



**Barton Springs
Edwards Aquifer**
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Aquifer District Announces 2015 Groundwater Stewardship Award Winners

At its January 28, 2016, meeting, the Board of Directors of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District selected its 2015 Groundwater Stewardship Award winners. The District presents these stewardship awards every two years to deserving individuals, organizations, companies or agencies that have invested exemplary effort towards the protection and conservation of water resources in the District.

"2015 was an impressive year for groundwater protection in Central Texas. Awareness, research, and legislative changes made for a very busy year all around," noted General Manager John Dupnik. "The community plays a vital role in protecting, conserving, and properly managing groundwater resources. We are thankful to everyone who chipped in and did their part. The District's Groundwater Stewardship Awards are an opportunity to turn our focus to the innovative, creative, inspiring, and passionate folks going above and beyond."

The Board and staff are recognizing the following extraordinary efforts to conserve and protect the groundwater resources of the area:

Permittee of the Year:

Centex Materials

Centex Materials' staff and leadership have consistently participated in the District's planning process, regularly supported education and outreach efforts, and last year installed a innovative recycling facility that streamlines operations and substantially increases water efficiency.

Lifetime Achievement Award:

Jack Hollon

Jack Hollon worked persistently and passionately throughout his life to conserve land and water in the Wimberley Valley and across the Texas Hill Country. He founded and supported many programs that integrated aquifer science, management, surface water quality protection, land conservation, environmental education, and public policy development. He brought people together, celebrated beauty, and helped find effective ways to protect it. He will be missed.

Aquifer Advocate Award:

Bill Johnson

Bill Johnson has been a long-time supporter, participant, and advocate of groundwater science across many agencies. He has facilitated dye traces to better understand groundwater flowpaths, hydrologic studies along the Blanco to understand surface water and groundwater interactions, and weather studies to understand potential recharge and runoff. He helped lead the community discussion and support of groundwater protection in a previously unregulated portion of Hays County.

Water Quality Protection Award:

City of Sunset Valley

The City of Sunset Valley has consistently made land use and policy decisions to limit development over the recharge zone and protect wells, provided and supported environmental education programs, involved its citizens in solutions-oriented behavior, and managed city-owned preserves and trails to benefit water quality.

Innovation Award:

Zara Environmental

Zara Environmental developed a method to bait and trap subterranean animals in wells. Over a period of 5 1/2 years and 214 sampling events, Zara biologists captured a Barton Springs salamander in a southern Travis County Edwards Aquifer well. Zara Environmental develops innovative research methods to sample non-traditional habitats.

Education Award:

City of Austin Watershed Protection Department, Watershed Detectives Program

The Watershed Detectives Program actively involves middle school students in groundwater education, environmental science, and best management practices. The City of Austin Watershed Protection Department has successfully created an engaging program for middle school students that teaches the importance of environmental stewardship at a local scale.

Research Award:

Hill Country Studio

The Hill Country Studio addressed regional challenges the Hill Country faces in the near future. Through a comprehensive report, the research team tactfully documented stresses, identified beneficial regional-scale management strategies, and proposed solutions. The report has fuelled informed discussions by bipartisan groups throughout the Hill Country.

Nominations were made by members of the public and District staff, and the nominees were evaluated and winners selected by the Board of Directors.

BSEACD is a groundwater conservation district charged by the Texas Legislature to preserve, conserve, and protect the aquifers and groundwater resources within its jurisdiction, which includes parts of three Central Texas counties. It is governed by a Board of five elected directors and staffed with hydrogeologists, groundwater regulatory compliance specialists, environmental educators, geospatial systems specialists, and administrative support personnel.

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