



Central Texas Boy Scouts enjoy camping at the Smilin' V Ranch.

ENVIROMENTORS HELP THE BOY SCOUTS “BE PREPARED”

Together, they work to bring a well into compliance

The Boy Scout Oath begins, “On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my country.” Rick Denison and Bob Oatman, with the Capitol Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America, learned that their country, or at least their state, had some rules they needed to follow.

In 2013, the council bought the 91-acre Smilin' V Ranch, outside of Liberty Hill, as a facility for day camps and training. It was during one of these training sessions that Denison and Oatman discovered that they might have a problem.

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Therese Baer, P.E., a volunteer with both the Boy Scouts and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's [EnviroMentor program](#), pointed out that in the eyes of the state, the council was operating a public drinking-water system at the camp. That was quite a surprise to Oatman, who handles maintenance for the ranch.

Baer remembers that questions were raised about the water system during a training session for adult volunteers. “When I asked about permitting through [the] TCEQ, he was unaware

that a permit was required. We struck up a conversation and got them enrolled in the TCEQ's EnviroMentor program.”

“To help other people at all times” Baer, and Rosemary Wyman, P.G., a geoscientist who works on hydrology, serve as EnviroMentors. They are just two of the many experts who volunteer their time to help nonprofit organizations and small businesses come into compliance with TCEQ rules and regulations.

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“It doesn't sound like the process is going to be too onerous,” says Denison, who is the director of Support Service for the council. “We've done a couple of



(From left) EnviroMentors Rosemary Wyman and Therese Baer advise Bob Oatman and Rick Denison on TCEQ requirements.

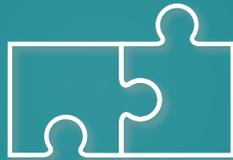
site visits [with Baer and Wyman]. They've been really easy to work with and have brought us from zero to 60 miles per hour with what we need to know, really quick!”

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In order to obtain the TCEQ's approval for the well, they are working together to fulfill a number of requirements. These tasks include:

- Develop an "as built" map and technical drawings of the system to know where lines are.
- Find out what size of pipe is in the ground.
- Improve and enlarge the pad around the well.
- Improve the security of the well building.
- Conduct periodic sampling of the water.
- Provide additional training for the operator.

Wyman says the initial assessment she conducted indicates that the well, storage tank, and lines appear to be in fairly good shape. The well is producing a good supply and is apparently not subject to contamination from a septic tank or other

source. However, the well-completion data that the TCEQ has to evaluate before approving the well are somewhat lacking, so they are working on that.

Wyman agrees with Denison that the construction needed is not very extensive. "I think the overall cost, especially with all those Boy Scout volunteers, is going to be fairly minimal."

"To keep myself physically strong"

Denison estimates that about a thousand people use the ranch in any given year. He says that during the summer the Smilin' V is the setting for Cub Scout day camps, where the smallest scouts enjoy loads of outdoor activities like archery, hunting, fishing, launching rockets, and

burning off a lot of energy. Plans for improvements to the site include an Old West-style fort with a BB gun range, a village with an archery range, and a chuck wagon for cooking, in keeping with the cowboy theme of the facility.

All of that running, shooting and playing makes the Cub Scout pack thirsty. Future campers will be able to drink from well water instead of relying on bottled water, thanks to the efforts of some skilled volunteers behind the scenes. 🌿

Information Online



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Enviromentor Program

www.tceq.texas.gov/assistance/em/envimntr.html



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