

APRIL 2006

TCEQ to Honor Texas Environmental Excellence Award Winners

Join the TCEQ in celebrating the winners of this year's Texas Environmental Excellence Awards (TEEA), the state's highest environmental honor. Winners accept their awards at a banquet at the Austin Convention Center, May 10, during the TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference.

Each spring the Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee and the Office of the Governor work with TCEQ staff to recommend winners for the TEEA. Ten diverse environmental projects representing the state's most outstanding achievements in resource conservation, waste reduction, and pollution prevention were chosen this year.

Below is a sampling of the winners' pool:

Agriculture: Texas Water Resources Institute
Project: Range Revegetation Pilot Project

The Range Revegetation Project at the U.S. Army's Fort Hood base is a true environmental win-win. Heavy artillery vehicle traffic from training activities on Fort Hood's 67,000-acre west range has left the land barren, rock-hard and prone to erosion. Sediment runoff affects area water quality, as the natural process of erosion has been accelerated.

Through a partnership with the Texas Water Resources Institute and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Fort Hood's range began to get help from an unlikely source: composted dairy manure from the Bosque River Watershed in north-central Texas.

Applying the compost to the poor quality soil addresses water quality issues, while enhancing vegetation growth at the base. Initial results show the compost has helped increase the rate of seedling growth and is working to reduce sediment runoff in the area, and water quality issues in and around the base.

Civic/Nonprofit: Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
Project: The Greening of Goodwill

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas first recognized its role in the computer recycling business in 1997, when the

large number of donated computers led the nonprofit to open Computer Works, a retail store for donated equipment. The store quickly became self-sustaining and profitable, prompting Goodwill to expand to a full-scale used electronics program that includes refurbishing and selling computer systems, recycling computer parts and peripherals, and demanufacturing computers (taking them apart to separate the usable parts from the unusable).

Goodwill's Environmental Business Services Department also manages a commercial computer recycling program; facilitates collection of discarded used electronics and public collection events; and collaborates in a number of community projects such as the Austin Computer Recycling Project, a partnership with Dell and the City of Austin that offers a proactive, community-based solution to computer disposal in Central Texas.

Youth: Weslaco High School
Project: Weslaco High School Botanical Gardens

Wanting to incorporate more hands-on learning in the science curriculum and improve student awareness of resource conservation and nutritional habits, students worked hand-in-hand with their science teacher to build the Botanical Gardens on the Weslaco High School campus. The gardens represent a unique blend of an outdoor classroom and community service project. Through the gardens, students explore their world and learn more about the direct correlation between the food on their dinner tables and their day-to-day actions.

Weslaco High School students celebrated Earth Day 2005 by building a pond habitat and by harvesting and donating 95 pounds of fresh, garden-grown produce to the Rio Grande Valley Food Bank. Thirty different varieties of native flowering shrubs and herbs, several butterfly garden beds, and one cactus garden were planted, and to celebrate Arbor Day, the students planted 16 native trees. Students participated in the Valley-wide Rio Reforestation Project, in which 13,000 seedlings are planted in one day throughout the Valley, and also led activities during Family Nature Day at the Valley Nature Center.

Check back next month for more TEEA winners!



Coming to a University Near You—Free, Graduate-credit Course for Teachers

Teachers, you're invited to an exciting summer learning opportunity—Teaching Environmental Sciences (TES).



TES is a tuition-paid graduate course in environmental education for teachers of students from kindergarten through 12th grade. It emphasizes air, water, and waste issues that affect the environmental and economic health of the local community.

The TES course is designed to provide balanced information and to promote partnerships among teachers, government agencies, businesses, and community organizations. Using a hands-on methodology, you gain teaching tools that equip you to help students develop critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making skills, so they are better prepared to take their places as citizens committed to environmental protection.

Typical TES activities include:

- Water testing
- Touring remote estuary sites
- Touring fish hatcheries
- Canoeing rivers and creeks to study water quality
- Visiting wastewater and drinking-water treatment plants
- Visiting a TCEQ air monitoring station
- Touring a hazardous-waste incinerator
- Visiting a landfill
- Building a compost bin, and many more field trips

For more information about the class, locations, and registration, e-mail educate@tceq.state.tx.us. You may also visit the Web site at www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/education/tes/tes.html.

Be a Texas Watch Monitor!

Texas Watch supports the TCEQ's Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Program through a partnership with Texas State University-San Marcos and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6. Texas Watch conducts environmental education and training activities through a statewide network including:

- individuals
- schools
- civic organizations
- local, state, and federal governments
- industries and businesses

Monitors cooperatively observe, collect, and share valuable water quality information. Texas Watch conducts workshops, monitoring training, field activities, and presentations; distributes outreach and educational materials, including a quarterly newsletter; and supports a comprehensive Web site. Volunteer monitors are certified at various levels depending on their resources, time commitment, involvement, and environmental goals. Participation is open to groups of all sizes and ages from third grade and up. For more information, call Texas Watch at 877/506-1401 or visit www.texaswatch.geo.txstate.edu/.

Do You Have Unwanted Pesticides, Home Chemicals, or Used Motor Oil?

The TCEQ is offering a free, one-day collection event for rural Texans.

The collections give agricultural producers who use pesticides in Texas an opportunity to dispose of unwanted products that may pose a hazard to them, their families, and their surrounding farming and ranching community.

Items eligible for this collection are:

- Banned or unwanted pesticides
- Household hazardous waste
- Properly rinsed, plastic pesticide containers
- Used motor oil
- Used oil filters
- Lead acid batteries

For more information on proper disposal methods and the location of drop-off sites, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/AgWaste/agwaste.html.

City	Date
Wall	4/26
LaGrange	4/28
Uvalde	5/1
Jourdanton	5/3
Odem	5/5

Updated TCEQ Publications

Residents, businesses, farmers, and ranchers in the Rio Grande Valley all depend on the Arroyo Colorado. Pollution problems are threatening the Arroyo. Read or request the publication, *Get to Know the Arroyo Colorado* (GI-318), and find out how you can help restore and protect this body of water. Visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-318.html to view the publication.

Obtaining TCEQ Rules (GI-032), is a brochure that provides the statutes, codes, and rules pertaining to Texas environmental quality, and also tells you how to get copies of a particular code or rule. To view the brochure, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-032.html.

You are currently on our subscription list to receive the monthly newsletter, *Environmental News You Can Use*. Instead of receiving the paper copy in the mail, you now have the option of receiving e-mails from us when we post the latest issue in PDF format on our Web site at www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/pd/pd-025.html.

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