



## Nine honored for local conservation commitment with first Cibolo Nature Center Stewardship Awards

BOERNE, Texas—Nine local conservationists were honored Wednesday evening with the Cibolo Nature Center's first Stewardship Awards, recognizing individuals who have made outstanding contributions to protecting the land, water and wildlife of the region.

"The Cibolo Nature Center considers this the highest honor we can bestow on people who have significantly helped develop the quality of life we are privileged to experience here in the Texas Hill Country," said Brent Evans, who, with Carolyn Chipman Evans, is founding director of the CNC. "In celebration of Earth Day on April 22, we want to acknowledge the folks whose shoulders we stand upon in conserving our natural resources and Hill Country heritage. Without committed individuals like these honorees, conservation success would not be possible."

He added that the CNC plans to make the Stewardship Awards an annual event for Earth Day.

Cibolo Nature Center Stewardship Awards were presented during a ceremony at the CNC to the following recipients.

**John H. Benedict Jr.**, who holds a Ph.D. in entomology, is retired as a Professor Emeritus at Texas A&M University, where he was a professor and research scientist until 1999, teaching and developing insect pest management programs for cotton, biological control, and genetically engineered insect resistant cotton crops. He has served on the boards of the Kendall County Partnership for Parks, Friends of Old Number Nine, the Sunrise Rotary Club and the Hill Country Archeological Association. Born at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, he has lived in Boerne since 2004.

**Kristie Denbow** of Boerne is a founding member, past president and serves on the board of directors for the Kendall County Partnership for Parks. Through strong partnerships with Kendall County and local organizations, she has secured \$200,000 of in-kind services and materials and more than 7,600 hours of volunteer service for the new county park system, leading to opening of the first county park (James Kiehl River Bend Park), the construction of the first public wildlife viewing facilities and the first chimney swift towers in Kendall County.

**Betty Sue Griffith Dunn** of Boerne, associate professor and director of the Cytogenetics Program at the UT Health Science Center San Antonio, has volunteered since 1996 for the Cibolo Nature Center, where she serves as coordinator for the design, installation and maintenance of the CNC's demonstration gardens and has participated in field research programs for 14 years. She is past president of the Boerne Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas and coordinates that organization's participation in the annual Mostly Native Plant Sale. A Master Naturalist, she also is a member of Boerne Birders and NICE! (Natives Instead of Common Exotics).

**Judy Edmondson** of Boerne is a fifth-grade teacher at Kendall Elementary School and has spent 16 of her 21 years as an educator with the Boerne Independent School District, where she was named Teacher of the Year for 2003-2004. In 2003, she founded Keep Boerne Beautiful, an affiliate of Keep Texas Beautiful, and remains KBB's executive director. KBB's projects directly reach more than 7,000 students in the BISD as well as in surrounding school districts. She also is a trainer for Keep Texas Beautiful, traveling statewide to train educators to use the Keep America Beautiful "Waste in Place" curriculum for kindergarten-sixth grade.

**John C. Kight** of Boerne, an independent consulting engineer, retired as director of transportation planning and development after 35 years with the Texas Department of Transportation – San Antonio District. He serves director and vice-president of the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District, is a member of the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group for Region L and is a former Kendall County Commissioner. A recipient of the Texas Water Development Board's Texas Rain Catcher Award, he conducts presentations and workshops on rainwater harvest systems.

**Greg Pasztor** of San Antonio, a former journalist turned educator, is chairman of the English and Communications Department at Palo Alto College and teaches television production and other communications courses. He is president of the Bexar Audubon Society, serves on the board of the Rock Art Foundation and is a former president of the Friends of Friedrich Wilderness Park, where he helped provide initial support to launch the Master Naturalist program. He has volunteered his skills as a videographer in support of the Cibolo Conservation Corridor Initiative.

**Patty Leslie Pasztor** of San Antonio is an independent consultant whose work ranges from plant identification for landowners to survival training for the military. Co-author of the book "Texas Trees – A Friendly Guide" with Paul Cox, she was formerly a native plant horticulturist at the San Antonio Botanical Garden and the park naturalist for Friedrich Wilderness Park. A Master Naturalist instructor, she has also taught adults and children about nature at Northwest Vista College, the San Antonio Missions, the Witte Museum, the Cibolo Nature Center and many other venues.

**Bob Webster**, co-owner of Shades of Green Nursery in San Antonio, is president of the Cibolo Conservancy, an advisor to the San Antonio Botanical Garden and serves on the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District Education Subcommittee and the Cibolo Nature Center's Herff Farm Advisory Committee. He has promoted organic gardening as the host of KTSA's Garden Show for more than 15 years and is an active hiker, backpacker, fly-fisherman and gardener. He has lived in the San Antonio-Boerne area for 35 years.

**Suzanne Young** has been a volunteer for the Cibolo Nature Center since 1999. A founding member of the Boerne Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas, she is project manager for Bigtooth Maples for Boerne, an Alamo Area Master Naturalist, president of The Dienger – A Cultural and Heritage Center, and is a member of Keep Boerne Beautiful, Boerne Area Historical Preservation Society and the Kendall County Historical Commission. She has lived in Boerne since 1994.

The Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne is located on 162 acres of natural lands at Boerne City Park off Highway 46 just west of the Kendall County Fairgrounds. The Cibolo Nature Center's mission is conservation of natural resources through education and stewardship. Call (830) 249-4616 or visit [www.cibolo.org](http://www.cibolo.org).