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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Three Hill Country Schools Win *Rainwater Revival* Grants to Fund Water Conservation Projects

(June 3, 2014) Austin, TX – Impressed by the quality of proposals for its rainwater harvesting and conservation grant program, the Hill Country Alliance is awarding three – instead of the planned two – \$1,000 grants to Hill Country schools to help teachers and students design and implement water-saving techniques.

The 5th annual Revival, planned for October 25 in Dripping Springs, is a day-long edu-fest that brings together experts to help families and businesses learn how to harvest rainwater for in-home and outdoor use. This year's grants brings to 13 the number of schools that have benefited from the auction of professionally designed and painted rain barrels – rain barrel art – at each fall event since 2010.

“Our judges were overwhelmed by the quality of applications we received and very appreciative of all the schools that want to teach conservation through hands-on projects,” said Karen Ford, the Hill Country Alliance board member who leads the Rainwater Revival event. “The design, construction and maintenance of water conservation projects bring together math, science, economics and an early appreciation for conserving our precious natural resources. We are so grateful to know these teachers, parents, garden clubs and others are dedicated to teaching our young people how to harvest and use rainwater and why it’s important to know and care about water.”

Grants were awarded to:

Hernandez Elementary School (San Marcos CISD): Some 70 fifth-graders will incorporate rainwater collection while managing a storm water issue that occurs when downspouts direct rainwater over sidewalks in front of the school. “Not many people think of the benefit of storm water management,” Peggy Leatherman of Rain Harvest Resources, one of the application judges, said. “All the judges were pleased at the innovation this idea shows, as well as the school’s interest in working with its garden and art clubs and City of San Marcos conservation experts.”

East Central High School (East Central ISD, Bexar County): The aquatic science programs will use the grant funds to capture rainwater to irrigate native grasses and plants being grown for a riparian restoration project. Environmental

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science students will study and track pH in the captured rainwater over time, of particular interest since the campus is near a coal-fired power plant scheduled to be decommissioned within the next four years. “Judges felt this was an excellent opportunity for real-world experience for our next generation of scientists,” said Ms. Ford.

Hunt ISD: Fourth-and-fifth-grade science students will use grant funds to build a working tabletop model of a rain catchment system that will serve as a teaching tool in all Hunt science classes. The physical model and its written educational materials are a joint project between the Hunt School and Hunt Garden Club volunteers and are expected to be used for a number of years. Students will maintain the model and update it as needed. “The school’s ongoing dedication to providing hands-on learning and its Discovery Garden, begun as a cooperative project with the garden club 14 years ago, is to be commended,” said Ms. Leatherman.

About the Rainwater Revival

The Rainwater Revival is an annual celebration of collection, conservation and common sense designed to help individuals and businesses learn how to capture rainwater for in-home and outdoor irrigation. The free event is sponsored by the Hill Country Alliance and will be held Saturday, Oct. 25, 2014, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Dripping Springs Ranch Park.

The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country. Visit us at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

Photos:

Board member Karen Ford (far right) presents a \$1,000 grant from the Hill Country Alliance’s Rainwater Revival to students and teachers at Hernandez Elementary School in the San Marcos CISD. The grant will help students design and build a system to capture storm water runoff.



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Hunt School students pose in front of their water catchment tank with some of the bounty from their Discovery Garden. The school received a \$1,000 grant from the Hill Country Alliance's Rainwater Revival to build a working model of a rainwater harvesting system.

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