

JUNE 2006

What Can You Do About Nonpoint Source Pollution?

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution is pollution that occurs without a specific point of origin and spreads by rainfall or snowmelt, moving over and through the ground. As the run-off moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and even our underground sources of drinking water.

Nonpoint source pollution is the leading remaining cause of water quality problems, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The effects of NPS pollutants on specific waters vary and may not always receive full assessment. However, we know that these pollutants have harmful effects on drinking water, recreation, fisheries, and wildlife.

We all play a part in NPS source pollution, resulting from a wide variety of human activities on the land. Each of us can contribute to the problem without even realizing it. But, we also can work together to reduce and prevent NPS pollution by practicing conservation and by changing certain everyday habits.

- Keep litter, pet wastes, leaves, and debris out of street gutters and storm drains.
- Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly and according to directions.
- Dispose of used oil, antifreeze, paints, and other household chemicals properly.
- Clean up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease, and antifreeze. Do not hose them into the street where they can reach local streams and lakes.
- Have your septic system inspected and pumped, at a minimum, every 3 to 5 years.
- Purchase household detergents and cleaners that are low in phosphorous to reduce the amount of nutrients discharged into our lakes, streams, and coastal waters.

To find out more about the TCEQ's Nonpoint Source Management program and actions you can take to prevent NPS pollution, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/nav/eq/nonpointsrcpgm.html.

More Outstanding Efforts Honored with Texas Environmental Excellence Awards

Continuing from previous issues with our recognition of outstanding environmental efforts across the state, listed below are the remaining three winners of the Texas Environmental Excellence awards.

Large Business/Technical: American Airlines Conservation Efforts Take Flight

Sometimes the biggest changes come from the ground up. That was exactly the case at the American Airlines Maintenance Base at Alliance Airport in Fort Worth (AFW). American Airlines' environmental department personnel at AFW saw an opportunity to recycle water and minimize hazardous waste, reducing environmental impact while saving money. The team gathered bids from outside contractors, but was discouraged by the overwhelming costs of implementing a recycled-wastewater system and a program that tracks AFW's waste reduction.

Needing to prove return on investment to corporate management, plant team members came up with their own cost-saving solutions. First, they expanded a reverse osmosis system to treat 40 million gallons of wastewater, converting an existing treated-effluent tank into a reverse osmosis tank. They reengineered and upgraded an outdated automation control system at half the estimated price. They also created an inspection and inventory bar code system to track hazardous waste.

The project has allowed American Airlines to reduce its total water usage at AFW between 24 and 36 percent over the last three years and reduce costs by almost \$1 million. In addition, the team at AFW reduced the amount of hazardous waste generated in 2000 by more than 50 percent, at a significant cost savings. The creativity and persistence of American Airlines personnel proves that even in big businesses, small ideas can really take flight.



An environmental message brought to you by the Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division.

Large Business/Nontechnical: Abitibi-Consolidated, Inc. Recycling Division
Collecting for a Good Cause

Students, teachers, church members, and many others across the state are turning paper into colorful playground equipment, new library books, and generous scholarships. How? Through Abitibi-Consolidated's Paper Retriever program.

Through the program, Abitibi-Consolidated provides free on-site recycling bins and collection services to schools, churches, and other nonprofits—and then pays the organizations for the paper they collect. Bright green Paper Retriever trucks pick up the recovered paper and take it to Abitibi's sorting facilities, where it is processed for recycling into new paper products. The program complements existing community recycling efforts by giving people new ways and new reasons to recycle year-round. It also teaches good recycling habits by providing free educational materials in English and Spanish.

Paper Retriever, which began in Houston in 1995, now reaches more than 3,500 organizations and has expanded throughout North America and the United Kingdom. In Texas alone, participants in the Paper Retriever program in 2004 collectively recycled 278,000 tons of paper—enough to cover more than 9,000 football fields in paper one inch deep—and earned more than \$1 million.

The program's environmental savings are perhaps even more impressive than its financial contributions. According to Abitibi-Consolidated, one ton of recycled paper uses 64 percent less energy, 50 percent less water, and emits 74 percent fewer air pollutants than one ton produced from virgin wood pulp.

For Abitibi-Consolidated, its Paper Retriever partners, and the environment, a culture of conservation really pays off.

Individual: Brent Evans, Boerne
A Force of Nature

For Brent Evans, making people fall in love with the environment just comes naturally.

As lifelong volunteer environmentalists, Evans and his wife, Carolyn, led the effort to create the Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne, transforming a thicket of woods and marshland into a tranquil nature trail and full-scale learning center. The Kendall County site draws tourists and school-children, as well as conservationists who despite their different perspectives encounter a strikingly common experience of nature as teacher and guide.

Now, Evans has another vision—a regional system of parks and natural areas that will provide outdoor recreation, encourage water conservation, and protect wildlife habitat. But, like the Cibolo project, he's not tackling this one alone. Among all his natural abilities, Evans is first and foremost a community catalyst. He knows how to pull the community together—and more importantly, he knows why.

When the Master Plan for Parks and Open Space was presented to the Kendall County Commissioner's Court, it was unanimously adopted. When a \$5 million parks bond went before the public, voters handily approved it. Evans laid the groundwork by seeking input from citizens, public agencies, and environmental experts every step of the way. He headed a community advisory committee and even raised funds for a public interest poll to better understand public attitudes.

Today, the parks system is moving forward as planned. The county has identified the area's most environmentally critical areas and is proceeding with land acquisition and park development.

Thanks to Brent Evans, an idea that might have languished as one man's dream has become an entire community's reality. And it's only just begun.

Environmental Leadership Awarded at the TCEQ's 2006 Environmental Trade Fair and Conference

Congratulations to the newly recognized members of the Clean Texas Program. The following companies received recognition at the 2006 TCEQ Environmental Trade Fair and Conference during the Keynote Luncheon on May 10, 2006, for their exemplary strides toward environmental leadership. During the luncheon, the TCEQ recognized four sites at the Platinum Level and six sites at the Gold Level—levels awarded to companies enacting environmental protection methods more stringent than mandated.



Clean Texas Platinum Level Members

3M Brownwood

3M Brownwood has a history of developing solutions that eliminate pollution at the source through product reformulations, process modifications, equipment redesign, and recycling or reuse of waste materials. 3M Brownwood has eliminated 398 tons of air pollution, 5,823 tons of solid/hazardous waste, and nearly 15 billion BTUs of energy.

Rockwell Collins, Richardson and Dallas Service Center

Rockwell Collins is reducing hazardous waste by improving their chemical inventory management system. Recently, a chemical inventory and distribution system was adopted and has achieved a 20 percent reduction in hazardous waste from 2004 to 2005.

Valvoline Company, a Division of Ashland, Inc., Deer Park

The Valvoline Company is the first site to simultaneously obtain the chemical industry's Responsible Care 14001 certification and the TCEQ's Clean Texas Platinum

membership. The Valvoline Company has fulfilled a commitment to recycle non-hazardous and oily wastes by ramping up employee awareness of recycling through training and sponsoring activities. Each year, the Deer Park facility recycles over 1.1 million pounds of materials, which include metals, plastics, and sorbents.

The following companies were recognized for their environmental performance at the Gold Level.

Clean Texas Gold Level Members

- BAE Systems, Austin
- Fort Hood
- Huntsman Ethyleneamines Plant, Freeport
- Lower Colorado River Authority Thomas C. Ferguson Power Plant, Horseshoe Bay
- Maxair, a Division of Four Seasons, Fort Worth
- Motiva Refinery, Port Arthur.

Agriculture Collection Events a Success!

What's in your back yard?

TCEQ's Agriculture Waste Collection Program, in a partnership with the Texas Cooperative Extension and Texas Department of Agriculture, organizes regional waste pesticide collections of unwanted or unused (waste) pesticides.

Five collection events took place in Wall, Uvalde, La Grange, Odem, and Jourdanton during the month of April. Thanks to these successful collections, more than 500 people brought in a number of potentially hazardous materials instead of improperly disposing of them. Items collected included:



- Over 144,000 pounds of Ag/Household hazardous waste
- 4,431 empty pesticide containers
- 1,053 old lead acid batteries
- 8,524 gallons of used oil
- Over 19,000 used oil filters

To find out more about upcoming collection events and their locations, visit the TCEQ's Ag Waste pesticide web site at www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/AgWaste/agwaste.html.

It's Summer, Time for Fun in the Sun!

Schools across the state have let out for the summer and families are flocking to Texas rivers and lakes for outdoor recreational activities. As children play and adults swim, the TCEQ and Keep Texas Beautiful are planning another summer season of lake and river cleanups. This program is important to our communities; cleanups and litter prevention help improve the quality of surface water. The TCEQ and Keep Texas Beautiful encourage you to join us in our lake and river cleanups this summer.

| Event Name | Date/Phone No. |
|---|-------------------------|
| Second Saturday Shoreline Spruce-up | June 10 214/321-5174 |
| 21 st Annual Lake Travis Parks Cleanup | June 17 512/391-0622 |

For more information about this program, visit www.ktb.org.

Recently Updated TCEQ Publications

There are numerous hazards associated with abandoned water wells: personal safety, groundwater contamination, co-mingling of groundwater, and loss of aquifer pressure head. You, as a landowner, are responsible for these hazards. *Landowner's Guide to Plugging Abandoned Water Wells (RG-347)*, is a guidance document on how to properly plug an abandoned water well, whether you choose to do it yourself or hire a professional. This document gives you instruction on the proper procedure. To view the document before ordering, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/rg-347.html.



Take Care of Texas (GI-311), is a bright colorful bookmark with helpful, easy-to-do environmental tips for individuals (available in English and Spanish). To view the bookmark, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi-311.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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