



## Texas Environmental Excellence Award 2015

### Education

We are excited to announce that our Rainwater Catchment Education Project, what we are now calling the “Catching Rain-Teaching Water” project was selected as one of the finalists for the 2015 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards in the Education category!

*Excerpt from the 2015 Texas Environmental Excellence Award Nomination*

“Rain is less frequent and less predictable these days. That means less water is available for recharging aquifers and sustaining rivers. The future of our water resources is dependent upon cultivating a water-wise and conservation dedicated population. Schools are the place to start, and Nueces River Authority’s Groundwater Conservation District funded rainwater catching project is a creative first step toward cultivating water cycle understanding, and a personal responsibility for water use. The Catching Rain-Teaching Water project is being underwritten by two local groundwater conservation districts, supported by oil and gas companies, and driven by campus leaders with the immediate goal of creating rainwater catchment demonstration projects on every public-school campus. The expected outcome is a lifelong water conservation ethic in each participating student.

The project brings hands-on water cycle education to students on their campuses and in their classrooms. Through the project activities they learn a love and a new value for rainwater that falls from the sky, and they learn to use caught rain conservatively to bring about good things. Students in K thru 12 grades are being introduced to new behavior options and being empowered to make personal choices in favor of water resource protection. Catching Rain-Teaching Water is an extension of the NRA’s long proven successful stewardship education and years of partnerships with local groundwater districts, schools and teachers within the Nueces River Basin, a program that reaches over 13,000 students each year in water starved Southwest Texas. The predecessor project, NRA’s The Headwater Stewardship Project was recognized by TEEA in 2008.

Catching Rain-Teaching Water has reached over 5,000 students to date. It was begun in a three-county area in 2011 with the Wintergarden Groundwater Conservation District. The program has already grown with sponsorship from the Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District and now includes seven counties. These seven counties; Atascosa, Zavala, Dimmit, LaSalle, Frio, Wilson, and Karnes are in the heart of the Eagle Ford shale oil and gas development where water resources are being stressed by drought and development. Water catchment has been demonstrated on 16 public school campuses to date and we plan to increase that for the coming year.”