Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts
P. O. Box 658 • Temple, Texas 76503 • 254-778-8741

Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board
P. O. Box 658 • Temple, Texas 76503 • 254-773-2250

August 21, 2013

To: Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Enclosed is your Texas Conservation Awards Program packet for 2014. The packet contains changes resulting from the district survey conducted last winter. This packet consists of guidelines, entry sheets for all awards categories, a description of the categories, and a transmittal cover sheet for entries. **Award entries must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, February 18, 2014**.

The Essay Contest entry sheet is compatible with the format and style of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) testing for writing.

If your district chooses to participate in any or all categories of the 2014 Conservation Awards Program, the district **must** contribute financial support to the program. The assessment for 2014 will be mailed at a later date.

We appreciate the past support and participation that districts have demonstrated for the Conservation Awards Program. In addition, we are proud of the opportunity to continue with this program and encourage you to continue recognizing conservation leaders in your district.

Please review the 2014 Conservation Awards packet carefully. If you need additional material or require assistance, please do not hesitate to contact your field representative or the State Office in Temple.

Jule Richmond, President
Association of Texas Soil &
Water Conservation Districts

Marty H. Graham, Chairman
Texas State Soil & Water
Conservation Board

Enclosures: 2014 Awards Program Packet

cc: District Chairman (letter only); ASCs (FO), NRCS

2014

Texas

Conservation

Awards

Program

TEXAS CONSERVATION AWARDS PROGRAM

The Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts (ATSWCD), as directing sponsors of the Texas Conservation Awards Program, are pleased to join the 216 Texas soil and water conservation districts in the quest for area winners during 2014.

AREA AWARDS BANQUETS
(Locations to be determined)

AREA I ..... Panhandle & Northwest Texas

AREA II ..... Southwest Texas

AREA III ..... South Texas

AREA IV ..... East Texas

AREA V ..... Central & North Texas

ENTRY DEADLINE: <u>Entries must be postmarked by February 18, 2014</u>.

(Each district is eligible to enter all categories.)

2014 TEXAS CONSERVATION AWARDS PROGRAM

PURPOSE:

To acknowledge, recognize and honor those who dedicate themselves and their talents to the conservation and wise use of our renewable natural resources. The conservation awards program provides competition and incentives to expand and improve conservation efforts, resource development, and increase the wise utilization of our renewable natural resources. As a result, soil and water conservation districts and both rural and urban citizens of Texas are benefited.

CATEGORIES:

1. Outstanding Conservation District
2. Conservation Rancher
3. Conservation Farmer
4. Essay Contest (two age divisions)
5. Poster Contest
6. Friend Of Conservation
7. Conservation Teacher
8. Wildlife Conservationist
9. Forestry Conservationist (Area IV Only)

GUIDELINES:

- Participation in any or all categories of the awards program shall be voluntary. However, to participate, a district is required to contribute financial support to the awards program (annual specified amount).

- All award contributions made to the ATSWCD for this purpose will be held and utilized in a separate and sole purpose account.

- Each area awards program will consist of opportunities to enter award categories selected for your area of the state administered under the same procedures. Awards banquets will be conducted on a standard format and standard awards should be presented in each area.

- Each district is eligible to submit one entry in each category as determined in your area of the state. (However, a district may submit up to three entries in both the essay and poster contests.)

- Entry material will be distributed in the fall of each year. Each awards packet will have a cover letter explaining exact entry procedures and the categories that may be entered for that year.

- Entry material is limited to the supporting information required on each entry form. Noncompliance with this rule will be counted against an entry.

(continued)

GUIDELINES (continued):

- Entries must be postmarked by **February 15** each year unless this date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday. In this instance, entries must be postmarked on the the next business day.

- **Districts should mail entries to: Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board**
  P O Box 658
  Temple, TX 76503

- Entries will be judged to select winners in each category. (A runner-up may be selected in any category.) First, second, and third place winners will be named in the poster and essay contests.

- Area winners in the poster and essay contest; Outstanding Conservation District; Conservation Farmer; Conservation Rancher; Friend Of Conservation; and Conservation Teacher will be judged to select a state winner. The state winners will each be presented a plaque at the Annual State Meeting of Soil and Water Conservation District Directors.

- Winners of the poster and essay contest in each area are required to have at least one digital photograph of the individual whose work is to be recognized.

- The names of winners should be submitted to districts by the end of March. News releases will be sent to each district.

- The location of each area awards banquet will be determined before winners are announced each year.

- Each district with a winning entry is responsible for transporting winners to the awards banquet. Complimentary tickets to the banquet will be provided to the winners and spouses (or family) by the district that submitted the entry.

- A conservation district that has been selected as a first place winner within the immediate past two years (2012, 2013) shall not be considered in that same category as a first place winner. There is no time limit on all other categories.

- SWCD directors, State Soil and Water Conservation Board members, State Soil and Water Conservation Board employees, and dependent members of the above mentioned individuals' households are **NOT** eligible to compete in the Texas Conservation Awards Program.
  (Exception: Children of the above mentioned individuals may compete in the Poster and Essay contests.)

(continued)

ADMINISTRATION:

- The State Soil and Water Conservation Board employees will be responsible for assisting districts with information, guidelines and promotional items concerning the Texas Conservation Awards Program.

- An operating budget will be developed each year to determine the anticipated cost of administering the awards program. An Awards Committee shall submit the budget to both the TSSWCB and ATSWCD.

- The operating budget shall consider only the cost of awards, printing and postage. (Each awards banquet and related expenses should be self-sustaining.)

- The Awards Committee, with approval from the TSSWCB and ATSWCD, is also responsible for selection of the banquet site and outline of the banquet program.

- Judging of all entries shall be the responsibility of the State Soil and Water Conservation Board employees. Outside groups or individuals should be utilized whenever appropriate and possible. Judging criteria should be based upon the quality of the entry and conservation promotion. If there is an instance of entries of equal quality, judges should consider the format and observance of instructions in preparing the entry.

- Each area may select a runner-up winner in any category. This selection should be based upon the quality of entries in each category.

- Outside groups, firms, or individuals are welcome to assist in sponsoring, donating financial aid and assisting with promotion of the Texas Conservation Awards Program.

- Funds received to carry out the area awards program shall be deposited into an account separate from any other funds.

- The management of all funds relating to the awards program will be the responsibility of the Executive Director of the State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the President of the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

TEXAS CONSERVATION AWARDS PROGRAM

- CATEGORY SUMMARIES –

(Complete category explanations are listed on the entry forms.)

1. OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Awarded to the winning soil and water conservation district in each area for the most outstanding program during the past fiscal year.

2. CONSERVATION RANCHER

Awarded to the outstanding conservation rancher in each area. *They **MAY** be a resident of the district or an absentee rancher.* They **MUST** perform ranching activities within the district and be a cooperator with the district from which the entry was submitted. The rancher may have other business or professional interests. If the ranch has a district approved Water Quality Management Plan and has incorporated water quality into their ranching activities the entry **MUST** demonstrate how the nominee has substantially implemented the plan.

3. CONSERVATION FARMER

Awarded to the outstanding conservation farmer in each area. *They **MAY** be a resident of the district or an absentee farmer.* They **MUST** perform farming activities within the district and be a cooperator with the district from which the entry was submitted. The farmer may have other business or professional interests. If the farm has a district approved Water Quality Management Plan and has incorporated water quality into their farming activities the entry **MUST** demonstrate how the nominee has substantially implemented the plan.

4. ESSAY CONTEST (Two Age Divisions: 13 and under and 14 to 18 year olds)

Essay (topic for 2014: **"How Soil and Water Conservation Improves Water Quality"**) is to be submitted to local soil and water conservation districts for local judging. Each local district will judge the entries and submit three essays in each age category to the TSSWCB for competition on the area level. Plaques will be awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners on the area level and state winners will be selected from the area winners. This contest is open to students, 18 years and under, and does not jeopardize Texas University Interscholastic League eligibility.

5. POSTER CONTEST

Posters should address the following subject for 2014: **"Where Does Your Water Shed?".** Posters shall be submitted to local soil and water conservation districts for local judging. Each local district will judge the entries and submit three posters to the TSSWCB for competition on the area level. Plaques will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners on the area level and state winners will be selected from the area winners. This contest is open to students, 12 years and under, and does not jeopardize Texas University Interscholastic League eligibility.

6. **FRIEND OF CONSERVATION**

Awarded to the outstanding man or woman in the district who has rendered the most unselfish conservation service in each area. Any of the following may be considered and are eligible for consideration under this category. Representatives of the news media (radio, television, newspaper, magazines, etc.); local civic or community organizations; Chambers of Commerce; local units of government; business/professional individuals; homemakers; or district employees/district voluntaries that contribute to or provide support for conservation shall also be considered eligible for this award. (This award is not for individual conservation practices).

7. **CONSERVATION TEACHER**

Awarded to the outstanding teacher of conservation in schools in each area. Teachers of all grade levels are eligible for this award.

8. **WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST**

Awarded to the outstanding wildlife conservationist in each area. They **MUST** be a district cooperator who has incorporated wildlife conservation into their farming and ranching activities.

9. **FORESTRY CONSERVATIONIST** (Area IV only)

Awarded to the outstanding forestry conservationist for the most outstanding farm forestry conservation program in the commercial forest areas of Texas. They **MUST** be a district cooperator or an individual who has implemented conservation practices on their land and has done missionary work for conservation and the district program.

2014 Texas Conservation Awards Program

SUMMARY SHEET

Please use this form to summarize your district's entries. Check each category entered and indicate if the entry is enclosed or mailed under separate cover.

_____

Soil and Water Conservation District (Name) **(No.)**

_____ 1. OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION DISTRICT _____

_____ 2. CONSERVATION RANCHER _____

_____ 3. CONSERVATION FARMER _____

_____ 4. ESSAY CONTEST (indicate age division)

ages 13 and under _____

ages 14 – 18 _____

_____ 5. POSTER CONTEST (12 years and under) _____

_____ 6. FRIEND OF CONSERVATION _____

_____ 7. CONSERVATION TEACHER _____

_____ 8. WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST _____

_____ 9. FORESTRY CONSERVATIONIST (AREA IV only) _____

_____
Chairman

_____
Vice-Chairman

_____
Secretary

_____
Director

_____
Director

Outstanding Conservation District

36th Annual
Texas Conservation Awards Program

Sponsored by the
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF TEXAS

_____
Conservation District Name & Number

(Information in this entry is to be based on the district's last fiscal year – Sept. 1 to Aug. 31)

Please provide a narrative **on Power Point** of the soil and water conservation district's conservation activities telling how resources are utilized to accomplish the district's objectives. Both a disc/CD and a hard copy are required for each entry. Only one award, per category, is to be put on a disc/CD. **Number of digital photographs are limited to 15.**

Individual districts may submit an entry telling their story for regional competition. State winners will be selected from the five regional winners.

As evidence of our final approval and desire to submit this entry, we do hereby affix our signatures:

_____ Soil and Water Conservation District No. _____

in session this _____ day of _____, 2014.

_____
Chairman

_____
Vice-Chairman

_____
Secretary

_____
Director

_____
Director

Mail entry to: TSSWCB, P O Box 658, Temple, TX 76503

Conservation Rancher

36th Annual
Texas Conservation Awards Program

Sponsored by the
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF TEXAS

_____
Conservation District Name & Number

_____
Name of Rancher

_____
Mailing Address

_____
How Long Cooperating

_____
Size of Ranch **Type of Ranch/Operation**

The Conservation Rancher **MUST** be a District Cooperator who has or is currently performing conservation work on his or her land. Also, the individual's promotion/support of soil and water conservation and the district program should be considered. *The rancher **MAY** be a resident of the soil and water conservation district or be an absentee rancher and may have other business or professional interests.*

Please provide a narrative **on Power Point** of the Conservation Rancher's activities. If the nominee has a district approved Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP), it is required that the entry reflect the plan and that the entry demonstrate how the nominee has substantially implemented the plan. This narrative is important to the judging process and should not exceed five (5) minutes. Both a disc/CD and a hard copy are required for each entry. Only one award, per category, is to be put on a disc/CD. **Number of digital photographs limited to 10.**

Local winners, determined by the district, may be submitted for regional competition. State winners will be selected from the five regional winners.

Mail entry to: TSSWCB, P O Box 658, Temple, TX 76503

Conservation Farmer

36th Annual
Texas Conservation Awards Program

Sponsored by the
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF TEXAS

_____
Conservation District Name & Number

_____
Name of Farmer

_____
Mailing Address

_____
How Long Cooperating

_____
Size of Farm **Type of Farm/Operation**

The Conservation Farmer **MUST** be a District Cooperator who has or is currently performing conservation work on his or her land. Also, the individual's promotion/support of soil and water conservation and the district program should be considered. *The Farmer **MAY** be a resident of the Soil and Water Conservation District or may be an absentee farmer and may have other business or professional interests.*

Please provide a narrative **on Power Point** of the Conservation Farmer's activities. If the nominee has a district approved Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP), it is required that the entry reflect the plan and that the entry demonstrate how the nominee has substantially implemented the plan. This narrative is important to the judging process and should not exceed five (5) minutes. Both a disc/CD and a hard copy are required for each entry. Only one award, per category, is to be put on a disc/CD. **Number of digital photographs limited to 10**.

Local winners, determined by the district, may be submitted for regional competition. State winners will be selected from the five regional winners.

Mail entry to: TSSWCB, P O Box 658, Temple, TX 76503

2014 Texas Conservation Awards Program

ESSAY CONTEST

SUBJECT:

"How Soil and Water Conservation Improves Water Quality"

Ages 13 and under-- (Maximum of 300 words)
Ages 14 to 18 – (Maximum 0f 500 words)
(PLEASE CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE AGE CATEGORY)

Please visit the stewardship website at **http://www.nacdnet.org/stewardship&education.com** for information relating to this theme. You may also contact your local soil and water conservation district for additional information.

As you write your essay, you should remember:

- write about soil and water conservation practices
- make your writing interesting to the reader
- make sure that each sentence you write helps the reader understand your essay
- make sure that your ideas are clear and easy for the reader to follow
- write about your ideas in detail so that the reader really understands what you are saying
- check your work for correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM TO EACH ENTRY

_____
Name of Individual and Home Address

_____
Soil and Water Conservation District District Number

JUDGING: Please submit all essay entries to the local soil and water conservation district. Essays will be judged within the district and the local winners will advance for area competition. State winners will be selected from the five area winners.

PRIZES: First, second and third place winners will be awarded plaques. Additional awards will be presented to state winners.

NOTE TO DISTRICTS: It is required that at least **one digital photograph** is provided of each winner for the awards banquet.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

This is an open contest to boys and girls, 18 years of age and younger, and does not jeopardize Texas University Interscholastic League eligibility.

Districts should mail local winner's entries to: TSSWCB, P. O. Box 658, Temple, TX 76503

2014 Texas Conservation Awards Program

POSTER CONTEST

Poster entries shall be on standard poster board, cut to half size – 22" x 14". Artwork on poster entries should be produced with materials which do not readily smear, crack, or chip. If necessary, a fixative or lamination may be used. The poster entry artwork should be flat.

All posters submitted for the 2014 contest will feature the NACD/NACD Auxiliary Conservation Poster contest theme for 2013. The **2013 theme is "Where Does Your Water Shed?."** – This will cover our water resources, its cycle through nature and its importance to us.

Please visit the stewardship week website at **http://www.nacdnet.org/stewardship&education.com** for information on the **2013** themes. More detailed information on the 2013 theme is posted on the website. You may also contact you local soil and water conservation district for additional information.

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM TO EACH ENTRY

_____

Name of Individual and Home Address

_____

Soil and Water Conservation District District Number

JUDGING: Please submit all poster entries to the local soil and water conservation district. Posters will be judged within the district and the local winners will advance for area competition. State winners will be selected from the five area winners.

PRIZES: First, second and third place winners will be awarded plaques. Additional awards will be presented to state winners.

NOTE TO DISTRICTS: It is required that **one digital photograph** be provided of each **area winner** for the awards banquet.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

This is an open contest to boy and girls, 12 years of age and younger, and does not jeopardize Texas University Interscholastic League eligibility.

Districts should mail local winner's entries to: TSSWCB, P. O. Box 658, Temple, TX 76503

Friend Of Conservation

36th Annual
Texas Conservation Awards Program

Sponsored by the
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF TEXAS

_____
Conservation District Name & Number

_____
Name of Nominee

_____
Mailing Address

_____
Type of Business

_____
How long has the nominee assisted the soil and water conservation district?

GUIDELINES:

The purpose of this award is to recognize outstanding examples of financial, personal or other assistance that an individual has provided to a local soil and water conservation district program. The key qualification is a keen interest in and support of conservation and a record of outstanding contributions to the goals and programs of a district. News media; local civic or community organizations; units of government; business/professional individuals; conservation homemakers or district employees may be considered in this category for contributions, missionary work on behalf of the district and other activities that enrich and/or further the mission of the district program.

This award is **NOT** for conservation practices on the individual's own land.

Please provide a narrative **on Power Point** of the individual's conservation activities. This narrative is important to the judging process and should not exceed five (5) minutes. Both a disc/CD and a hard copy are required for each entry. Only one award, per category, is to be put on a disc/CD. **Number of digital photographs limited to 10**.

Local winners, determined by the district, may be submitted for regional competition. State winners will be selected from the five regional winners.

Mail entry to: TSSWCB, P O Box 658, Temple, TX 76503

Conservation Teacher

36th Annual
Texas Conservation Awards Program

Sponsored by the
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF TEXAS

_____
Conservation District Name & Number

_____
Name of Teacher **Grade Level or Teaching Field**

_____
Mailing Address

_____
School of Employment and School Address

GUIDELINES:

Teachers of all grade levels are eligible. Briefly, describe the nominee's conservation teaching activities. Please include a summary of the nominee's approach to teaching conservation through his or her subject matter. Please use the following criteria as a guideline:

1. Importance of conservation education in teacher's program.
   - Examples of what is taught, how broad based is the program, how is the information presented.
2. Assistance from the community and resource specialists. (Who and How)
3. Program extension – in the community and into other curriculum areas.
4. Student involvement – Examples of student initiatives and involvement.
5. Originality.

Please provide a narrative **on Power Point** of the teacher's conservation activities. This narrative is important to the judging process and should not exceed five (5) minutes. Both a disc/CD and a hard copy are required for each entry. Only one award, per category, is to be put on a disc/CD. **Number of digital photographs limited to 10**.

Local winners, determined by the district, may be submitted for regional competition. State winners will be selected from the five regional winners.

Mail entry to: TSSWCB, P O Box 658, Temple, TX 76503

Wildlife Conservationist

36th Annual
Texas Conservation Awards Program

Sponsored by the
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF TEXAS

_____
Conservation District Name & Number

_____
Name

_____
Mailing Address

_____
Size of Farm or Ranch

GUIDELINES:
The outstanding Wildlife Conservationist **MUST** be a district cooperator who, as part of his or her farming or ranching activities and soil and water conservation work, has done an outstanding job of conservation by:

- Providing well-located and adequate amounts of:
  1. Food – such as native and/or seeded plants needed by wildlife during critical seasons.
  2. Cover – by planting or leaving cover as needed for habitat and protection of wildlife.
  3. Water – such as farm ponds, wells, seeps and springs, or by efficient soil and water conservation on their land.
- Fish pond management.
- Other

Please provide a narrative **on Power Point** of the Wildlife Conservationist's activities. This narrative is important to the judging process and should not exceed five (5) minutes. Both a disc/CD and a hard copy are required for each entry. Only one award, per category, is to be put on a disc/CD. **Number of digital photographs limited to 10**.

Mail entry to: TSSWCB, P O Box 658, Temple, TX 76503

Forestry Conservationist

(Applies to Area IV Only)

36th Annual
Texas Conservation Awards Program

Sponsored by the
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF TEXAS

_____
Conservation District Name & Number

_____
Name

_____
Mailing Address

_____
Size of Farm or Ranch **Total Acres in Woodland**

The Forestry Conservationist **MUST** be a district cooperator who has implemented conservation work on his or her land and has done missionary work for conservation and the district program.

Please provide a narrative **on Power Point** of the Forestry Conservationist's activities. This narrative is important to the judging process and should not exceed five (5) minutes. Both a disc/CD and a hard copy are required for each entry. Only one award, per category, is to be put on a disc/CD. **Number of digital photographs limited to 10**.

Mail entry to: TSSWCB, P O Box 658, Temple, TX 76503