

# PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

October 31, 2007  
Corpus Christi, Texas

## Coastal Bend Bays Foundation (CBBF) Announces Winners of 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation & Environmental Stewardship Awards Program

CBBF proudly announces the 2007 winner's of its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation & Environmental Stewardship Awards Program, which recognizes and honors outstanding Coastal Bend citizens, educators, businesses, governing bodies and other entities that have made significant contributions to the protection of the natural resources, habitats and native species of the Coastal Bend. Awards will be presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation & Environmental Stewardship Awards Program Banquet on November 14<sup>th</sup> at the Solomon P. Ortiz Center in Corpus Christi. More information at [www.baysfoundation.org](http://www.baysfoundation.org)

*The Selection Committee, chaired by Dr. J.W. (Wes) Tunnell, determined winners in each category. Other committee members included: Education - Linda Simpson, Region II Service Center; Business - Alan Bligh, Better Business Bureau; Non-Profits - Dick Messbarger, Coastal Bend Community Foundation & Greater Kingsville Economic Development Council; State Agencies - Dr. Jim Tolan, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department; Federal Agencies - Robyn Cobb, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Private Citizens - Bob Corrigan, Corrigan Benefits LLP and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program; Industry - John La Rue, Port of Corpus Christi Authority. CBBF Chair and 2007 President Jay Reining selected the Chairman's Award and the Special Achievement Award was selected by CBBF.*

### Award categories and winners:

Chairman's Award: *For commitment to and extraordinary effectiveness in preserving Texas' rich coastal heritage:* **Joe C. Moseley, P.E., Ph.D.**, HDR Shiner Moseley & Associates, Corpus Christi, Texas

Public Service Category: *For a public servant whose efforts and leadership on behalf of the Coastal Bend Region exceed the requirement of his or her job:* **Beau Hardegree**, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Corpus Christi, Texas

Citizen Volunteer: *For a citizen who dedicates time and energy to the preservation of the Coastal Bend Region without any expectation of compensation or recognition:* **Lowell Kepp, M.D.**, Rockport, Texas

Coastal Community: *For farsighted public stewardship over the Coastal Bend's resources and for leadership in enhancing the Coastal Bend environment:* **San Patricio County**, Texas

Business & Industry: *For a Coastal Bend company for leadership in giving protection of the region's environments the high priority they deserve:* To be announced

Small Business: *For a Coastal Bend small business for leadership in giving protection of the region's environments the high priority they deserve:* **Jerry B's Kayak Sales**, Corpus Christi, TX

Non Profit Organization: *For a nonprofit Coastal Bend organization that has worked to preserve the region's heritage, protect the natural environment, and nurture the prosperity of the Coastal Bend:* **San Patricio Soil and Water Conservation District**, Sinton, Texas

Public Awareness: *For an institution or individual for dedication and effectiveness in raising Texans public awareness about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend:* **Jim Needham, Ph.D.**, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi, Texas

Elementary Education: *For an individual teacher for dedication and effectiveness in educating Texas students about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend:* **Debra McQueen**, Montclair Elementary School, Corpus Christi, Texas

Middle School Education: *For an individual teacher for dedication and effectiveness in educating Texas middle school students about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend:* **Tasha Pate-Smith**, A.C. Blunt Middle School, Aransas Pass, Texas

High School Education: *For an individual teacher for dedication and effectiveness in educating Texas high school students about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend:* **Vinay Dulip**, Foy H. Moody High School, Corpus Christi, Texas

Higher Education - University and College: *For an institution or individual professor or instructor for dedication and effectiveness in educating Texans about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend:* **David McKee, Ph.D.**, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi, Texas

Special Achievement Award: *For innovative ideas that improve our coastal environment and the commitment to turn these ideas turn into reality:* **Tom Ballou**, Sherwin Alumina & **Jim Naismith**, San Patricio Municipal Water District, Ingleside, Texas

Detailed information about winners in each category follows:

► **Chairman's Award:** *Given for commitment to and extraordinary effectiveness in preserving Texas' rich coastal heritage.*

**Joe Moseley, P.E., Ph.D., HDR Shiner Moseley & Associates, Corpus Christi, Texas**

Joe Moseley has been on the cutting edge of Texas coastal law, coastal hydrodynamics, and coastal engineering projects. For 40 years his work is among the most respected in Texas. Dr. Moseley has 40 years of experience dealing with coastal related technical and institutional issues. He spent his first 13 years with The State of Texas in four positions of increasing responsibility (Water Development Board, Governor's Office, Coastal and Marine Council and Deepwater Port Authority); since 1980, he has been doing engineering consulting. During his entire career, Dr. Moseley has been engaged in coastal and marine affairs primarily in Texas, but also at the national and interstate level. Since joining the private sector as a consultant in 1980, Dr. Moseley has been active in a wide range of coastal projects including ports, coastal development, environmental protection / enhancement, coastal engineering, infrastructure, etc., where he has provided planning, permitting and design services. During this period, he has served as the owner's designated agent for the permitting of over \$2 billion worth of projects. He has also maintained an active role at the state and national level in many coastal and marine activities and organizations.

► **Public Service Category:** *For a public servant whose efforts and leadership on behalf of the Coastal Bend Region exceed the requirement of his or her job.*

**Beau Hardegee, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Corpus Christi, Texas**

As Coastal Program Biologist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Beau has shown a real talent for knitting together highly productive and diverse partnerships of federal, state and local agencies, non-profits and individuals working together to implement fish and wildlife preservation, restoration, enhancement and/or creation projects in our region. Beau plays a key role in numerous seagrass protection projects in partnership with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, the Nature Conservancy of Texas, Texas State University and the University of Texas' Marine Science Institute. While an employee of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department he helped create the kayak trail through Redfish Bay. He is also active in education and community service, organizing children's teams for the Birding Classic, serving on CBBF's board, and as Team Leader for CBBEP's Habitat & Living Resources Implementation Team. Finally, as Chair of the Gulf Coast Joint Venture's Laguna Madre Initiative, Beau heads up a team to identify coastal habitat projects for major federal grants.

► **Citizen Volunteer:** *For a citizen who dedicates time and energy to the preservation of the Coastal Bend Region without any expectation of compensation or recognition.*

**Lowell Kepp, M.D., Rockport, Texas**

In 2000 Dr. Lowell Kepp, a retired Corpus Christi pediatrician with an abiding interest in the environment, along with his friend Dr. Kurt Reemsnyder, started Aransas First, a land trust dedicated to preserving the natural beauty in Aransas County. Their first success was obtaining a lease agreement with the Navigation District for Cove Harbor. They then raised funds for construction of a boardwalk and gazebo for visitors to this prime birding location. They next secured a contract with TXDOT for monitoring a natural area on SH 35. Dr. Kepp also negotiated a contract with the City of Rockport to improve Tule Creek by having invasive vegetation removed and creating a native habitat education project. He (along with others) worked closely with HEB and WalMart to assure that some of the native live oak trees would be preserved when their new buildings were erected. Through his diligence, a new fast food restaurant revised its whole plan for building placement, resulting in the preservation of many of our famous live oak trees. Dr. Kepp has written numerous articles for the Rockport Pilot, and made many appearances before the Rockport City Council and Aransas County Commissioner's Court on behalf of protecting our environment. He is also an advisor to Stewardship Aransas, an advocacy organization dedicated to educating legislators and others regarding the health of the environment in Aransas County.

► **Coastal Community:** *For farsighted public stewardship over the Coastal Bend's resources and for leadership in enhancing the Coastal Bend environment.*

**San Patricio County, Texas**

San Patricio County has shown vision, and environmental stewardship and leadership by protecting unique bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands along the Nueces River as park space, including public access, and by developing eco-tourism and outdoor recreational opportunities at the three new parks. These three new Nueces River parks are the La Fruta Park, the San Patricio de Hibernia Park, and the Chipita Rodriguez Park. These heavily wooded areas of Nueces River bottomland hardwoods are now protected park space available to the public. Until recently, Nueces River hardwood forests and bottomlands were privately owned, with general public access only at Lake Corpus Christi and within the City of Corpus Christi. La Fruta

Park will include a kayak launch, recreational vehicle (RV) pad sites and utilities, campsites with facilities, drainage improvements, road improvements, a river overlook kiosk and boardwalk, hiking trail improvements, picnic tables, and grills to accommodate the citizens of San Patricio County of all ages and visitors/tourists to San Patricio County. San Patricio de Hibernia Park will include a kayak launch, observation blinds, a river overlook, windmills/wildlife tanks, and wildlife management equipment (hog traps, feeders). Chipita Rodriguez Park will include a pier on the Nueces River, a river overlook kiosk, and campsites. Residents and tourists will have the opportunity to access the bottomland hardwoods of the Nueces River watershed with the San Patricio Park System protecting the important river watershed and riparian habitat from pollution, development, and degradation.

► **Business & Industry:** For a Coastal Bend company for leadership in giving protection of the region's environments the high priority they deserve. **To be announced.**

► **Small Business:** *For a Coastal Bend small business for leadership in giving protection of the region's environments the high priority they deserve.*

**Jerry B's Kayak Sales, Corpus Christi, Texas**

Jerry B's Kayak Sales is one of the best things to have happened in our area in a long time. Jerry and Debi Book are always ready to help out not just friends, but also the community at large. Jerry has taught customers, students, and families to be a lot more concerned about our bays, and their surroundings. His clients and students not only kayak with the kayak team, but always pick up trash left behind in the water and along the shore. Jerry has taught many individuals that our natural areas, as well as our cities, should be better taken care of. Jerry and Debi have worked with and given their time to several volunteer organizations, such as Big Brothers and Sisters, TAK, and the Flour Bluff Business Association, just to name a few. And furthermore, Jerry can always tell you a good spot to put in to fish!

► **Non Profit Organization:** *For a nonprofit Coastal Bend organization that has worked to preserve the region's heritage, protect the natural environment, and nurture the prosperity of the Coastal Bend.*

**San Patricio Soil and Water Conservation District, Sinton, Texas**

The San Patricio Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has been helping San Patricio and Aransas county land users take care of natural resources for over 60 years by assisting private landowners and promoting water quality efforts that benefit rivers, lakes, streams, bays, and estuaries. In the last 10 years San Patricio SWCD has developed over 200 voluntary water quality plans that address non point source pollution from agricultural lands and include soil testing for nutrients to assure fertilizers are not over-applied. Pesticide management plans insure pesticides are applied correctly, and conservation plans provide information on special tillages to reduce soil loss. Ranchers' conservation plans address proper stocking rates and grazing heights. Projects to reduce non point source pollution along streams, rivers, bays, and estuaries have included planting marginal cropland, installing terraces and grade stabilization structures, brush management, range seeding, fencing, and water distribution systems for livestock. Shoreline erosion projects involved planting smooth cordgrass to halt erosion and promote habitat for marine life and wildlife on the shores of Nueces, Corpus Christi, Copano, and Aransas Bays. These projects were funded by private landowners, the Texas General Land Office, and the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program. San Patricio SWCD sponsored two non point source pollution studies – one on cropland near Edroy, Texas and the other study on rangeland on the Welder Wildlife Refuge near Sinton, Texas. And finally, San Patricio SWCD participates in information and outreach programs geared to conservation efforts, such as FFA student land judging contests, in which over 600 students from the Coastal Bend Area compete annually. San Patricio SWCD also teams up with the Texas Cooperative Extension and San Patricio County Farm Bureau to teach approximately 1,200 4th grade students about agriculture. The San Patricio SWCD concentrates their efforts towards educating youth to care for the land and water.

► **Public Awareness:** *For an institution or individual for dedication and effectiveness in raising Texans public awareness about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend.*

**Jim Needham, Ph.D., Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi, Texas**

Coastal Bend kids should know what's beyond the water's edge and Dr. Jim Needham, Dean of Community Outreach at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, has been doing more than his fair share to make sure that happens. Over the course of nine summers Dr. Needham has introduced hundreds of school-aged kids to the critters and components of Coastal Bend estuaries through TAMU-CC's Gulf Coast Environmental Education Program. This innovative program mixes a working knowledge of coastal ecology with loads of outdoor fun. For five consecutive days at summer camps kids engage in hands-on activities and go places they might not otherwise experience, which is, of course, the idea. Originally started as an outreach

to students at Solomon Coles, Oak Park, Crossley and Gibson elementary schools, the program expanded to include home school children, youth from the Boys & Girls Clubs, and kids other youth organizations, as well. Many groups have returned for additional sessions. One student who moved away even flew in to enroll in a second summer session. In addition to learning kayaking, kayak safety and environmental stewardship, Dr. Needham's students take home positive memories which can influence them for a lifetime.

► **Elementary Education:** *For an individual teacher for dedication and effectiveness in educating Texas students about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend.*

**Debra McQueen, Montclair Elementary School, Corpus Christi, Texas**

Mrs. Debra McQueen is an exemplary educator whose leadership in environmental conservation has permanently changed the campus and lives of students at Montclair Elementary School. When approached about beginning a small, but important recycling program at Montclair, she agreed. With Mrs. McQueen's leadership, this recycling program extended to plastic bags, bottles and aluminum cans, and then grew to become a community program. The school raised hundreds of dollars through the recycling, and more importantly, changed the way Montclair Elementary School students view these materials. As part of her environmental focus, Mrs. McQueen has also kept students involved and apprised of community activities such as the Adopt-A-Beach Clean Ups. She consistently brings new ideas to the faculty that are environmentally sound, such as Project Learning Tree and Project Wild science curricula which were incorporated into the campus. Mrs. McQueen is a fantastic educator, person and ombudsman for the environment.

► **Middle School Education:** *For an individual teacher for dedication and effectiveness in educating Texas middle school students about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend.*

**Tasha Pate-Smith, A.C. Blunt Middle School, Aransas Pass, Texas**

Mrs. Smith is an outstanding science teacher at A.C. Blunt Middle School. The best testament a 7<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher can have is the number of students that go on to 8th grade honors science classes the next year. Mrs. Smith's rate is higher than any other science teacher on the campus. She is dedicated to a hands-on approach to science, instilling in students a deep awareness of how they are part of their environment, and how they must participate in making sure their environment is preserved. The majority of Mrs. Smith's students go on to honors science classes in high school, and many of her students will quickly tell you that she is the one teacher that has made the greatest impact on their lives. Wow!

► **High School Education:** *For an individual teacher for dedication and effectiveness in educating Texas high school students about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend.*

**Vinay Dulip, Foy H. Moody High School, Corpus Christi, Texas**

Mr. Vinay Dulip actively integrates environmental science and conservation into all his classes. Each semester, Mr. Dulip takes his students to Oso Bay, the Nueces River and points along the Oso Watershed to teach them water quality sampling techniques. He spends hours in the field with his students taking water samples to teach them the importance of water quality and how water quality affects our lives. For the past three years, Mr. Dulip and his students in pre-engineering have put on the Clean Air Fair at Moody High School. By incorporating air quality monitoring processes into his chemistry curriculum, students better understand how air quality is evaluated, and what pollutants are actually going into our air. Mr. Dulip has been a steadfast teacher to all of his students, introducing many of them to environmental activities (such as Adopt-A-Beach Clean Ups), ecological studies (such as water quality testing), and science-based extracurricular activities, like UIL contests. As an accomplished chemistry teacher, he has guided his students through every struggle (and hilarious lab error), teaching them the foundations of chemistry and helping them develop college-worthy laboratory skills. He is a great friend, a trustworthy mentor, and will undoubtedly be of even more help for all future students to come. Additionally, he and his students have been regular volunteers at Earth Day-Bay Day for several years.

► **Higher Education:** *University and College – For an institution or individual professor or instructor for dedication and effectiveness in educating Texans about the natural resources of the Coastal Bend.*

**David McKee, Ph.D., Texas A&M University Corpus Christi**

Dr. David McKee has been not just an integral part of, but a cornerstone of the Mariculture and Marine Biology programs at TAMU-CC for over twenty years. His research and other work, particularly in the field of mariculture, his curriculum and course development, and his teaching innovations and style have helped make TAMU-CC's programs among the premier Marine Science programs in the nation. Over the years, he has participated in the education of almost every TAMUCC marine science undergraduate student, and most graduate students, since he began teaching such core courses as marine ecology, ichthyology, marine mammals and aquaculture. And in so doing, he has helped the mold these students and the overall marine

program into what it is today. A student can successfully come out of Dr. McKee's classes with one of two things: an array of facts, definitions and scientific names to be regurgitated twice per semester, or a deeper synthesis of the material leading to a personal understanding of how things work as part of a complex ecosystem. Dr. McKee strives in his teaching to make it the latter, pushing his students to exit his classes with an appreciation for our natural resources and an ability to think for themselves. He is highly-respected by his students and peers, sitting on numerous, state, national and international panels and boards. Yet he is always willing to go the extra distance to see that students who want to learn have every opportunity to do so. Dr. McKee is a mentor, scholar, and friend who has left a lasting impression on his students, urging them to practice the highest level of professionalism and never end their quest for intellectual enlightenment. In the summer of 2008, Dr. McKee's book entitled *Fishes of the Texas Laguna Madre* will be published by TAMU press. He is also a founding member of the Gulf Coastal Conservation Association and a current active Board member of the Corpus Christi Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association.

► **Special Achievement Award:** *For innovative ideas that improve our coastal environment and the commitment to turn these ideas turn into reality:*

**Tom Ballou, Sherwin Alumina & Jim Naismith, San Patricio Municipal Water District**

The historic bauxite residue reclamation project, started by Tom Ballou and Jim Naismith, is an innovative undertaking that provides a beneficial use of tailings (bauxite residue) and re-use of reclaimed water. The project is also a past environmental award winner from the Coastal Bend Sierra Club for converting what was a wasteland into a wetland sanctuary. This project uses treated effluent and stabilized bio-solids from the City of Aransas Pass and the City of Portland, "mud" (remaining solids from the conversion of raw water into drinking water) from San Patricio Municipal Water District, to restore land covered with old bauxite residue. This project provided an alternative to proposed industry standard practice of stabilization and capping.

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November 11, 2007  
Corpus Christi, Texas

## Coastal Bend Bays Foundation (CBBF) *Conservation & Environmental Stewardship Awards Program*

CBBF proudly announces that Flint Hills Resources, a member of Port Industries of Corpus Christi, is the 2007 winner of the Business & Industry Category for its 5th Annual Conservation & Environmental Stewardship Awards Program. This program recognizes and honors outstanding Coastal Bend citizens, educators, businesses, governing bodies and other entities that have made significant contributions to the protection of the natural resources, habitats and native species of the Coastal Bend. Awards will be presented at the Ortiz Center on November 14, 2007. Ticket & table information is available at [www.baysfoundation.org](http://www.baysfoundation.org).

The Business & Industry category is presented to a Coastal Bend company for leadership in giving protection of the region's environments the high priority they deserve. Flint Hills Resources, a member of Port Industries of Corpus Christi, has recently achieved Corporate Lands for Learning Certification from the Wildlife Habitat Council for the establishment and documentation of their site-based education programs at the Flint Hills Resources Wildlife Learning Preserve. This includes the efforts of the employees at the Wildlife Learning Preserve for establishing a program built on a strategic academic partnership with Texas A&M University - Kingsville, along with productive partnerships with Texas A & M Corpus Christi, Del Mar College and the Texas State Aquarium's SeaCamp Program. Flint Hills Resources is being presented with the Corporate Lands for Learning Certification/International Accreditation Program Certificate at a separate ceremony in Baltimore, Washington. Flint Hills Resources was also a winner in the Business & Industry category in 2003 for the 1st Conservation & Environmental Stewardship Awards Program, for the designation of the 120-acre wildlife preserve and for serving more than 350 area students and over 350 adults with biological and environmental education for the past three years at the preserve. It is with great pride that we commend Flint Hills Resources on their continuing efforts at improving this noteworthy project and conservation education.

### *Related item of interest:*

Locally owned Aloe Tile Works ([www.aloetile.com](http://www.aloetile.com)) will once again be providing specially designed tiles to each award winner. Aloe Tile Works is an active part of the Coastal Bend community, having designed Aloe tile murals for schools, parks, churches, city buildings and in rest stops in two locations across the state. Ed and Cornelia Gates began Aloe Tile Works in 1994. **Ed Gates** was born in Reading, Pennsylvania and grew up in the Midwest. He holds a Bachelor of History and Arts from Grinnell College in Iowa and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute. In 1995, Ed received a National Endowment for the Arts Federal Design Achievement Award for his work on the Staples Street Station in Corpus Christi, Texas. **Cornelia Henderson Gates** was born in Uvalde, Texas and grew up in Corpus Christi, Texas. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Geology from the University of Texas and a J.D. from Tulane Law School. She has been published in *Ceramics Monthly* and *The Journal of the American Art Pottery Association*. Aloe Tile's work is also featured in Peter King's *Architectural Ceramics for the Studio Potter* and will be included in the new publication by Lark Books: 500 Tiles.

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