

PRESS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Cristal Guerrero, Project Manager
Off. 361-882-3439
cristal@baysfoundation.org



2017 Winners of the Conservation & Environmental Stewardship Awards Announced!

Summary

The Coastal Bend Bays Foundation (CBBF) proudly announces the winners for the [Coastal Bend Bays Foundation's 15th Annual Conservation and Environmental Stewardship Awards](http://www.baysfoundation.org/eab/) (go to www.baysfoundation.org/eab/ for more information). CBBF's Awards Program recognizes and honors outstanding Coastal Bend citizens, educators, businesses, governing bodies and other entities. The winners were chosen based on their significant contributions in the areas of habitat conservation, enhancement, protection, restoration or preservation of the Coastal Bend's precious natural resources, or in educating the region's youth and adults about the importance and value of their natural surroundings.

This year's Winners are as follows:

- **President's Award – Dr. Joan Holt**, G. Joan Holt is Professor Emerita of Marine Science at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas. Dr. Holt has made great contributions to conservation in the Coastal Bend over the past 40 years. Her work has addressed vital issues surrounding fish ecology, captive culture, and development. Her lab was one of the few in the country to grow coral reef fishes in captivity to conserve native populations. Recently, she and her husband donated the Scott and Joan Holt Paradise Pond dedicated to the conservation of bird habitat.
- **Coastal Steward, Volunteer – Ron Smudy**, Ron Smudy has volunteered countless hours at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Ron's work ethic, combined with his knowledge of heavy equipment, basic land management practices, and positive attitude have allowed Aransas NWR to better meet its habitat management and public use objectives.
- **Coastal Steward, Professional – Sara Jose**, Sara has done a great job over the past several years as a community youth educator. She is the Preserve Manager at the Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve and Learning Center. She lead the Nature Challenge program, which combines enjoying regional special places with family activities, persevering after Hurricane Harvey threatened to end the program by continuous communication and outreach.
- **Coastal Community – “Sink your Shucks” Program – Gail Sutton, Jennifer Pollack, Paul Montagna, Harte Research Institute**, The oyster recycling program “Sink Your Shucks” was founded by the Harte Research Institute and the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi College of Science and Engineering in 2009. The program was the first in Texas that reclaims oyster shells from local restaurants and returns them to our local waters providing both substrate to form new reefs and habitat for fish, crabs and other organisms.
- **Non-Profit Organization – South Texas Botanical Gardens**, The South Texas Botanical Gardens is a leader in conserving native plant species, providing information about native reptiles and birds species and educating the public about the local environment and the need to actively participate in protecting our resources. The Botanical Garden provides ever expanding environmental education programs focused on grades K-12 and community adult education.
- **Education – K-12 – Kimberly Ogden**, She feels passionately about getting her students at Berlanga Elementary School out into nature and teaching them to become good stewards of the environment. Kimberly finds every opportunity to take her students on outdoor field trips to further the connection they have with the environment and the natural resources of the Coastal Bend.
- **Education – Higher – Dr. Bart Ballard**, Professor and Research Scientist in the Department of Animal, Rangeland, and Wildlife Sciences and Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, respectively. He also holds the C. Berdon and Rolanette Lawrence Endowed Chair in Waterfowl Research at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute. Bart teaches and conducts research on the ecology and management of birds with a focus on waterfowl and other waterbirds. Dr. Ballard has been committed to the research and conservation of wetlands and water birds along the Texas coast for many years now, along with sharing that knowledge with the community.
- **Industry – CITGO Corpus Christi**, CITGOs commitment to the environment extends throughout their operations. They are committed to the environment and consistently support local environmental initiatives. CITGO continues its efforts to reduce waste generation and air emissions, and as a responsible and conservative water consumer. CITGOs commitment to environment extends not only throughout their refinery operations, but to the bays, estuaries, and habitats of the Coastal Bend.

- **Business – AEP Texas**, AEP Texas has been a leader in conservation and environmental stewardship in the Coastal Bend. This is exhibited by their willingness to address environmental concerns that impact the community and wildlife. AEP Texas staff regularly volunteer for beach trash cleanups within the Coastal Bend. Even though their main goal is to provide energy for the constituents of the Coastal Bend they are instrumental in the environmental stewardship of our natural resources.

About the Awards Banquet:

WHAT: Coastal Bend Bays Foundation’s Conservation & Stewardship Environmental Awards Banquet
WHEN: Thursday, December 7, 2017 from 5:30 PM – 9:00 PM
WHERE: American Bank Center, Henry Garrett Ballroom A&B, 1901 N. Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi

As in years past, award winners are to be honored at CBBF’s annual fundraiser and banquet. Maclovio Perez, Broadcast Meteorologist for KRIS TV, will be the Master of Ceremonies for the event. Barbara Canales, Port of Corpus Christi Authority Commissioner, will be the Special Guest Speaker.

Start the evening with drinks, appetizers and bidding on our silent auction, featuring nature and outdoor-oriented items, including Southwest Airline tickets, jewelry, and outdoor gear. Don’t forget to purchase tickets for our raffle items, including a chance to win a one day guided Nilgai Hunt on King Ranch valued at \$2,350.00, a Yeti Cooler valued at \$400.00 or a set of Nikon Monarch 5 binoculars valued at \$349.00!

Don’t miss this exceptional local event, unique for recognizing the people and organizations who keep the sparkle in the Sparkling City by the Sea. It’s not too late to volunteer for this event. Call Cristal Guerrero at 361-882-3439, or go to our website, www.baysfoundation.org.

Tickets are available by purchasing on-line at <http://www.baysfoundation.org>, by calling CBBF at 361-882-3439. The public is invited to purchase General Admission tickets for \$50, Friend of the Bay tickets for \$100, or to sponsor a table starting at \$1,000.

The Coastal Bend Bays Foundation wishes to thank the following investors for their support:

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Huge Thank you to King Ranch for donating this year’s Nilgai Hunt as a raffle prize and to YETI for donating the cooler!

