

4100 PIEDRAS DR. E.,  
SUITE 253  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78228

# Alamo RC&D News

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

SUMMER/FALL 2008

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Karen L. Opiela**  
Chairperson  
Wilson Co.

**Albert Gamez**  
Vice-Chair  
At-Large

**Gerard Martelly**  
Secretary/Treas.  
At-Large

**Michael Korus**  
Director  
Atascosa Co.

**Gene Camargo**  
Director  
Bexar Co.

**Richard Hernandez**  
Director  
Frio Co.

**Roger Baenziger**  
Director  
Guadalupe Co.

**Rosann Zwonetschek**  
Director  
Kendall Co.

**Robert Fitzgerald**  
Director  
Medina Co.

**Joe Ramos**  
Director  
AACOG

**Armand Martinez**  
Director  
At-Large

**Robert Carrizales**  
Director  
At-Large

## Energy Conservation Program Launched

Investing in our communities through improved energy efficiency in farming operations is a win-win opportunity for Texas agriculture. Energy-efficient farms reduce energy costs, increase available capital, spur economic growth and improve agriculture's working environment.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts' State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) has created the Texas Agricultural Technical Assistance Program to provide Texas agricultural producers with free Energy Assessment Reports (EARs) for their farming operations. The EARs will identify and make recommendations on opportunities to save energy (electricity, propane, diesel, etc.) within the farm operation.

SECO has contracted with EnSave Inc. to administer the program. EnSave also has a partner-



**Alan Rheaume, Karen Opiela and Bertha Venegas attended the training**

ship with the National Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils (RC&D). This partnership allows the RC&D Councils, SECO, and EnSave to work together to

maximize energy efficiency activities within agriculture, including the free Energy Assessment Reports (EARs).

The Alamo RC&D Area sponsored a week long conference that included a one day informational meeting to launch the program, a one day grant writing training by USDA-Rural Development and a three day training for councils, coordinators and individuals selected by the councils to serve as data collectors. The one day informational meeting was sponsored by Broadway Bank and Exelon Nuclear. The weeklong conference involved eight RC&D areas. Additional information is available by calling (210) 735-3391 or visiting our website at [www.alamorcd.org](http://www.alamorcd.org).

## Natl. RC&D Week Celebrated

Forty-four years ago, a brand new program began. It had the hopes and dreams of people who believed in the power of the community.

RC&D week was declared

in recognition of that program which has grown from 10 to 375 designated areas to cover 85% of our country.

The Alamo RC&D Area celebrated National RC&D

Week September 21-27. Public service announcements were sent to the media that covers the Alamo ten county area in celebration.

## Asking for Money



Two Proposal Writing Workshops were hosted by our council during the month of June in San Antonio and Floresville.

The purpose of these workshops is to assist our community leaders and individuals to sharpen their skills in proposal writing and to have a competitive edge when applying for grants.

The workshops help evaluate the need and solution for the grant, tell about your organization, create a realistic budget and match funders with your project. Attendees obtain a better understanding of the grant process and get help in creating the first draft of a grant proposal.

Workshops are scheduled every year.

For additional information contact us at (210) 735-3391 or visit our website at [www.alamorcd.org](http://www.alamorcd.org).

*"...get ideas for improving ranch cash flow by using existing resources."*

## New Farm Bill topic of Workshop

A Farm and Ranch Workshop was conducted on August 15 in Floresville.

The workshop provided landowners and land managers an opportunity to learn more about the new Farm Bill and the changes to conservation

programs, get an update on animal health challenges in Texas, learn how to manage livestock and wildlife nutrition during drought, and get ideas for improving ranch cash flow by using existing resources.

Dinner was provided by

Capital Farm Credit and refreshments were sponsored by Ag. Workers Insurance. The City of Floresville provided the facilities.

Visit our website for upcoming workshops at [www.alamorcd.org](http://www.alamorcd.org).

## All About the Environment



A household hazardous waste collection event gave the residents of Wilson County an opportunity to safely dispose of any household hazardous waste materials for FREE.

A Household Hazardous Waste Collection station was set up at the

Wilson County Precinct 4 Maintenance Facility on 104 Mesquite in Stockdale, and materials were received from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sat., Sept. 27, 2008.

This collection day was made possible by the Alamo RC&D Area, Inc., a nonprofit organization, in cooperation with Wilson

County, the Alamo Area Council of Governments, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the San Antonio River Authority.

The Wilson County 4-H furnished lunch and refreshments for those assisting with the event.

# RC&D 101



A Board Development Training was conducted on October 22, 2008 following the board of directors meeting. Council members had

an opportunity to learn about the RC&D program including the federal part of it and its function and the nonprofit itself. A review of the history of the RC&D program was presented by Bertha Venegas, RC&D Coordinator, NRCS, and the requirements of the organization by the governing agency of the RC&D pro-

gram. Karen Opiela provided her perspective on the responsibilities of a volunteer, their service to the board of directors and her past experiences in attending the National Leadership Forum. Opiela reviewed the legislative process and briefly touched on the fiduciary responsibilities of a board member.

*“Texas is home to more than 2 million feral hogs...”*

## The Wild Side of It

A Feral Hog Workshop was held on Thurs., Sept. 25, 2008 at the 4-H Building, 12132 Leslie Road, in Helotes. Attendees who completed the workshop received five hours of continuing education units (CEUs).

The workshop provided landowners and land managers an opportunity to learn more about feral hogs, including their population dynamics, regulations and

laws for hunting feral swine, agricultural regulations, controlling feral hogs, hunting and trapping, transportation and holding facilities and diseases. The workshop wrapped up with a speaker panel question and answer session.

Texas is home to more than 2 million feral hogs, the largest feral hog population in the United States and their num-

bers continue to increase due to high reproductive potential and the lack of natural predators. Sponsors included USDA-NRCS, Alamo Soil and Water Conservation District, Texas Agrilife Extension and the Texas/Mexico Border Coalition CBO.

## Ranch Tour Honors Family

The Kendall Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) together with Alamo RC&D and the Texas Section Society for Range Management hosted their Land Stewardship Tour of the Hillingdon Ranch, 346 Giles Ranch Road, near Comfort, on Fri., June 27.

The Hillingdon Ranch was honored as the recipient of the 2007 Outstanding Rangeland Management Award from the Texas Section Society for Range Management. The tour of the Hillingdon Ranch included speakers on a variety of topics including land management of live-

stock, grazing, plant identification, wildlife management, prescribed burning and brush management. Robin Giles, also spoke about land management in today’s world.





## Planning for the Future

Located to the northwest of the San Antonio metropolitan area, Bandera County's population is projected to almost triple in the next 50 years. The signs of stress on the county's water resources are already apparent in the city of Bandera's main water supply, the lower Trinity Aquifer, where water levels have been

declining over the last few decades. The remaining groundwater resources – which support this burgeoning rural population – may also, begin to show similar signs of stress without proper planning. In addition, as outflows from these aquifers support spring flows and base flows to the county's rivers and

creeks, the county's surface water resources are also at stake.

The Alamo RC&D Area, Inc. in partnership with the Bandera County River Authority Groundwater Conservation District (District) has adopted the Bandera Hydroshed Assessment Project to help the District assess its current

*(Continued on page 5)*

*“Abandoned tires that hold stagnant water serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes...”*

## A Tire Dilemma

They come in all sizes and disposing of them can be a problem.

Abandoned tires present a problem for County officials when the tires are disposed of improperly.

The importance of proper tire disposal cannot be overstated in that it is not just an environmental and sanitation issue but also a very serious health is-

sue. Abandoned tires that hold stagnant water serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes that further pose a widespread threat of Dengue, West Nile Virus and other vector borne diseases.

Through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) our Council has received funding

to dispose of abandoned tires.

Working with County officials abandoned tires are being collected in Wilson County until the funds have been exhausted. Future events are being planned to collect tires in conjunction with the collection of household hazardous waste.

## In the Dumps



Illegal dumping is a big problem in Texas, increasing with our growing population and expanding economy. Illegally dumped waste ranges from a bag of trash somebody throws in a borrow ditch to hundreds of thousands of

dumped tires, and everything in between. Sometimes when businesses fail, they leave dangerous waste behind, such as half-full barrels of waste chemicals. But, big or small, illegal dumping creates health risks, lowers property values and is expensive to clean up later.

Through the Texas Commis-

sion on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) our Council has received funding to clean up illegal dumpsites in Atascosa County. Working with County officials, numerous sites have been identified and cleaned up with these funds.

# Planning for the Future *(continued...)*



*(Continued from page 4)*

and future water supply situation and chart a course for developing a comprehensive hydroshed assessment

for Bandera County. The research will directly benefit surface and groundwater users in Bandera County. The County's economic interests are also tied to its water resources as Bandera's primary industries are ranching and tourism, both enhanced by the availability of water. Many of the County's numerous bed and breakfast businesses and working ranches supporting

dude, hunting, and fishing activities have evolved and flourished because of the spring flows and surface flows of the Medina and Sabinas rivers. In addition, real estate trends show that rural land markets are increasingly dominated by demand for recreational land for hunting and fishing, activities highly dependent on the presence of surface waters.

**“Volunteers are making things happen in the Alamo RC&D Area.”**

## Volunteers Make Things Happen

A thank you to those volunteers who have dedicated their time to serving our organization in various capacities.

Volunteers:

Karen L. Opiela  
Albert Gamez

Gerard Martelly  
Michael Korus  
Joe Ramos  
Roger Baenziger  
Armand Martinez  
Gene Camargo  
Richard Hernandez

Rosann Zwonetschek  
Ruben Maldonado  
Robert Carrizales  
Fidel del Barrio  
Robert Fitzgerald

## Donors Support RC&D

The following businesses, groups and individuals have supported the Alamo RC&D through donations of money, goods and/or services:

- Capital Farm Credit
- Ag Workers Mutual Insurance
- Broadway Bank
- Exelon Nuclear
- Mumme's
- West Feeds
- Dooley Foundation
- Kronkosky Foundation
- Daily Bread Ministries
- City of Floresville
- Helotes 4-H Booster Club
- San Antonio River Authority
- Alamo Area Council of Governments





**ALAMO RESOURCE  
CONSERVATION &  
DEVELOPMENT  
AREA, INC.**

**4100 Piedras Dr. E., Suite 253  
San Antonio, TX 78228**

Phone: 210-735-3391

Fax: 210-735-3392

E-mail: [alamorcd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alamorcd@sbcglobal.net)

**“Making Things Happen in Your  
Community”**



## Take Note

**ALAMO RC&D Annual  
Meeting  
December 3, 2008  
Quihi**

**Irrigation Conference  
January 20, 2008  
Hondo Fair Grounds**

**Beef Cattle Short Course  
January 8, 15, 22, 2009**

**Natl. Leadership Forum,  
February 9-11, 2009  
Washington, D.C.**



**Natl. RC&D Conference  
June 14-17, 2009  
Albuquerque, NM**

**2009 Alamo RC&D Board  
of Directors' Meetings  
February 25  
April 22  
June 24  
August 26  
October 28  
December (TBA)**

*The Alamo RC&D Area, Inc. is partially funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and adheres to the discrimination policy of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.*