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ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

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Texas Commission on Environmental Quality ♦ MC-113 ♦ PO Box 13087 ♦ Austin TX 78711-3087

NOVEMBER 2006

Putting Fines to Work—Closer to Home

Did you know that your nonprofit or governmental environmental project could benefit from penalty dollars the TCEQ fines individuals and businesses? This positive step is possible through a Supplemental Environmental Project.

A Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) directs fines, fees, and penalties for environmental violations toward environmentally beneficial uses. Through the SEP program, state law allows businesses or individuals (respondents) in an enforcement matter to choose to direct penalty dollars toward improving the environment, rather than paying into the Texas General Revenue Fund. Specific projects eligible for SEP designation must show that they prevent pollution, reduce the amount of pollution reaching the environment, enhance the quality of the environment, or contribute to public awareness of environmental matters.

Who can benefit from these funds?

If you are a **nonprofit** or **governmental organization** you may seek SEP consideration for independent projects. You must be able to quantify the environmental benefits. For-profit organizations are not eligible to receive SEP funds.

SEP funding could be used for projects similar to the following:

- implementing state and federally approved or funded environmental improvement plans (estuary plans, SIPs, watershed protection plans, etc.);
- collecting tires, household hazardous wastes, or electronics;
- removing abandoned housing that contains asbestos or lead paint;
- restoring habitat, especially wetlands and riparian corridors;
- extending sewer service to low-income individuals who are using failing septic systems, especially in areas adjacent to impaired waters;
- improving wastewater-treatment plants in areas that are considered economically distressed;
- providing public water supplies to low-income individuals who are using shallow or contaminated well water;
- converting gasoline-powered equipment used by local governments or school districts to alternative-powered, low-emission equipment;
- financing public works for a neighboring municipality or county that will benefit the environment in a way that is beyond ordinary compliance with the law; and



- removing illegal municipal and industrial solid-waste dumps.

To find out more about this program or how to apply for SEP funding, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/legal/sep/ or order the publication, *Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPS)* (GI-352), by visiting www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-352.html. If you have questions about the SEP guidelines, please contact the SEP coordinator in the TCEQ's Litigation Division by phone at 512-239-3400 or by e-mail at olsadmin@tceq.state.tx.us.

Holidays Approaching Quickly!

Enjoy your holidays this year, but find ways to create less waste or to recycle while you're at it. The following tips are a few simple steps you can take to make your holidays more environmentally conscious:

- Set your holiday table with cloth napkins and reusable dishes, glasses, and silverware.
- Put leftovers in recyclable containers and share them with family and friends.
- Compost leftover food scraps (other than meat and dairy).
- Buy a potted tree instead of a fresh-cut one, and plant it after the holidays.
- Save energy while you're traveling by turning down your thermostat and putting lights on timers.
- Use your own camera instead of a disposable one.
- Buy rechargeable batteries.

For more ideas on how to reduce your holiday waste, visit www.epa.gov/osw/specials/funfacts/winter.htm and enjoy your environmentally friendly holiday!



An environmental message brought to you by the Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division.

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E-Cycling—Practice It!

This is the time of year when friends and family exchange gifts—that could mean new computers, televisions, cell phones, and other electronics.

You could prevent waste in the first place by finding ways to reuse and recycle instead of throwing away used electronics. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, computer monitors and older TV picture tubes contain an average of four pounds of lead. If thrown away, used electronics are generally classified as hazardous waste. Extending the life of your electronics or donating your most up-to-date and working electronics can save you money and save valuable resources. Safely recycling the resources in electronics also eliminates the need to obtain these elements from nature, decreasing the impact on the environment.

Want to know where to donate or recycle your old, usable electronic item? Visit www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/recycle/ecycling/donate.htm.



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Releases Spanish-language DVD

As part of an ongoing effort to get more youth and minorities involved in community environmental issues, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a new Spanish-language DVD and educational program.

Chucho Salva el Dia (Chucho Saves the Day) is the humorous story of an environmentally aware artist and his dog Chucho. The DVD follows Chucho and the artist on a visit to a lake as they encounter storm water pollution and deal with public attitudes that affect the environment. The new Spanish-language DVD is aimed at school-age audiences within the Spanish-speaking community.

For more information on how to order *Chucho Salva el Dia*, visit www.epa.gov/region6/6xa/childrens_health_video.htm.

Upcoming TCEQ Workshop

UST Management & Compliance Assistance Seminar

For contractors/consultants engaged in installation, repair, and removal of underground storage tank systems as well as owner/operators.

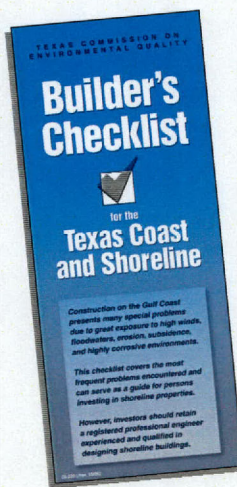
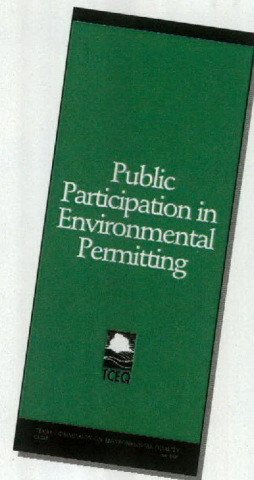
December 12, 2006

Austin Marriott North, Round Rock

For more information on how to register, e-mail: events@tceq.state.tx.us

Revised TCEQ Publications

The brochure *Public Participation in Environmental Permitting* (GI-233) provides basic information about the permitting process, the programs and services the TCEQ offers, and opportunities for public participation. The TCEQ reviews applications for a wide variety of environmental permits, such as water quality, waste, and air permits. Order a copy today to find out how you can participate in the process beginning with the “Public Notice” to “Responding to a Contested Case.” To view the brochure in English and Spanish before ordering, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-233.html.



Construction on the Gulf Coast presents many special problems due to exposure to high winds, floodwater, erosion, subsidence, and highly corrosive environments. *Builder's Checklist for the Texas Coast and Shoreline* (GI-220) is a guide for those investing in shoreline properties. It includes a checklist covering the most frequent problems builders encounter.

To view the brochure, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-220.html.

Did you know the TCEQ requires operators of construction sites to obtain a permit designed to protect water quality? *Steps to Obtain Construction Permits for Storm Water Discharges* (RG-436) will walk you through this process. Also included is contact information and where to get help along with useful web sites. To view the brochure, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/rg/rg-436.html.

To order any of the TCEQ publications, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/order.html.



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