



Keep it Clean

Meet the New EAHCP Habitat Conservation Manager Jamie Childers



Many people spend their first years in college listed as an “undecided major.” Not Jamie Childers. She knew from an early age that she somehow wanted to be involved in protecting the water resources so critical to communities all over the world. She credits her grandmother for that particular inspiration.

At a young age, Childers, the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plans’ (EAHCP) new habitat conservation manager, heard many stories about waterways in Belgium where her grandmother grew up which were polluted and

caused sickness in towns nearby. As a young adult, her first stop in addressing that passion for clean water was Colorado State University where she earned a bachelor of science degree in Watershed Science. After graduation, she began her professional work in environmental science. Currently, she is pursuing a master of science degree in Natural Resource Policy and Administration from the University of Florida.

“Although I’ve been involved in water resources planning and environmental protection efforts over the past 18 years, I am truly excited to join the EAHCP team,” Childers said. “This opportunity, I believe, will bring me back to my original goals of working in water quality protection. I’ve been learning a great deal about the Edwards Aquifer, the endangered species and habitats in my first month with the EAHCP. I have already gained a deep appreciation for the amazing work that has been done to protect this unique aquifer. It offers exciting professional challenges that I’m anxious to dig deeper into.”

Before coming to San Antonio a year ago, Childers worked with Tetra Tech, a global environmental engineering company, and was involved in an environmental project regarding the Florida Everglades Agricultural Area.

She was a member of a large project management and technical team charged with studying the impacts of a potential 240,000 acre-foot storage reservoir that collects water from Lake Okeechobee.

“Most people know something about the special nature of Florida’s Everglades,” Childers noted. “Our team was brought in to ensure the project work was done consistently with US Army Corps of Engineers’ policies and guidelines. The twist on this project, though, was the timeline. A typical project like this would take three years to finish. We were asked to get it done in six months. Consequently, we had a huge team and worked nonstop. In addition to my project management contributions, I worked closely with the South Florida Water Management District’s modelers and biologists to quantify the environmental and cost benefits of alternatives being considered.”

Prior to her work in Florida, Childers worked on and managed several National Environmental Policy Act programs including two large water resources environmental impact studies for the Southeastern “water wars.” Additionally, she managed technical staff in the development of watershed, hydrodynamic and water quality models for various rivers, lakes and estuaries in the Southeast.

“The watershed studies I worked on ranged in size from 18 square miles to more than 43,000 square miles,” Childers explained. “We were responsible for developing and managing the databases required to store and organize biological, water quality and water quantity data. I know that technical experience will be very helpful in my work on the EAHCP as there is some excellent research occurring here.”

In addition to the technical aspects of her profession, she is an advocate for engineers and scientists understanding they have roles as educators too. Her current studies include a focus on the means for conveying complex water resources issues to nontechnical stakeholders.

“I know this has been said before, but I truly believe that water is life,” Childers said. “And that means everyone should know how important protecting our water resources is to the future of all communities. Historically, technical folks share their work within their own community of professionals. Today, there are so many new and exciting ways to tell the world about what we’re finding, studying and concluding. It’s important that we make time to communicate our work in ways that engage all the users of the Edwards Aquifer. The Edwards Aquifer Authority and the EAHCP are rare gems in the world of aquatic habitat conservation. It’s not that often that a group of scientists and technicians have the resources and commitment to implement a habitat conservation program of this scale. That’s a big story for not only the Edwards Aquifer Region but for those in other parts of our country who might be working on HCPs of their own. I’m looking forward to sharing this unique work with both technical and nontechnical people.”

No one can be sure if Jamie Childer’s grandmother thought her stories about water in her homeland would make such an impact on her granddaughter. But, we do know she would be quite proud of how those memories shared helped shape Jamie’s life into one now passionately engaged in producing a healthy planet.

Short Takes

Make Plans to Attend San Marcos Sustainability Fair

On April 6, 2019 City of San Marcos Sustainability Fair and Live Plant Sell. This event is intended to bring local environmentally-minded organizations together and showcase skills to live a more sustainable lifestyle. You can find out more information by going to: www.SanMarcosTx.gov/DiscoveryCenter.

Refugia Sneak Peek

You can get a sneak peak at some of the new tanks in the San Marcos Refugia which will be home to many of the endangered species the EAHCP is designed to protect. [Click here for more info.](#)

EAHCP Implementing Committee Meeting Set for March 21

A meeting of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) Implementing Committee will be held Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 10 AM in the Edwards Aquifer Authority Board Room, 900 E. Quincy St., San Antonio, TX, 78215.

EAHCP Science Committee to Meet on March 27 in San Marcos

The EAHCP Science Committee will meet on March 27 at the San Marcos Recreation Hall. The meeting will begin at 9 AM.

You can find out more information about the San Marcos Recreation Center at this link.

Quick Reminder

In 2019, all Stakeholder and Implementing Committee meetings will now be held in the EAA Board Room in San Antonio and begin at 10 AM. This move has been made to take advantage of the EAA's larger meeting space and ability to live stream meetings. Those capabilities will help increase program transparency and accessibility. Additionally, packets and presentations will now be distributed using the Granicus system. During this transition, documents will also be made available on the EAHCP website as committee members get adjusted to the new system. These public meetings can be viewed at this link: . These public meetings can be viewed at this link.