

# EAHCP STEWARD

News from the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan - January 2019

## Rock Star

*Distinguished Geologist John Sharp to Join EAHCP Science Committee*



After spending more than four decades of teaching, research, consulting and service to his profession, Dr. John M. (Jack) Sharp, Jr. summed his thoughts about his new appointment to the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) Science Committee by saying, “I’ll continue to learn, and hopefully contribute to the scientific understanding of the Edwards Aquifer.” That humble formula helped create a career of considerable success which takes 83 pages to detail in Dr. Sharp’s curriculum vitae (CV). It is also the same formula the

EAHCP has employed to make steady increases in knowledge about the Edwards Aquifer, endangered species living there and the habitats which support those unique creatures. So you might say that this match was probably chiseled out in geology heaven.

“When I came to Texas many years ago, I never thought I would be studying karst aquifers,” Sharp said. “But then I got involved with projects concerning the Edwards Aquifer and I was hooked. As a geologist, the Edwards presents so many interesting challenges for researchers, but it is also so uniquely important to the economic health of this part of the state. So, when you put those two together, how can a scientist not be completely drawn to helping people protect this resource and at the same time get as much benefit from it as possible.”

Sharp has a Ph.D. and M.S. in Geology from the University of Illinois and a B.S. in Geological Engineering from the University of Minnesota. He also served in the U.S. Air Force as a civil engineer. He is the recipient of the 1979 O. E. Meinzer Award of the Geological Society of America and the 2012 Presidents’ Award of the

International Association of Hydrogeologists , those organization's most prestigious hydrogeology award. He has been a Von Humboldt Fellow to West Germany.

Sharp's appetite for knowledge and learned insights in geology and hydrogeology brought him to making presentations to groups of scientists around the world. His prominence in his fields of study gave him the opportunity to serve the Geological Society of America as President, treasurer of the International Association of Hydrogeologists, and the U.S. chapter of the International Association of Hydrogeologists as its chair. He has also held other leadership positions with the American Institute of Hydrology and the Austin Geological Society. He served on the U.S. National Committee for Scientific Hydrology, Universities Council on Water Resources, Australian Research Council Panel of Assessors, and National Environmental Research Council (Great Britain) to list a few others.

In addition to his service to his profession, Sharp is credited for creating a mathematical model for determining physical changes that occur on the surface of fractured rocks. He traveled to Mexico to study the Earth's third-deepest sinkhole in partnership with NASA and other prominent agencies. He has written and co-authored hundreds of scientific journal pieces and done scores of book reviews. As a distinguished member of The University of Texas faculty, he is most proud of mentoring 100 graduate students through their studies and ultimate advanced degree theses.

Sharp also has a keen sense for how his profession is directly related to today's communities' water resources and pollution prevention needs. He says that hydrogeologists are particularly qualified and needed to help explain those types of resource challenges everyone faces. Upon his arrival in Austin, he focused much of his time to studying the impact of urbanization on Barton Springs. That work led to other types of community consulting such as his work in helping West Texas cities understand the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing for oil on their natural springs.

In explaining his work with communities on their natural resource issues, Sharp elaborated, "With every water issue we must address in the present, we first have to try to understand the past, and then project into the future with the scientific knowledge we have learned. It's important to put out the current science as best as we understand it to foster wise decision making," Sharp noted. "Sometimes it's appreciated, sometimes it's not appreciated, but it's something every scientist should do."

Even though Sharp has recently retired from the University of Texas, he still has plenty on his plate that will add more pages to that already dense CV. One such project is a memoir about the Edwards Aquifer he is developing along with EAHCP Chief Science Officer Dr. Chad Furl and former EAHCP Program Manager Nathan Pence. And because of his career-long passion for learning more about the Edwards Aquifer, he said he is especially looking forward to digging in on the EAHCP Science Committee work.

"Some people know where they want to go in their careers, but mine has been a complete adventure," Sharp acknowledged with a laugh. "I got into the study of geology upon the recommendation of a family friend who just happened to be the Minnesota Geological Survey director. And before I ever got started on my advanced degrees, I served as a civil engineer in the Air Force. It was during that time that I decided to pursue higher education and teaching. After I obtained my doctorate in hydrogeology, my work ultimately led to Texas and this wonderful university in Austin in 1982. Since then, I've worked in places close to home and some a bit far from here. But I can say each stop along the way has been a formative learning experience."

The EAHCP is proud to welcome Dr. Sharp to his next adventure.

You can read more about Dr. Jack Sharp at this link.  
[https://www.jsq.utexas.edu/researcher/john\\_sharp/](https://www.jsq.utexas.edu/researcher/john_sharp/)

# EAHCP Steward Short Takes

## EAHCP Steward Moving to Monthly Publication

Editors Note: In 2019, the EAHCP Steward will be published monthly. We will continue to include feature stories along with the popular audio interviews, plus we'll be adding some short news takes. As always, feel free to send us your comments and please be sure to share with your colleagues.

## EAHCP Implementing Committee Meetings to be Held at EAA

In 2019, all Stakeholder and Implementing Committee meetings will now be held in the EAA Board Room in San Antonio. 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.

More information on this update will be shared at the January 24 Joint Stakeholders and Implementing Committee Meeting.

## EAHCP Welcomes New Executive Committee Members

With the start of the year, the EAHCP Implementing Committee will be led by a new executive committee. Here are the appointments.

Chair - Mark Enders (CONB)

Vice Chair - Roland Ruiz (EAA)

Secretary - Robert Mace (TXST)

## EAHCP Calendar for 2019

January 24 - Stakeholders Committee/Implementing Committee at EAA

February 21 - Implementing Committee at EAA

March 21 - Implementing Committee at EAA

May 23 - Stakeholders Committee/Implementing Committee at CONB

October 3 - Stakeholders Committee/Implementing Committee at EAA

December 19 - Stakeholders Committee/Implementing Committee at EAA

## Science Committee Meetings

March 27 - Wednesday - Location TBD

June 27 - Thursday - Location TBD

September 11 - Wednesday - Location TBD

December 19 - Thursday - Meeting to be held at EAA

## Sessom Natural Area Workday Scheduled for Feb. 9

The City of San Marcos has scheduled its next Sessom Natural Area Workday for Feb. 9, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Tasks include removing invasive ligustrum, constructing contour terracing, dragging small brush to be chipped, pulling invasive seedlings, broadcasting native seed and removing trash and other clean up items as needed. Tools will be provided. Please wear closed toed shoes.

The group will meet at Ella Lofts parking lot (817 Chestnut St). Pizza will be provided afterwards by our sponsor Pie Society. Please RSVP to Eric Weeks at [eweeks@sanmarcostx.gov](mailto:eweeks@sanmarcostx.gov).