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KBDJ Rock Crusher wins conservation prize

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KBDJ, LP, a quarry and rock crushing operation adjoining the Ruby Ranch subdivision, was recognized for work on habitat conservation by the non-profit Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) at its symposium last week.

"KBDJ believes it is possible to do business in a manner that is ecologically sensitive," said Jill Shackelford, KBDJ principal. "We are committed to preserving and protecting the wildlife and the natural beauty of the property. During the past year as we have worked to earn our certification, we have enjoyed partnering with local educators, schools and others in the community on a number of environmental projects, and we have more planned for the future."

The quarry operators have committed to establishing and maintaining about 50 acres of wildlife habitat, WHC officials said, including setting up bat roost boxes, using recycled Christmas trees to create a habitat for fish and aquatic wildlife and planting native grasses.

In early 2008, the site hosted a field trip for 125 fourth graders to educate them about native wildflowers and have them assist with the planting of native species at the site. It also has hosted an environmental educator field trip and is working to incorporate environmental education opportunities during its site tours.

"KBDJ sought our advice and has worked closely with us over the past year to preserve the beautiful open space surrounding its mining operation," said Hill Country Conservancy Executive Director George Cofer. "This certification is a golden example of what can happen when the business and environmental communities work together to preserve the Texas Hill Country."

KBDJ has fought a lengthy permitting battle against its next doors neighbors, resident of the upscale Ruby Ranch subdivision. The quarry opponents say the operation, located on top of the environmentally sensitive Edwards Aquifer recharge zone, could hurt local water quality as well as their property values.

Established 20 years ago, the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) is a nonprofit, non-lobbying organization dedicated to increasing the quality and amount of wildlife habitat on corporate, private and public lands. More than 2.4 million acres in 46 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 16 other countries are managed for wildlife through WHC-assisted projects.