



Quarry named wildlife habitat

One of three named in state

Last Edited: Friday, 12 Dec 2008, 8:30 PM CST
Created On: Friday, 12 Dec 2008, 8:25 PM CST

BUDA (KXAN) - Central Texas is home to one of the three quarries in the state that have received special certification for creating a wildlife habitat. The KBDJ quarry in Hays County just west of Buda is proud of the work it is doing that is made possible with help from hundreds of kids.

"We just have papers that we read and answer the questions, but now we actually get to see where the rocks are," said Sarah Quilkey, a fourth-grade student at Bridgepoint Elementary School in Eanes Independent School District.

On Friday, 140 anxious fourth-graders got the chance to peer over the edge of the limestone quarry. Even more intriguing than the low-emission loaders heading to the massive rock piles to the students was the hands-on nature lesson.

A Hill Country Conservancy member addressed a small group of students.

"Can anybody name our state flower?" In unison, the group shouted, "Bluebonnet!" Each student sprinkled a cup of wildflower seeds over the new pollinator garden added to attract birds, bees, bats and butterflies.

Texas Environmental Quality Commission was also on hand to teach students about the Edwards Aquifer, which runs underneath the quarry. Environmental education and mining can be an unusual mix.

"It may be perceived as odd by some," said Jill Shackelford, who owns KBDJ. "But we are very passionate about it."

Shackelford and her husband share the passion of protecting the site beyond the state's standards. They go beyond keeping dust down and storm water from draining into the aquifer. The quarry was recently certified as a national wildlife habitat conservation land by the Wildlife Habitat Council.

The Shackelford's efforts to incorporate wildlife management projects into their everyday operation earned the status. Thursday's students were the second group to visit the quarry and help the business work towards another Wildlife Habitat Council recognition called "Corporate Lands for Learning.