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For Immediate Release

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## **Grand Opening Ceremony for the EAHCP's Refugia Buildings**

**San Marcos, TX** – The ceremony for the new Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP) refugia facility at the San Marcos Aquatic Resource Center (SMARC) took place this morning, and included remarks from Roland Ruiz, Edwards Aquifer Authority General Manager; Scott Storment, EAHCP Program Manager; and Amy Lueders, Southwest Regional Director of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS). In addition, recognition was given to key individuals from the EAHCP along with Dr. Ken Ostrand the USFWS guest of honor and director for the SMARC.

The new facility utilizes the USFWS's designs to meet certain specifications for the threatened and endangered species, including tanks for housing the species, security systems, energy-saving solar panels, and a quarantine building. The quarantine building at SMARC contains separate plumbing, air conditioning, and electrical systems that separate the wild specimens from the healthy, preexisting specimens housed in the refugia building tanks. The SMARC is a refugium for the Texas wild rice, Texas blind salamander, San Marcos salamander, fountain darter, and Comal Springs riffle beetle.

The EAHCP is intended to provide assurance that suitable habitat for the 8 threatened and endangered species will remain in both the two major springs that exist in Texas – the San Marcos and Comal Springs, which feed the San Marcos and Comal Rivers. The EAA manages, enhances and protects the Edwards Aquifer, a major groundwater system serving approximately 2 million South Central Texans.

*More information can be found at [www.edwardsaquifer.org](http://www.edwardsaquifer.org).*

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