

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:



**Celebration of Children in Nature
Awards Dinner
2014 Award Nominations**

Nomination Deadline: March 21, 2014

In September of 2014, Westcave Preserve will host the sixth annual **Celebration of Children in Nature Awards Dinner**. The centerpiece of this program is the celebration of extraordinary work in the Central Texas Community to inspire joy and wonder by getting our children out into nature. We will recognize four individuals or organizations who demonstrate the very best in connecting kids to the natural world.

We are seeking the nominations of children, adults, organizations or groups of individuals who are doing exciting, innovative, successful work to offer solutions to the problem of "nature deficit disorder" – a term coined by bestselling author Richard Louv in his book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Your Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*.

Categories are as follows:

E. Lee Walker Award for Community Collaboration: This child, adult, group or organization will have demonstrated the value of working with partners to create opportunities for kids to get out into nature regularly. Lee Walker has established himself as the quintessential collaborator, some might say a collaborator magnet, and so our award for community collaboration is presented in his name. Lee served as the chair of the Westcave Board, and has been its primary benefactor, for more than 25 years. It was Lee's skill at collaborative leadership that generated the funds to build our fabulous Warren Skaaren Environmental Learning Center and those same skills have guided Westcave in a new and expanded strategic direction. **Previous winners include: Sustainable Food Center - Sprouting Healthy Kids program, Youth Launch Urban Roots Program, National Wildlife Federation and Texas Wildlife Association, Texas Parks and Wildlife Outdoor Family Program, El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission, and Candlelight Ranch.**

John Covert Watson Award for Vision: This child, adult, group or organization has had a far reaching vision for a future that embraces the importance of children reconnecting to the natural world. John Watson is a visionary architect who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright and has created a number of organically designed homes. John was the private landowner of what is now Westcave Preserve. John recognized that the public had a great desire to visit this very unique hill country canyon and he had the vision to partner with our life-long friends at the LCRA to create

Westcave Preserve which was dedicated to the restoration and preservation of this extraordinary property. **Previous winners include: Heather Kuhlken – Austin Families in Nature, Dell Children’s Medical Center of Central Texas, Selah Bamberger Ranch Preserve, Texas River School, and Dr. Kimberly Avila Edwards, M.D., F.A.A.P., and Explore Austin.**

John Ahrns Award for Environmental Education: This child, adult, group or organization will have innovated curriculum and integrated the natural world, and perhaps their schoolyard, into their classroom so that their students are inspired to become explorers of the natural world on their own time. John Ahrns is among a rarefied group of first rate naturalists and has been the sole preserve director and lead educator since Westcave’s beginnings in 1976. John Ahrns began his work at the Preserve by hauling more than 100 full-size garbage bags of trash out of the Westcave canyon. Years later, when he had accomplished astonishing restoration and protection for the Preserve, John set out to build an environmental education program that now attracts more than 6,000 children each year. **Previous winners include: City of Austin – Earth Camp, Danna Keyburn of Redeemer Lutheran School, David Matthews of Small Middle School, Johnny Wilson of St Stephen’s Episcopal School, William Earley of Laurel Mountain Elementary, and LCPL Nicholas S. Perez Elementary School.**

Westcave Preserve Award for Enduring Dedication: This child, adult, group or organization has a significant history of getting kids out into nature. Like Westcave Preserve, which has been inspiring children and adults for decades, this award recognizes that there are many who have been toiling in the *Children and Nature* field for many years. **Previous winners include: American YouthWorks – Texas Conservation Corps, Girl Scouts of Central Texas, LCRA – McKinney Roughs Nature Park, Austin Parks and Recreation Dept. - Austin Nature and Science Center, and Art Pasley – C.A.S.T. for Kids.**

How to Submit a Nomination:

Nominations may be submitted by the nominee or by any individual or organization who wishes to recognize a child, adult, group or organization for their work on behalf of children and nature.

[See attached application.](#)

Deadline:

The open nominations process begins February 20, 2014 and will remain open through March 21, 2014. Selection of the winners will be made by a panel of children and nature-related volunteers and professionals. Award winners will be announced no later than April 30th, 2014.



Celebration of Children in Nature Gala 2014 Award Nominations

Nomination Deadline: March 21, 2014

Nomination Form

Person Submitting the Nomination:

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Phone Number: _____
Email Address: _____

Child, Adult, Organization or Group being Nominated

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Phone Number: _____
Email Address: _____
Web address _____

Award Category for Nominee: _____
(you may list more than one)

Please include a short summary of why this candidate should be recognized for their contribution to the Austin children in nature community (maximum of 200 words):

Attachments:

You may attach articles, web links, photos, or other documentation regarding your nominee.

We appreciate you taking the time to nominate an individual or organization for their work on behalf of children and nature. Award winners will be announced no later than April 30th, 2014.