

The Annual Texas Environmental Superconference

June 27, 2017 Jeff Civins

PRACTICES Environmental

The Texas Environmental Superconference is one of a kind. Held each year in Austin in sweltering early August, this conference consistently sells out, attracting over 500 participants from the public and private sectors. Indeed, now in its 29th year, it was the winner of the first American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy & Resources (ABA SEER) award for Best State or Local Bar Environment, Energy and Resources Program of the Year.

The key to the conference's popularity is its unabashed willingness to integrate humor into content--with annual themes, skits, quizzes, prizes, and, for the past several years, even a conference song. Past themes have included Yogi Berra quotes ("It's like déjà vu all over again"); Clichés ("The best thing since sliced bread"); Shakespeare ("Much Ado About Pollution"); "Star Wars ("May the farce be with you"); and Willie Nelson songs ("On the Road Again"). Dwarfing all other past conferences, though, was the Disney movie-themed conference, which featured the song "SuperconferenceAustinTexasExpialidocious" and is the subject of two YouTube videos. ([introductory remarks](#) and [conference song](#)).

Speakers generally weave the conference themes into their presentations and, on occasion, even appear in costume. For example, an EPA chief of enforcement appeared as Harry Truman in the politically-themed conference, "Join the Party," and as Darth Vader, in the Star Wars-themed program. And an EPA General Counsel appeared as a tiara-wearing Wonder Woman in the super hero-themed program. A former EPA Regional Administrator and TCEQ Chairman appeared variously as the Beatles, the Odd Couple, Game Show contestants, and Yoda and Luke Skywalker.

This year's [conference](#) – to be held on Thursday-Friday, August 4-5, 2017 – has as its theme board games and is entitled "Let the Games Begin." The Wednesday evening session on enforcement is entitled "Trouble." Registration is at [Environmental Superconference-2017](#).

Participants look forward to attending each year for the chance not only to experience a fun and informative program, but also to network and to informally discuss issues of concern with other environmental professionals representing diverse perspectives, e.g., private and public sectors; regulators, regulated community, and environmental organizations; legal and technical professionals; and local, state, and federal governments.

The conference is organized by the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Section of the State Bar of Texas, in conjunction with other environmental professional organizations, including ABA SEER, the Air & Waste Management Association—Southwest Section, the Water Environment Association of Texas, the Texas Association of Environmental Professionals, and the Environmental Health and Safety Audit Center. Proceeds from the conference are used to fund environmental internships, student writing awards, and section outreach programs.

Thanks to a generous contribution from Supporter, [EARTHx](#) (formerly Earth Day Texas), the Superconference this year is offering –and last year offered--scholarships for employees of non-profit organizations with environmental matters as a significant focus.

The Annual Texas Environmental Superconference is the answer to the question, why come to Austin in early August?

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