

WILLIAMSON COUNTY ■ RECREATION

## Squeezing watery fun from stone



Workers move large chunks of limestone into place at what will become the Quarry Splash Pad, a water park at an old rock quarry in Williamson County. It is scheduled to open in mid-May. Williamson County is spending \$1.8 million on this project, but the planned price of admission is a bargain: only \$1 per person. See photos from the undeveloped rock quarry online at [statesman.com/go/multimedia](http://statesman.com/go/multimedia).  
Andy Sharp photos FOR AMERICAN-STATESMAN

This summer, splash park will offer kids an educational diversion

By Claire Osborn  
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

**L**EANDER — Inside the abandoned quarry, water will spout from holes in rocks, a waterfall will splash over a 10-foot limestone wall, and small streams will trickle near the featured attractions: a sand pit, three water cannons, a 5½-foot water slide and a small climbing wall.

The Quarry Splash Pad, expected to open in mid-May, is being constructed with \$1.8 million in bond money approved by Williamson

County voters in 2006.

It's in the Southwest Williamson County Regional Park on County Road 175, and it's designed to encourage children to spend time outdoors and reconnect with nature, said Jim Rodgers, the county's parks and recreation director.

"Kids can use the Internet to find out what the endangered species is in China, but they don't know what's in their own backyards," Rodgers said.

The 1.8-acre splash pad, for which construction began last May, is designed to "feel like a classic Hill Country swimming hole," said Chris Lalich, an architect from the RVI architectural design firm in Austin who helped design it.

"When the water is not running See **QUARRY, B5**



The Quarry Splash Pad will display educational materials, such as these prehistoric fish teeth, as part of its mission to encourage kids to appreciate and spend time in nature.

## QUARRY: Park to recycle the 10,000 gallons of water it will use

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in the splash pad, everything is hidden, and then surprise sprays come out of the ground with bubbles and geysers," he said.

The architects for the pool got inspiration from the rocks and ledges in Barton Springs and Hamilton Pool, as well as Teardrop Park in New York City, which includes prominent rock walls and water play features for children, Lalich said.

The contractors built limestone walls using stone from the abandoned quarry, Rodgers said. The quarry was used sometime in the 1950s by a rancher and is now part of the park, Rodgers said.

As people walk on the concrete slab through the splash park, streams of water will intermittently shoot at them from the rock walls and the slab. The entire system will use 10,000 gallons of water, which will be recycled through a system of pumps at the site, Rodgers said.

The water will be chlorinated, filtered and treated with ultraviolet light to keep it clean, he said.

A bridge over the splash pad helps separate it into three areas. One, designed for children ages 2 to 5, has a sand pit and a small stream that they can dam up, Rodgers said. Another is for all ages and features a waterfall and three 24- to 30-inch water cannons, he said. A third area has a water slide and another small stream where children can play.

Workers are finished laying the pipes for the water system and building a restroom area with a concession stand.

Miles Smith, the project supervisor, who works for Kraftman Commercial Playgrounds



Linda Scott AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Jim Rodgers, Williamson County's director of parks and recreation, tours the Quarry Splash Pad construction site, where three distinct areas will be designed to appeal to children of different ages. Among the features are a sand pit, a waterfall, water cannons and a slide.

Andy Sharp FOR AMERICAN-STATESMAN

and Waterparks, said most splash pads he works on are centered on a flat slab of concrete with water spouts sticking into the air. "I think this is awesome," he said.

There will be no lifeguards at the splash pad, and admission will be \$1 per person per day, Rodgers said. People can also rent the pavilions being built around the splash pad for parties, he said.

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