
August 2022



Conservation Insider

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Hello, CCCA Friends, Partners, and Volunteers,

Here we are in the 'Dog Days of Summer!' We've had it HOT before and we've had it DRY before, but to have it so HOT and so DRY for so LONG is a challenge for humans, animals, and plant life. Staying alive is the name of the game and requires a balancing act between using just enough water, finding ways to reduce water usage, and eliminating all actions that waste water.

The next step is to use new sources of water and to learn how to re-use the water we have. We can do it! We have to do it! Let's all join in the effort.

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**CCCA NEWS**

## **May 14th CCCA Celebration Event: *A Welcome, an Award, and a Birthday Party!***

On May 14, CCCA Board Members welcomed members of the CCCA Advisory Board and members of Jensie Madden's family to an afternoon of reflection, appreciation, camaraderie, and light refreshments. Gathering at the Tye Preston Memorial Library, attendees reflected on the progress made by CCCA over its first four years and looked at challenges and opportunities ahead. Members of the organization's Advisory Board were thanked for their support and guidance, as were the officials, former Board Members, and volunteers who attended. The highlight of the event was the announcement and presentation of CCCA's first Comal Conservation Award, which was presented, posthumously, to Jensie Madden, one of CCCA's founders and member of its Board of Directors for its first two years. Jensie's son, Sean, accepted the award for his mother.

### ***Looking for a way to help protect Nature?***

We have some ideas! CCCA is looking for volunteers to help advance our conservation mission in the following areas:

- Communications Coordinator to share information among our various communication and social networking platforms
- Facebook Manager
- Newsletter Editor
- Website Assistant
- Fundraising - Join us for our next huge event, The Big Give SA. We have 2 free training slots available for the Big Give Training Camp, the afternoon of Tuesday, 30 August. It is a great way to learn about this very successful campaign which takes place on 22 and 23 September. This enjoyable fundraiser will cap off our 2022 season.

Interested candidates should submit their contact information and brief message at: [www.comalconservation.org/donatecontact.html](http://www.comalconservation.org/donatecontact.html)

### ***CCCA Welcomes Two New Partners!***

We're happy to welcome our two newest Partners – the Cibolo Center for Conservation, and the Watershed Association. Meet our new Partners:

The Cibolo Center for Conservation is dedicated to its mission to promote the conservation of natural resources through education and stewardship. The Cibolo devotes itself to preserving, sharing, and teaching about living harmoniously and sustainably with our wide-open spaces while transforming lives through the love of nature. Outdoor education, enriching community experiences, and environmental research in action are the pillars of the Cibolo's excellence for almost 35 years. Located in Boerne, The Cibolo offers nature-based preschool and other school programs, summer camps, and a wide range of educational and adventure events all year round. [Home - Cibolo Center for Conservation](#)

The Watershed Association, formerly known as the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association, is a non-profit organization located in the heart of the Texas Hill Country,

born out of a love for water. Focused on conserving land to protect water, the Association works to inspire responsible stewardship of the watershed in the Wimberley Valley, across the Hill Country region, and throughout the state of Texas, through community engagement, education, science, art, and land conservation. The Watershed Association uses local examples, innovation, and successes to inspire solutions to similar challenges across the Hill Country. [Home - Wimberley Valley Watershed Association \(wimberleywatershed.org\)](http://wimberleywatershed.org)

We are very happy to have these excellent conservation organizations as our new partners!

### *CCCA is on AmazonSmile*

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and on phone apps. When you shop with AmazonSmile, you'll find the same low prices, same selection, and convenience as shopping on Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. You can choose from over one million organizations to support – we hope you'll choose CCCA and help save the natural environment in Comal County.

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SAVE THE DATE

CCCA Lunch & Learn

WHAT: CCCA Lunch & Learn for new volunteers

WHEN: September 12, 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM

WHERE: McKenna Events Center, [801 W. San Antonio St, New Braunfels, TX](#)

Come join us for a delicious lunch and a chance to learn about CCCA's history and mission, and our work in the community. You'll hear about the many volunteer opportunities on CCCA's committees (Communications, Outreach, Government Affairs, and Resource Development), special projects, and serving on our Board of Directors. Come see demonstrations of the activities typically conducted at CCCA's outreach booth at events around the county, including our Karst aquifer demonstration and the very popular-with-the-kids "Enviroscape" that teaches how we each impact the environmental health of our community through the choices we make.

Please contact diane.desimone49@gmail.com to register. By giving just a few hours, you can help make a difference in Comal County. Be part of the CCCA Team!

Big Give

September 22-23 is the BIG GIVE 2022!

Please put the Big Give on your calendar and plan to support CCCA in this once-a-year, 24-hour day of giving! This year's Big Give event will run from 6 PM Thursday, September 22, through 6 PM Friday, September 23 and it's all online. This is your chance to help save land, water, and wildlife in our beautiful Comal County. All Big Give donations will go toward expanding CCCA's conservation efforts, including funding for our Comal Land Conservation Fund that supports projects designed to protect open space and keep landowners on their land.

CCCA Community Program

WHAT: CCCA Community Program "Protecting Land to Protect Water" with guest speaker Sharlene Leurig, CEO of the Texas Water Trade

WHEN: Wednesday, September 21, 6:00-7:30

WHERE: McKenna Events Center, [801 W. San Antonio Street, New Braunfels, TX 78130](#)

EVENT INFO: "Protecting Land to Protect Water." Where is the water? Above ground? Below ground? And how do we get to it? For the past decades, smart...and we mean really smart ...Texans have been scientifically reviewing and planning how we maintain good groundwater now and tomorrow. Texas Water Trade personnel say: "We aim to build a future of clean, flowing water for all Texans". One such person is Sharlene Leurig, who is a water planning expert and the CEO of Texas Water Trade. As Sharlene has stated: "I think most people who we talk to are seeing, with the ongoing drought and the population boom here in Texas, that there is a need to shore up our water supply." The water supply is maximized when we collect as much as we can and then make the best use - and reuse - of it. The best way to recharge the aquifers is to keep the land above the recharge zone as open as possible. Good stewardship of this land helps provide not only water but also clean air and open spaces, and supports local economies. Ms. Leurig will focus on the important connection between land, aquifers and our water supply.

A free public program.

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## **IN OTHER NEWS**

### **Let Your Neighbors Know Why Your Yard Is Brown**

CCCA has "**[I'm not watering – I'm sharing my water with . . .](#)**" yard signs, sponsored by the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA), to encourage and support individual efforts to save water during the current drought by not watering lawns!

The signs are free to anyone who wants one and are available in 3 different versions showing support for either [Local Farmers](#), or [Hill Country Springs](#), or [Whooping Cranes](#). (Residents in HOAs may want to check signage restrictions before ordering.)

Reserve your yard sign and get more information at: <https://form.jotform.com/222106123852041>

Signs are available for pick up at the **Headwaters at the Comal office (333 E. Klingemann, New Braunfels)**, the **New Braunfels Public Library (700 E. Common St, New Braunfels)**,

and the **Tye Preston Memorial Library (16311 S. Access Rd, Canyon Lake.)**

Show your neighbors that you are part of the solution!

### ***Kevin Webb Earns Chair of the Board Award in the Field of Transportation***

During the monthly New Braunfels Chamber Board of Directors meeting on Monday July 18th, Chair of the Board Ian Taylor awarded Kevin Webb the Chair of the Board Award in the field of transportation. This award is designed to honor individuals who have made a significant contribution to the community in a specific field of civic endeavor.

In Webb's tenure as Commissioner, he has been a regional leader in transportation and is the current Chairman of the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) - the first from outside of Bexar County. Kevin Webb has worked on many projects at the County with a focus on public safety, county infrastructure, and supporting the County's employees so they can best serve its citizens. Webb continues to work with area partners to try and preserve open space and protecting what makes Comal County the beautiful place it is.

The awardee is presented a letter from the Chair of the Board at a Board of Directors meeting, then presented a plaque at the Annual Chamber Banquet. The selection committee for this award is made up of the Immediate Past Chair, Chair of the Board, and Chair-Elect.

Congratulations, Commissioner Webb!

### **HCA 2022 Leadership Summit**

**Our Shared Stories - Past, Present, and Future - coming in September!**

**WHEN:** Thursday, September 29, 8:45 AM - 4:00 PM

**WHERE:** The Hall at Jester King Brewery, **13187 Fitzhugh Rd, Austin, TX 78736**

The Hill Country Alliance invites you to join us in-person or online on Thursday, September 29 at The Jester King Brewery in Dripping Springs. Presentations will run from 8:45AM - 4PM, with lunch provided from 12-1PM and several networking breaks throughout the day. The event will be followed by a happy hour featuring live music entertainment from 4-6PM.

Virtual and in-person tickets are available now at **[HCA Leadership Summit | Welcome to Hill Country Alliance](#)**. Virtual attendees will receive additional communication in advance of the Summit, including a link to a livestream of the day's events. All attendees will also receive access to a recording of the Summit after the close of the event.

A limited number of in-person tickets for the Summit are available now - with early bird pricing available until August 15. Get them before they are gone - full agenda coming soon!

### **2022 Conservation Easement Workshop Series**

The Texas Agricultural Land Trust (TALT) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are presenting a special series of workshops to share information that could benefit landowners across the state. The free workshops will be focused on conservation tools and resources including the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program that provides financial support to landowners. A workshop is scheduled in San Antonio on August 17<sup>th</sup> at the Witte Museum, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM; lunch is included with pre-registration. For more information or to register, go to: [Save the Date! Conservation Easement Workshop Series \(constantcontact.com\)](https://constantcontact.com)

## **Congratulations to our Partner, Keep Canyon Lake Beautiful**

Keep Canyon Lake Beautiful won the 1st Place Governor's Community Achievement Award this year! Our own Cindy Cuevas, one of the founders of the KCLB group, was there to accept the award and the \$210,000 grant check!

Great job KCLB!!

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CCCA AUGUST SPOTLIGHT: *Water & Drought*

Most of us take water for granted. We see it in the lakes, rivers, creeks and springs that are found throughout our beautiful county and it flows whenever we turn on the faucet. Like so many things, we don't appreciate it until it's gone, but we're learning to appreciate it more this summer.

Farmers are losing their crops, ranchers are having trouble feeding their livestock, and some private wells in the county have already gone dry. Now what?

We're focusing our SPOTLIGHT this month on the effects of this extreme drought and how the heatwave is exacerbating the problems. A few excellent articles are included here, and more can be found on CCCA's website at <https://www.comalconservation.org/water--drought.html>

WE NEED RAIN--- NOW!!!

Written by Frank Dietz for the Herald-Zeitung, August 6, 2022

As our 2022 seasons transitioned from late winter to spring, our surrounding yard areas required early season attention. After these early touchups, it became evident our well-worn mower was ready for replacement. In early May we assumed periodic rains would produce the need for mowing. Some investigation indicated we might choose to move to battery powered heavy-duty equipment this time. An order was placed, replacement arrived and it still remains "ready and waiting." Our expectations for rainfall have been left wanting, becoming desperate as the weeks come and go. It is as if from then until

now a rare dark cloud passes our way overhead and finds our readiness and waiting mockingly laughable. We have even heard thunder a time or two. But, alas, it is anything but a joke! The drought deepens weekly and the stressors abound.

In this week of writing, Jacob's well in Wimberly has gone dry for only the fourth time ever. This caps a series of reports from friends, family and correspondents about worrisome images across our Texas Hill Country. Images of riverbeds gone dry and looking more like an empty roadway bed; little pools of water with desperate fish, some the threatened Guadalupe bass; stories of stranded docks and boat launchings. Others have called attention to the frailty of wildlife and the super crowded influx of livestock going to auction. We have even had a nearby wildfire scare that left scorched acreage as a caution. Read the entire article at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/water--drought.html>

From Texas A&M Today

Heat Wave Deepens Texas Drought

By Adam Russell, Texas A&M AgriLife Communications

A series of 100-degree days have created worsening conditions for livestock and crop producers across the state, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agents report.

A heat wave across the state is exacerbating the extreme drought conditions plaguing Texas agriculture.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agents and regional specialists around the state have reported a wide range of issues related to triple-digit temperatures and worsening conditions for livestock and crop producers. There are reports of poor forage and growing conditions throughout the state, including failed to stunted plants and lower yield expectations on crops ranging from sorghum, cotton, peanuts and pecans.

Livestock producers in drier areas of the state have been weaning and marketing calves earlier and culling herds deeper than usual. There are also reports of herd consolidations occurring. The main factor driving higher and earlier cattle sale volumes is poor spring forage production from lack of rainfall and the high cost of supplemental feed.

Hay supplies are tightening and cuttings have been well below average in most parts of the state so far. Declining surface water and poor water quality in stock ponds and tanks is becoming a wider issue for many producers.

The extent of drought is driving local governments to implement restrictions on activities, including water consumption and outdoor burning. Continue reading at:

<https://www.comalconservation.org/water--drought.html#Texas-AM>

KENS 5

Drought Conditions in Central Texas Could Have Disastrous Impact on Area Rivers: Slowing River Flows Make the Water Quicker to Evaporate

By Alan Kozeluh

July 7, 2022

SAN ANTONIO — Central Texas is seeing the worst drought conditions it has seen in a decade. It's causing rivers to slow to a crawl and the impact of that could be disastrous.

"We definitely have some concerns with where the water level's going to get too later in the year, if we don't start getting some level of consistent rain," said Shaun Donovan, Environmental Sciences Manager at the San Antonio River Authority.

There are places in south Texas right now where the flow of the river all but stops.

"There's been reports of the Frio River is at 0.0 CFS, so it's not flowing at all right now," Donovan said. "There was a lot of concerns and issues with the Guadalupe River, especially above Canyon Lake where they can't control the flow."

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, most of Bexar County is in drought level D3, that's out of four. Historically, this level, classified as Extreme

Drought has meant an increased risk of wildfires, severe loss of plant and wildlife, and very low river flows. The last time Bexar County was this dry was during the drought of 2011, when the entire state was at D4 – Exceptional Drought.

Continue reading at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/water--drought.html#KENS5>

Texas A&M, Texas Water Initiative

Texas Water Law

In Texas, water rights depend on whether the water is groundwater or surface water.

Generally, Texas groundwater belongs to the landowner. Groundwater is governed by the rule of capture, which grants landowners the right to capture the water beneath their property. The landowners do not own the water but have a right only to pump and capture whatever water is available, regardless of the effects of that pumping on neighboring wells.

Surface water, on the other hand, belongs to the state of Texas. It can be used by a landowner only with the state's permission.

GROUNDWATER

Water found below the earth's surface in the crevices of soil and rocks is called percolating water, or more commonly groundwater. Texas groundwater law is judge-made law, derived from the English common law rule of "absolute ownership." Groundwater belongs to the owners of the land above it and may be used or sold as private property. Texas courts have adopted, and the legislature has not modified, the common law rule that a landowner has a right to take for use or sale all the water that he can capture from below his land. Continue reading at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/water--drought.html#Texas-Water-Law>

Heat Wave Deepens Texas Drought

By Keith Schneider
August 3, 2020

WIMBERLEY, Texas – Among the famed springs that distinguish the Texas Hill Country as a region of crystal-clear water and iconic swimming holes, Jacob's Well stands out. The spring's water source is rain that falls on the thin soils of Hays County and filters through porous limestone before filling a network of deep, ancient caves.

The water rises back to the surface from a hole, about 12 feet across, in the bottom of Cypress Creek. The round opening is so blue, so shimmering, that viewed from the top of a nearby limestone cliff it looks like an eye. Unblinking as it emerges from the darkness, the water forms an intent gaze that appears capable of seeing the opposing moods of the Hill Country: the calming influence of ample water supply in wet seasons, and surging alarm during drought.

Read the full article at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/water--drought.html#Blue-Schneider>

All the above articles and MANY more are available to read in the August Spotlight section of our website at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/water--drought.html>

Stay safe, stay healthy, enjoy nature! See you next month.

Comal County Conservation Alliance

<https://www.comalconservation.org/>

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