



Conservation Insider

December 2020

Happy Holidays! We hope you are staying safe and healthy while finding ways to enjoy the

holiday season even with the necessary social distancing. Soon we will welcome in 2021 and with it the hope of a world returning to a more normal state.

In 2021 CCCA will be welcoming some new Committee Chairs who will bring new ideas to the organization. We will continue our mission with renewed energy as we begin to see what appears to be the end of Covid. Among other initiatives, we will begin hosting a Zoom presentation every other month in our regular second-Tuesday-of-the-month spot. Our first program will be **January 12, 6-7:00 PM, featuring Mark Enders, Watershed Program Manager for the City of New Braunfels**, so please save the date and plan to tune in. We will introduce you to our Committee Chairs, Board members and officers at the January program. And we will also introduce our highly accomplished Advisory Board members at the same time. Stay tuned!

MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT ON WATER

Our December and January Spotlight is focused on the importance of WATER. We are dedicating two months to this topic because it is a critical issue that needs the attention of every Comal County resident. The Water Spotlight page on the CCCA website has many great reads on WATER and what we can do to ensure a healthy supply of water for future generations. We hope you will take a look and perhaps learn more about the challenges to our Hill Country water. AND...while you're there, please take a minute to fill out the water survey. These monthly surveys are very important to us and help direct our focus and work.

CCCA Board Member, Frank Dietz's columns for December and January will also focus on the topic of water. His December column was recently published in the *Herald Zeitung* and we hope you enjoy it as much as we do.

The importance and the magic of water.

Frank Dietz, Comal County resident, CCCA Board Member,
& Herald Zeitung monthly columnist

WATER! Yes, cool, fresh, and refreshing WATER!

As I begin reflecting on the cusp of Thanksgiving, it grows out of a brief conversation with one of our granddaughters. She wanted to know what kind of "thanks list" I was coming up with for 2020. I responded, "We are grateful for continued health and distanced life in this wilderness time of viral threat."

Then I added, "I'm digging deep for life's essential ingredients, first and foremost WATER!"

Characteristic of our several grands is the frequently asked, "why?" I told her about my very first memory of fresh, amazing water at the hand pump for the well on my grandparents' farmstead. It was the only source for household water. I used a little stool to be tall enough and pushed up and then pulled down to have a very chilly flow of water pour forth! That wonder and shiver that ran down my spine has remained vivid all these years. Later, I resonated with the discovery process of Helen Keller who wrote:

"I knew then that 'w-a-t-e-r' meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away."

Continue reading at <https://www.comalconservation.org/precious-water.html>

WATER NEWS IN THE SPOTLIGHT - Here's what we've been reading

Overlooked Army Corps Rulemaking Would Shrink Federal Stream Protections

November 12, 2020 in Water News
By Brett Walton, Circle of Blue

Conservation groups and state regulators are alarmed by proposed changes to nationwide permits that authorize construction across streams and wetlands. Earlier this year, the Trump administration secured one of its signature environmental legacies when it completed a rule that reduced federal protections for wetlands as well as for streams that flow only following rainfall. Environmental policy experts concluded that the administration's narrow definition of the scope of the Clean Water Act was its most damaging decision for waterways. The rollback of the Obama-era ruling was a campaign promise of President Trump and a rallying cry for industrial lobby groups that supported him.

Continue reading at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/precious-water.html>

Wall Street Begins Trading Water Futures as a Commodity

Yale Environment 360
Published at the Yale School of the Environment
December 8, 2020

Wall Street has begun trading water as a commodity, like gold or oil. The country's first water market launched on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange this week with \$1.1 billion in contracts tied to water prices in California, Bloomberg News reported.

The market allows farmers, hedge funds, and municipalities to hedge bets on the future price of water and water availability in the American West. The new trading scheme was announced in September, prompted by the region's worsening heat, drought, and wildfires fueled by climate change. There were two trades when the market went live Monday.

"Climate change, droughts, population growth, and pollution are likely to make water scarcity issues and pricing a hot topic for years to come."

Read more at <https://www.comalconservation.org/precious-water.html>

The Edwards Aquifer

from Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA)

The Texas Hill Country and Edwards Aquifer region is under assault from urban sprawl. Farms and ranches are being turned into subdivisions, shopping centers, and highways. This pattern of unsustainable growth is threatening to pollute and over-pump the watersheds that replenish the Edwards Aquifer and the Great Springs of Texas, including drinking water for over 1.7 million Texans.

For decades, the rugged terrain and scarcity of water in the Hill Country kept urban and suburban development at bay, while the flatter, more fertile eastern edge of the Balcones Escarpment supplied resources for growth and development. But modern construction equipment, speculative real investment, and government subsidies are transforming the Hill Country into Everywhere U.S.A. All of these ingredients in urbanization come together in providing infrastructure for development: roads, sewer lines, and water lines. This infrastructure is often subsidized by us, the taxpayers.

Read more at <https://www.comalconservation.org/precious-water.html>

Saving Water in Texas

<http://www.epa.gov/watersense>

As the second most populous state in the country, Texas has a large and continually growing demand for water. Texas also has a semi-arid climate, leaving the state prone to extreme droughts. Historically, most of Texas' droughts have ended with tremendous rain events, creating a cyclical pattern of droughts and floods. Efficient water management and water conservation projects are helping the state address this cycle and meet current and future water needs. Read more at <https://www.comalconservation.org/precious-water.html>

Renewable Energy Saves Water & Creates Jobs

Eight graphs tell the story; see for yourself (from the Scientific American)

August 7, 2018

By Luciano Castillo, Walter Gutierrez, Jay Gore

Credit: David Hogan Getty Images

A common argument for expanding renewable energy sources is that technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines are responsible for far less carbon dioxide than power plants that burn fossil fuels. But two other powerful benefits should also be getting much more attention: the switch can save vast quantities of freshwater, and can create a large number of new, high-paying jobs. Want proof? Let's look at the data that our detailed research has revealed. Continue at <https://www.comalconservation.org/precious-water.html>

opinion+water: Ensuring One Water Delivers for Healthy Waterways

Texas+Water

October 27, 2020

As forward-thinking cities become increasingly adept at capturing and reusing wastewater, stormwater and greywater, essential river systems may be at risk. Ensuring One Water Delivers

for Healthy Waterways recommends that deliberate, community-driven planning is urgently needed to avoid depriving Texas' waterways of necessary water.

With this report, the National Wildlife Federation, the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University and the Pacific Institute provide water planners much-needed practical guidance on how to build a community-driven water vision that takes into account the needs of local residents as well as downstream cities and ecosystems that depend on a healthy flow of water. The report provides water planners with a framework that communities can use to plan for future water supply resilience while also ensuring that healthy waterways are an outcome as well.

Continue at <https://www.comalconservation.org/precious-water.html>

There are a few new videos linked on our website on the Water Spotlight tab that we thought you would want to see.

diy+water: Wonderous Water-saving Wicking Gardens

From the 2020 Hill Country Living Festival + Rainwater Revival

Texas Master Naturalist—Hays County Chapter: Riparian Vegetation
Riparian Recovery Network News

<https://www.comalconservation.org/precious-water.html>

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy Holidays to all.

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

Comal County Conservation Alliance

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

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