

Passion and Unity for the Natural World

May 8, 2022

Through the last 25 years our Texas Hill Country and Comal County have undergone monumental change! The "I-35 corridor" and the cherished escarpment that attracts many have witnessed a continuous "arriving" and "settling" for many. The location alongside the linkage of two of the nation's most rapidly growing metropolitan communities underscores our new reality.

In the fervor of development, growth, and tourism expressed in and around Comal County, a concerned band of citizens comprised of old timers and newcomers has emerged. In addition to the connections of residential and commercial developers and planners, folks with a deep interest in the natural features of Comal and the Texas Hill Country have found one another. Twenty or so new groups of interested and concerned naturalists and water stewards have joined the five or so long-standing groups that have held together some of the visionary work of Lindheimer and a few others. Diverse in education, professional, personal, religious, and political interests, those with a passion for the rivers, springs and aquifers, the flora and fauna of the hills, and stretch of blackland farms have come together with a new public voice and select measures. With an aim "to preserve land, water, and wildlife in Comal County" the Comal County Conservation Alliance became a shared voice.

Convening conversations about five years ago the League of Women Voters, the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance and the Hill Country Alliance joined locally concerned citizens in some preliminary conversations that proved formative in bringing Comal citizens with concerns together. In May of 2018 A Certificate of Formation as a Texas Nonprofit Corporation and registration with the Texas Secretary of State as a corporation created the formal early steps. Lots of outreach among the early advocates began to grow the circle of concerned and willing workers that is ever more visible as the CCCA, our very own locally grounded, Comal County Conservation Alliance. A careful, steady hand of leadership emerged with the current President, Elizabeth Bowerman. She has assisted by shepherding a fledgling effort with organizational steps, a sharing of areas of responsibility and an engaged Board of Directors. The group has held public sessions monthly in person until pandemic times came, then bimonthly addressing topics of interest with impressive resource people. A team of communicators for a variety of public events as well as website construction, Facebook posts, a "Conservation Insider" update of topics and resources, a monthly op-ed column for CCCA in partnership with the Herald-Zeitung and a presence at the local Farmers' Market have impressed many in the community as to the seriousness of CCCA. A willingness to have representatives, members and/or leaders connect with the New Braunfels city elected and staff officials, the County Commissioners' Court and Engineer, representation with the New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce and outreach to the Legislature and select state agencies impresses as well.

Beginning in 2018 support for CCCA's conservation interests has grown notably and steadily. Personal and nonprofit private funders have demonstrated heartening and broadening support. Linkage with partner groups includes an impressive twenty-plus allied efforts across the Texas Hill Country and state.

Through a generous grant, Helen Ballew became a Conservation Consultant with CCCA in 2021. You may have seen her exploring or assisting in clearing debris from a Comal cave or two! Another grant makes some administrative assistance possible with Kim Hatfield. Contact us at comalconservation.org or come to Landa Haus Tuesday, 10 May, 6pm and learn some surprising things all about CEDAR!