

## **A View of the Future for Comal County**

By Frank Dietz

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Mid-June brought me to a lively birthday event for a 3-year-old youngster. Among the family and neighbors gathered, two attendees spoke with me about “the column” that appears for Comal County Conservation Alliance. One of the younger adults had some questions about conservation and the efforts I have been describing in the Herald-Zeitung. Smiling, I remarked, “just last month I attended a 4th birthday celebration, and it was for the CCCA. It’s fun to find folks curious and interested!

During that 4th birthday event held at Tye Preston Memorial Library we had an opportunity to identify accomplishments and look toward the future. It is impressive to take note of the diverse variety of folks in Comal County and Hill Country engaged around the subject of the pressures brought with accelerated development. It leads to taking a candid look at the pressures on remaining acreage and green spaces. Should there be some boundaries to protect parcels from eager subdividing? If so, where are these parcels? When assessing water resources for our area, what are the limitations and how is wastewater carefully reused or disposed of going forward? Assisting in addressing salient issues of note, a Land Conservation Fund of private donations seeks to provide supportive encouragement and preparatory assistance should landowners of limited means want permanent protection for some parcel(s). In the same vein, explorations about support by both municipal, county and state authorities are being pursued through citizen contact. Conversations among elected officials remain ongoing. So, the 4th birthday occasion provided some satisfactory and appreciative “growing and maturing.”

The CCCA’s President, Elizabeth Bowerman, asked those gathered to not feel the modest accomplishments and efforts should be sufficient. Rather, she declared: “As we press forward to preserve land, water, and wildlife in Comal County, our goals are numerous.”

That means:

- Spreading appreciation of our natural resources fostering a “conservation mindset,”
- Creating partnerships to achieve land protection among private, governmental, business and nonprofits,

- Envisioning a framework for land protection in Comal County enhancing public and private preservation modes such as a county parks and a natural areas Master Plan, and adherence to our Regional Habitat Conservation Plan, including finding private and public funding sources.

Elizabeth then called upon the alliance going forward to mitigate flooding, assist landowners seeking protection for conservation, protect recreational opportunities to keep them healthy and accessible, and broaden community support through education and policies that enable preservation. Additional “to do’s” include workshops for developers introducing the principles of “conservation developments” as well as “low impact development.” Our group will be reaching out to homeowner associations (HOA) to encourage water conservation and rainwater usages. Partnering with the Hill Country Alliance CCCA will seek to introduce the concept of “One Water” principles as alternative water sources and reuse comes into usage. Timely workshops on “Dark Sky Lighting” will be included in this partnership as well.

There are heartening conversations with decision makers as well as their staffs which we look forward to strengthening.

Should you find yourself and a neighbor or friend interested in joining the effort and conversations, your input, energy, and resources will be most welcome.

As I told my young adult inquirer, the web offering at [www.comalconservation.org](http://www.comalconservation.org) is filled with information and invitation. We’d love to hear from you!