



Conservation Insider

June 2023

Hello, CCCA Friends, Partners, and Volunteers,

“June is bustin’ out all over . . .” and our beautiful Hill Country is awash in lush greens and colorful wildflowers. It’s a wonderful contrast to the dry, brown look of last Summer! We’ve been busy this Spring, participating in the local festivals and introducing the community to “Mother Rock” (our large, beautiful chunk of local karst limestone) to demonstrate how rainwater and other surface water drains through the karst to replenish our aquifers. CCCA also celebrated its 5th Anniversary, had a ceremonial Ribbon Cutting ceremony by the New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce, and presented the 2nd annual Jensie Madden Comal Conservation Award to sisters Joyce Moore and Cynthia Martinez, owners of the Honey Creek Springs Ranch! Now, with Summer just beginning, many of our partner organizations are getting ready for Summer Camps and field trips. Let’s get out there and enjoy Nature!

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## CCCA NEWS

### Conservation Celebration

By Hannah Thompson — The Herald-Zeitung  
June 1, 2023

On May 23, the Comal County Conservation Alliance (CCCA) hosted a celebration to present the Jensie Madden Comal Conservation Award to sisters Joyce Moore and Cindy Martinez.

Leading up to the award presentation, Ryan Spencer, executive director of the CCA, shared a few words about the meaning of the Jemie Madden Comal Conservation Award.

According to Spencer, those given the award have shown to be determined leaders, visionaries and have focused on preserving water, wildlife, and land.

“Our recipients today have dedicated themselves to protecting an incredible natural resource in our county and state, and ... I want to say thank you,” Spencer said. “Your efforts have helped to ensure that countless generations of future Texans will be able to explore, connect and leave inspired by one of the pristine and ecologically significant waterways in our state and you have protected one of the greatest representations of Karst Geomorphology in the State of Texas.”

Spencer then revealed that the award consisted of two parts: a proclamation from the board declaring the two recipients as award winners and two handcrafted bowls carved by Taylor Heard from a fallen mesquite tree that originally was next to the Comal River.

The award was presented by Dr. Andrew Sansom, Research Professor of Geography and Executive Director of The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State.

“These two women have demonstrated to us that landowners are willing to commit to protect their lands beyond their generation,” Sansom said. “Because of what Joyce and Cindy have done, The Nature Conservancy’s work at Honey Creek and then Honey Creek Ranch, there’s going to be almost 6,000 acres of protected lands around that watershed.”

According to Moore, it didn’t take long for them to decide they’d now protect Honey Creek Springs and the longest cave in Texas.

After all, Moore looked into conservation easements for around 30 years; initially, the two knew they wanted to do it but weren’t sure they could financially.

“It’s an important piece of property to us; it’s our legacy,” Moore said. “To everyone else, it’s just a piece of private land that’s been saved, but it’s our home. This is where our roots are ... we had to do this.”



New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce ceremonial ribbon-cutting in honor of CCA’s 5th Anniversary.



Left to right: Andrew Sansom, Joshua Moore, Joyce Moore, Ryan Spencer, Cynthia Martinez, Joseph Martinez, Shantal Tollett.

## CCCA Welcomes New Partner

Welcome to our newest partner "Texas Children in Nature Network".

Texas Children in Nature Network (TCiNN) is a grassroots network of over 700 partner organizations and individuals dedicated to connecting children and families with nature in Texas to be healthier, happier and smarter. Their nine regional collaboratives across the state work directly with local communities to fulfill their mission through community outreach and engagement, nature-based programming, and special initiatives. Resources, ideas and strategies are leveraged and shared across the network.

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

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SAVE THE DATE

CCCA Community Program

WHAT: "Preserving Open Space in Comal County: Challenges and Opportunities" with guest speaker Annalisa Peace, Executive Director, Grater Edwards Aquifer Alliance. Annalisa will relate what other local governments in the Edwards Aquifer region are doing to preserve land to protect our water resources and will outline some options and opportunities that Comal County and municipalities might adopt for this purpose.

WHEN: Tuesday, July 11, 6:00-7:30 PM

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

Wildlife Management Conference

WHAT: Prairie View A&M University's Cooperative Extension Program invites you to join them for a two-day, interactive, learning opportunity on June 22 and June 23. In partnership with the Texas Wildlife Association, the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and Texas A&M University-Kingsville, we aim to inform and educate guests on topics such as: wildlife laws & regulations, whitetail deer management, establishing wildlife management plans, feral hog management, and more!

WHEN: June 22- June 23 Conference Registration is FREE, but it is required. Breakfast & lunch will be provided both days as well.

WHERE: New Braunfels, Texas.

For more information, contact: Derrick Banks PVAMU Extension Program Specialist (Wildlife Mgmt.)
(936)261-5133
ddbanks@pvamu.edu

Headwaters at the Comal Summer Camps

WHAT: Join Headwaters at the Comal for a brand-new summer camp for rising 6th-8th graders. During this week long half day camp, students will become scientists helping to document and learn more about the plants and animals living in the Springs and Savannas of Headwaters and the ecosystems that support these species. During camp, students will participate in activities including BioBlitzes, water testing, soil testing, butterfly monitoring, bird watching, hikes, and nature journaling. They'll also learn more about the tools and methods scientists use to collect data through these activities. By the end of the week, students will be ready to put their new found knowledge to work and help gather data and information at home and around the community.

June 5-9: Citizen Science Summer Camp

WHEN: Mon, 5 June — Fri, 9 June, 9:00 AM — 12:00 PM

WHERE: Headwaters at the Comal, 78130

Day 1: What is Citizen Science?

Day 2: Who Cares About Dirt?

Day 3: Water Watchers

Day 4: Plant Patrol

Day 5: Creature Feature

This program will run daily from 9 AM -12 PM at Headwaters at the Comal in our Outdoor Pavilion.

Scholarships are available for students and families in need of support.

Have questions? Need more information? Contact Lauren Strack at 830-608-8937 or lstrack@headwatersatthecomal.org.

June 12-16: Water Watchers Summer Camp

Session I

WHEN: Mon, 12 June — Fri, 16 June, 9:00 AM --12:00 PM

WHERE: Headwaters at the Comal, 78130

July 17-21: Water Watchers Summer Camp

Session II

WHEN: Mon, 17 July — Fri, 21 July, 9:00 AM —12:00 PM

WHERE: Headwaters at the Comal, 78130

During this summer camp, 4th-6th graders will learn about the amazing water resources we have right here in New Braunfels and the Texas Hill Country. Young scientists will participate in lessons focusing on topics including: watersheds, groundwater, succession, geography, the water cycle, weathering, erosion, and deposition. Hands on activities will include: water testing, macroinvertebrate & microorganism sampling, watershed and aquifer modeling, seed balls, art, and much more. At the end of the week, students will be inspired to enjoy and protect our precious Springs for themselves, their friends and family, and future generations.

This program will run daily from 9 AM -12 PM at Headwaters at the Comal in our Outdoor Pavilion.

Scholarships are available for students and families in need of support.

Have questions? Need more information? Contact Lauren Strack at 830-608-8937 or lstrack@headwatersatthecomal.org.

Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country Summer Camps

The Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country

Summer Camps!

JUNE 2023 June 12-16 | June 26-30

Ages 6-13!

- **LEARN ABOUT DINOSAURS!**
- **DIG FOR FOSSILS!**
- **HAVE FUN WITH GEOLOGY!**
- **HISTORY W/GUEST SPEAKER!**
- **TRACKING W/GUEST SPEAKER & ANIMALS!**

Camps are \$250 for the week or \$50.00 a day. Camps are drop off: 9:00 AM- 1:00 PM

For information:
830-899-4542
museum@gvtc.com
www.theheritagemuseum.com

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## IN OTHER NEWS

### LIGHTS OUT TEXAS!

Spring Migration: March 1 - June 15, 2023

We encourage everyone to turn off non-essential lights at night from 11 PM – 6 AM during the full spring and fall migration periods, and where conflicts apply, prioritize lights out during the critical peak migration periods. BirdCast tools by Cornell Lab of Ornithology inform us when increased migration traffic will happen in your area. Stay informed and subscribe to alerts today!

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

### MILES FOR MONARCHS

Every year, millions of monarch butterflies embark on a fall migration from the northern U.S. and Canada to central Mexico and set out to return north after a long winter. Miles for Monarchs is a way for individuals, teams, and the entire collective of participants to journey the same 3,000 miles of this migration virtually. Miles for Monarchs 2023 is an online campaign designed to engage participants in personal wellness while supporting monarch conservation. Join individually or with a team, track your mileage, get out into nature, and learn from conservation experts from the Monarch Joint Venture.

This year's campaign will take place in the spring and fall to represent the seasonal migrations of monarchs. The spring "migration" will be hosted from May 22 - June 25.

[milesformonarchs.com](https://milesformonarchs.com)

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CCCA H-Z JUNE COLUMN

"Water! Sweet, Essential Water!"

By Frank Dietz for the H-Z June 3, 2023

Comal County of the Texas Hill Country is a precious jewel. Foremost in the gifts of the natural world that draw us to gather here by the springs and rivers among the hills is that life essential: WATER/AGUA. A recent report from the incredible Webb Telescope way out there in space points to a growing body of data regarding the sourcing of the waters we benefit from on Earth. More water and ice are in the far beyond. The future promise includes resources beyond our keenest imaginations. What exciting hints for our next generations.

Meanwhile, here at the ranch where our modest Earth-friendly haus provides us shelter and home, recent rains have brought a measure of relief and spurred outdoor demands we have had no need to attend for quite some time. Relatively modest showers brought a gentle rise to some of the creeks which flowed to begin filling stock tanks, flowed toward the fragile receptive edge of the Edwards recharge or sent just a bit of water down toward Alligator and Geronimo creeks and ultimately into the Guadalupe River and the bay and estuaries along the coast. Hurrah! We carry forward our need to protect, conserve and modify water usages in an ever-drying climate along the escarpment and its karsts.

All this recent dynamic of rainfall gift and restoration deepens my appreciation for the legacy holders seeking to conserve and protect essential green open space in the frightfully rapid disappearance of the landscape of the Texas Hill Country. The centering value undergirding much of the legacy holders' efforts to conserve and protect is basically about the water and its relationship to the land.

Read the full article [HERE](#).

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## CCCA JUNE SPOTLIGHT

### Groundwater

**"TOOLS FOR MANAGING GROUNDWATER IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY; WHAT GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, COUNTIES, CITIES AND RESIDENTS CAN DO TO PROTECT GROUNDWATER IN THE REGION"**

Hill Country Alliance

It is often said that water is the lifeblood of the Texas Hill Country— but the real credit for our region's success is the water we cannot see: our region's groundwater supply. Hill Country groundwater is a drinking water source for countless communities – from small rural cities like

Bandera and Leakey, to fast developing communities like Fredericksburg and New Braunfels, to our region's largest metropolis – San Antonio. Groundwater also feeds our crystal clear rivers – 12 of the state's 15 major rivers have their headwaters in the Hill Country and receive

inflows from springs. However, the Hill Country is growing at a staggering rate. New developments are placing increasing demand on our aquifers at the same time that the region is experiencing more frequent drought. Most of this growth is happening in unincorporated

areas where regulation is limited.

In the face of such unprecedented change, we must use every tool in our toolbox to manage groundwater for the people, plants, and animals that call the Hill Country home. This paper lays out the available tools for managing groundwater within groundwater conservation districts, counties, cities, and individuals. Groundwater Conservation Districts are emphasized throughout this guide because they are the state's preferred method for managing groundwater; however, these districts cannot effectively manage long-term groundwater supply without the support of county and city leadership and the informed input of their constituents.

Like groundwater itself, knowing who can do what to manage groundwater can feel evasive and mysterious. This resource is meant to demystify the available tools for groundwater management and make groundwater planning and management more accessible across the Hill Country

Continue reading [HERE](#).

## "HOW DO GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATER INTERACT?"

American Geosciences Institute Environmental Awareness Series

Surface water and groundwater systems are connected in most landscapes. Streams interact with groundwater in three basic ways: streams gain water from inflow of groundwater through the streambed, streams lose water by outflow through the streambed, or they do both depending upon the location along the stream. It is the groundwater contribution that keeps streams flowing between precipitation events or after snowmelt. For a stream to gain water, the elevation of the water table in the vicinity of the stream must be higher than the streamwater surface. For a stream to lose water to groundwater, the water table must be below the elevation of the stream-water surface in the vicinity of the stream. If the water table has large variations during the year, a stream segment could receive water from groundwater for a portion of the year and lose water to groundwater at other times.

Surface-water bodies such as lakes and wetlands can receive groundwater inflow, recharge groundwater, or do both. The movement of water between groundwater and surface-water systems leads to the mixing of their water qualities. High quantities of nutrients or other dissolved chemicals in surface water can be transferred to the connected groundwater system.

Read the full article [HERE](#).

## "TEXAS MUST ADDRESS GROUNDWATER FUTURE, SAYS EXPERT"

By Jeff Falk, Rice University

June 11, 2021

Nestled in the heart of the Texas Hill Country, in Comal County, Pure Pastures is a 2,000-acre multi-species operation that practices 100% regenerative management. Pure Pastures is a collaboration between the Moorman family, the ranch owners and partners in the business, and the Eubank family, the operations managers and business partners.

Lew Moorman was introduced to regenerative agriculture after experiencing health concerns in his family. He realized that the food system needed changing, from the soil up, to improve people's health. In 2018 Lew set out on a mission to regenerate the food system beginning with improving soil health on his ranch near Canyon Lake, TX. He partnered with Maggie and Jeremiah to develop their business Pure Pastures.

In October 2019, the Eubanks moved to Lew's ranch from Stockdale, TX where they had been running a hog operation since 2015. They had been attempting to buy more land, but they were facing many obstacles in doing so, which is common for many beginning farmers and ranchers. They saw a Lew's job post on Facebook for managing a much

larger piece of land. They began negotiations with Lew and took the leap to manage the ranch and partner in the business. As first-generation ranchers, this gave Maggie and Jeremiah the opportunity to expand their production and gave Lew peace of mind that the ranch would be managed regeneratively.

Read the full article [HERE](#).

*Stay safe, stay healthy, enjoy Nature!*

**Comal County Conservation Alliance**

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

[Info@comalconservation.org](mailto:Info@comalconservation.org)

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Comal County Conservation Alliance  
PO Box 2804  
Canyon Lake, TX 78133