

**Minutes of General Meeting of the Comal County Conservation Alliance
Thursday, June 14, 2018 at McKenna Events Center**

Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Laura Sivy-de la Cruz, President.

Laura Sivy-de la Cruz welcomed attendees and introduced members of the Board of Directors.

Treasurer Harry Sutherland reported there is \$136.00 in CCCA funds and invited donations.

Laura invited announcements.

Jensie Madden reported on public forum “Local Control Options for Hill Country Counties,” held on June 5th, and hosted by League of Women Voters Comal Area (LWVCA), Greater Edwards Aquifer Authority (GEAA), and Preserve Our Hill Country Environment. Meeting addressed limited county authority to address growth issues. Meeting was well attended; Dan Tharp provided CCCA postcards to distribute; a link to presentation and follow-up advocacy will be forthcoming. Take away: contact County Commissioners in favor of resolution to request legislation for greater authority (e.g., impact fees, impervious cover limits); contact state legislators to support such legislation.

Jensie also announced that Guadalupe County is developing a strategic plan; to her knowledge, only Travis County has one. She encouraged any Guadalupe County residents to get involved (see www.guidingguadalupe.com).

Laura shared information about the Sentinel Peak Preserve (<https://sentinelpeakpreserve.org/>), an effort to raise funds to purchase ~2,400 acre property in Comal and Hays counties, which includes golden-cheeked warbler habitat and is for sale by the Houston Area Boy Scouts.

Helen Ballew thanked the GEAA, Hill Country Alliance (HCA), and LWVCA for their foundational work. She said CCCA has an ambitious agenda as the first umbrella group for conservation in the county. As part of the Greater Springs Project (GSP), earlier in the day she visited Comal, Hueco, Blue Hole, and San Pedro springs; all except Comal were dry. She welcomed Diane Wassenich of San Marcos River Foundation (SMRF), which works with GSP and has grown to become a land trust.

Diane Wassenich explained how the City of San Marcos received funding to purchase land (that had been purchased by the SMRF) to protect water resources. The grant funds are from the Clean Water Fund (federal) through the Texas Water Development Board. SMRF facilitated the city applying for the loan of \$3.2 million, of which 1.3 million (45%) will be forgiven. SMRF will help city apply for money to pay off loan. She encouraged taking funds raised to leverage funding from other granting agencies.

Jensie pointed out that the County Commissioners are not actively pursuing funding for land conservation. One objective of the Government Affairs Committee is to advocate for a task force to research these options for the county.

Annalisa Peace of GEAA expressed her enthusiasm for seeing this group come to fruition after two to three years in the making.

Helen introduced standing committees and explained briefly the proposed tasks of each committee so that new attendees could decide with which committee they wanted to work. The Communications and Marketing Committee and the Resource Development Committee were still in need of Chairs. Each committee needs to develop a budget for the grant proposal to be submitted to McKenna. Group broke into committees.

Committees reported.

Government Affairs Committee: Jensie Madden, Chair, reported that committee will be using the issue of water resources to talk to County Commissioners; will press for task force to research ways to acquire land for protections. Committee will continue to self-educate. Participating on the Government Affairs Committee tonight: Jensie Madden, Troy Lumpkin, Ellen Anderson, Robin Engel, Rick Brunner, and John Sullivan. Previously signed up: Liz Robbins, David McCallum, and Helen Ballew.

Communications and Marketing Committee: Georgia Shaffer, website and graphic designer, volunteered to chair committee. Committee is developing logo from which all other “branding” will flow. Committee discussed web hosting site, web site content, printed material options, and budget needs. Participating on the Communications and Marketing Committee tonight: Dan Tharp, Georgia Shaffer, Mary Phillips, Gloria Meehan, Steve Beach, and Eva Silverfine Ott.

Resource Development Committee: Marné Peterson volunteered to chair committee. She made an impassioned appeal for action. Committee discussed need for fundraiser and Gruene venues for a “Kick-Off” event in September. Committee will also pursue grants and big donors. . Committee will also pursue big donors. Participating on the Resource Development Committee tonight: Marné Peterson, Laura Sivy-de la Cruz, Leslie Dey, Warren Smalley, Dorothy Carroll, and Elizabeth Bowerman.

Outreach Committee: Joel Dunnington reported the committee discussed identifying additional volunteers and partner organizations as well as identifying important and unique properties in the county (will follow up with Meadows Center regarding their watershed mapping). The committee will develop a letter of agreement to recruit other organizations and develop a budget for a landowners meeting to be held in early 2019. Participating on the Outreach Committee tonight: Joel Dunnington, John Sullivan, Tony Sellers, Daniel Oppenheimer, Deedy Wright, Hellen Ballew, Louise Brunner, and Harry Sutherland.

Laura announced next meetings.

The next General Meeting will be Tuesday, July 10th, 6–8 p.m. at [GVTC auditorium](#), Smithson Valley. General meeting will now be held the second Tuesday of each month at this location.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.