



Conservation Insider

October 2022

Hello, CCCA Friends, Partners, and Volunteers,

I'm sure we're all happy to welcome Fall and are enjoying the cool mornings! Now, let's hope that the traditional Fall rains will follow. Although the little bit of rain we got in mid-September was enough to make the weeds green-up and allow the native plants to bloom, the drought is not over and our area is still far enough behind in rainfall for 2022 to be a contender as the driest year on record if something doesn't change before year end! Do your rain dance! (If you don't have one . . . make one up! 😊)

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## CCCA NEWS

### Thank You!

Big thanks to all who donated to CCCA during the Big Give Fundraiser!

Your gifts will help preserve our beautiful Texas Hill Country. We can't do it without you - our CCCA Friends!

Didn't have a chance to give during the Big Give? You can always go to [comalconservation.org](http://comalconservation.org) and make a donation through our website.

Let's KEEP COMAL WILD!

## Exciting News! CCCA is Hiring an Executive Director

Comal County Conservation Alliance is seeking a dynamic Executive Director to lead the organization into its next chapter.

The Executive Director will guide the organization through the transition to become staff supported and managed as we continue to bring awareness and a conservation perspective to the residents of Comal County.

Please read the full Job Description, including responsibilities, desired qualifications and application procedures [HERE](#).

## CCCA 2022 Interest Survey

CCCA has recently published its 2022 Interest Survey – the first one since 2018! Thanks to our great volunteers and community support, CCCA has come a long way in these first four years - but there is still much to be done. The broad variety of skills and experience found in our Comal community are impressive and are needed to take CCCA to the next level.

If you have not already completed the survey, we encourage you to take a few minutes to do so and tell us how you'd like to help. Even if you are already volunteering with CCCA please take the short survey and list your interests so they will be included in the results.

Click [HERE](#) and get started.

Working together we can make a difference!

## Be Sure to Look for Us at These Events:

Fall Monarch Festival – October 22 - Fischer Park, in NB, 11 AM – 2 PM (Rain Day – Oct 29)

Trick or Treat at the Tracks – October 22 – Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country, in Canyon Lake – 5 PM – 7 PM

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SAVE THE DATE

CCCA Community Program

WHAT: CCCA Community Program “*Drought! – The New Normal?*” with speaker Todd Votteler, Ph.D., President of Collaborative Water Resolution LLC

WHEN: Wednesday, November 9, 6:00-7:30 PM

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

EVENT INFO: Another year, another drought? This entire year CCCA has focused our programs on water! Our final speaker for 2022 is none other than Todd Votteler, Ph.D. Todd is President of Collaborative Water Resolution LLC, Editor-in-Chief of the Texas Water Journal and Texas+Water, and hosts the Talk+Water podcast. He will discuss the current drought and issues regarding the management of water in the future.

A free public program.

Canyon Lake Gorge Tours

Join CCCA on a private tour of this incredible Texas Phenomenon

The Canyon Lake Gorge was carved by the flood of 2002 when more than 67,000 cubic feet of water per second flowed over the Canyon Lake spillway, marking the first time the spillway was used since the dam was completed in 1964. The power of water sliced open the ground below the spillway exposing the 110-million-year-old Cretaceous Glen Rose limestone and unearthing geologic wonders including fossils, dinosaur footprints, exposed faults, aquifers, beautiful lagoons, breathtaking waterfalls, and dramatic vistas.

The 3 HOUR GUIDED TOUR is a slow- paced walk through the Gorge, covering 1.25 miles with many stopping points for photos and educational information delivered by a trained guide (CCCA member Mike Poffenberger, retired geoscientist and Master Naturalist.).

HEALTH ADVISORY: Be advised that the tour is physically demanding due to the rugged terrain as there are numerous steps up and down as well as walking on uneven surfaces. Persons with bad knees or ankles, heart conditions or are easily winded may want to consider one of the other gorge tours available through GBRA.

PRIVATE CCCA GORGE TOUR TICKETS

A private CCCA tour will be held on October 22 and October 29, from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Only 20 spots are available on each of the 2 tours, and will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. The GBRA Tour fee is \$21 per person. Book your spot(s) early! A waiting list will be set up after the 40 spots are filled, for people who wish to be notified in the case of a cancellation or the addition of other tour dates.

It's a beautiful time of year to get outside and enjoy our cool(er) Fall weather!

Hope you can join us.

Click [HERE](#) for more information about the CCCA Gorge Tours and to register for your spot(s)

Canyon Lake Charity Wreath Auction

Please plan to stop in to support CCCA at the Wreath Silent Auction hosted by St. Francis by the Lake Episcopal Church in Canyon Lake. The Wreath Silent Auction event is being held to increase community awareness of the nonprofits in the area and help raise a little money to support their work.

The Silent Auction will be held for one week: Sat Oct 29 through Sat Nov 5, as follows:

- Oct 29: 7 AM – 7 PM
- Oct 30: 12 PM – 6 PM
- Oct 31 - Nov 4: 7 AM – 7 PM
- Nov 5: 9 AM – 3 PM – BIDDING CLOSES AT 3 PM,
- Nov 5: 3-4 PM - Closing Celebration

Location: **121 Spring Mountain Drive, Canyon Lake, TX** (intersection of FM 306 and Spring Mountain Drive.

Be sure to come by on Saturday, Nov 5 between 2 and 3 PM to make your final bid and enjoy wine, hors d'oeuvres and sweet treats. Shortly after 3 PM, the highest bidders will be named, will claim their Wreaths and award their checks to the charity whose wreath they won.

Ellyn Hickey, one of CCCA's very talented artist 'Friends', has created a beautiful one-of-a-kind wreath as CCCA's entry. Come bid on it and support our mission!

We'll see you there!

Note: Early voting will be occurring at St Francis by the Lake in the Great Hall Oct 29 through Nov 4.

Come vote and then place a bid on the CCCA wreath!

CCCA Holiday Party

Please join CCCA for a Holiday Party!

LOCATION: Faust Hotel on Seguin St. in New Braunfels. Once again, we will enjoy the wonderful ambiance of the Historic Faust Hotel!

DATE: Tuesday, 6 Dec, 5 PM to 8 PM.

FOOD, FUN and SILENT AUCTION: We will have a terrific silent auction of "Adventures and Experiences". When you think of the coming year, let's make 2023 a year of "getting out there" and enjoying the great outdoors!

Watch for more details to come!

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## IN OTHER NEWS

### *Blanco County Residents Organize to Conserve*

On Thursday evening, September 15, nearly 180 residents of Blanco County gathered to learn about the growth and development issues affecting them and what actions can be taken to help balance growth with protecting their critical water supply and rural character. Much like the two "Planning for Growth" conferences held in Comal County in

2017, the group heard from conservation groups in the surrounding counties who discussed development, land fragmentation, threats to groundwater resources, and options available for dealing with these issues. CCCA's president, Elizabeth Bowerman, spoke to the group about how CCCA got started and stressed the importance of citizen involvement and building good working relationships with elected officials, and encouraged the group to "Just do it!"

### *Kendall County's Open Space Bond*

Following a county-wide poll in which Kendall County residents showed overwhelming support for protection of open space and water quality and quantity in the county, Kendall County Commissioners recently voted to place a \$20M bond on the November ballot, for the purpose of acquiring open space and conservation easements on land to ensure its availability for recreational or open space use, protecting wildlife habitat, or to protect the water quality of creeks, rivers and springs.

Way to go, Kendall County!

### *Bandera County Expanding Minimum Lot Size*

In response to concerns about the increasing number of subdivisions coming into the county and the resulting stress on the county's water supply, effective 1 September, Bandera County increased the minimum lot size required to drill new domestic wells from 5 acres to 10 acres. With limited authority to guide land use decisions outside city limits, Bandera County Commissioners and the local Groundwater Conservation District dug deep to find a way to use the tools they do have to do more to help protect the water supply and rural character of Bandera County. As one official put it, "the 2023 State legislative session offers another opportunity for county officials to seek the increased authority needed to protect our water, open spaces, rural character and quality of life in the Hill Country while we still can, and we're hopeful that, with a majority of the Hill Country counties asking for this authority, we might be able to make a difference before it's too late."

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CCCA H-Z OCTOBER Column

Have You Been to the Gorge at Canyon Lake?

Written by Frank Dietz for the Herald-Zeitung, October 1, 2022

One of the natural wonders of our Comal County in the Texas Hill Country is the slice through the Earth's surface alongside Canyon Dam. An extreme rainfall event of 30 inches above Canyon Lake and Dam along the Guadalupe watershed in 2002 gave us this phenomenal wonder. In a matter of 6 days a fifty-foot-deep slice of the Earth surface spanning between 50 to 150 feet wide when the lake's spillway had to relieve pressures on the dam, gave us a peek at the historic wonders beneath us. This "pie slice" removed more than 300,000 tons of earthen material. The relatively flat surface with a shallow creek was no more!

The Saturdays of 22 and 29 October from 9:30AM until 12:30 PM, you can join a guided walking tour through the Gorge in an extraordinary 3 hours of discovery. This trek is not for the faint of heart and requires some special hiking shoes and preparation. Check [HERE](#) for specifics and a route to reserving a place in one of the two groups. Each Saturday is limited to 20 spots. Once those are full, a reserve list for others seeking a chance to make the trip on another date will be developed. Too, for those with more limited stamina or mobility worries, an Overlook Trail has been opened during this last year. It is approximately two miles looping along the northern rim and can be self-directed. Some accompanied opportunities may become possible with informed guides in coming months. Watch the website for those announcements.

In the fall of 2007, I drew a lucky pass for a group guided tour in the early months of the Gorge's limited availability to the public. This old Geology lab assistant from decades earlier awakened to such wonder with a select group of family and friends the day before Thanksgiving. I was fortunate in securing as guide an Historical Geology enthusiast who gave us more information than we could process but opened the secrets uncovered in the Gorge from the exposed 110-million-year-old Cretaceous Glen Rose limestone world. In addition to springs and small waterfalls, fossilized sea urchins quite perfectly preserved along with small and large dinosaur prints were abundant. From macro to micro the fossils and their stories abound! You can even see fossilized ocean ripples preserved in the limestone.

Read the entire article at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/published-columns.html>

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## CCCA OCTOBER SPOTLIGHT

### Monarch Migration

Our Spotlight this month is on Monarch Migration. The Fall migration of Monarch butterflies through Texas is a magical time! They stop as they travel through the state to load up on nectar which will build the fat stores that will get them through the winter in Mexico. When Texas suffers from drought, as we have this year, we don't have enough wildflowers for them to fatten up on, potentially breaking the cycle and reducing their populations. We can do our part to help prevent that. Read on to learn about their amazing life cycle, what these iconic butterflies need to survive, and what we can do to help.

From: *Monarch Joint Venture*

#### "Monarch Migration"

Each fall, North American monarchs travel from their summer breeding grounds to overwintering locations. East of the Rocky Mountains, monarchs travel up to an astonishing 3,000 miles to central Mexico, whereas the shorter migration west of the Rockies is to the California coast. There is evidence of some interchange between the eastern and western populations, perhaps when individuals cross the Rocky Mountains, when butterflies fly from the western U.S. to the Mexican wintering sites, or butterflies from the Mexican sites fly into the western U.S.

Continue reading at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/monarch-migration.html#monarch-migration>

**From: Monarch Butterfly Fund's *Conserving the Migration* Newsletter**

## **"Monarch Life Cycle"**

The life of a monarch begins when a female monarch lays an egg, usually on the underside of a milkweed leaf. The egg hatches after 3-5 days to reveal a very small larva (caterpillar). Over a period of 9-15 days, the larva increases its body mass about 2,000 times as it grows and molts (sheds its skin) five times to allow for the rapid increase in size.

Continue reading at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/monarch-migration.html#monarch-life-cycle>

**From: Texas A&M's *AgriLife Today***

## **"Monarch Butterflies Facing Battle Royal for Survival; Pollinators Placed on International Conservation Organization's Red List as Endangered"**

**By Paul Schattenberg, August 1, 2022**

Monarch butterflies have long graced the skies of Texas during their annual migration. However, their population has been in steady decline, and recently the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, IUCN, placed the monarch butterfly on its Red List of threatened species, classifying it as endangered.

The IUNC's Red List is a comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species. It is a tool for promoting the biodiversity conservation and policy change needed to protect the world's flora and fauna.

Texas A&M AgriLife entomologists are concerned about the decline in monarch butterfly populations and want Texans and others to understand why these "regal" insects are important to agriculture and the environment.

Continue reading at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/monarch-migration.html#monarch-survival>

**From: Texas *Butterfly Ranch***

## **"Recent IUCN "Endangered" Listing Creates Confusion for Monarch Butterfly Fans"**

**By Monika Maeckle July 26th, 2022**

A recent designation of the monarch butterfly as "endangered" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had monarch aficionados' heads spinning last week.

The organization, composed of government agencies and NGOs from around the world, issued a press release July 21 adding the monarch butterfly to its Red List of Threatened Species, citing habitat destruction and climate change.

And yet in May, news broke that the eastern migratory monarch population enjoyed a 35% increase this year over last. In January, conservationists announced that the number of

California's monarchs, which move up and down the Pacific Coast, vaulted more than 12,000% in 2021. Given such robust monarch numbers over the past two years, the IUCN "endangered" designation came as a surprise.

Continue reading at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/monarch-migration.html#monarch-info>

All the above articles and MANY more are available to read in the October Spotlight section of our website at:

<https://www.comalconservation.org/monarch-migration.html>

*Stay safe and enjoy nature!*

**Comal County Conservation Alliance**

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

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