



Conservation Insider

September 2023

Hello, CCCA Friends, Partners, and Volunteers,

As August comes to a close it is hard to believe that Fall is here. For the first time in a longtime, my weather app indicates that the 100-degree streak is starting to taper off. While the cooler temperatures will bring much needed relief, the discussions around our state's water infrastructure and access to parks and open space is kicking into high gear.

I want to encourage each of you join us over the next two months as we host a series of discussions about the extreme strain that our environmental systems are currently under and the tools that we have, to reduce this strain and prepare for growth. On September 12th Katherine Romans, the Executive Director of the Hill Country Alliance, will speak to our group about "*The Long Game: Creating lasting conservation in a high growth region.*" I have no doubt that it will be a powerful presentation.

In October we will be partnering with the League of Women Voters-Comal Area, to host an "Environmental Townhall" so we can fully understand the initiatives that the legislature has put on the ballot this November to help fund water supply projects that create new water sources for communities and to fund the Centennial Parks Conservation fund, creating new state parks. At the end of the month, we will be partnering with the Tye Preston Memorial Library to celebrate our state's natural beauty with a showing of "Deep in the Heart" a nature documentary that captures the rugged beauty of Comal County and the Lonestar state. Thank you for everything you do to protect land, water, and wildlife here in Comal County. I appreciate it.

Ryan Spencer

Executive Director

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THE BIG GIVE IS COMING!

Wednesday, September 20th, 6 PM — September 21st, 6 PM

Please Support CCCA With Your Donation!

Help preserve land, water, and wildlife in Comal County!

Ensure clean water, healthy natural areas, reduced flooding, and top-notch recreational opportunities.

Make an investment in our county's future.

Thank you!

Let's Keep Comal **Wild!**



www.thebiggivesa.org/organizations/comal-county-conservation-alliance

Comal County Conservation Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Please support CCCA in the BIG GIVE.... September 20 & 21. This is your chance to help save land, water, and wildlife in beautiful Comal County. All Big Give donations to CCCA will go to our Comal Land Conservation Fund to help

support projects designed to preserve natural areas and help keep our rivers and springs flowing.

Join the Team!

Want to get involved with CCCA in a more active way? We are growing and expanding our work in the community and are looking for a part-time Administrative Coordinator to join the staff.

This work-from-home position involves a variety of projects, including:

- Volunteer Development and Placement
- Interest Surveys
- Database Management
- Publicity
- Newsletter Creation
- Email Monitoring

The ideal candidate is self-motivated and detail-oriented, with strong organizational skills and proficiency in Word, Excel, Outlook, and Google Suite. Hours are 20-25 per week with the opportunity for additional work. See the full job description, compensation, and application details at [Career Opps - Comal County Conservation Alliance \(CCCA\)](#) (comalconservation.org)

Thank You

CCCA thanks Chef Marcién, the Neighborhood Gourmet, for providing the delicious meal, and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Comal County for hosting our most recent “Preserving a Land Legacy” workshop! We appreciate our sponsors and thank Rachael Lindsey, Director of Science and Stewardship for the Hill Country Conservancy, for her presentation on how conservation easements can be used by landowners to preserve their family land legacy.

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SAVE THE DATE

CCCA Community Program

WHAT: Katherine Romans, Executive Director of Hill Country Alliance, will describe the tools and approaches that the Hill Country Alliance and the broader Texas Hill Country Conservation Network are employing to shift the future of this region we call home. She'll talk about the role each of us can play, and why what we need more than ever is strong leadership, consistent grassroots advocacy, and a shared vision for the Hill Country we want to hand on to future generations of Central Texans.

WHEN: Tuesday, September 12, 6:00-7:30 PM

WHERE: McKenna Events Center, 801 W. San Antonio Street, New Braunfels, TX 78130



Community Program

**EVERYONE
IS WELCOME!**

SPEAKER

Katherine Romans
Executive Director
Hill Country Alliance

TOPIC

"The Long Game: Creating lasting conservation in a high growth region"

WHEN

Tuesday, September 12, 2023
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

WHERE

McKenna Events Center
801 W San Antonio St
New Braunfels, TX



WWW.COMALCONSERVATION.ORG

IN OTHER NEWS



HCA Leadership Summit: "From Vision to Action" September 28th!

The Hill Country Alliance invites you to join them in-person or online on Thursday, September 28 at The Hall at Jester King Brewery in Dripping Springs. Presentations will run from 8:45AM - 4PM, with lunch provided from 12-1PM and several networking breaks throughout the day. The event will be followed by a happy hour featuring live music entertainment from 4-6PM.

Virtual and in-person tickets are available now on HCA's website. Virtual attendees will receive additional communication in advance of the Summit, including a link to a livestream of the day's events. All attendees will also receive access to a recording of the Summit after the close of the event.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Climate Science Conference: The Good, The Bad, and The Wicked

Date: Thursday, September 7, 2023 – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Location: LBJ Grand Ballroom at the LBJ Student Center on the Texas State University-San Marcos campus

Register: <https://climate.meadowswater.org/>

View the conference agenda: <https://themedowscenter.com/program-copy/>

Dive into the depths of climate science at The Good, The Bad, and The Wicked conference on September 7 in San Marcos. Hear from experts, exchange ideas, and explore interdisciplinary approaches to tackle Texas' wicked climate challenges. Limited spots available, register today.

Defending Wildlife and Wildlands in the Hill Country

by Azalia Rodriguez, Defenders of Wildlife

July 19, 2023

DRIPPING SPRINGS, Texas – As the Texas Hill Country landscape continues to change, local wildlife is being pushed to its limits. Golden-cheeked Warbler populations are declining, indicator species in our waterways are disappearing, and migratory birds are being directed off their natural flight pathway.

Conservationists caution against the predictable fate of our beloved Texas Hill Country as rapid growth continues to surpass conservation in the state. If development is expected to support the growth of millions of people coming to the Hill Country over the next 20 years, it must be balanced with strategic investments in natural infrastructure.

In creating the *Hill Country Land, Water, Sky and Natural Infrastructure Plan* (Natural Infrastructure Plan), the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network surveyed a sample of Hill Country residents and found that a majority prioritized protecting water supplies. The more than 2,800 respondents also highlighted prioritizing protections for wildlife habitats and open lands.

The Natural Infrastructure Plan is a blueprint to maintain wild landscapes for growing municipalities through actions like land conservation easements and endangered species protections. Natural infrastructure — ecological systems such as forested open space, healthy rangeland, and starry skies — benefit all life.

Water supply in the Hill County is struggling to support seasons of drought and is further challenged by the floods that often follow. As made clear by recent wildfires and dry creek beds, drought impacts on land are easy to see but are far less apparent when it comes to underground aquifers.

Learn more about the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network's informative *Hill Country Land, Water, Sky and natural Infrastructure Plan* at: <https://ourtxhillcountry.org/news/>

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CCCA H-Z SEPTEMBER COLUMN

"Are We Reaching the Tipping Point?"

By Frank Dietz, for the H-Z September 2, 2023

My elementary school teacher aunt was a bundle of fun. I was the first to help her achieve "aunt" status. She spent some of her off-time giving me lots of attention. I remember how

much I delighted in her times with me. She had an array of little table games and floor puzzles we would endeavor to work on together. Several carried the themes related to balance, height and how far you could build blocks upward. “Oops, tipping point!” became the expression I learned early. Today, so many decades later, it becomes an apt signal for what we are experiencing for real, not just metaphorically, on a number of fronts. Do you feel it as I do?

Whether the subject is fresh abundant water, spaces across our Hill Country to explore without impediment or some of the scary statistics regarding the shrinking census of wildlife it certainly feels like those times when we were reaching the pinnacle of a stacking group of blocks before it all came tumbling down. Early in the new 21st century I discovered Estaville and Earl’s Texas Water Atlas, a helpful snapshot of the full Texas picture of surface and subsurface waters in a region prone to periodic stretches of drought. Seamus McGraw built further perspective with his impressive discussion of Thirsty Land. The list of resources and reports going forward document that this is a very serious matter both when looking to our surface and subsurface water sources and sustaining their quality. Do we near a “tipping point?”

Drive around the Texas Hill Country and our Comal County, in particular, and you soon see documentation of what it means to be listed as 1st, 2nd or 3rd in rapid growth of population and households. It signals spacious parcels being carved into small affordable settlements and buildings. Alongside these fresh carvings across the escarpment that creates our Texas Hill Country there is a notable disappearance of green cover and the wildlife it supports. The challenge to manage a way to honor the passionate interests for settling near our Springs and Rivers with respectful protections for open space is clearly upon us. The question basically is whether we are now near the “tipping point” toward seeing loss of what has been so attractive to many.

On September 12th from 6-7:30 p.m. at McKenna Events Center concerned citizens can gather for discovery and learning with one of the most informed Hill Country stewards and friends who seek to achieve this delicate balance. Katherine Romans, Executive Director of the Hill County Alliance, will bring a current snapshot and tools to create a careful future before the tipping point is reached. Do come and bring neighbors and family!

Along with this September opportunity for a fresh current look at our precious Texas Hill Country will be an opportunity to support the Comal Land Conservation Fund of the CCCA through the BIG GIVE on September 20th. Watch for the public announcements of this important effort in league with an array of important non-profits seeking to assist folks and make a difference in lives and create a more viable future. The CCCA’s Land Fund is designed to build sufficient capacity to lend a hand for landowners unable to take the several expensive steps toward creating a Conservation Easement. Once achieved, the fund’s assistance can be reimbursed but the enablement can happen. Check out some of the specifics for this year’s BIG GIVE and the Comal Land Conservation Fund at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/comal-land-conservation-fund.html>. Your help will make a difference!

Help sustain the delicate balance!

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Stay safe, stay healthy, enjoy Nature!

Comal County Conservation Alliance

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

Info@comalconservation.org

Tell your friends, family and neighbors about our Conservation Insider Newsletter!

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