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From: Comal County Conservation Alliance <comalccalliance@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 07, 2023 9:53 PM
To: roxanna@gvtc.com
Subject: CCCA Conservation Insider



Conservation Insider

November 2023

Hello, CCCA Friends, Partners, and Volunteers,

Rain, Rain, Rain! While all of us know that much more rain is needed to bring us out of drought it sure feels good to see a second Spring before the onset of Winter. As the season of gratitude kicks off, I want you to know how much we appreciate you. During the month of October, CCCA hosted two Community Programs, and it was wonderful seeing the outpouring of support for our "Conservation Townhall" and our showing of "Deep in the Heart." Thank you for continuing to be part of the effort!

Don't forget that the next Community Program at the McKenna Center on **November 14th, 2023**, starting at 6:00pm! The program will focus on "*Preserving our Rural Heritage*" and features speakers from the Texas Historical Commission and the Comal County Historical Commission. It will certainly be a fascinating discussion. I also want to remind you to make

your voices heard at the polls today! This year there are two environmental propositions on the ballot (Prop 6 and Prop 14) and your voice is needed as the state of Texas wrestles with making these investments in Water Infrastructure and State Parks. As always, thank you for everything you do to preserve land, water, and wildlife in Comal County. I appreciate it.

Ryan Spencer

Executive Director

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CCCA NEWS

CCCA Welcomes two new Advisory Board Members!

Rex Blackburn moved to Bulverde in 1974, at a time when Comal Country and Bulverde/Spring Branch were very rural. Hwy 281 was a two-lane road. Rex says, "I remember Luke's gas station, still here at 281 and Bulverde Road, and Ferdi's restaurant. After moving around the country for business during the 80's and 90's he returned to the Texas Hill Country for Good in 1999.

Rex has spent the last 24 years in Real Estate and now operates the BLUE COLLAR COMMERCIAL GROUP with Keller Williams in Spring Branch. He brings a strong knowledge of the continued growth in residential as well as commercial real estate in this area. He understands the stress that this puts on the area and its resources and is a forefront and firm promoter of responsible development.

Rex's belief is simple: "The Hill Country will keep growing, but by working together, we can shape this growth wisely, sustainably, and for the long term."

Rusty Brockman retired in 2001 from the Comal ISD after a 30-year career in public education. He served as a teacher, coach, elementary and middle school principal and central office administrator in four different school districts.

Upon retirement from public education, Rusty joined the Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce as Vice President of Economic Development. He retired in March 2018 after 17 years in that position. Since 2018 Rusty has been Community Relations Coordinator for Cemex Balcones.

In May 2020, Rusty was sworn in as Mayor of New Braunfels, a position he is honored to have served. His first term was completed in May 2023, and he chose not to seek re-election to spend more time with his family.

Rusty has been married to his wife M'Liss for 48 years and both are lifelong Lutherans. He and M'Liss moved to New Braunfels in 1986 and are proud to say that all of their children and 6 grandchildren are happily living in New Braunfels.

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CCCA NEWS

November Community Program

"Protecting Comal's Rural Heritage"

WHEN: Tuesday, November 14th, 6:00 - 7:30 PM

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

WHAT: Tiffany Osburn, Regional Archeologist with the Texas Historical Commission, and Cindy Coers, Chair of the Comal County Historical Commission will join CCCA to talk about *"Protecting Comal's Rural Heritage."*

As Comal County experiences rapid growth and development, its rural lands are being fragmented. These lands contain the remaining ranches, farmsteads, historic schools, and special places that have long defined Comal County's rural heritage. However, these same lands also play a critical role in supporting our watersheds, foodways, wildlife, and natural infrastructure. This program will discuss the value of preserving of our rural heritage along with offering tools for preservation of historic resources. Rain, Rain, Rain! While all of us know that much more rain is needed to bring us out of drought it sure feels good to see a second spring before the onset of Winter. As the season of gratitude kicks off, I want you to

know how much we appreciate you. During the month of October, we hosted two Community Programs, and it was wonderful seeing the outpouring of support for our “Conservation Townhall” and our showing of Deep in the Heart. Thank you for continuing to fuel our efforts!



Community Program

This program will discuss the preservation of our rural heritage along with tools for preservation of historic resources.

We'll also discuss historic recognition and designations available, relevant preservation law, and informational resources available at the county, state, and federal levels.



Walzem Homestead, 1854, New Braunfels, Comal County

SPEAKERS

Tiffany Osburn, Regional Archeologist
Texas Historical Commission

&

Cindy Coers, Chair
Comal County Historical Society



TOPIC

"Protecting Comal's Rural Heritage"

WHEN

Tuesday, November 14th
6:00 - 7:30 PM

WHERE

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



Everyone is welcome!

www.ComalConservation.org

Looking for a way to help protect Comal's rivers and springs?

Preserving Comal County's natural beauty and rural character is a job for the whole community. Won't you join the effort? CCCA is looking for volunteers to help advance the conservation work in Comal County by helping CCCA in one of the following areas:

- Graphic Designer
- Facebook Manager
- Newsletter Editor
- Website Assistant

Interested candidates should submit their contact information and brief message at: www.comalconservation.org/donatecontact.html

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CCCA H-Z SEPTEMBER COLUMN

"LET'S TAKE A DEEP DIVE INTO COMAL'S RURAL HERITAGE"

By Frank Dietz, for the H-Z November 4, 2023

Conversations through a number of decades with heritage farm and agriculture families have been impressive and revealing. Many such visits have been with our neighbors in and around Comal County and the beloved Texas Hill Country. Others are rooted from a long period of dialogue in a program sponsored by the Rural Sociology Department of Texas A&M University and the Extension Service (now known as AgriLife). Professional ordained clergy and laity in the state's rural communities were brought together as part of the Town and Country Church Conference each fall. Such conversations generated a host of interesting words growing out of the rural heritage of Texas families. Some of the words that come to mind are: interesting, inspiring, courageous, informative, revealing, provocative, concerning, challenging and more. My impressions and learnings rooted in these encounters form the basis for my inviting you to join CCCA (Comal County Conservation Alliance) in a special adventure of discovery and information.

On Tuesday, November 14th from 6-7:30 pm at McKenna Center we will have an opportunity to hear from an impressive regional archeologist, Tiffany Osburn of the Texas Historical Commission and Cindy Coers who chairs our Comal County Historical Commission. Each of these resource presenters brings a host of information, a collection of stories and descriptions of

family legacies and the value of the rural heritage so rapidly disappearing with the rapid pace of development all around us in every corner of our County. Bring your questions and inquiries.

My own experience in sitting with varieties of Texans endeavoring to continue productive life on family heritage acreage always has left me astonished, impressed and amazed. The wealth of life lessons drawn from those endeavoring to be productive on acreage in many regions of our state is astonishing. That only gets magnified in the small but blessed boundaries of our own Comal County. The early tools for working and enhancing the land and its gifts prompt explanations that exhibit reverence for the natural world, bright ingenuity to “figure things out” and an amazing array of respectful restorative practices that invest in the future. Much of what we now would describe in sophisticated terms about eco-friendly practices were a part of the learned and practiced behaviors from early on.

Our visit with our specialists on November 14 regarding our rural heritage will help us see the pathways open for our own endeavors going forward. What about water, its careful use and capture for further utilization? What ways would enhance and encourage biodiversity rather than abuse and destroy the natural gifts too often taken for granted?

If this description supports protections for wildlife, pollinators, land kept in more natural and productive forms as opposed to just providing more expansive growth corridor settlements, you’re absolutely correct. How we honor and appreciate the rural heritage and protect it while welcoming those appreciating and enhancing the heritage in dynamic Comal County shapes an agenda we can share for the future.

While speaking of an agenda for the future, I would be remiss to not remind you that this Tuesday, November 7, you will have an opportunity to show support for precious water and parks. Two of the several amendments are important onetime funding from current surpluses. A yes vote on Proposition 6 establishes the Texas Water Fund. Likewise, a yes vote on Proposition 14 will similarly assist funding future parks. Vote wisely on the several options but be sure to help affirm items 6 and 14! Thanks in advance.

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IN OTHER NEWS

New Landowner Resources Available

From the Hill Country Alliance: [Hillside Stewardship Guide](#)

HCA's Hillside Stewardship Handbook has been months in the making. 'We couldn't be more excited about this resource and the beautiful graphics and information it contains. As you know, 2023 was one of the most acute years of drought our region has seen. Everything we can do to slow, sink, and store water on the land will make a difference. This guide shows a variety of practices that can help mitigate erosion and enhance water catchment on their properties for

when rain finally returns to the Hill Country. Feel free to share this resource with landowners in your network!"

Conservation Easement Webinar | November 14th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Join HCA for a free webinar on conservation easements featuring Frank Davis, Chief Conservation Officer at Hill Country Conservancy, as a guest speaker. Frank will present on what conservation easements are, how they benefit landowners, and how to set an easement up on a property. Additionally, two Hill Country landowners will join us to share their experiences in having a conservation easement on their land. Click [here](#) to learn more and register.

Alamo RC&D Agri-Land Workshop | November 28th - in Boerne, TX

Alamo RC&D Area Inc. is hosting a free half-day workshop for local landowners and producers featuring presentations from experts on a variety of land management topics. Topics include Rural Development Programs, NRCS Technical and Financial assistance programs, urban agriculture for small landowners, and more! Please see the attached flyer for an agenda and details. [Follow this link to learn more and register.](#)

Water Reuse in the Hill Country: Analyzing Opportunities in Comal County, Texas

Report released by GEAA's Policy Director, Rachel Hanes, September 2023

The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance is excited to be releasing a report outlining the opportunities present in the Texas Hill Country to use recycled water to alleviate the burdens placed on the Edwards and Trinity Aquifers by focusing on the present and (hopeful) future state of recycled water use in Comal County. Water reuse – using reclaimed and treated wastewater – is an integral step in ensuring that counties in the Hill Country will have the water supplies they need to ensure the health, safety, and quality of life of residents in the years to come.

The status of water reuse in Comal County underscores both the long way Hill Country counties have to go in implementing water reuse systems and the unique opportunities present to do so within their boundaries.

As evidenced by the state of water reuse in Comal County, this source of water is a vastly underutilized tool in the fight to manage the Hill Country's water supplies in the face of prolonged drought and presents a clear opportunity to better preserve our natural resources for the generations to come.

You can view the full report [here](#).

A summary of the report is available [here](#).

Balancing Growth and Conservation: The Water Crisis in Central Texas

By: Kaitie Moore Underwood | REALTOR®, Blue Collar Commercial Group

In the picturesque Hill Country of Central Texas, a perfect storm is brewing—a convergence of heat, drought, and relentless population growth that is pushing local aquifers and springs to their limits. As a commercial real estate agent concerned about responsible development and water conservation, I find myself increasingly troubled by the urgent need for Central Texas conservation districts to prioritize climate-focused management. The sustainability of our communities hinges on striking a balance between growth and conservation.

The Water Crisis Unveiled

Every other day, another concerned resident calls Charlie Flatten, the general manager of the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District in Dripping Springs, with tales of dry water wells. The urgency of the situation becomes apparent when residents are forced to search for water trucks to fill their cisterns due to a shortage in Central Texas. The Trinity Aquifer, the lifeblood of this region, is currently at its lowest recorded level. Iconic natural springs, once a source of pride, are now dwindling or drying up, a testament to the harsh realities of extreme heat, relentless drought, and the growing demand for water.

To add to the complexity of the situation, private companies like Aqua Texas are pumping water beyond authorized limits to meet the surging demand. While conservation districts are striving to ensure responsible water management, Aqua Texas, a subsidiary of Essential Utilities, prioritizes profit over conservation. It's a clash of interests where responsible development and water conservation face off against a business model that thrives on selling water to meet shareholders' expectations. Continuing reading by clicking [here](#).

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Working to preserve land, water, and wildlife in Comal County!

Supporting Nature so Nature can support us!

Comal County Conservation Alliance

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

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