



# Conservation Insider

October 2020



Celebrate  
with us!

October 2020 is our inaugural, month-long celebration of the region's most dazzling night-time feature — the star-twinkling, planet-glowing, comet-crossing night sky — where beauty and wonder abound.



OCT 1 HARVEST MOON



OCT 16 NEW MOON



OCT 31 HUNTER MOON

**Hello CCCA Friends and volunteers!** We hope you all have had the opportunity to spend some time outside enjoying our beautiful change of weather. It appears we are experiencing an early fall this year that is so welcome after our unusual summer of social distancing.

### **CELEBRATE THE NIGHT SKY WITH US THIS OCTOBER!**

After many months of not being able to hold our monthly community meetings we are going to have the first of what we hope will be regular virtual meetings until we can meet again in person.

Since this is the first annual **Hill Country Night Sky Month, October 2020**, launched by the Hill Country Alliance, **CCCA** will present a Zoom community meeting in celebration of our region's night skies and the hard work that Hill Country communities do to preserve it. HCA's Cliff Kaplan will have a presentation for us and we will hear about some of the Friends of the Night Sky groups in our area in case you are interested in joining, and we hope you are! Prepare to learn, connect and have some fun. The meeting information is below. Join us.

#### **Oct. 13 at 6pm CCCA community ZOOM meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82527836770?pwd=YkNYUFUwRjVGYTBUditVMTVadWQ1QT09>

It requires Passcode: **CCCA** to join.

**HCA's Night Skies program** coordinates partner organizations, local governments and parks, and volunteers across the region to preserve Hill Country night skies. This year, the program's emphasis has been on supporting the formation and development of local Friends of the Night Sky groups in many Hill Country counties -- including the Comal County Friends of the Night

Sky (find them on Facebook). Learn more and partake in the celebration by visiting [NightSkyMonth.com](http://NightSkyMonth.com)

**The Hill Country Alliance** is a non-profit organization that works in 17 Hill Country counties on issues related to the stewardship of our region, from the rivers, streams, and aquifers, to the open pastures and woodlands, to vibrant communities, and the preservation of our night skies. HCA's mission is to bring together an ever-expanding alliance of groups with the long-term objective of preserving open spaces, water supply, water quality, and the unique character of the region. Learn more about HCA at [HillCountryAlliance.org](http://HillCountryAlliance.org)

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## MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT ON NIGHT SKIES

Our **CCCA SPOTLIGHT** is on the beauty and importance of preserving the night skies this month! We've also designed a short questionnaire you can answer, sharing your opinions about dark skies and their importance in our county and the Texas Hill Country.

**AND.....** we have links to some fantastic apps to make your Star gazing more productive, as well as links to articles we hope you find educational and interesting.

**Go to:** <https://www.comalconservation.org/monthly-spotlight.html>

**Speaking of STARS! One of Frank Dietz's poetic columns** was recently published in the Herald Zeitung about the beauty of our ever present Night Skies.

## GRACIAS — LOOK UP!

**Frank Dietz October 3, 2020**

The CCCA wishes to express thanks to 61+ generous folks who reached toward open space protection with BIG GIVE gifts to enhance the Land Conservation Fund! For those wishing they had or who failed to reach out on that day, you can go to the CCCA website and hit DONATE! Thanks for helping!

When last have you looked skyward at night? There's much in the NIGHT SKIES you'll want to see and some you'll wish you could see! Let's chat a bit about this gift that for too many of us is diminishing. Let's thank those seeking to make a difference as well.

My early life opportunities took us as a family out on a pier into a bay along the Gulf Coast. On waning and waxing moonlit nights, the clarity of the array of celestial displays was spectacular. My first sighting of the Milky Way led to an inquiry, "what's up there?" I suspect my heart beat more rapidly as I wondered, "could those be headlights or something?!" Some of those nights' star reflections were on the calm waters as was true when the moon would be full. That clear memory stirred with a rapid heartbeat again when I first came to Comal County in the late 1950s. In those days the Night Skies were glorious at Slumber Falls Camp for youth and the ranch where we share a patch of pasture. Through the long years, the ever developing I-35 corridor and our springs and rivers village brought a fading skies with a crescendo of bright night lights. Now we drive a distance rather than into one of the pastures for clarity of night time skies.

The GOOD NEWS is that across the Hill Country and its communities as well as right here in Comal County and New Braunfels there are folks determined to mitigate the intrusive lights with special measures. Our Comal County Commissioners resolved in 2018 to take our celestial gifts to heart and pursue constructive measures.... *continue reading at*

<https://www.comalconservation.org/night-skies.html>

**AND** you may read Frank's previous columns as well as those written by Ernie Wittwer on our website: <https://www.comalconservation.org/hz-monthly-columns.html>

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## **UPDATE ON THE BIG GIVE**

We are so thankful for our generous Friends who dug deep into their pockets to support our efforts to preserve land and protect our natural resources during the recent Big Give 2020 campaign. Thanks to our Donors, Volunteers and Friends we are growing as a Community Organization which enables us to speak for Comal's precious Land and Water resources. As of 21 Sept, we received through Big Give donations a total of \$9528.60, which included \$1,440 in Big Give prize money plus McKenna Giving Day award of \$2000. In addition, we received through direct contributions \$750 and \$4,040 from two donors. By unanimous vote of the CCCA Board, all the funds will be placed in CCCA's newly established Comal Land and Conservation Fund (CLCF) to assist with land conservation efforts in the county. Thanks to everyone who helped make this a spectacular event for CCCA and Comal County.

The next Big Give is scheduled for Sept 23, 2021.

**And, before we go.**

## **Remember Earth Day on Election Day**

Do you remember Earth Day 2020? Probably not. There were only virtual celebrations of the 50th anniversary on April 22nd, because we were all in lockdown due to Covid-19.

We at the Comal County Conservation Alliance felt the loss of our usual Earth Day recognition. We especially missed celebrating our beautiful Earth's treasures with our friends and neighbors in Comal County. We missed watching children's faces light up when discovering monarch butterflies up close. We missed hearing the exclamations of amazement as young people poured water on a watershed model and saw how water flows from our hills down into the aquifer, or into the rivers and on to the Gulf of Mexico.

Every Earth Day brings the feeling that all of us are a part of something greater and all share a role in protecting the wildlife and the habitats that we are celebrating.

Let's take that Earth Day feeling of protecting and preserving natural areas with us when we vote this November. Let's look for candidates who understand conservation issues, especially in the races that will impact us most directly at the local level. What are candidates saying about protecting our water resources, about preserving natural areas to provide flood protection, and protecting wildlife habitats for future generations?

You can learn what candidates are saying through resources provided by our partner, the non-partisan League of Women Voters of Comal Area. View recorded Candidate Forums for Comal County Commissioners Court, Precinct 1, and for Comal County Commissioners Court, Precinct 3 at [www.lwvcomal.org](http://www.lwvcomal.org).

You can also find a personalized ballot, showing the races and candidates you will be voting on, with candidate responses to questions, at [www.Vote411.org](http://www.Vote411.org).

Inform yourself before you vote. Remember Earth Day on Election Day.

***Stay safe, stay healthy, enjoy nature! See you next month.***

[www.comalconservation.org](http://www.comalconservation.org)

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