



Conservation Insider

September 2021

Welcome Friends, Partners and Volunteers!

What a spectacular month August was for conservation in Comal County. We saw two extremely promising projects take shape here in the county and CCCA has kicked off a new outreach promotion called “KEEP COMAL WILD”. Read all about these exciting projects below.

CCCA NEWS

REMEMBER.... September 23 is the BIG GIVE! This is your chance to help save land, water, and wildlife in our 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 to KEEP COMAL WILD.

AND a brief note about "KEEP COMAL WILD"

We hope you will begin seeing this slogan on vehicles as you drive around Comal County. We want to remind everyone keeping Wild, Open Spaces is important for residents and visitors alike, especially at our time of enormous population growth. We love people but we also love our Hill Country.

You can get these stickers (free!) at our CCCA table during many upcoming community events; and we'll also send you one as a Thank You for donating to CCCA during the Big Give. We would love to see them everywhere! Help us spread the word.

Look for us at these events:

- Comal County Fair – Sept. 25 & 26 – Comal County Fairgrounds (NB)
- Folkfest – Oct. 9 & 10 – Heritage Village (NB)
- Monarch Fall Festival – Oct. 9 – Fischer Park (NB)
- NB Farmers Market – Oct. 30 & Dec. 18

We hope you added this to your calendar !

CCCA's SEPTEMBER VIRTUAL PRESENTATION

With Suzanne Scott, Texas State Director of The Nature Conservancy

September 14, 6:00 - 7:30 PM

<https://zoom.us/join>

Meeting ID: 869 3404 1445

Passcode: 346436

"Prioritizing Nature's Role in Building Resiliency"

The Nature Conservancy in Texas will soon commemorate its millionth acre of land protected in Texas. Although it is a big milestone, it is a small percentage of the land that needs to be protected. There is so much more to do and with the growth in Texas and Comal County specifically, the Nature Conservancy is working hard and fast, including with partners like the Comal County Conservation Alliance, to advance the role of nature to mitigate floods and improve water quality but also to protect biodiversity and ensure that people and nature can thrive together.

More information at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/upcoming-events-2021.html>

COMAL COUNTY NEWS

Comal County Commissioners Court Giant Step

On Thursday, September 26, the Comal County Commissioners Court approved an agenda item to move forward with an application to the Texas Water Development Board for funding to protect land and water and mitigate flooding in Comal County. This may seem like a small step, but it is actually huge! We at the Comal County Conservation Alliance (CCCA) could not be more grateful to Judge Krause and all four commissioners for their foresight and support in taking this step towards doing great things for the land and people of Comal County. CCCA is thrilled, and ready to continue our work with the county to accomplish our shared land conservation goals.

Thank you, Judge Krause, Commissioner Eccleston, Commissioner Webb, Commissioner Haag and Commissioner Crownover!

Texas Parks and Wildlife & Nature Conservancy Partner to Protect Honey Creek

Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioners approved funding that, coupled with funding secured by the Texas Nature Conservancy, would permanently protect the headwaters of Honey Creek.

You all have been hearing about the prospect of a high density housing development from GEAA (Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance) since 2018. Purchase of the Honey Creek Ranch property is the most certain way to assure that Honey Creek State Natural Area remains a treasured and incomparably pristine asset for the citizens of Texas. Likewise, permanent protection of this property will assure continued enjoyment of Guadalupe River State Park, the State's most visited recreational areas. Hopefully we are on the way to realizing an outcome for Honey Creek that is better than anyone dared to imagine.

It appears that now the only impediment to Texans acquiring 515 acres of gorgeous parkland is the prospect that Flagstone Water Company declines to void a contract for water for a now non-existent Honey Creek Ranch development. (More on this later.)

Many thanks to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Texas Nature Conservancy and, most especially, thanks to landowners Ronnie and Terry Urbanzyk. Hopefully, future visits to the preserved natural area will provide many fond memories for the Urbanzyk's and much enjoyment to all Texans.

Read more about this here Texas Parks and Wildlife votes preservation over development for Honey Creek Ranch

<https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/Texas-Parks-Honey-Creek-Ranch-San-Antonio-16414142.php>

In other local news

Wimberley Valley Watershed Assoc. & TESPAs are hosting a free, educational Virtual ZOOM Webinar

Wednesday, Sept 8th from 12 noon to 1:00 pm -- Eat your lunch at your computer!

Diving Deep into Karst

We invite you to tune in and invite your friends, members, colleagues and followers!

Our featured speaker, George Veni, PhD, executive director of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute, will talk about the International Year of Caves and Karst, national and Texas karst research, and the importance of karst resources.

Then Robin Gary, managing director for Wimberley Valley Watershed Association, will present initial results from the recent 60+ well study in Hays and Comal counties, discuss local karst groundwater dynamics, and share well-owner tips and tricks.

Use this registration link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlpc-CvrDgsGtbG6qFMzr7FJ-GtGH21qohz>

This campaign is hosted by WVWA and TESPAs with funding from The Water Protectors Fund

<https://wimberleywatershed.org/current-issues/water-protectors-fund/>

Volunteers Sought for 5th Annual Dos Rios Watershed Cleanup

Posted on: August 26, 2021

Volunteers are needed for the 5th annual Dos Rios Watershed Cleanup Event scheduled for Saturday, October 2nd.

This year's event will be a return to the original single-day cleanup format from previous years, while still being mindful of public health. Registration for the event will be held the morning of the event from 8:30am to 10:00am at the Headwaters at the Comal, located at [333 East Klingemann Street](#). Participants will be asked to sign in, select their cleanup site, and grab their cleanup supplies, breakfast, and participation gift before heading out. Cleanup locations can include city parks, greenspaces, roadside areas, or other areas throughout New Braunfels.

For additional information call 830-221-4020

or visit <http://www.nbtexas.org/dosrioscleanup>.

Vote for Fischer Park!

Fischer Park has been selected as one of five projects in the 2021 #NiagaraPerkYourPark Contest from Niagara Bottling in partnership with the National Recreation and Park

Association. New Braunfels has a chance to win a \$90,000 upgrade to help us create a nature play space and new trails in the Blackland Prairie for wildlife viewing. We need your help to make it happen! VOTE here.

<https://niagaraperkyourpark.com/?fbclid=IwAR2X00BkFqnkHroLVSEOdqWMjlvX2G3VyyjEow6jTMv50FHkC7NV4wQVwM>

Public Input Meeting for Alligator Creek Trail Preliminary Design

The City of New Braunfels will be hosting a public input meeting to go over the preliminary designs for the proposed Alligator Creek Trail. That meeting is set for September 15th, 2021, from 6:00 to 8:00pm at the NBU Service Center located at **355 FM 306**.

The City's Hike & Bike Trail Plan envisions the Alligator Creek Trail to include multi-use paths, natural and bike facilities to provide clear and safe connections to local destinations, and links to neighborhoods along Geronimo Creek and Alligator Creek.

To learn more about plans for the Alligator Creek Trail, visit www.nbtexas.org/alligatorcreektrail. Again, the public input meeting to discuss the preliminary designs for the Alligator Creek Trail is set for September 15th from 6:00 to 8:00pm at the NBU Service Center on FM 306. For additional information, please contact Ylda Capriccioso, Park Development Manager, 830-221-4358 or ycapriccioso@nbtexas.org.

CCCA MONTHLY H-Z ARTICLE

Offering a Hand and Helpful lift

Written by Frank Dietz for the Herald-Zeitung

Sept 5, 2021

Karen and I spent a string of summers directing junior and mid high camps. The themes and adventures were about developing community and a growing discovery of the world(s) around us. Each week began with fun experiences of group building and creation of bonds in "family groups." One of the early first afternoon exercises was a tool to solidify the young teens' relationships for the week. The group of six to eight came close for a circle, surrounding the young adult leader/counsellor. Each group member was invited to reach in with one arm so that together the group would lift their leader from an outstretched position. For the newcomers it was a "wow" to note how easily the lifting took place when each person did their part. It was not surprising to hear references to the iconic experience as the week's adventures unfurled.

Hold that image of mutuality as we look toward an opportunity that comes our way in this month of September. Even with all that swirls about in our community impacting education, work space, and other endeavors, a big picture effort to be helpful together comes our way. From 12:01 a.m. until 11:59 p.m. on 23 September, THE BIG GIVE is coming as an opportunity to share with others. There will be an array of "asking" by well

deserving efforts near and far. One asking is to reach beyond the immediate in order to support Comal County Conservation Alliance (CCCA) and its COMAL LAND CONSERVATION FUND. In so doing your grandchildren and others who reap the benefits of this generosity will thank you! Yes, on 23 September through the BIG GIVE you will have an opportunity to reach your hand in so as to join others in strengthening cooperative efforts at conservation aimed to assist in “Keeping Comal Wild.” The protection of some green areas for the long journey of our beloved community will be the object of such gifts and efforts. Continue reading at:

www.comalconservation.org/nature-based-solutions.html

SPOTLIGHT ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

<https://www.comalconservation.org/nature-based-solutions.html>

Sometimes we ignore the simple solutions and instead try to engineer our way out of the problems we have created. But many times the solution is right under our feet in the form of Nature. That is why this month we focus our SPOTLIGHT on Nature-based Solutions to protect our land, water and wildlife.

“For most of history, man has had to fight nature to survive; in this century he is beginning to realize that, in order to survive, he must protect it.” — Jacques-Yves Cousteau

Big Texas Cities Have Less Land to Absorb Floods - from AgriLife today - Texas A&M University

Land use, climate change making flood mitigation in Texas cities more difficult

By Kerry Halladay February 19, 2021

Texas cities are expanding fast. Between 2010 and 2019, six of the 15 fastest-growing cities in the U.S. were in Texas. Bigger Texas cities mean less land to soak up rainwater, leading to increased flood risk. Add climate change to the equation and you have an even bigger flooding problem to solve.

Buildings, roads, sidewalks and other city elements are impervious: they can't soak up water like soil can. Instead, water runs off the impervious surfaces, flowing into neighboring streams and low-lying areas. Having faster and higher amounts of runoff results in more flooding....

read more at: www.comalconservation.org/nature-based-solutions.html#floods

From The Nature Conservancy -- How Nature Helps Improve Water Quality

Texas Water Program -- Securing Texas' Water Future

November 5, 2020

Water is the lifeblood of our state—and the key to healthy people, lands and wildlife. The Nature Conservancy in Texas has worked to protect and preserve the state’s freshwater ecosystems and water resources since our establishment in 1964. As Texas grows and prospers, securing our water future remains a critical priority for sustaining the health and resilience of our state.

In the coming years, a rapidly rising population and expanding urbanization will place undue stress on our water resources. Flow in nearly 75 percent of Texas rivers and water levels in all our major aquifers is declining. According to our State Water Plan, if no action is taken, we’ll be facing a statewide water shortage equivalent to an estimated \$151 billion in annual economic losses by 2070. Continue reading the article at:

www.comalconservation.org/nature-based-solutions.html#reduce-flood-risks

Water Resources + BMPS: Forest + Water Relationship - from Texas A & M University

In addition to supplying the cleanest water of any land use, Texas forests also absorb rainfall, refill groundwater aquifers, slow and filter stormwater runoff, mitigate erosion, reduce flooding, and maintain watershed stability and resilience. Collectively, this process is known as the forest-water relationship, or watershed ecosystem services, and is valued at \$13.2 billion annually.

What is a watershed, and how does it work? Forests and Water - Helping to Meet the South's Water Needs Today and Tomorrow.

Tour through our interactive Story Map to learn more about the role of forests in conserving water resources and sustaining them in the future. Read the entire article at:

www.comalconservation.org/nature-based-solutions.html#forest-water

Biodiversity, Clean water and Your Health -- from Raritan Headwaters

In many ways, clean water, and the health of you and your family, depends on biodiversity – the variety of species in our local ecosystems. Native species are critical to the function of forests, wetlands, streams and aquifers – without them these systems would not be able to supply us with clean, healthy water, air, and land.

Living things provide valuable ecosystem services to the upper Raritan River region and beyond. They are critical in cycling water and nutrients like nitrogen, carbon, and phosphorous as they go about their jobs of capturing, storing and using energy for survival and reproduction. They also filter pollutants from our water. Not only our physical health but also our emotional health and sense of well being are associated with biodiversity. Read more at:

www.comalconservation.org/nature-based-solutions.html#clean-water-health

AND....Remember to go to our website for much more news and information.

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

Comal County Conservation Alliance

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

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