



For Immediate Release

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New Plan Provides a Shared Vision for Preserving the Iconic Texas Hill Country

DRIPPING SPRINGS, Texas – A new report released this month by the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network (the Network) shines a spotlight on the need for investing in conservation as Central Texas grows. *The Hill Country Land, Water, Sky and Natural Infrastructure Plan* provides a data-driven vision for conservation of our region’s most important and defining natural resources.

The 18-county Hill Country stretches from Austin to San Antonio and west to Uvalde and Junction, and includes three of the top ten fastest growing counties in the country. As the population grows, impacts are being felt in the form of increasing pressure on groundwater resources, land fragmentation and loss of natural areas, and light pollution that clouds the view of the stars at night. With these challenges in mind, conservation partners joined forces to create a plan for proactively protecting the natural resources so central to the identity of the Hill Country.

“So often our discussion around infrastructure investments are centered on roads, transmission lines, pipelines, and sewer systems, or other ‘hard’ infrastructure projects,” said Josh Sendejar, Network Manager. “We know that open spaces, clean and flowing rivers, aquifers, working ranchlands, dark night skies, and healthy riparian areas provide invaluable infrastructure services, at little to no cost to taxpayers.”

Additional key takeaways from the Natural Infrastructure Plan:

- In more than 2,800 survey responses from residents across the region, the protection of water resources was the single largest concern by far.
- 85% of survey respondents are supportive of increasing public funding for conservation.
- Six different conservation goals-ranging from protecting water supply to ensuring recreational access-were mapped and prioritized as a part of the study.
- Natural infrastructure is the cornerstone of thriving and resilient economies and an essential foundation of community health and safety.

“The Hill Country Land, Water, Sky, and Natural Infrastructure Plan provides a shared vision for the Hill Country as well as a set of tools to plan and scale up investment in conservation within the region.,” said Katherine Romans, current Co-Chair of the Network and Executive Director of the Hill Country Alliance. “The case is clear -

investing in natural infrastructure now is the most cost-effective way to ensure the Hill Country is here to hand on to our kids and grandkids.”

The full Hill Country Land, Water, Sky, and Natural Infrastructure Plan includes a written report, dozens of maps and demographic information across all 18 counties, and detailed recommendations for a path forward. It was created based on feedback from nearly three thousand Central Texans - including natural resource professionals, residents, elected officials and landowners within the region. This new resource builds upon the 2022 [State of the Hill Country report](#) and gives local leaders, community groups and conservation practitioners the data and tools to plan for conservation within their communities.

For more information, visit OurTXHillCountry.org

Media Contact:

Josh Sendejar, Texas Hill Country Conservation Network Manager
512-710-6949, josh@hillcountryalliance.org

The Texas Hill Country Conservation Network (the Network) - a coalition of nonprofits, universities, and individuals - worked for the last year to conduct public opinion surveys, mapping, and stakeholder-led visioning process that culminated this week with the release of a new resource to help guide the protection of the region's natural infrastructure as it continues to grow.

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