

2021 HILL COUNTRY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

# A HILL COUNTRY CONSERVATION REUNION

THURSDAY, SEPT. 30 | 8 AM - 6 PM | THE HALL @ JESTER KING

8:45 – 9:00

**Welcome to the 2021 Hill Country Leadership Summit**

*Katherine Romans, Hill Country Alliance*

9:00 – 9:30

**The State of the Hill Country: 8 Key Metrics for a Region at a Crossroads**

*Jonathan Ogren, Principal - Siglo Group*

The Texas Hill Country is a region at a crossroads, with its natural resources and stunning beauty under threat from rapid population growth, unregulated and unchecked development, and a changing climate. This session will focus on a new report showing the current state of the Hill Country through eight key metrics that will be tracked over time to monitor the impact that conservationists are having in protecting what makes the region so special.

9:30 – 10:00

**Lights Out Texas: Collaborative Conservation for Migratory Birds**

*Joni Carswell, CEO and President - Texan by Nature*

Founded in 2011 by Mrs. Laura Bush, Texan by Nature unites conservation and business leaders in preserving our natural resources. Formed in response to a major bird collision in Galveston, Lights Out Texas connects Texans with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Colorado State University. Lights Out Texas is a statewide campaign of education, awareness, and action that focuses on turning out lights at night during the spring and fall migrations to help protect the billions of migratory birds that fly over Texas annually.

10:00 – 10:30

**BREAK**

10:30 – 11:00

**Implementing One Water in the Hill Country: Connecting Communities with Projects and Professionals**

*Moderator: Sarah Faust, Environmental Attorney – Faust Law PLLC*

*Panelists: Robin Gary, Managing Director – Wimberley Valley Watershed Association | Troy Dorman, Ph.D, P.E., CFM, Director of Water Resources – Halff Associates | Stephanie Moore, P.G., Senior Hydrogeologist—Intera Inc.*

As the Hill Country continues to grow at unprecedented rates, we must plan ahead in order to conserve our limited and precious water supplies. One Water is the consideration of all water resources - rainwater, stormwater, onsite wastewater reuse and so on - with the project goal of building resilience and reliability in our water systems. This panel will explore three innovative One Water community projects operating in the Hill Country from the people involved in their development.

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**11:00 – 11:30**

## **Leading the Rural Hill Country: Young Leaders' Perspectives**

*Moderator: Dana Williams, Director of Community Engagement – H. E. Butt Foundation | Panelists: Candace Morrison, Founder – Kimble County Farmers Market | Jeremy Walther, Founder – Pint and Plow*

This panel will feature younger folks from across the region who are striving to take their rural communities in new directions. We will learn about their visions for their communities and the joys and challenges of leading from the next generation.

**11:30 – 12:00**

## **Heart of the Hill Country Award**

*Presented by Past Recipients: Sky Lewey and Christy Muse  
Honoring: Annalisa Peace and Karen Ford*

**12:00 – 1:00**

## **BREAK**

**1:00 – 2:00**

## **Building Community Resilience by Investing in Local Leaders**

*Keynote + Moderator: Carmen Llanes Pulido, Executive Director - Go Austin/Vamos Austin!  
Panelists: Donna Klaeger, Executive Director – Community Resource Centers of Texas | Connie Barron, Blanco City Council*

Over the past 5 years, the Hill Country has faced a perfect storm of pressures. Flooding events, a historic winter storm, record-breaking development rates and soaring housing prices. How do we protect the health, economic prosperity, and environmental resilience of our current communities, while planning for the future residents of this region? Carmen Llanes Pulido will discuss the important work of GAVA in Austin's Eastern Crescent, and then lead a panel discussion about community building in towns big and small across the region.

**2:00 – 2:25**

## **BREAK**

**2:25 – 2:35**

## **Wanted Dead or Alive: Mountain Cedar – a Conversation with Author Elizabeth McGreevy**

*Prerecorded video*

This short video dispels some of the myths around Ashe juniper and provides important considerations for Hill Country land stewards. HCA's Daniel Oppenheimer talks with author, Elizabeth McGreevy, about her new book as they explore and share observations in the field.



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**Lightning Round: Emergent Stories of the Hill Country** – 5 minutes each

**Hill Country Runs on Water**

*Sarah Schlessinger, CEO, Texas Water Foundation*

Texas Runs on Water is a statewide umbrella campaign – led by Texas Water Foundation – designed to speak to a broad and inclusive audience, linking the value of water to our pride of all things Texas. The campaign can be localized to particular communities or regions and is currently working with the support of partners in Houston, the Panhandle, and the Hill Country.

**Camp Bullis Sentinel Landscape: A New Frontier in Public-Private Land Conservation and Stewardship**

*Daniel Oppenheimer, Hill Country Alliance*

Over the past 18 months, Hill Country Alliance and the Alamo Area Council of Governments have built a coalition of nearly 40 partner organizations and agencies focused on enhancing coordination and collaborative conservation in the southern Hill Country that is anchored around Joint Base San Antonio - Camp Bullis. The partners recently submitted a proposal to the Sentinel Landscape Program, which would help accelerate land and water conservation, habitat enhancement, and night sky preservation to support natural resources, communities in several counties, and the Camp Bullis training mission.

**Water and Equity in the Texas Hill Country**

*Angelica Lopez, Research Scientist – Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute*

Angelica will present new research into water and equity in the Texas Hill Country. This work will illuminate some of the greatest challenges that we face as a region in ensuring safe, reliable access to clean drinking water, protecting life and property from flooding, and ensuring that all Central Texans have a sense of connection with the region's incredible water resources.

**Creative Funding for Land and Water Conservation**

*Bill Moriarty, Funding Engineer*

**Hill Country Night Sky Month and the Friends of the Night Sky**

*Dawn Davies, Hill Country Alliance*

October marks the second annual Hill Country Night Sky Month, and the celebration is back with proclamations, lighting renovations, contests, star parties, moon howls, and more. Learn about all the festivities and how you can get involved with our Friends of the Night Sky across the Hill Country.



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## **Comal County Conservation Alliance Presentation**

*Elizabeth Bowerman, President – Comal County Conservation Alliance*

Comal County – the fastest growing county in our region – is facing tremendous development pressure. Formed in 2018, the Comal County Conservation Alliance is a dedicated group of volunteers working to preserve the land, water, and wildlife in Comal County.

**3:15 – 4:00**

## **Texas Land Trends: Tracking Change and Tackling Challenges**

*Roel Lopez, Director, Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute*

*Panelists: Commissioner Kevin Webb, Comal County | Mayor Tim Handren, Boerne*

Rates of growth and fragmentation in the Hill Country are among the fastest in the country, and those trends have only accelerated during the global pandemic. Local cities and counties must work creatively and proactively to ensure the fabric of their communities—from healthy waterways, working farmlands, rural charm and sense of place—are maintained in the face of change. This session will illuminate how data and information can inform that work, and how several local elected officials are taking charge.

**4:00 – 6:00**

## **HAPPY HOUR NETWORKING RECEPTION**

*\*Red text denotes panelists that have yet to be finalized.*