

**education**  
**conservation**  
**cooperation**



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*For Immediate Release*

## Hill Country Photo Contest Kicks Off March 1<sup>st</sup>

(February 22, 2010) – The Texas Hill Country is a photographer’s paradise. Creeks are once again flowing, and the forecast calls for a green spring with plenty of wildflowers. Now is the time to dust off your camera and head outside to capture the beauty and mystique of this special region.

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Hill Country Alliance photo contest opens March 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Winners receive not only cash prizes, but will be featured in the popular Hill Country calendar produced each fall by the Hill Country Alliance (HCA). “We hold this contest each year to help raise awareness about how precious the region is, what’s at stake and why planning is so important,” says Carolyn Chipman Evans, HCA President and Executive Director of the Cibolo Nature Center and Conservancy. “The natural, cultural and historic resources we value are limited and fragile so it is important to educate everyone about how we can do a better job taking care of our community.”



Photographer: Rusty Ray

Entering the contest is easy. Contestants can enter up to four photos online by visiting [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org).

Great Hill Country photographs illustrate what's unique about the area and showcase the natural and rural heritage of the Texas Hill Country. While many people naturally think about the scenic beauty of the region, other great subjects for the photo contest include: people enjoying nature; historic towns; ranches and agricultural activities; wildlife and wildflowers; and of course, springs, creeks, rivers and lakes.



Photographer: Carolyn Whiteside

Photo-worthy treasures such as these are at risk as more and more of our landscape converts from a natural state to residential housing and commercial uses. Hill Country landowners value their land and are good stewards of their land. Nevertheless, we are losing historic ranch lands because of development pressure, insufficient incentives for conservation, and depleted water resources. Development sprawl has cascading effects on this rugged-appearing, but fragile region.

Lands that are kept in natural areas provide for what's known as "ecosystem services" that benefit everyone. By valuing and protecting our landscapes we enhance water quality, water supply, air quality, and quality of life for future generations.

Ninety percent of the land in the 17 county Hill Country region is in unincorporated areas where unregulated development is the norm because no local entity has planning authority. The consequence is irreversible damage that ultimately degrades property values, depletes our natural resources, and hinders economic stability throughout the region.



Photographer: Chase Fountain

The Hill Country Alliance (HCA) is a non-profit organization creating educational resources and events about growth-related issues and strategies for conservation.

Please see the Hill Country Alliance website ([www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org)) for the latest news and events and to learn more about our initiatives and how you can contribute toward our goals.