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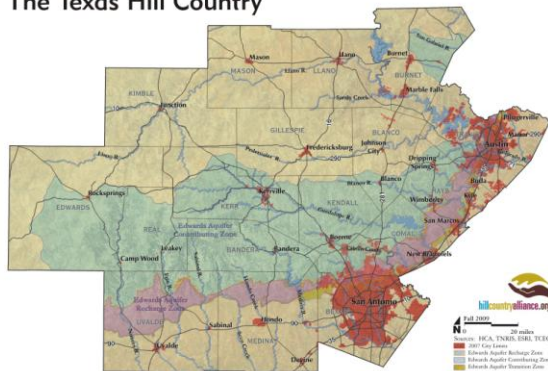
For Immediate Release

**HILL COUNTRY ALLIANCE RECEIVES \$25,000 GRANT
FOR WATER CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY**

(February 25, 2010) – The Hill Country Alliance announces the receipt of a \$25,000 grant from the Kirk Mitchell Environmental Law Fund to support the Alliance’s water conservation education advocacy.

The Hill Country Alliance (HCA) was created to educate the Hill Country community about strategies for responsible growth to protect our heritage ranchlands, fragile watersheds and the unique economy of this very special region. Because of the generosity of the Kirk Mitchell and others like him, HCA has become widely recognized across the region as a leader in Hill Country growth issues and a voice for better planning. HCA is a Texas based 501c3 non-profit corporation working in 17 counties since 2005.

The Texas Hill Country



Kirk Mitchell is an investor and conservation philanthropist living in Austin, Texas. Mr. Mitchell has been active in supporting Hill Country land, water and wildlife conservation for fifteen years.

The Kirk Mitchell Environmental Law Fund recently expanded its conservation philanthropy. The fund totaled \$1.5 million at the end of 2009. Its priority funding areas include water protection and biodiversity preservation in Texas, with particular emphasis on the spring and river systems of the Texas Hill Country.

The grant will support the Alliance’s work to expand outreach, research and educational events throughout the region. “When HCA was created, the idea was to build a large network of involved citizens and partnerships with citizen groups, landowners, universities, and elected officials so that all perspectives could have an opportunity to listen to each other and work together towards a common vision” explains HCA Executive Director, Christy Muse. “We organize numerous events

such as our popular water issues symposiums; land stewardship, rainwater harvesting, conservation easement and conservation development programs. We host regular forums for elected officials to work on ideas to expand county authority to regulate development. And, we're also involved in creating mapping resources where growth scenarios are created, debated and analyzed to aid in planning processes.”

Population is exploding, creating development pressures further and further outside of Austin and San Antonio. Ninety percent of the land in the region is in unincorporated areas where unregulated development is the norm because of a lack of local planning authority. The consequence is irreversible damage that ultimately degrades property value, depletes our natural resources and hinders economic stability throughout the region.

Please see the Hill Country Alliance website (www.hillcountryalliance.org) for the latest news and events and to learn more about HCA's initiatives.