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For Immediate Release

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Hill Country Photography Exhibit opens this weekend at Cibolo Nature Center

Celebrate the beauty of the Hill Country this holiday season. HCA honors the outstanding photographers who are featured in the 2010 Hill Country Calendar.

The holidays are the perfect time to get outdoors and enjoy the splendor of the Hill Country region. Just northwest of San Antonio in Boerne, the Cibolo Nature Center is 100 acres of trails and wilderness waiting for you and your family to explore. This season as you visit the preserve you'll be treated to something special. The Hill Country Alliance, a nonprofit organization in Central Texas, is placing winning photographs of its 2009 Hill Country Photography contest on display in the visitor's center.

As the Hill Country region continues to experience rapid rates of growth and new development, special places such as Cibolo become sacred havens for new generations to experience the natural landscape. Once a dream of Cibolo founder, Carolyn Chipman Evans, now thousands of volunteer hours later the Cibolo Nature Center is a prime example of community caring and an excellent model of a local community's efforts to preserve its natural heritage.

The photographs on display are also featured on the pages of HCA's 2010 Hill Country Calendar along with valuable information about Hill Country natural resource and heritage preservation issues. The exhibit will include a silent auction. Framed autographed images will be available to the highest bidder from December 6th through December 20th. Buyers can place their bids on the HCA website, www.hillcountryalliance.org.

The Hill Country is a unique landscape full of natural beauty, historic towns, recreational attractions, family ranches and abundant wildlife. There is also no shortage of enthusiastic photographers capturing the treasures of the region.



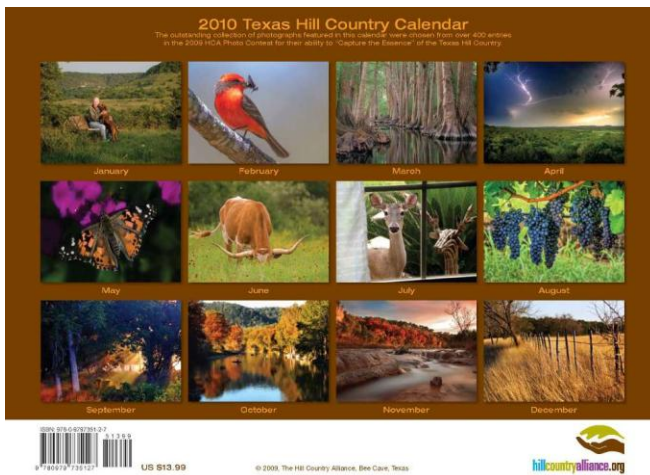
Chase Fountain - *David Bamberger and Cory*

Chase Fountain, Texas Parks and Wildlife photographer, won the “Hill Country People” category with his photograph titled *David Bamberger and Cory*. Fountain was assigned to photograph Bamberger after it was announced that Bamberger Ranch won the 2009 Leopold Conservation Award. Fountain says they walked around the ranch and talked for hours and then he did the photo shoot with Bamberger and his dog, Cory. “He puts his heart out there, and he inspired me so much,” Fountain says. “I got the shot at the end of the day at that perfect golden moment.”

Rusty Ray, a regular in the calendar won “Natural Treasures” category with *Successful Hunt*. Ray was camping at South Llano River Park near Junction when caught a glimpse of a vermilion flycatcher venturing near his camp. “I set up camp, put a thistle sock up and a chair by the picnic table with a tripod. The golden finches started coming in,” Ray recalls. “The vermilion flew up within 15 feet of where I was sitting with an insect in his mouth. I moved the camera and started shooting. He beat the insect on a branch and then looked up.” *Hill Country Buffet* another gorgeous shot by Ray is featured in the calendar and will be on display.



Rusty Ray – *Successful Hunt*



Other photographers included in the exhibit are: Rose Epps, *Painted Lady* (May) and *Fishing at Sunset* (Cover); Rusty Ray, *Hill Country Buffet* (June); Sharon Carter, *Deer Neighbors* (July); Carolyn Whiteside, *Pick Me* (August); Carol Serur, *Angler’s Quest* (October); Paul Huchton, *Fall Colors in the Canyon* (November); and Robin Gorrell, *Fenceline* (December).

To purchase the calendar, visit the HCA website at www.hillcountryalliance.org where you’ll also find the latest news and events, and more about HCA initiatives and how you can get involved.

Open to the public since Earth Day 1990, Cibolo provides education, research, entertainment and outdoor activities for thousands of visitors a year, while promoting sound stewardship of land, water and wildlife. Learn more at www.cibolo.org.