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*For Immediate Release*

## **Milan J. Michalec Takes the Helm at Hill Country Alliance**

### *Karen Ford to Serve as New Vice President*



Milan J. Michalec

Austin (January 15, 2011) – As new president of Hill Country Alliance (HCA), Milan Michalec says he wants to see the organization lead the discussion on topics such as county authority and the State Water Plan, not just participate. “I want to be able to take advantage of the tools we’ve developed in the strategic plan and work with electronic media opportunities to be the story rather than respond to it,” he says.

A powerful Hill Country water conservation advocate, Michalec is serving a third term on the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District, and he is the founding member of the Kendall Country Well Owners Association. Michalec also participated in the Camp Bullis Joint Land Use Study representing Trinity Aquifer Groundwater Conservation Districts. Recently he was selected to fill a position to determine environmental flows on the Guadalupe and San Antonio Bay and Basin Area Stakeholder Committee (BBASC).

Michalec has been an active member of HCA since 2008 when he served on the advisory board. In 2009, he was asked to join the board of directors. Michalec says he’s seen HCA grow in the ability to be very thorough in focus and strategy and expand its presence across 17 counties. “Ultimately we are better prepared to develop high-quality issue papers vetted by professionals and to distribute them using print or our website through a wide area of the Hill Country,” he says.

Michalec wants HCA to continue to produce educational materials for citizens and decision makers on a wide range of topics. Water will be one of the most important topics for HCA in 2013. “We are working really hard trying to illustrate the interdependence of groundwater and surface water,” Michalec says. Other topics of focus are the importance of maintaining healthy riparian areas and preserving night skies.



Karen Ford

Karen Ford brings to her new role as board vice president for HCA a wealth of experience and a heart filled with passion for conservation of Hill Country beauty and natural resources. Ford is a marketing and communications professional and former Hays County commissioner. She also is a regional leader on water conservation.

As the new HCA vice president, Ford sees the organization more actively reaching out to the corporate community and engaging young people to become involved with Hill Country resource issues. “I also want to see us reach out to other cultural audiences,” Ford says. “The Hispanic population is growing in Texas and the Hill Country, and it is important that we reach all audiences.”

Water resource issues, rainwater harvest education and county authority are HCA initiatives that get the most of Ford’s time and attention. “It’s not only an honor, but a real active learning experience to serve on the board of HCA, says Ford. “HCA is like a family, and it’s just great to be involved with people who know so much and care so much.”

The Hill Country Alliance is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country. To learn more about Hill Country Alliance initiatives, please visit the HCA website ([www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org)).

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