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*For Immediate Release*

**HILL COUNTRY UNITES TO PRESERVE NIGHT SKIES**  
**Night Sky Co-op to Educate and Encourage Voluntary Efforts to Curb Light Pollution**



Hill Country landowners gather at the Preserve at Walnut Springs to commit to Night Skies. Rusty Yates (seated), signs for Walnut Springs along with left to right, Christy Muse, HCA; Wayne Gosnell; Bonnie Baskin, PWS; Ellen Yates, PWS; James Reeves, Red Corral Ranch; Paul Sumrall, HCA; Harris Greenwood and Romelia Favrot, Double H Ranch; Michael Galster, Bamberger Ranch and Herve Lapuente, Austin Astronomer

Johnson City (April 4, 2012) - In the Texas Hill Country, the stars at night are not as bright as they once were. The view of this treasured natural resource, the awe of generations past, is being slowly dimmed due to the effects of encroaching light pollution. Poorly designed outdoor lighting fixtures that needlessly and often unintentionally shine up into the night sky are causing our view of the magnificent, starry heavens to fade away.

On April 3, 2012, a group of prominent Hill Country residents, businesses, and ranchers banded together at the Preserve at Walnut Springs, west of Johnson City, and formed the Hill Country Night Sky Cooperative. Working under the umbrella of the Hill Country Alliance, the Co-op strives to educate the Hill

Country community on night sky preservation issues and to encourage land owners, residents, businesses, and governmental entities to practice sound outdoor lighting management.

Christy Muse, Executive Director of the Hill Country Alliance, stated “The undesirable effects of light pollution – glare, light trespass, light clutter and sky glow – can make the Hill Country region less attractive to visitors and residents alike. But there is good news – this problem is relatively easy to ‘fix’. We hope the Hill Country Night Sky Co-op can make a difference.”

Members of the Co-op pledge themselves “. . .to protect and preserve the treasured natural wonder that is the Hill Country’s starry nighttime skies by practicing sound outdoor lighting management with the goal of reducing or eliminating light escaping over the horizon from outdoor light fixtures on my property.”

Founding members of the Hill Country Night Sky Co-Op include: The Preserve at Walnut Springs, Blanco County; Selah/Bamberger Ranch, Blanco County; LBJ National Historical Park, Blanco and Gillespie County; Reese River Ranch, Blanco County; Garrison Brothers Distillery, Blanco County; Double H Ranch, Blanco County; The Hershey Ranch, Gillespie County; Native American Seed, Kimble County; Red Corral Ranch, Hays County.

The Night Sky Co-op is open to any individual, business, or organization that shares these goals. Membership is cost-free. Anyone interested in being a part of this grass roots educational effort can sign up at [www.hillcountrynightskycoop.org](http://www.hillcountrynightskycoop.org).

Learn more about Hill Country-wide efforts to protect our starry skies at [www.hillcountrynightskies.org](http://www.hillcountrynightskies.org) and/or [www.hillcountrynightskycoop.org](http://www.hillcountrynightskycoop.org), both hosted by the Hill Country Alliance, [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org).

*HCA is a nonprofit 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. Learn more about the organization and the photo contest at [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org).*

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