

**Contact:**

Christy Muse, Executive Director  
Hill Country Alliance  
[christy@hillcountryalliance.org](mailto:christy@hillcountryalliance.org)  
512.560.3135

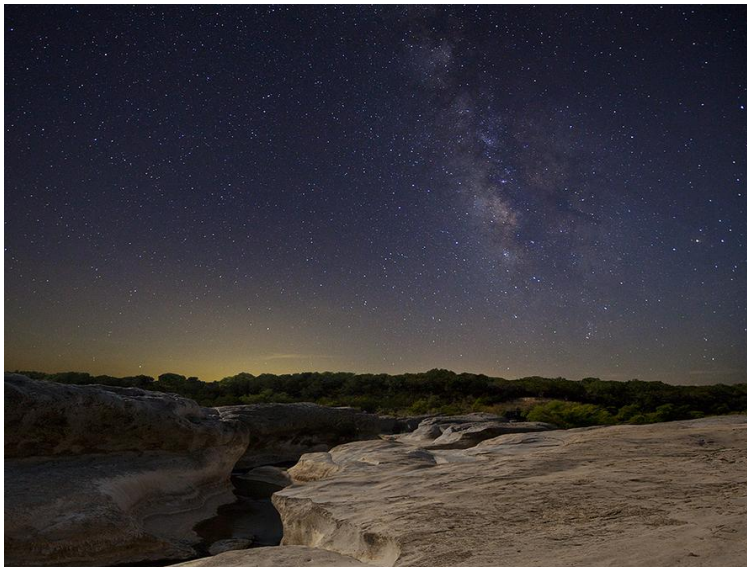
*For Immediate Release*

**Photo contest winners share love, respect for natural areas**  
*2013 Hill Country Alliance Calendar Shares Hill Country Beauty All Year Long*

Bee Cave, Texas (September 10, 2012) - Sometimes the Texas Hill Country shares its bewitching beauty openly, other times it requires planning to be in the right place at the right time to see an especially magical scene. Thirteen photographers who will share their photographs in the 2013 Hill Country Alliance calendar had their cameras at the ready to take advantage of stunning scenes that will be shared when the calendar goes on sale this week.

“All the photos selected for the calendar not only delight the eye, but convey the fragile relationship we have with the trinity of land, sky and water in the region,” said Christy Muse, Executive Director of the HCA. “HCA and its partners are committed to protecting the ecosystem of the Hill Country so that it can be enjoyed responsibly for years to come, and we’re gratified that these photographers have depicted our region with such meaning.”

“This year our calendar committee chose four of the 13 photos for special recognition,” said Muse “The winners receive a cash prize, and the grand prize photo also graces the cover of the calendar.”



Grand Prize Winner: *Milky Way above Pedernales Falls State Park*, Rob Greebon

Grand prize-winning photographer Rob Greebon made several trips to Pedernales Falls State Park to plan and photograph the night sky vision of the Milky Way above the park. A fourth-generation Texan, Rob and his family take full advantage of their Texas State Parks Pass and visit Pedernales as well as other areas of natural beauty often.

“I’ve always been amazed looking up in the night sky,” Greebon explained when asked about why he took this particular photo. “I grew up in the country without much light pollution so from an early age I enjoyed stargazing – this is just an extension of my childhood dreaming.”

Greebon, as did all the prize winners, expressed appreciation for the work that HCA does in bringing together jurisdictions, businesses and citizens to discuss issues and find solutions for ensuring that the Hill Country's natural areas are maintained. "I am glad I can contribute in some small way to HCA's preservation of our surrounding areas, he said. "My family has known about the HCA's mission for quite a while and applauds their efforts to protect its natural resources so our kids and grandkids will be able to enjoy them as well."

First Place winner, John Bryant Baker, took his winning photo on the San Marcos River in the early spring of 2011. "My best friend Casey (who is the one in the photo) and I were in the midst of an 83-mile, 3 1/2-day paddleboard trip from San Marcos to Gonzales."

Spending time out in nature is a passion of John's. "I have been blessed with the opportunities to do a lot of traveling and have been on some grand adventures, but there is something special to me about experiencing more of the place where my roots are. I grew up in Fredericksburg, so the Hill Country is in my blood, and developing a deeper connection and understanding of this land and these rivers is important to me."



1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: *Morning Paddle*, John Bryant Baker

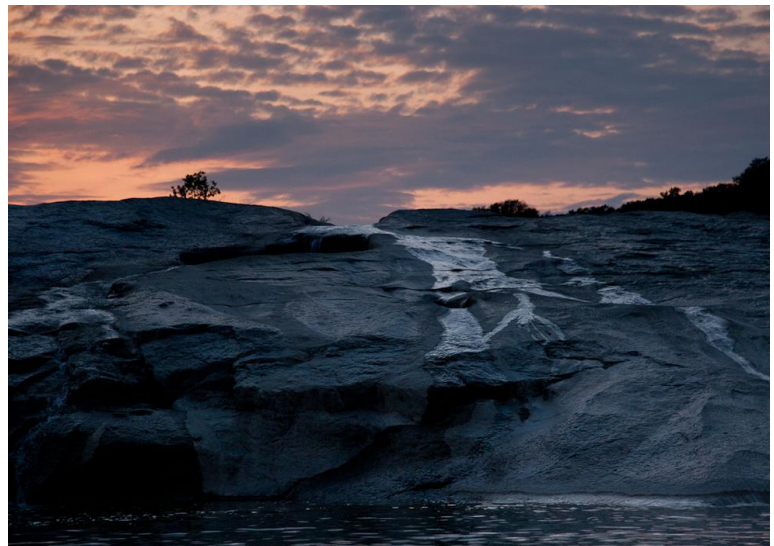


2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: *R U Thirsty?* Leslie Shoots

Second Place winner, Leslie Shoots, shot his winning photo during last summer during the long hot drought. "I first came across this dried up mud hole along the banks of the river. Later when long- awaited rains finally came I found it filled with water with the cracked mud still visible on the bottom. Seeing the lone bush reflected on the surface, I turned my camera upside down to put it on the horizon. You see I personally had just gone through a long drought and this was an encouragement to me, kind of a message from our Creator that everything was going to be O.K. I was teaching a class in Sunday school titled 'Living Waters' it all just clicked, and I took about a dozen shots of which this was my favorite."

New to the area, third place winner, Jim Beckett, was exploring Pedernales Falls when he shot his winning photo. “My family was with me and after our picnic dinner I saw we were going to have an interesting sunset and interesting lighting down along the falls. I always bring the camera when we go to parks and other natural areas.”

“Our family has been involved with preserving nature for some time,” Jim said. “Early on we were involved with Utah Audubon and have been members of various organizations since then. The outdoors is so great to be in that we want it preserved and available to all.”



3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner: *Pedernales Sunset*, Jim Beckett

The 2013 Texas Hill Country Calendar goes on sale this week. Single and bulk-order quantities are available at [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org). The website also features additional information and photos by the winners of the 2013 photo contest.

*The Hill Country Alliance 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. Visit us at [www.hillcountryalliance.org](http://www.hillcountryalliance.org).*

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