

For Immediate Release
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Texas Hill Country: A Region of Extremes

Hill Country Alliance Call for Photos Begins March 1



2015 Grand Prize winner: *Wildflowers at the End of the Storm*, by Rob Greebon

The annual Hill Country Alliance photography contest poses a thematic question for this year's participants: What are the contrasts you see in your day-to-day life in the Texas Hill Country?

The year 2015 put into stark relief the extremes of our region. We saw the wettest spring in recorded history, then destructive and devastating floods, the return of drought, resilient riparian recovery, a growing movement to protect our dark skies, growth and development alongside stewardship and conservation. These extremes reveal what makes this region so unique, and what we stand to lose if we develop in a 'business as usual' scenario.

The HCA photo contest opens on March 1 and runs through May 31. Winners receive cash prizes and their photos will appear in the popular HCA calendar. Entering the contest is easy through the HCA website (www.hillcountryalliance.org).

Each year HCA produces a calendar featuring stunning photographs taken by both amateur and professional photographers. This year HCA seeks photos that illustrate the dramatic contrasts of the Hill Country—picturesque creeks and swimming holes, dark night skies, breathtaking views and iconic cultural experiences like dance halls, charming towns and heritage ranches—but also signs of drought, flood, development pressures and the changing nature of our region. The story of the Hill Country is not complete without both.

“The images submitted through the HCA photo contest tell a compelling story of why we need to protect all that we know and love about the Hill Country,” said HCA Board President Leo Tynan of Fredericksburg. “Those who have been here for a while know that the extremes—of drought and flood, cold and heat, incredible beauty and incredible power—are fundamental to the nature of this place. Now we are seeing more extremes of the man-made variety; development alongside bucolic riversides, dark skies dotted with lights, transmission lines cutting across scenic vistas.”

The Hill Country is anticipated to double its population by the year 2050. We are increasingly seeing proposals for water lines, new subdivisions, roadways, transmission lines and industrial facilities to support this growth. If we don't plan ahead and accommodate that development thoughtfully, what we stand to lose—sustainable groundwater sources, scenic vistas, clean rivers and streams, and dark night skies—could change the character of this region forever. The annual calendar is one of many HCA educational programs designed to shed light on these kinds of issues.

HCA Interim Executive Director Katherine Romans says the photo contest is an easy way for anyone to get involved and contribute to a vision for Hill Country conservation. “This photo contest is about capturing the incredible qualities of the Hill Country and weaving together a visual story of what we want to protect for future generations. Bluebonnets are already blooming around the Hill Country—so grab your camera and get to shooting!” Learn more about the photo contest and HCA's educational programs at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

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.

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