



# Texas Hill Country Conservation Network

## Protecting the Hill Country

The Texas Hill Country is at a crossroads. This iconic landscape filled with natural beauty and heritage-rich rural communities is facing tremendous threats from sprawling growth and development. Land fragmentation and consumption, coupled with groundwater pumping and rapid expansion of impermeable cover from new buildings, roads, and parking lots, is inhibiting groundwater recharge and increasingly threatening open spaces, spring and stream flows, natural habitat and wildlife, and rural character and small-town charm. The window of opportunity to keep the Texas Hill Country rural, natural, and scenic will likely close within our generation.

## What is the Network?

In 2017, a coalition of organizations and agencies came together to form the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network (the Network) to advance shared goals of conservation of the Texas Hill Country. The Network aims to significantly scale up the impact of conservation-focused organizations working to protect natural resources, rural heritage, and quality of life.

### MISSION STATEMENT

To maximize protection of the Hill Country's natural resources through enhanced collaboration.

## Why a Network?

We recognize that without collaborating, we will not keep pace with the loss of open space, the threats to water resources, and the challenges facing our region. Together we can inspire greater action than any one organization, agency, or brand could achieve alone.

In addition to increasing impact on the ground, the Network seeks to increase the visibility of existing collaboration among conservation-focused organizations and institutions, and to enable and support these organizations to efficiently expand and scale their ambition, activities, and collective impact. The Network also provides a clearer platform from which conservation-focused organizations can work together to engage with other networks of stakeholders who are vital to long-term conservation and stewardship in the Hill Country such as landowners, businesses, farmers and ranchers, local and county officials, city and county leaders in the urban areas at the edges of the Hill Country, state and federal government agencies, outdoor and hunting enthusiasts, tourism industry members, and many other groups.

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# The Network Strategic Plan

The Network embarked upon a strategic planning process in the spring of 2017 to create a comprehensive organizational, membership, and governance structure and protocols for the Network that would increase organizational capacity and effectiveness. The objectives of the strategic plan are to articulate a strong value proposition for organizations to participate in the Network, to improve coordination and alignment of activities and messaging among conservation organizations and enhance prospects for scaling collective impact.

This strategic plan document was finalized in January 2018 and includes: identification of the problem the Network seeks to address; a statement of purpose for the Network; mission and vision statements; a description of how Network members will collaborate; six priority goal areas for 2018-2022 and suggested metrics to measure progress; an outline of the Network design and structure; a list of near-term priority activities; and a statement of the Network approach and values.

## Priority Goals 2018-2022

The six priority goals in the strategic plan address a range of outcomes and impacts that the Network believes are important to make progress on over the next five years.

**Landscape-Level Impact Goals:** The first three goals designed to help connect and align participants' individual and collective efforts towards impacts on the ground and in communities.

- GOAL 1:** Scale permanent land conservation and stewardship practices and shape sustainable development practices
- GOAL 2:** Ensure adequate spring and river flows for human and ecological systems
- GOAL 3:** Protect the water quality in Hill Country creeks, waterways, and aquifers from contamination by wastewater and run-off

**Process and Systems Goals:** The next three goals address the ways in which the Network will achieve impact on the ground and in communities.

- GOAL 4:** Grow awareness and support for Hill Country conservation among the public and multiple levels of government
  - GOAL 5:** Scale up investment in Hill Country conservation
  - GOAL 6:** Build long-term partnerships for durable conservation of the Texas Hill Country
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