



GEM OF THE HILLS | BLANCO, TEXAS

HILL COUNTRY DARK SKY CONFERENCE

AGENDA | MAY 22, 2025

- 11:00 LUNCH
- 12:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks. *Mayor Candy Cargill | City of Blanco*
- 12:10 Restoring the Night: Combating Light Pollution. *Amber Harrison | DarkSky International*
- 1:00 The State of Affairs in our Region. *Dawn Davies | Hill Country Alliance*
- 1:15 BREAK
- 1:30 Kerrville Dark Sky Ordinance. *Dalton Rice | City of Kerrville*
- 1:50 How May We Illuminate You? *Michelle Fischer | City of Dripping Springs*
- 2:10 Blanco on the Edge of Darkness. *Libbey Aly | Blanco Chamber of Commerce*
Wayne Gosnell | Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky
- 2:30 BREAK
- 2:45 Camp Bullis Dark Sky. *Richard King | Joint Base San Antonio*
- 3:05 Eliminating Skyglow at the Speed of Light. *Buddy Stefanoff | Crossroads LED*
- 3:55 Closing Remarks. *Katherine Romans | Hill Country Alliance*
- 4:00 Happy Hour and Networking Reception

HOSTED BY
The City of Blanco

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Blanco Chamber of Commerce | Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky | Hill Country Alliance

MEET YOUR SPEAKERS



Candy Cargill | Mayor, City of Blanco

Candy Cargill, newly elected mayor of Blanco, TX, is a longtime real estate broker and owner of Hill Country Real Estate. A former City Council member and Planning & Zoning Commissioner, she brings deep community ties and civic experience. Cargill is focused on improving Blanco's water infrastructure and ensuring long-term sustainability through diversified water sources.

Amber Harrison | Dark Sky Places Program Manager, DarkSky International

Amber, a Wichita native with degrees in Anthropology, worked in cultural resource management before becoming a Park Ranger at Big Bend Ranch State Park. There, she developed a passion for dark sky conservation, leading public programs and successful Dark Sky Place applications. She enjoys photography, hiking, biking, and time with her dogs.



Dawn Davies | Night Sky Program Manager, Hill Country Alliance

Dawn Davies, Night Sky Program Manager for the Hill Country Alliance, has 16+ years of experience in astronomy, space science, and education. With a B.A. in Culture, Ecology & Sustainability, she connects science with human experience. A lifelong stargazer, she works with Central Texas communities to fight light pollution. Off duty, she enjoys Viking reenactments, dark-sky adventures, and time with her family in the Hill Country.

Dalton Rice | City Administrator, City of Kerrville

Dalton Rice, MSHS, CPM, became Kerrville's City Manager in 2023 after leading Morgan's Point Resort. A U.S. Army Special Forces veteran, he brings experience in emergency services and healthcare. He chairs KEDC, serves on multiple boards, and is active in Rotary. Dalton holds degrees in business and healthcare and enjoys flying, diving, and family time with his wife and three kids.



Michelle Fischer | City Administrator, City of Dripping Springs

Michelle Fischer has served as Dripping Springs City Administrator for 25 years. She helped establish Texas's first International Dark Sky Community and leads the City's Night Sky Program. A member of DarkSky International and local advocacy groups, she advises others on lighting policies. Michelle was honored by the DAR for her conservation work. She and her family enjoy stargazing under Hill Country skies.

MEET YOUR SPEAKERS



Libbey Aly | Executive Director, Blanco Chamber of Commerce

Libbey is acting Executive Director of the Blanco Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau. Shortly after moving to Blanco and settling in to being a new mom, she found a unique form of exercise and fellowship in the form of African Dance. The study of African drum and dance has been an ongoing hobby for 18 years now.

Wayne Gosnell | President, Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky

Wayne Gosnell, a retired Army colonel with a Ph.D. in Communication, lives in Blanco, TX. After nearly 30 years of service, he and his wife served with Wycliffe in Mexico and later in Bosnia. Back in Texas, he rekindled his passion for the night sky, founding Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky in 2018 and leading Blanco to International Dark Sky Community status in 2022.



Richard King | Community Initiatives Project Manager, Joint Base San Antonio

Richard King retired from the Army after 30 years of service specializing in operations and strategic planning. Upon his retirement in 2014, he focused on encroachment management and community relations working toward compatible development around Joint Base San Antonio. He currently works at Joint Base San Antonio in the 502 Air Base Wing Community Mission Integration office.

Buddy Stefanoff | Vice President, Crossroads LED

An experienced and successful innovator, Buddy leads the company's strategic initiative to develop advanced LED-based lighting solutions for industries seeking to modernize their lighting and illumination platforms.



Katherine Romans | Executive Director, Hill Country Alliance

Katherine, Director of the Hill Country Alliance, brings 10 years of nonprofit and legislative experience. She served as a U.S. House Natural Resources Committee aide and led HCA's landowner outreach program, connecting landowners to conservation resources. Katherine also has experience with local and national nonprofits and holds a Master's in Environmental Management from Yale.

MEET YOUR HOSTS



City of Blanco | Host

In the City of Blanco, we are defined less by boundaries on a map than by the sense of shared values our residents hold dear. Small town values, guided growth, preservation of historical, cultural, and natural heritage are just a few of the core principles that makes City of Blanco a wonderful place to call home.

Blanco Chamber of Commerce | Partner

The Mission of the Blanco Chamber of Commerce is to promote the economic well-being of local businesses and the business community as a whole, and to improve the quality of life for all citizens of Blanco and the surrounding area.



Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky | Partner

Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky is a group of local residents dedicated to protecting the Hill Country's starry night skies. We work with county and city governments, developers, and individuals to promote responsible lighting practices. By balancing growth with preservation, we aim to maintain the beauty of Blanco County's night sky for future generations. In our short history, we've made significant strides in keeping the stars visible for all to enjoy.



Hill Country Alliance | Partner

The Hill Country Alliance is committed to preserving the beauty of the Texas Hill Country for future generations. Our mission unites diverse partners to protect open spaces, starry skies, clean water, and the region's unique character. We aim to ensure that the remarkable landscapes and resources that have defined this area for over 14,000 years remain accessible and sustainable for years to come.



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