

Hill Country Land, Water, Sky and Natural Infrastructure Plan

September 28, 2023 | Hill Country Leadership Summit



TEXAS HILL COUNTRY conservation network

OurTXHillCountry.org



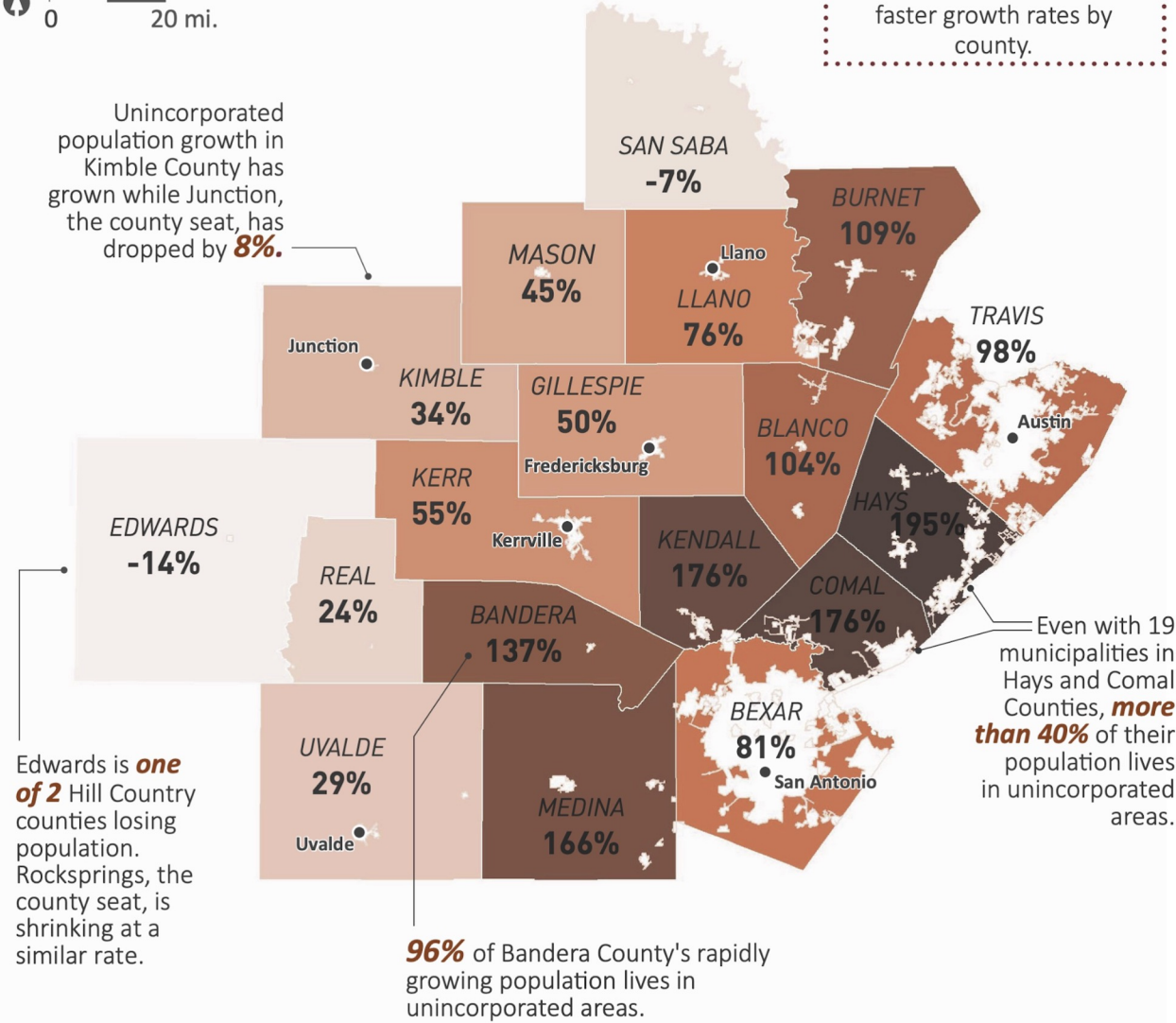
POPULATION GROWTH IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS, 1990 - 2020



The Hill Country population in unincorporated areas has grown by **103%** since 1990. **Darker shades** indicate faster growth rates by county.

Unincorporated population growth in Kimble County has grown while Junction, the county seat, has dropped by **8%**.

Edwards is **one of 2** Hill Country counties losing population. Rocksprings, the county seat, is shrinking at a similar rate.



Even with 19 municipalities in Hays and Comal Counties, **more than 40%** of their population lives in unincorporated areas.

96% of Bandera County's rapidly growing population lives in unincorporated areas.

White spaces indicate incorporated areas.

STATE OF THE HILL COUNTRY
8 KEY CONSERVATION AND GROWTH METRICS
FOR A REGION AT A CROSSROADS

February 2022



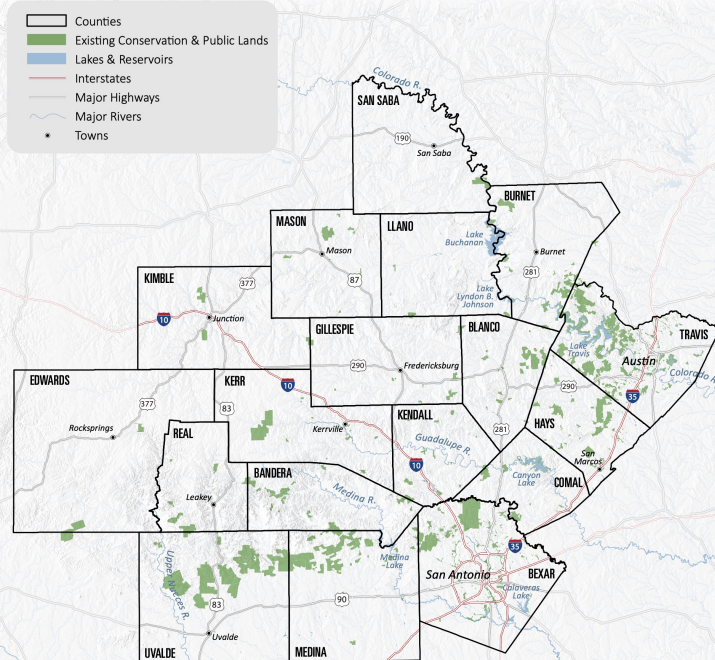
Produced by:



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By the Numbers



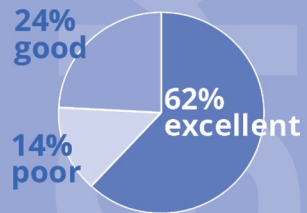
THE HILL COUNTRY STUDY AREA

12
designated dark sky places



14
friends of the night sky groups

Night Sky Visibility



3.9
million residents



5.2
million projected population in 2040

32
million annual visitors¹⁵

864,336
unincorporated areas in 2020;

103%
increase from 1990

Headwaters of

12
Texas Rivers

191
gallons of water consumed on average per capita per day (wide variation)

1,142
pristine streams

Home to iconic spring-fed swimming holes



17,760
square miles

11
million acres

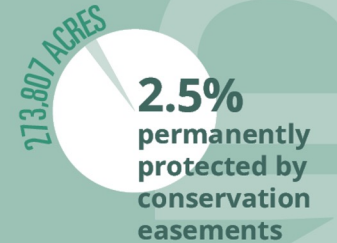
18
counties

11 ecoregions represented

15 State Parks & Natural Areas

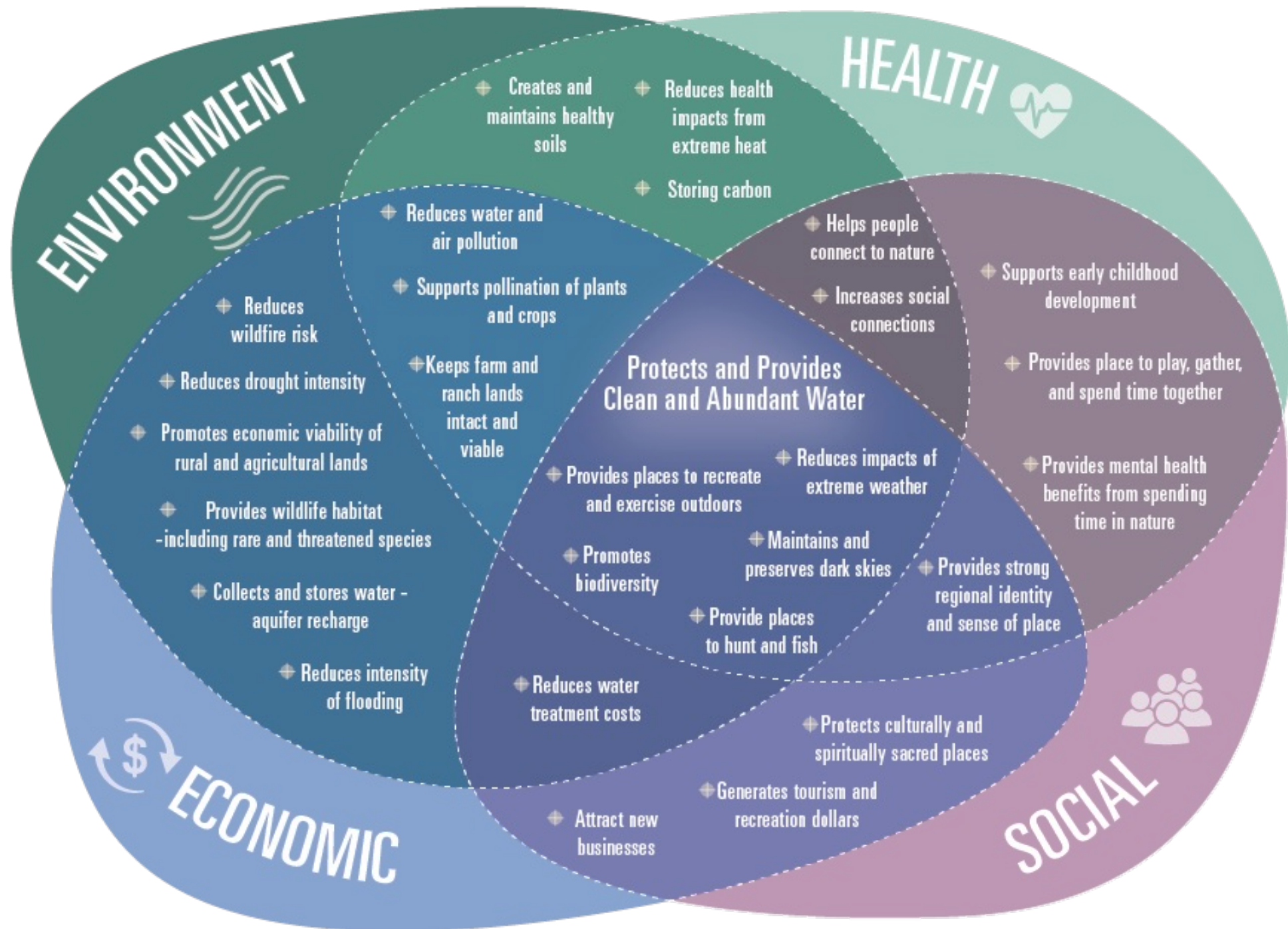
403
plant & animal species of greatest conservation need¹⁶

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION
\$1,400,000,000

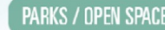


More endemic plants than any other region of Texas

Endangered species include golden-cheeked warblers, karst invertebrates, and spring salamanders



OF THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY



GROUNDWATER

SEEP | SPRING

RESERVOIR

texas hill country conservation network

FINAL CONSERVATION GOAL & CRITERIA WEIGHTING



WATER SUPPLY 26%

- 39% - Protect lands in aquifer recharge and contributing zones
- 31% - Protect all contributing streams to reservoirs
- 20% - Protect perennial named streams and rivers
- 10% - Buffer public water intakes



WATER QUALITY 23%

- 41% - Protect natural lands along streams, rivers, wetlands, and arroyos
- 23% - Protect pristine streams
- 18% - Buffer natural springs
- 18% - Protect areas of high erosion potential



CLIMATE RESILIENCE 22%

- 30% - Protect flood-prone areas from development
- 30% - Protect intact forest areas
- 21% - Protect more resilient landscapes
- 19% - Protect areas of increased threat of wildfire



WILDLIFE HABITAT & CONNECTIVITY 12%

- 39% - Protect areas with general high habitat value
- 31% - Protect habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species
- 30% - Protect lands with close proximity to other conserved lands



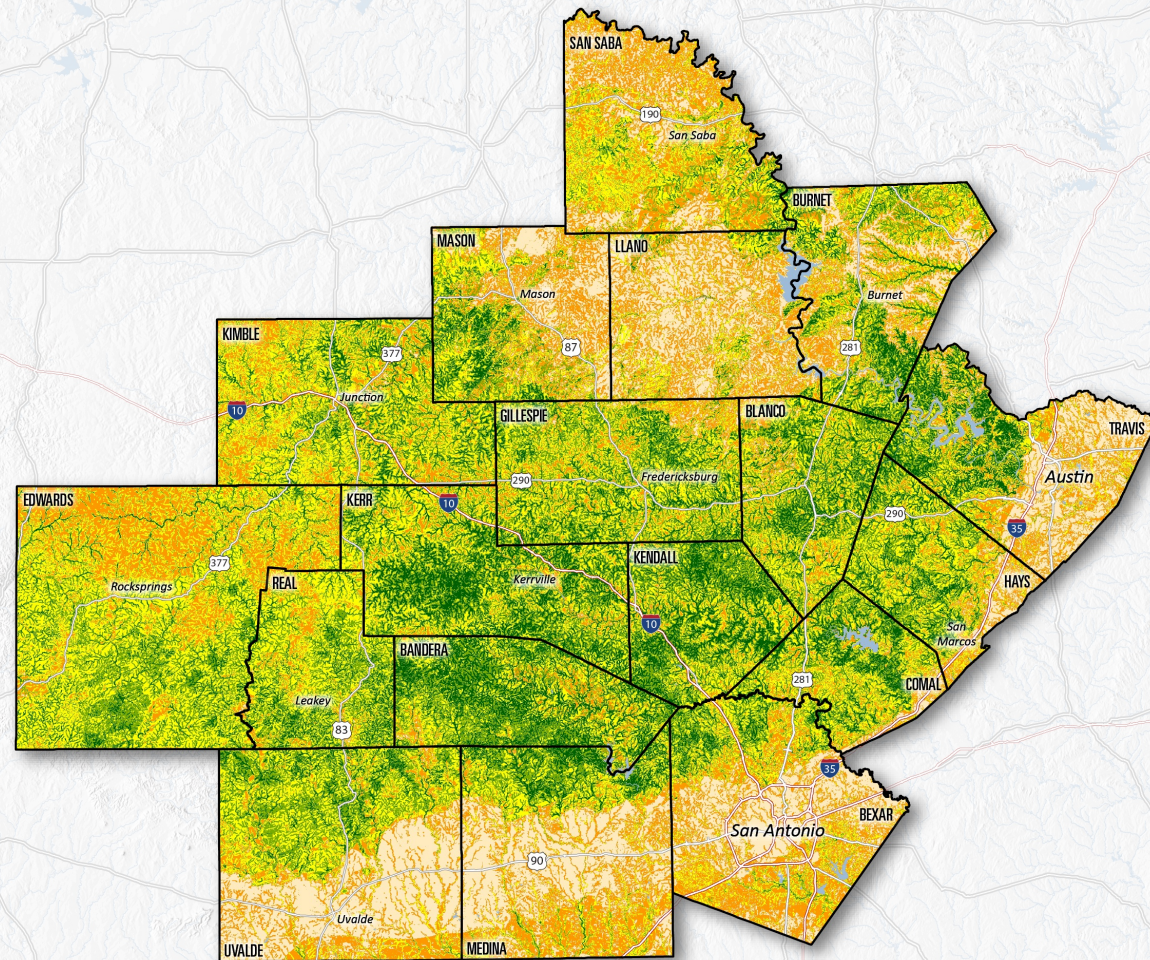
WORKING LANDS 10%

- 39% - Protect larger parcels on the landscape
- 31% - Protect working lands facing development pressure
- 30% - Protect areas of prime and significant soils

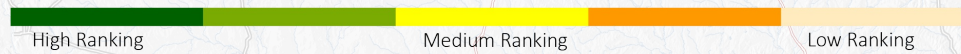


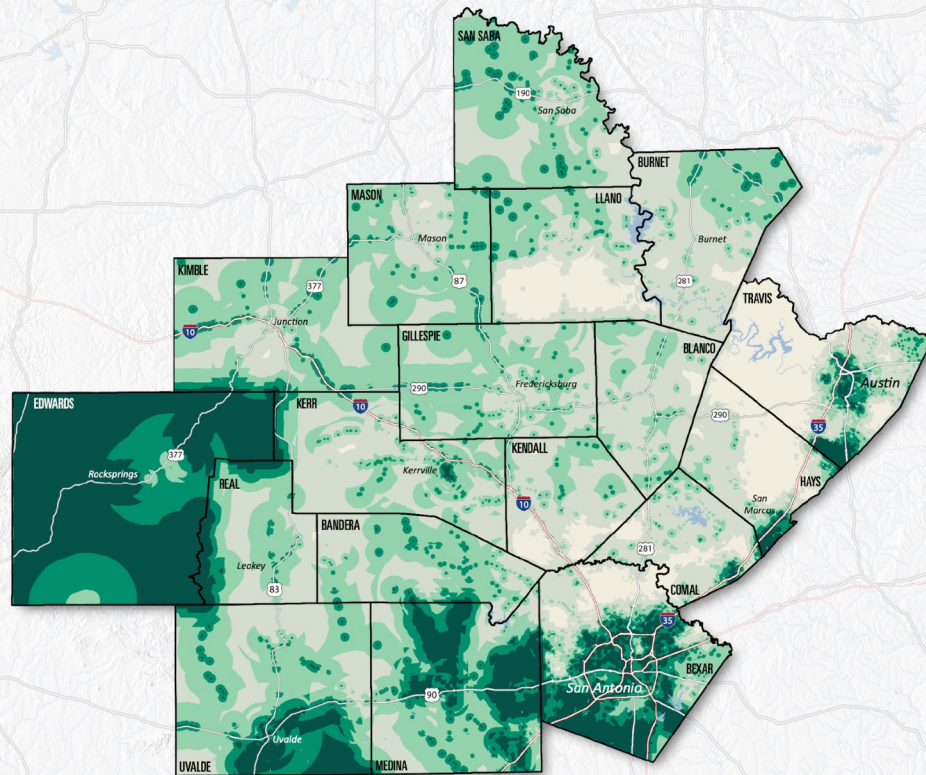
ACCESS TO OUTDOORS & NATURE 7%

- 28% - Provide open space to improve public health
- 26% - Preserve open space in or near low income/underserved areas
- 26% - Improve access to aquatic recreation opportunities
- 20% - Prioritize protection of areas furthest from existing public lands



OVERALL RANKING AREAS





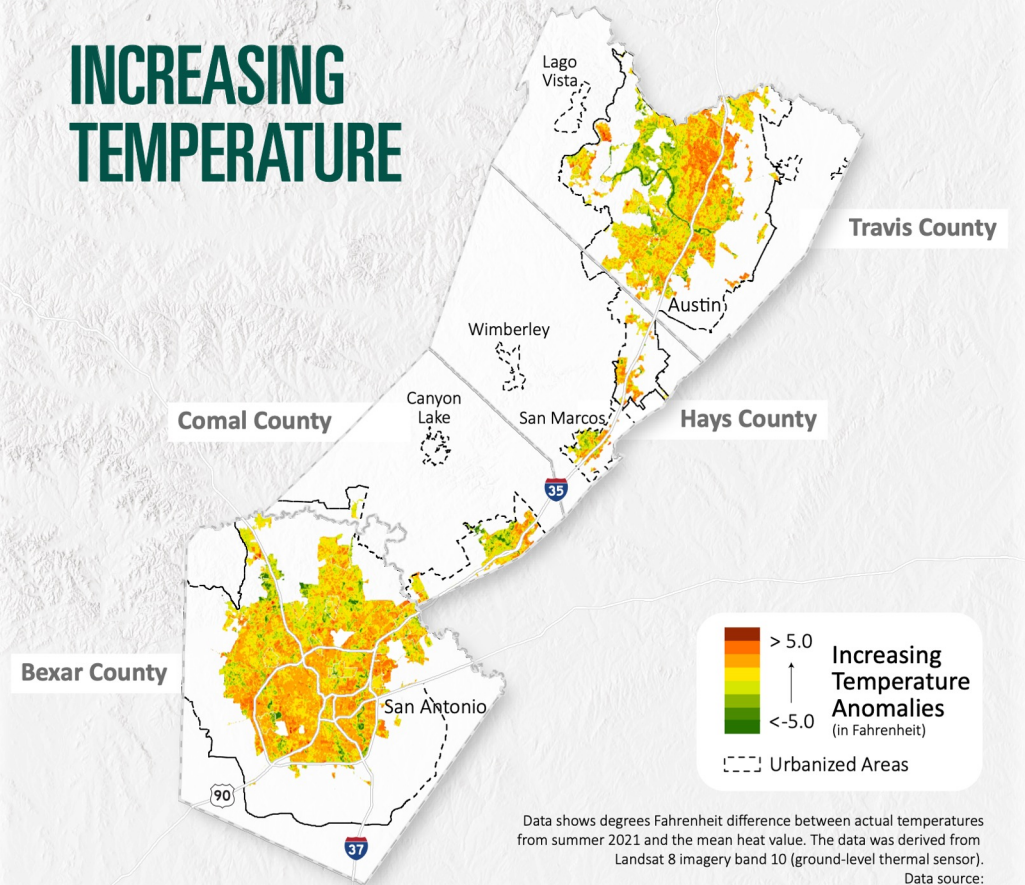
ACCESS TO OUTDOORS & NATURE RANKING AREAS

High Ranking

Medium Ranking

Low Ranking

INCREASING TEMPERATURE



Data shows degrees Fahrenheit difference between actual temperatures from summer 2021 and the mean heat value. The data was derived from Landsat 8 imagery band 10 (ground-level thermal sensor).
Data source:
<https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=ec2cc72c3de04c9aa9fd467f4e2cd378>

NIGHT SKIES MAPPING

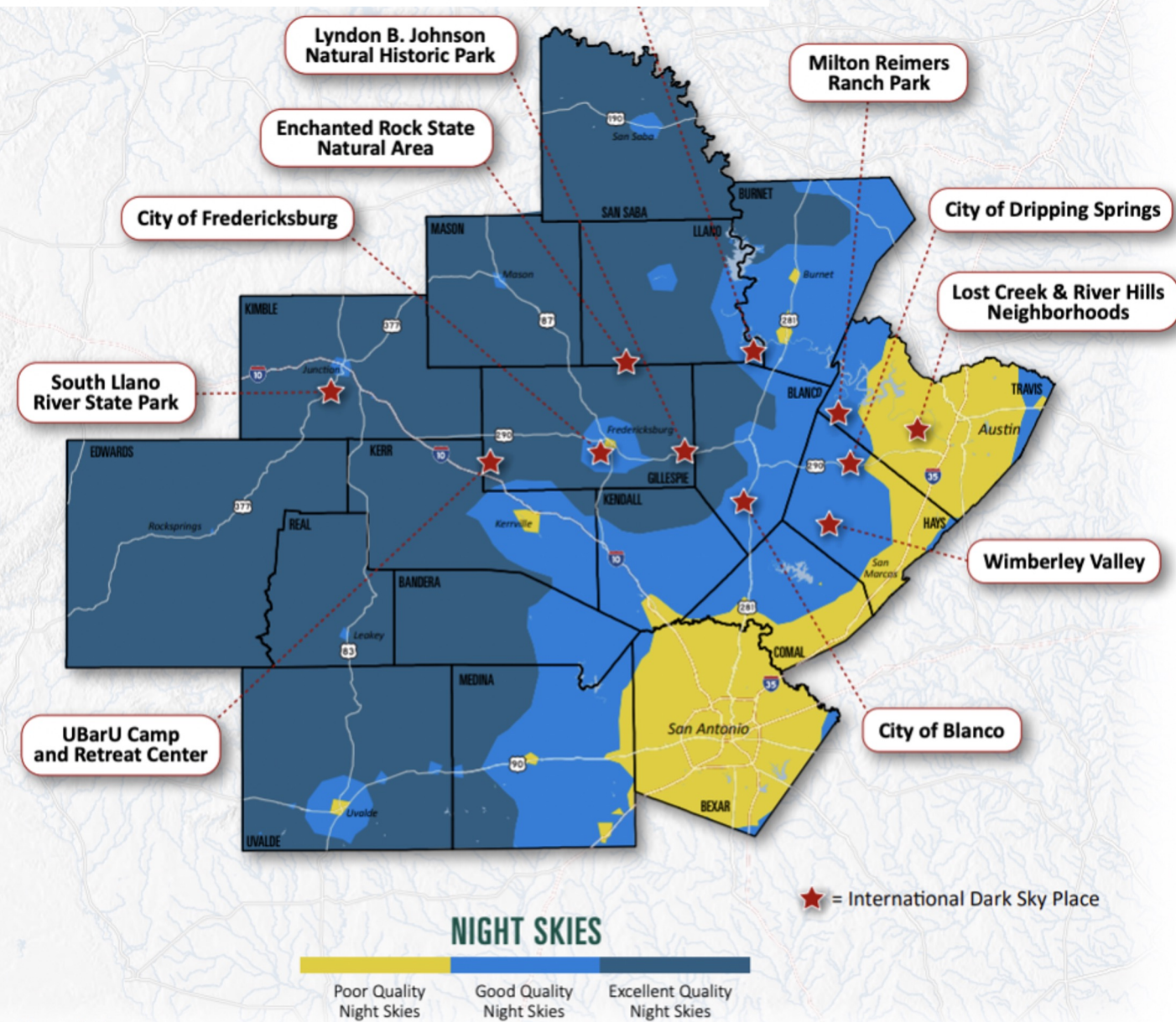


Figure 4-11

KENDALL COUNTY

88,616

Acres of Highest Priority
Natural Infrastructure Areas

Land Area - **422,904 acres**
Lakes & Reservoirs Area - **1,416 acres**
Streams & Rivers - **1,679 miles**
2020 Population - **44,279**
2020 Pop. Density - **66.8 ppl/sqmi**



Percent Developed Areas (2019)



Percent Conservation Areas (2021)



Public Investment in Conservation (2010-2022)



Rate of Population Growth (2010-2020)



Diversity Index (2020)



Persons in Poverty (2020)



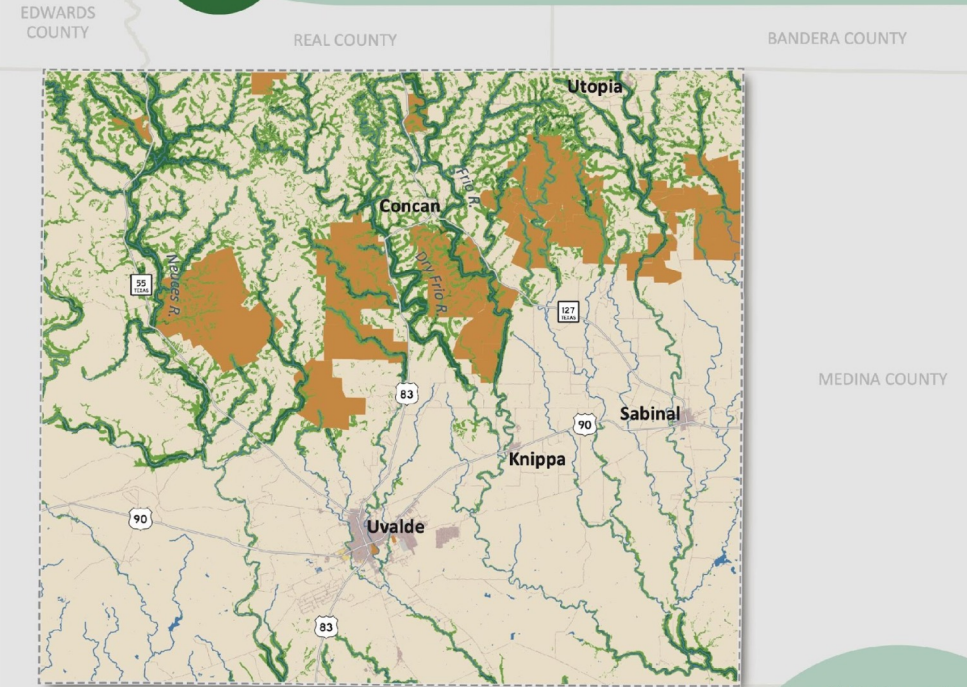
Social Vulnerability (2020, out of 100)

UVALDE COUNTY

24,564

Acres of Highest Priority
Natural Infrastructure Areas

Land Area - **990,600 acres**
Lakes & Reservoirs Area - **2,660 acres**
Streams & Rivers - **3,141 miles**
2020 Population - **24,564**
2020 Pop. Density - **15.8 ppl/sqmi**



Percent Developed Areas (2019)



Percent Conservation Areas (2021)



Public Investment in Conservation (2010-2022)



Rate of Population Growth (2010-2020)



Diversity Index (2020)



Persons in Poverty (2020)



Social Vulnerability (2020, out of 100)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our consultant team:

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Panelists



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Hill Country Conservancy



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Hill Country Alliance



Ben Eldredge
Cibolo Center for Conservation



Azalia Rodríguez
Defenders of Wildlife



NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

OF THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY



WOODLANDS / FORESTS



GRASSLANDS



FARMS &
RANCHLANDS



WETLANDS &
RIPARIAN ZONES



WATERWAYS



AQUATIC SYSTEMS



PARKS / OPEN SPACE



URBAN FORESTS



RAIN GARDENS

