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For Immediate Release

Four winners announced in Hill Country photo contest

Calendar celebrates treasures and raises awareness about conservation

Austin (September 10, 2009) – Photographers from across the Hill Country took the theme of Hill Country Alliance’s Third Annual Photo Contest seriously: *Celebrating the Treasure of the Hill Country* is now possible with a look through the beautiful photographs in the 2010 Hill Country Alliance calendar. “Our desire is for this contest and the calendar to increase awareness of the need to care for the treasures of the Hill Country with regional planning and conservation,” says Christy Muse, HCA executive director.

Four photographers are celebrating winning the contest, which featured four categories:

Hill Country People: individuals, children and families

Natural Treasures: springs, parks, rivers, special places in nature

Hill Country Enterprise: wineries, tourism, festivals, towns

Working the Land: gardening, agriculture, ranching, farming

Chase Fountain, Texas Parks and Wildlife photographer, is the winner of the “Hill Country People” category with his photograph titled *David Bamberger and Cory*. Fountain was assigned to photograph Bamberger after it was announced that Bamberger Ranch won the 2009 Leopold Conservation Award. Fountain says they walked around the ranch and talked for hours and then he did the photo shoot with Bamberger and his dog, Cory. “He puts his heart out there, and he inspired me so much,” Fountain says. “I got the shot at the end of the day at that perfect golden moment.”



Chase Fountain - *David Bamberger and Cory*



Rusty Ray, winner of the “Natural Treasures” category, specializes in outdoor photography. Ray was camping at South Llano River Park near Junction when he caught a glimpse of a vermilion flycatcher venturing near his camp. “I set up camp, put a thistle sock up and a chair by the picnic table with a tripod. The golden finches started coming in,” Ray recalls. “The vermilion flew up within 15 feet of where I was sitting with an insect in his mouth. I moved the camera and started shooting. He beat the insect on a branch and then looked up.” And that was the winning photograph titled *Successful Hunt*.

Rusty Ray – *Successful Hunt*

Ray has entered the HCA Photo Contest every year and won third place last year. His photograph, “Evening Glow in Llano County,” is the cover of the 2009 HCA calendar.

Carolyn Whiteside is winner of the “Hill Country Enterprises” category. She says that for her, “photography is a hobby that went astray.” She now has a small photography business. The day she photographed her winning photo, *Pick Me*, was not an ideal day for outdoor photography. “It was late July. In Texas that means hot and not picturesque,” Whiteside notes. “It dawned on me it was the grape season.” She went to a winery in Gillespie County, just outside of Fredericksburg. “When I got there, I took only pictures of grapes. They were so pretty and perfect.”



Carolyn Whiteside - *Pick Me*



Robert Anshutz – *Vineyard Harvest*

Robert Anschutz, winner of the “Working the Land” category, likes traveling the back roads of the Hill Country taking photographs. He had explored the idea of taking some photographs at the Driftwood Vineyard, “When it was harvest time in 2006 I had a great opportunity that morning to watch the harvesting process.” It was a great harvest that year. “With the machine in the photograph, they harvested eight tons of grapes that day,” Anschutz recalls.

The winning photographs were chosen by a team of judges including: Rusty Yates, contemporary fine art photographer; Carter Smith, executive director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife; and Kevin Vandivier, photographer and owner of Alpha Omega Photographic Gallery. Herb Smith, who won first place in the contest two years in a row, chaired the judging team this year.

To purchase the calendar, visit the HCA website at (www.hillcountryalliance.org) where you’ll also find the latest news and events, and more about our initiatives and how you can get involved.