

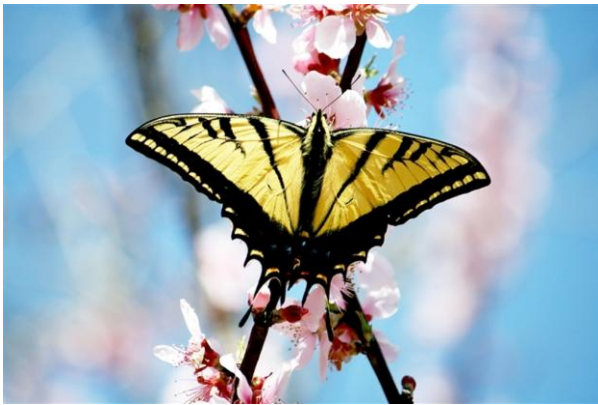
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Hill Country Photo Contest Kicks Off March 1st



2011 Grand Prize Winner, Photographer: Tammy Wren

What do you love the most about the Hill Country? Is it a cool blue swimming hole, your family's ranch, a field of native grasses or your favorite dance hall? The Hill Country Alliance (HCA) invites you to head outside with a camera and capture what makes the region so special to you.

HCA's 6th annual photo contest opens on March 1st and runs through May 31st. People of all ages and skill levels are invited to submit up to four photographs online at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

"Winning photographs will illustrate the beauty of the Central Texas Hill Country and tell a story about the region's unique natural and cultural heritage. This year, we'd love to see some slightly hidden features such as recharge features, wildlife habitats, spring-fed creeks and outstanding examples of well stewarded land – treasures worth protecting for future generations," said Sky Lewey, HCA President.

Contest winners will receive cash prizes as well as a full-page photo feature in the 2013 HCA Hill Country Calendar. The grand prize winner will receive \$300 and the winning photograph will grace the cover of the calendar. A distinguished panel of artists, photographers and regional leaders will judge the contest.

"Through our annual contest and calendar, the Hill Country Alliance educates people about the outstanding beauty and unique history of the Hill Country and endeavors to build a culture of conservation in our community," said Sky.

Rapid population growth has placed many of the Hill Country's natural areas and heritage ranch lands at risk and water planning for the future is a tremendous challenge.

"Hill Country landowners love and care for their land. However, together we must do more to protect our threatened ranch lands and natural areas," said Christy Muse, HCA Executive Director. "Protecting these areas not only ensures the economic vitality of our region, but also safeguards clean drinking water and a high quality of life for our children and grandchildren," Christy added.

HCA 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. Learn more about the organization and the photo contest at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

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