

For Immediate Release

Contact: Christy Muse, Executive Director
Hill Country Alliance
christy@hillcountryalliance.org
512.560.3135



Symposium Will Explore Issues Facing Iconic Pedernales River



Pedernales River, Photographer: Rusty Ray

(March 3, 2014) – The first Texas Water Symposium of 2014 will feature a conversation between Hill Country landowners and water experts about the Pedernales River. The symposium, which will take place from 7 to 8:30 pm on Thursday, March 20, at the Hill Country University Center, 2818 Highway 290 East, Fredericksburg, is free and open to the public.

The moderator will be **Dr. Andrew Sansom**, Director, Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, Texas State

University. Panelists will include **Tim Birdsong**, Ecosystem/Habitat Assessment Chief, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; **Mark Steinbach**, Executive Director, Texas Land Conservancy; **Clinton Bailey**, Director, Public Works and Utilities, City of Fredericksburg; **Pam Mabry Bergman**, Landowner and Hill Country Land Trust Board Member, Pedernales Basin; and **Howard Hicks**, Landowner and Vice President for Public Affairs, Holt Cat.

They will discuss some of the challenges and opportunities facing this iconic resource, which reflects the diverse landscapes of the Hill Country, and the work that is being done to protect it. How can we understand the economic, social and ecological value of such a diverse river? How does the health of the river reflect land management decisions made in the far corners of its basin? What are the major threats to the quality and quantity of the river's water?

As Central Texas grapples with population growth, land fragmentation and changing land uses, understanding the impact of land and water management on the health of our rivers and their associated catchment areas is essential.

The Pedernales runs 106 miles through the Hill Country before eventually joining the Colorado River at Lake Travis. Its catchment area—the land that drains into the river—touches 8 counties and covers more than 800,000 acres.

The basin provides habitat for numerous fish and wildlife; supports agricultural, ranching and hunting pursuits; and contributes 23% of the flow into Lake Travis, providing a critical source of drinking water for downstream users such as the City of Austin. The basin also provides invaluable recharge to the Trinity Aquifer, supporting thousands of wells throughout the region.

For seven years the Texas Water Symposium series has brought together policymakers, scientists, water resource experts, landowners and regional leaders to explore the challenges and complexities of managing water in Texas. The sessions are free and open to the public, and are recorded and aired on Texas Public Radio one week later. The Symposium is a partnership project of Schreiner University, Texas Tech University, Texas Public Radio and the Hill Country Alliance.

For more information about the Texas Water Symposium Series, visit www.schreiner.edu/water.

To stay informed about future programs, subscribe at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

The Hill Country Alliance 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. Visit us at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

###