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For Immediate Release

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Texas Water Symposium will explore “*Ecosystem Services*,” their function, and the money they save taxpayers

(April 30, 2018) – Celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Texas Water Symposium with an evening discussion about “Ecosystem Services” and the value of healthy lands and waters to all Texans. This installment of the Texas Water Symposium will take place at **7pm on Thursday, May 10th**. The program, titled ***Ecosystem Services: how we can help preserve and protect our natural assets***, will be held at the Texas Tech University Field Station in Junction, Texas. The Texas Water Symposium is free and open to the public.

Ecosystem services are the benefits that are provided by the natural environment. Healthy rivers, uplands, and aquifers provide safe drinking and irrigation water. Plants act as filters that generate oxygen and clean our air. Healthy soils retain moisture and capture carbon. Natural systems help regulate temperatures, maintain nutrient cycles, and provide a wide range of other necessary services that would otherwise require mechanical solutions and cost taxpayer dollars.

“These life-sustaining benefits are called **ecosystem services**, and according to a recent assessment by the Texas A&M Forest Service, are valued at \$93 billion annually,” said Hughes Simpson, a panelist for the May 10th event and Texas A&M Forest Service staff.

What would it cost to replace the ecosystem services we currently receive for free? As a society, we tend to overlook, take for granted, and neglect the things that come to us at no cost. To help inform decision-makers, researchers are now trying to quantify the true value of these free benefits. Join us as we explore the ecosystem services provided by our Hill Country natural resources, and how we can help preserve and protect our natural capital.

This Symposium will be hosted by Texas Tech University, the Hill Country Alliance, and Texas Public Radio, and will feature the following distinguished panelists:

State Representative Andy Murr: Texas House District 53

Hughes Simpson: Program Leader III - Texas A&M Forest Service

Tom Arsuffi: Director of the Llano River Field Station at Texas Tech University

Moderator – Katherine Romans: Executive Director – Hill Country Alliance

The Symposium is a partnership project of Schreiner University, Texas Tech University, Texas Public Radio and the Hill Country Alliance. For more information, visit www.texaswatersymposium.com, and listen to [past shows](#) online. 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.

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Photo: David Parsons