

Texas Hill Country Conservation Network



Protecting the Hill Country

The Texas Hill Country is at a crossroads. This iconic landscape—filled with natural beauty, dotted with heritage-rich rural communities, and central to the health of Texas’ economic engine—is facing tremendous threats. Booming population growth, changing climate patterns, and a unique set of regulatory challenges threaten the very natural resources that define this region. The window of opportunity to keep the Texas Hill Country rural, natural, and vibrant will likely close within our generation.

What is the Network?

In 2017, a coalition of organizations and agencies came together to form the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network (THCCN/the Network) to advance shared goals for conservation of the Texas Hill Country. The Network aims to significantly scale the impact of conservation-focused organizations working to protect natural resources, rural heritage, and quality of life.

MISSION STATEMENT

To maximize protection of the Hill Country’s natural resources through enhanced collaboration.

Why a Network?

We recognize that without collaborating, we will not keep pace with the loss of open space, the threats to water resources, and the broader challenges facing our region. After studying other collective impact models around the state and the country, Network partners came together to set a structure that will enhance collaboration, allow for flexibility and responsiveness to pressing issues, and scale conservation impact. Together we can inspire greater action than any one organization, agency, or brand could achieve alone.



The Network is governed by a Steering Committee, which represents 11 organizations, academic institutions, and businesses from across the region. The Hill Country Alliance serves as the backbone organization.

The Network Strategy

The Network embarked upon a strategic planning process in the spring of 2017 to create comprehensive organizational, membership, and governance structure and protocols to increase organizational capacity and effectiveness.

Priority Campaigns 2019-2021

The Network has identified three priority focal areas to direct energy and expertise over the next 18 months. Guided by a five-year strategic plan, these campaigns will provide focus for delivering on-the-ground conservation victories.

Utilizing Innovative Finance for Watershed Protection: Texas is the only state in the country that does not afford its counties land use controls to plan for and appropriately manage growth. Additionally, as cities grow, Texas loses agricultural lands—faster than any other state. The connection between land conservation, watershed health, and the long-term resilience of Hill Country water resources is inextricable. THCCN partners will work in a coordinated fashion to leverage innovative and sustainable conservation finance sources for permanent protections for Hill Country lands.

Advancing “One Water” in Austin and the Hill Country: The City of Austin’s recent passage of Water Forward, a ground-breaking 100-year water plan with heavy emphasis on “One Water” integrated management tools, creates a unique opportunity to catalyze an institutional shift in the culture of water management in Central Texas. THCCN partners will partner to ensure the successful implementation of Water Forward and to expand the use of One Water into the wider region.

Enhancing Sustainable Groundwater Management for Continued Spring Flow : Thirty percent of all surface-water flows in Texas originate as groundwater, and groundwater contributions to surface flows are greatest in the Hill Country. The majority of groundwater districts in the Hill Country do not currently have sustainable management goals that prohibit aquifer overdraft and are managing for the depletion of the underlying aquifers. THCCN partners will coordinate efforts to conduct the science, education, and policy work needed to enshrine sustainability and spring flow into DFCs across the region.



The Hill Country includes 18 counties and more than 11 million acres. From the bustling cities of Austin and San Antonio to the rural hinterlands of Leakey, Junction, and San Saba. This region holds the headwaters of 12 of Texas’ rivers.