

The Watershed Association

Normal flow at Jacob's Well
April 2021



Photo by Erich Schlegel

Zero flow at Jacob's Well
October 2022



Photo by Robin Gary

Program Updates
Winter 2022



THE
WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION
LAND · WATER · CONNECTION



THE
**WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION**
LAND · WATER · CONNECTION

A non-profit organization located in the heart of the Texas Hill Country, born out of a love for water.

Mission

To promote conservation by ensuring communities are aware of their connection and responsibilities to their watershed and are supported in advocating for water policies and practices that promote ecological sustainability for future generations.

Vision

A world where all community members understand the many benefits that flow from a respectful relationship with the land: human health, ecological health, economic sustainability, enriched community life, and the renewal of the human spirit.




Watershed Association Board, staff, and family

Board of Directors

Parc Smith, President
Scott Price, Treasurer
Jason Pinchback, Secretary
Dorothy Knight
Pokey Rehmet
Vanessa Puig-Williams

Leadership

David Baker, Founder and Executive Director
Robin Gary, Managing Director
Ellen Evans, Operations Director
Aliya Rosenbloom, Art4Water Coordinator



Land. Water. Connection.

November 14, 2022

Dear Friend of the Watershed,

Protecting the iconic Jacob's Well spring and the land and water of the Hill Country has been our focus for over thirty years. The crystal clear flowing spring is a timeless source of inspiration and a symbol of gratitude for the gift of water. Water truly connects us all. Jacob's Well serves as a reminder of the Hill Country's natural beauty and the delicate balance we as a community must achieve to avoid spoiling what we love. This year the drought and over pumping of the Trinity aquifer caused by continued growth in the critical recharge zone has caused Jacob's Well to stop flowing for over 30 days, the longest period of zero flow in history.

The relentless and excessive heat, drought, and wildfires this past summer had a devastating impact on wildlife, aquatic recreation, and the local tourism economy. The Jacob's Well Natural Area and Blue Hole Regional Park were forced to close access for public swimming because of lack of flow and concerns of water quality. As we move into the winter season, months after the heat of the summer, large segments of Cypress Creek and the Blanco River remain dry.

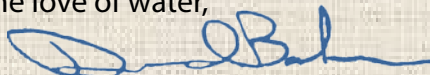
Amid all the environmental challenges we have faced this last year, our programs have expanded, more acres of land have been preserved, and our policy and advocacy initiatives have increased as we have deepened our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and community outreach through new programming for Art4Water. We continue to build on our success implementing One Water building strategies locally in order to have a greater impact across the region. The desire to execute our mission has never been greater in the face of monumental challenges. Rain drops fall outside my window as I write this letter offering hope and awareness of nature's regenerative power to heal and restore life.

The Watershed Association's Winter Program Update provides a snapshot of the wide range of our impactful programs and initiatives to protect our land and water and connect individuals and organizations focused on the long term health and sustainability of the communities we serve. From land conservation and restoration to watershed education, from water quality monitoring to making scientific research relevant, and from task forces to public comment, the Watershed Association continues to be a regional leader in land and water conservation, scientific research, environmental planning, policy, and regenerative education.

The Watershed Association thrives through generous expertise and dedicated efforts of our board and countless partners, supporters, and volunteers. Whether you donated, volunteered, participated in one of our programs, or shared the Watershed News, YOU have been part of our many successes.

Together, we can share a vision for human and ecological health, economic sustainability, and an enriched community, and renewal of the human spirit. Thank you for standing with us and leading a movement to sustain our land, water and healthy communities!

For the love of water,



David Baker, Executive Director



THE
WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION
LAND · WATER · CONNECTION

Our Impact

Protect Texas Water



Land Conservation

500 acres of land in conservation



Watershed Protection & Conservation Science

19 years of water quality monitoring with the Clean Rivers Program at 13 sites along Cypress Creek & the Blanco River, 12 bacteria sites monitored monthly



Policy, Advocacy, and Environmental Planning

1.6 million gallon annual wastewater discharge into the Blanco River prevented by the formation of Protect Our Blanco. Settled by Texas Land Application Permit to prevent further discharge



Regenerative Connection and Education

1,700 residents, students, and families reached by over 20 presentations, field trips, and events



Art4Water

300,000 visitors to the Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition at the Austin Central Library



Partnerships and Community Support

157,000 people reached through informal education and digital media



Land Conservation

*Sunset at Colemans Canyon
Photo by Jonathan Ogren*

We conserve land to protect water.

The Watershed Association is a regional land trust serving Central Texas and is a proud member of the Texas Land Trust Council. The Watershed Association has worked over the past 26 years to assemble and reunite the land directly surrounding Jacob's Well into a single ownership for the first time since the 1800s. The land had been subdivided into hundreds of parcels for development and was finally placed in a conservation easement in 2010. The Watershed Association worked to remove over five acres of impervious cover and begin restoration of the landscape to transfer to Hays County to establish the Jacob's Well Natural Area.

Since then, the Bluffs, Rebecca Springs, Colemans Canyon and Dry Cypress Preserves,

were purchased and conserved to protect critical habitat and aquifer recharge that supports local drinking water and spring flow from Jacob's Well.

With strong community support and stakeholder investment, the Watershed Association has converted over 500 acres into permanently conserved lands.

In addition to the conserved public lands and properties owned by the Watershed Association, we also monitor 294 acres of conservation easements, including the City of Wimberley's Cypress Creek Nature Preserve. Our work to conserve land is central to connecting our communities conservation ethic to these natural wonders, sustaining spring flow and water quality, and growing a healthy economy in the Wimberley Valley and Central Texas region.

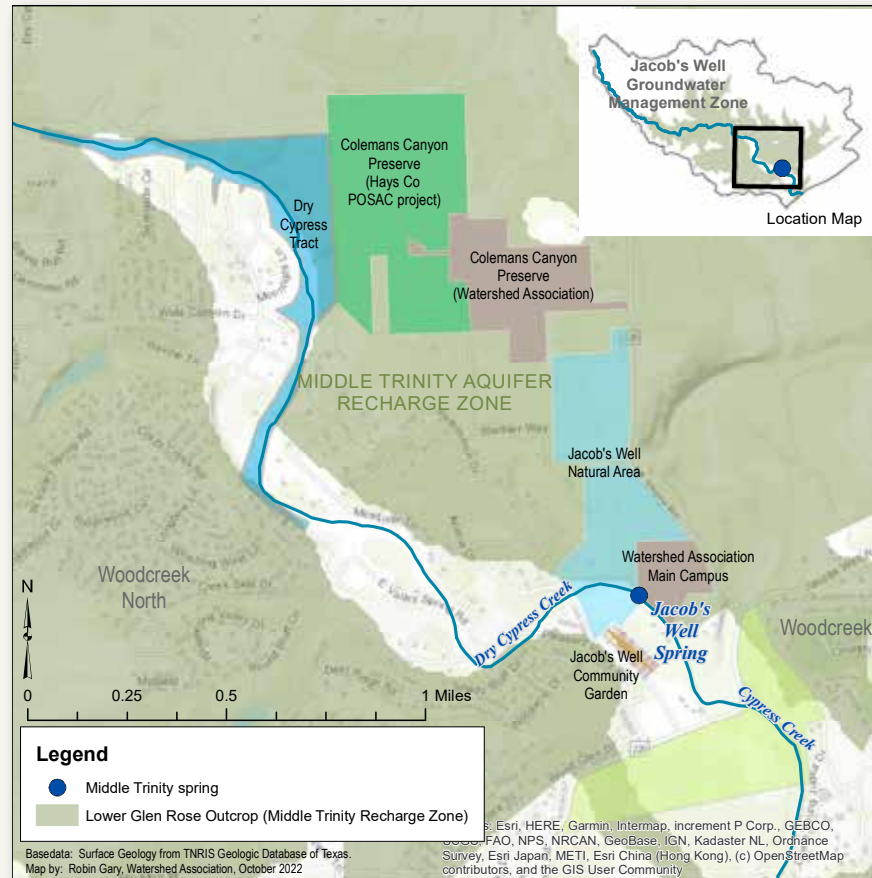
Bioswales at the Watershed Association Main Campus. Image by Woody Welch



Native grasses on conservation easement land. Photo by Robin Gary

Conservation Lands

The Watershed Association prioritizes land conservation as a means to preserve and protect our water. Conserving land in recharge zones is a priority for our organization to sustain creek and spring flows. When our conservation efforts began in 1996, only 1500 acres were in conservation in Hays County. Through our diligent work and collaborative efforts with Hays County and partners across the region, today we have over 30,000 acres in conservation in Hays County.



To further land and water conservation, the Watershed Association acts as a regional land trust and is a proud member of the Texas Land Trust Council. From its inception, the Watershed Association has worked to reassemble land divided into many small parcels into contiguous parcels across the region, most notably assembling the 81 acres that is now home to the [Jacob's Well Natural Area](#), which was purchased through voter approved bonds in 2010 and protected through a conservation easement held by Save Our Springs Alliance. Additionally, the Watershed Association owns and stewards over 280 acres of critical recharge lands, including property adjacent to Jacob's Well, [Coleman's Canyon Preserve](#), [Dry Cypress](#), [Jacob's Well Community Garden](#), [the Bluffs on Cypress Creek](#), and [Rebecca Springs](#). These conservation lands were purchased to prevent development in sensitive areas and are maintained to maximize high quality recharge and habitat.

Conservation Easements

The Watershed Association holds [three conservation easements](#) that protect 251 acres in Hays County; we work closely with conservation easement holders through stewardship, monitoring, and annual assessments. One of the conservation easements is the [Cypress Creek Nature Preserve](#), seven acres of land along Cypress Creek stretching from just east of Wimberley Square to the southwestern edge of Blue Hole Regional Park, which offers visitors the opportunity to experience a pristine riparian ecosystem with a wide variety of plants and wildlife. The Watershed Association continues to work in partnership with the Nature Conservancy, Texas Land Trust Council and other partners to expand conservation lands throughout the region.



*Colemans Canyon cleanup with Danforth Junior High students and Master Naturalists.
Photo by Woody Welch*

Hays County Parks and Open Space Bond Projects

The Watershed Association proposed [five projects to the Parks and Open Space Bond Committee \(POSAC\)](#). The POSAC recommended county funding for 4 of 5 Watershed Association proposed projects. Although the POSAC ranked the \$20 million Regional Conservation Fund Project as Tier Three with no current term recommendation for funding, the content of the proposal is serving as the basis for both the Greater San Marcos project and One Water Utility project development. The top tier projects with recommended funding include Coleman's Canyon Preserve with a \$2.6m recommendation to conserve 163 acres in the recharge zone for Jacobs Well, Dry Cypress Creek Trail with a \$1.5m recommendation to create a regional trail and add to recharge protection, Cypress Creek De Cordova Trail with a \$2.625m recommendation to preserve critical Cypress Creek riparian habitat, and Roy Creek Canyon with a \$1m recommendation to preserve a pristine one of a kind spring in northern Hays County.



*View from Colemans Canyon.
Photo by David Baker*



Watershed Protection & Conservation Science



Image by Kenny Braun

Healthy spring flows directly influence water quality—especially in the Hill Country. As flow declines, dissolved oxygen levels also decline and pollutant loading from direct wastewater discharges and non-point sources increases, which can impact the health of fish and aquatic communities. Since 2003 the Watershed Association has financially supported monitoring efforts. Currently, the Watershed Association funds ten quarterly and two monthly Clean Rivers Program water quality sampling sites along Cypress Creek and the Blanco River to document water quality conditions in these sensitive areas.

With increases in population and associated groundwater use complicated by frequent droughts, flow at Jacob's Well has stopped several times within the last decade. The Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan was established by the Watershed Association, Meadows Center and community stakeholders in 2008 in response to water quality impairments

and to proactively address water challenges through stormwater best management practices, green infrastructure, alternative supplies, beneficial reuse, conservation development and other One Water design concepts that protect spring flow and water quality.

Thanks to robust monitoring, quality assured science is available to community leaders and stakeholders to inform public policy.

Recently, the Watershed Association utilized water quality data in the formation of the Blanco Water Reclamation Task Force to facilitate policy changes that prevent direct wastewater discharge into the Blanco River. With innovative solutions such as One Water, and the creation of groundwater management zones, **we will continue to protect spring flow and maintain the pristine quality of our water supply through informed decision making and public policy based on sound science.**



Zara Environmental biologist
surveying Wimberley Bat Cave
Photo by Peter Sprouse



David Baker collecting water
quality samples circa 2004

Water Level Monitoring with Two New Monitor Wells

In spring 2022, the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District, Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District, and Hays County collaborated with the Watershed Association and Hays County Jacob's Well Natural Area to install [two new monitor wells inside the Jacob's Well Groundwater Management Zone](#) to better document groundwater conditions and aquifer dynamics.

These sophisticated wells are constructed to measure conditions in key aquifer layers. The [multiport monitor well](#) on the Watershed Association's Colemans Canyon Preserve has 10 independent zones to measure conditions in individual formations of the Middle and Lower Trinity Aquifers. The dual completion monitor well at the Jacob's Well Natural Area has two drop pipes that allow access to continuously measure water levels in two Middle Trinity Aquifer formations—the Lower Glen Rose and the Cow Creek.

Water Quality Monitoring

Since 2003, the Watershed Association has been collecting water quality data through the [Clean Rivers Program coordinated by Guadalupe Blanco River Authority](#). Currently, the Watershed Association funds 14 quarterly monitoring sites along Cypress Creek and the Blanco River. In collaboration with Protect Our Blanco, the Watershed Association sponsors 2 monthly monitoring sites on the Blanco River above and below the Blanco Wastewater Outflow to measure changes in water quality associated with direct wastewater discharges.

The volunteer [Wimberley Water Advisory Group](#) has monitored both Cypress Creek and the Blanco River near Wimberley for E coli bacteria for decades. The Watershed Association is coordinating

Volunteer Spotlight: Pete Anderson



Pete helped start the Wimberley Water Advisory group in 1984 and has been coordinating the volunteer-run effort for decades. Thank you, Pete, for your vital contribution to our community!

with Pete Anderson and the volunteers to expand the availability of monthly data collected during the swim season. This program is further supported by the Wimberley Chamber of Commerce, Wimberley Community Civic Club, and Wimberley Lions Club. Results are published in the Wimberley View and posted on the Watershed Association's [Bacteria Monitoring webpage](#).



*Jacob's Well Multiport Monitor Well
Photo by Robin Gary*



Zero flow at Jacob's Well
Photo by Robin Gary

Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan

The [Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan](#) (CCWPP) is a collaborative approach that engages city, county, civic organizations, and citizens of the Wimberley Valley in the conservation and preservation of Cypress Creek. The community led, EPA approved Watershed Protection Plan is an important tool used to help guide efforts to effectively manage the Cypress Creek Watershed by utilizing Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to mitigate nonpoint source pollution, anticipate future water quality impairments, and protect groundwater resources. The Watershed Association continues to serve on the executive committee and has partnered with the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment to apply for a third round of funding through an EPA 319 grant. We are developing a sustainability plan to continue essential monitoring, education and outreach activities. Recent new members of the CCWPP include the Woodcreek North Property Owners Association and Aqua Texas.

Drought, Groundwater Pumping, and Conservation

Jacob's Well flow reached a daily average flow of zero in August 2022. Including this year, Jacob's Well has stopped flowing 5 times in recent history—2000, 2009, 2011, 2013, and now, 2022.

Zero and low flow conditions have major ramifications for Cypress Creek, aquatic habitat, tourism, and groundwater users. Hays County Parks and City of Wimberley Parks staff

estimate a combined loss of over \$400,000 in swim reservation revenue this year as a result of the impacts caused by low to zero flow conditions at Jacob's Well and Blue Hole. [Low spring flow indicates low groundwater levels in the aquifer.](#) Many area residential wells experienced supply problems and had to rely on bulk water delivery. Drought affects everyone, and we need to come together to conserve and work to protect our water through policy and advocacy at a community level. To support the effort, the Watershed Association presented on [Drought, Groundwater Conservation, and the Need for Conservation](#) to Woodcreek City Council, Wimberley Parks Board, Wimberley City Council, Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District Drought Town Hall, the Future of Blanco County stakeholders, and Westcave Water Talk.





Policy, Advocacy, & Environmental Planning



Photo by Diana Spangenberg

In the Hill Country, there is a need for innovative approaches to provide more investment in parks and open space, protecting aquifer recharge, water equity and regional planning for conservation-based development. These strategies prevent wastewater pollutants from impacting local streams, encourage rainwater harvesting through incentives and forward sustainable groundwater management.

Our region is characterized by a state of prolonged drought punctuated by extreme rain events. As a result, providing affordable and reliable wastewater treatment systems that prioritize reuse and prevent groundwater depletion is critical to sustain water availability and water quality. Through promotion of decentralized water management “One Water” design, **the Watershed Association encourages an integrated planning and implementation approach** to managing finite water

resources for long-term resilience and reliability, meeting both community and ecosystem needs.

Given the rapid population growth in Central Texas and our finite water resources, **One Water principles are becoming critically important to extend and protect our vulnerable water supplies.** A core principle of One Water is the reuse of treated wastewater for irrigation and other beneficial use. The Watershed Association is a founding member of the No Dumping Sewage Coalition that has been a driving force to identify and investigate alternatives to direct discharge into the last remaining pristine streams in Texas through both legislation and a rulemaking petition to TCEQ. The reuse of treated effluent will protect water quality and will also help offset groundwater use for irrigation and be more protective of spring flows to balance community and ecosystem needs for a sustainable water future.



Image by Erich Schlegel

HILL COUNTRY CONSERVATION METRICS

AMOUNT OF CONSERVED AND DEVELOPED LANDS

Conserved Land
Acres 2021: **546,301**

Developed Land
Acres 2016: **828,066**

CONSERVATION INVESTMENT

Total Conservation Funds Passed,
1992-2020

\$1,220,247,967

POPULATION GROWTH IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS

Unincorporated Population 2020:

864,336

30-Year Unincorporated Population
Change 1990-2020:

103%

SPRING FLOW

BARTON SPRINGS

71cfs

JACOB'S WELL

3.4cfs

COMAL SPRINGS

307cfs

SAN MARCOS SPRINGS

179cfs

DARK SKY VISIBILITY

Excellent night sky, 2015:

62%

Good night sky, 2015:

24%

Poor night sky, 2015:

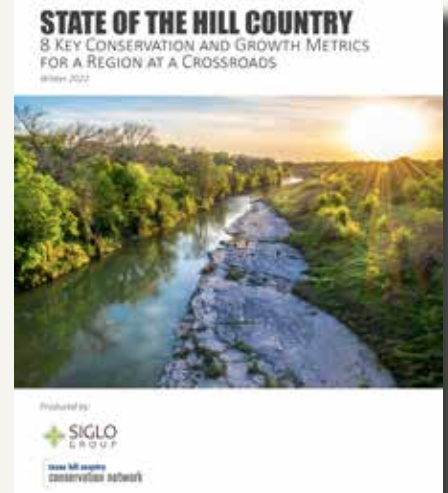
14%

Key Metrics Presented in the State of
the Hill Country Report.

State of the Hill Country Report

The Hill Country is growing. Population is booming and communities are trying to keep up with soaring demand. The State of the Hill Country Report helps give a snapshot of conditions and policies that affect land, water, and communities in our area. [The State of the Hill Country Report](#) presents eight conservation and development metrics and provides insight for residents, business owners, and policy makers for how to grow more sustainably.

The report is a collaborative project of the [Texas Hill Country Conservation Network](#), founded by the Watershed Association and Hill Country Alliance in 2015 to expand and scale the impact of conservation-focused organizations across the state. The report is a comprehensively researched and collaborative effort of all of the network organizations and has been highlighted in dozens of news articles and provides the details and metrics to inform regional growth and development in our sensitive region.



Heart of the Hill Country Awards: David Baker and Carolyn Chipman Evans

David Baker, Founder & Executive Director of the Watershed Association and Art4Water, and Carolyn Chipman Evans, CEO of the Cibolo Center for Conservation were honored with the Hill Country Alliance [Heart of the Hill Country Award](#) to recognize and celebrate their work championing and stewarding the natural resources of our region. Chipman Evans and Baker have both spent decades working within their communities to preserve our region's unique resources and to educate and inspire others to do the same. Both honorees were honored in the presence of their peers at the Hill Country Leadership Summit and presented with a beautiful award, designed and crafted by Hill Country artist J.J. Priour using Cordova limestone and glass. They join previous years' Heart of the Hill Country awardees Sky Jones-Lewey, Karen Ford, Annalisa Peace, and Christy Muse.



Image by Hill Country Alliance

Greater San Marcos Partnership: Decision Support Tool

The Watershed Association convened partners to facilitate the formation and preliminary activities of the Greater San Marcos Partnership. The [Greater San Marcos Partnership: Decision Support Tool Project](#) was created with the intention of convening a broad based committee to develop a regional conservation development growth plan. The project was led by Meagan McCoy and co-chair Lon Shell, and Executive Director David Baker. The effort was led by Watershed Partners, a consulting arm of the Watershed Association, along with Siglo Group, who constructed the tool to identify the region's most pressing environmental concerns and advocate for regional protections while also communicating where opportunities for new jobs and planned development would be most suited.

The Watershed Association and Watershed Partners led the GSMP Workgroup IV of Vision 2025 "Enhance Community Appeal" committee of nearly 40 business leaders, public officials, developers, engineers, planners, conservation professionals, environmental advocates, architects, landscape architects, and economic development staff to develop an online Geographic Information System (GIS) decision support tool to inform site selection criteria and balance conservation goals with growth objectives that are core to GSMP.

In Memoriam: Joe Campbell Day

The Wimberley Valley and Texas Hill Country benefit from conservation successes made possible because of passionate individuals like Joe Day. In early 2022, we lost this water protector, land steward, and champion for groundwater conservation. Joe's heart and dedicated spirit are dearly missed by all of us here in Wimberley.

Joe's voice is unforgettable. He spoke clearly and passionately to support decades of work to conserve Texas Hill Country and preserve its sacred springs. "Getting people in touch with nature is the objective. We design the gauntlet of environmental structures and education on people as they go down to Jacob's Well or Blue Hole. Along the way, they get pollen on them, and then go out and spread it around. We always filter these precious resources through an educational process to create a legacy of preservation." -Joe **Thank you, Joe, for your years of support and dedication to the Watershed.**



GREATER SAN MARCOS PARTNERSHIP



Draft Interactive Decision Support Tool and Map Interface. Compiled by Siglo Group



Algal blooms in the Blanco River downstream of the Blanco wastewater discharge, 2019
Photo by John Brown

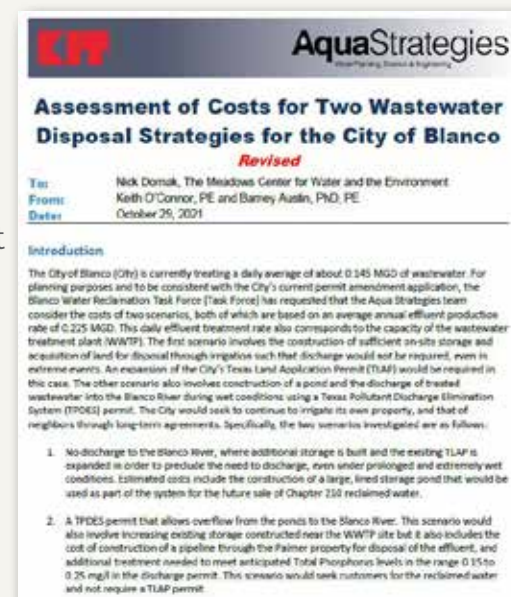
Water and Equity in the Texas Hill Country

In order to achieve the missions of the diverse partner organizations, The Watershed Association and the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network organizations collaborated to assess water challenges and their impacts on many Hill Country communities, particularly communities comprised of underserved or at-risk populations. [The Water and Equity in the Texas Hill Country report](#) provides a baseline, holistic understanding of where diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and environmental justice (EJ) issues intersect with water issues and challenges and outlines key findings and actions moving forward.



Blanco Water Reclamation Task Force

The Watershed Association, in collaboration with Protect Our Blanco and the City of Blanco, formed the [Blanco Water Reclamation Task Force](#) in September 2020 to investigate alternatives to direct discharge to allow for growth while protecting water quality, water supplies, and habitat. The task force was composed of four representatives for the City of Blanco and four members named by Protect Our Blanco (including David Baker and Joe Day) and was facilitated through a MOU with the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. Through fundraising and outside support, a third-party engineering firm was hired to assess costs to increase capacity for the Blanco wastewater system. On March 8, 2022, the Blanco City Council voted to approve the Task Force recommendations and directed staff to negotiate a new TLAP permit with phased adoption of no discharge, with reference to the Protect Our Blanco sample guidelines.

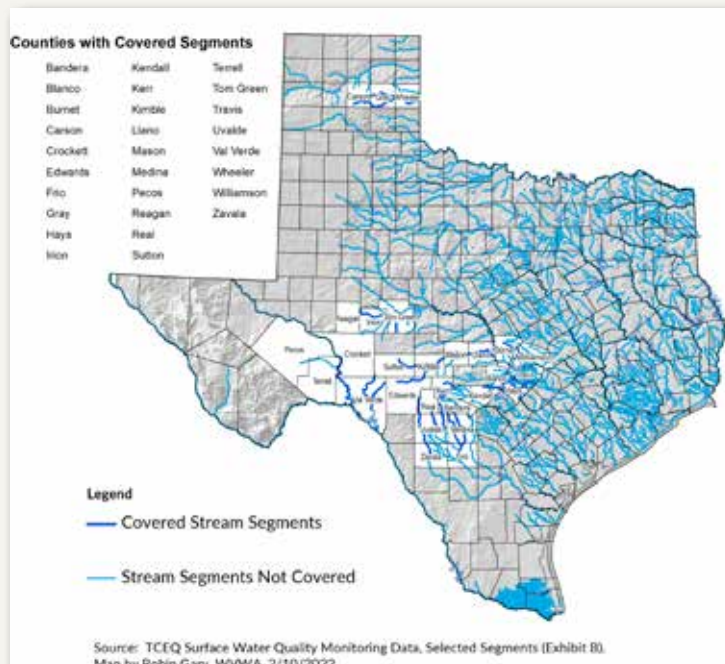


Pristine Streams Protections

In the first quarter of 2022, over 1200 comments were submitted on the TCEQ Pristine Streams rule change petition. The heartfelt and relevant public comments made a lasting impression on the Commissioners as they met to review the petition. However, the TCEQ Commissioners voted 2 to 1 to deny the Pristine Streams Rule Change Petition, and opened the door for continued discussion with staff and stakeholders on how to better [protect Texas' pristine streams](#). In August 2022, nearly five months later,

the TCEQ held a Pristine Streams Stakeholders Meeting, where staff presented current rules and procedures related to water quality for wastewater discharge into streams. We are hopeful that TCEQ will address Pristine Streams protections in their rules or necessary

legislation will be passed in the next legislative session to protect our Hill Country streams and honor the legacy of Sky Lewey who dedicated many years to this effort.



In Memoriam: Sky Jones-Lewey

This May we all lost a powerful, no-nonsense, force of nature—Sky Jones-Lewey. As Resource Protection and Education Director for the Nueces River Authority, she touched thousands of lives, spearheaded award-winning programs, and led wide-reaching efforts to control invasive plants and protect water quality. Her smile, her tenacity, her knowledge, and her contagious love of the Nueces have changed Texas rivers for the better. Sky helped lead the effort to better protect all Texas' last remaining pristine streams during the last legislative session with Pristine Streams bill (HB 4146). While the bill passed the House and ultimately stalled in the Senate, it showed the widespread support for better stream protections and opened the door to discussions with TCEQ. We are proud and grateful for our time working with her. She will be sorely missed.



Splashing in the Nueces River
Photo by Ron Spruce

One Water Implementation

One Water is an intentionally integrated approach to water that promotes the management of all water—drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, graywater—as a single resource. WISD's newest campus, Blue Hole Primary, is the first One Water School in Texas. The school was designed and constructed with strong support from the Watershed Association and the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State. Using innovative One Water concepts to minimize water use and optimize onsite reuse, Blue Hole Primary serves the growing Hill Country communities of Wimberley and Woodcreek with one of the most water efficient and cost-effective approaches envisioned for a school campus in Texas. Blue Hole Primary's unique campus reduces its water consumption footprint (if compared to conventional approaches) by approximately 90 percent through implementation of these One Water strategies.

One Water concepts minimize water use and optimize onsite reuse to protect our community's limited water supplies. The teaching campus provides valuable insight and experiences for One Water design, implementation, and maintenance using real, measurable data for water collection and use. The Watershed Association continues to work with WISD administration and teachers to develop curriculum, increase availability of campus performance data, and monitor and maintain One Water components.

Wimberley's One Water School has inspired and informed projects across the Hill Country. The Watershed Association is dedicated to apply One Water principles at residential, multi-family, commercial and neighborhood building scales to conserve and protect our water supplies and continue to serve as a model for other communities looking for solutions for regional water challenges.

Conservation Spotlight: Texas First Rainwater Public Water System at Shield Ranch

www.shieldranch.com/shield-ranch-celebrates-grand-opening-for-the-campsite-at-shield-ranch/

The Shield Ranch's sustainably designed campsite made history this year with the first Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)-approved public water system that relies entirely on rainwater to serve its guests; the site utilizes Enviro Loo evaporative toilets and energy generated exclusively from solar panels. As the hub for Camp El Ranchito and open to non-profit partners focused on environmental sustainability, the facility will provide year-round nature-immersion experiences for people of all ages while protecting the land and water resources for future generations.



Image by Hill and Wilkinson

Principal Dara Brooks with the TWDB Rain Catcher Award at Blue Hole Primary
Photo by Ray Don Tilley



Regenerative Connection & Education



Image by Erich Schlegel

Like the pristine water flowing from springs across the region to form deep connections throughout the entire Hill Country and beyond, connection and education are key pillars to the work we do.

Forming a connection with nature isn't just beneficial, it's vital for our human health. Increased time in nature shows clear positive associations with overall physical and psychological health and emotional wellbeing—it even makes us more productive.

Research tells us that when people simply view images of nature, “they are inclined to be more social, more caring towards others, more community-oriented, and more generous.” More time in nature tends not only to make us healthier, but better people in our communities with more inclination to recognize and respond to planetary health and concern for threats to our natural systems.

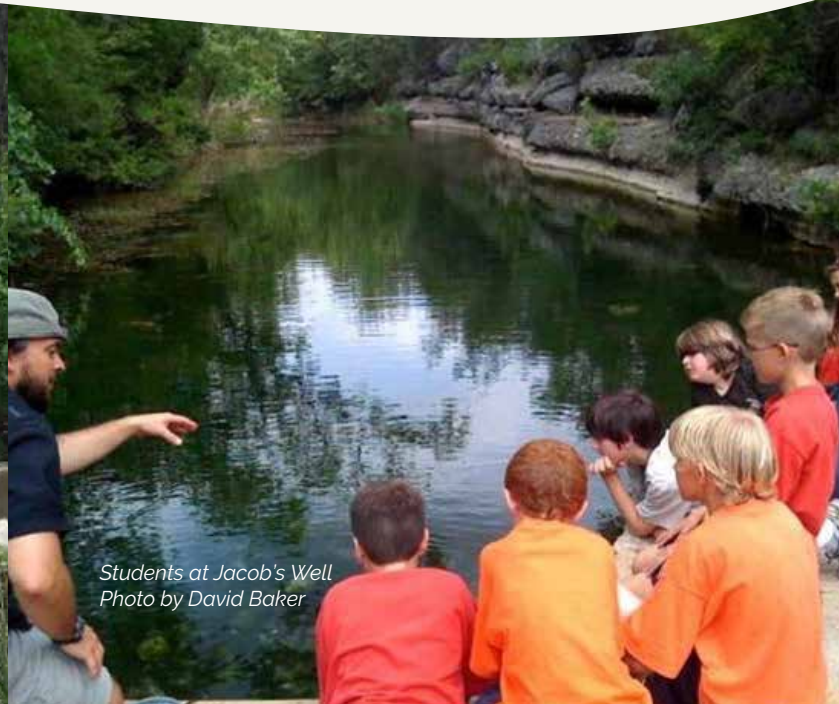
It has been said that humans are becoming the first indoor species, with our children spending more time with devices than in unstructured, outdoor play. Since most of our bodies are made up of the same elements found outside, when we become distant from nature, we also become separated from fully knowing ourselves.

The Watershed Association's nature-based programming focuses on regenerative and experiential practices where humans realign our relationship with nature. **We offer diverse opportunities for people of all ages to better understand themselves through the lens of the natural world.**

When we return to our rightful place in the natural world, we are healthier, we better understand nature and we are more likely to take care of it.



Jacob's Well Community Garden
Photo by David Baker



Students at Jacob's Well
Photo by David Baker



Jacob's Well Community Garden

The [Jacob's Well Community Garden](#) was created in Spring 2014 as a collaboration between the Watershed Association and passionate local community members. The garden has continuously expanded and improved over the years to become the vibrant community gathering space it is today. Located on conserved land at Logans Run in Woodcreek North, the garden sits on the former site of condo tennis courts. The community garden provides an affordable way for local gardeners to grow healthy, organic produce while giving back to the community. The space features 36 garden beds, 3 of which are devoted to growing food for the Wimberley Crisis Breadbasket.



*Harvest at the Community Garden
Photo by Jessica Marie*

Gardeners utilize organic growing methods, create abundant compost, and rely on rainwater collected in four cisterns as the primary water supply. Current initiatives at the garden include installation of solar panels and a solar pump that will connect to the rainwater collection tanks and ultimately the installation of drip irrigation in the garden beds to conserve more water. We are grateful and honored to partner with the gardening community and the volunteer leadership that make this garden thrive!

Texas Brewshed Alliance

The [Texas Brewshed® Alliance](#) was formed to inspire land and water stewardship across Texas through educating brewers and beer drinkers about the importance of water and its vital role in sustaining the natural landscapes and craft beer that we love. As a program of the Watershed Association, the Texas Brewshed® Alliance provides cross-disciplinary experiences that educate and connect across diverse community sectors (policy, education, government, science, and regenerative agriculture) so that we may co-create innovative approaches to land and water stewardship, positively impacting the way we relate to each other and our environment. Keep an eye out for Brewshed® events at breweries in your area as we expand and relaunch the program this spring season!



*A portion of Clear Springs Lager sales
support the Watershed Association
Photo by Roughhouse Brewing*



Image by Kara Buse

"Art shapes culture, and changes people and communities. Art tells a universally powerful story that communicates the value of water beyond words." - David Baker, Art4Water Founder

The Watershed Association launched an exciting new program in 2022 to engage artists as powerful advocates for our springs, creeks and rivers. Artists have always served society as visionaries, translators and storytellers—they help share powerful stories and elements of the human experience that are limited by spoken language. Art4Water is a program that advocates for environmental protection through the lens of art.

The program is focused at the intersection between the human experience of art, culture

and expression to policy, conservation, environmental stewardship, and education. Art4Water is a pathway to engage and educate both the artists and the art appreciators in a way that is memorable, unique and experiential. Charts, graphs, and statistics can only inspire to a point but when we personally feel and experience something, we are more likely to understand it, care about it, and alter our behaviors on its behalf.

We launched the Art4Water Program with the Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition at the Austin Central Library, and we are excited to expand the program to include additional exhibitions, unique events, nature-based artist residencies and retreats that turn to our community's artists as important leaders in conservation.



*Live Painting Demonstration at the Art4Water Launch Party
Image by Travis Beerburg*



*Terry Zee Lee installing kites at the Austin Central Library
Photo by Kara Buse*



The Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition at the Austin Central Library. Photo by Robin Gary

Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition

This year, the Watershed Association launched Art4Water with the [Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition](#)--a collection of over 50 water-inspired art kites from over 30 local and national artists. The exhibit was held in the LEED certified Austin Central Library and has been seen by over 300,000 people. The exhibition was guided by the vision and leadership of Terry Zee Lee and Ryan Willett and Watershed Association staff to make this spectacular exhibit a success. The exhibit brings together diverse communities around the respect for Texas' great springs--their history, their value, and the threats to their existence. Artwork for the eight featured Sacred Springs was created by the accomplished graphic designer and illustrator, John Mata. We are grateful for the artists and kitemakers for their participation, skill, and creativity. The impactful statements made through their art fuels awareness and the critical dialogue at the intersection of art and conservation.



John Mata with two of the Sacred Springs kites at the Austin Central Library. Photo by Eric Schlegel

Artist Spotlight: Summer Nielson

Summer, a senior at Vandegrift High School, is one of the featured artists of the Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition. She loves experimenting with multiple artistic mediums, including digital art, traditional painting, and animation. Her digital piece represents the flow of rivers across Texas. The bands of color across the kite are representative of the different regions and environments of our state, each sustained by the unifying force of water. After being selected, Summer painted her digital piece onto nylon using acrylic paints and textile medium. We are so excited that this collection uplifts the voices of many young artists and look forward to future Art4Water programming that further develops and inspires artists of all ages and backgrounds.



Summer Nielson with her kite 'Flow' at the Austin Central Library. Photo by Eric Schlegel

STEAM Kite Building Workshops

The Watershed Association partnered with kite facilitator Terry Zee Lee to host two kite building workshops with school students and their families. Terry Zee and Watershed Association staff hosted a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Tweens Kite Build in collaboration with the Austin Central Library's Kids Block Party to engage youth in Austin in the kite experience. They also collaborated with Wimberley ISD to share the kite building workshop with 180 second grade students at Blue Hole Primary. As part of the STEAM curriculum, students designed, decorated, built, and flew water kites to help raise awareness of water issues in the community and highlight the benefits of their school's One Water design. Kites were creatively decorated by students in their art class and built using STEM principles, and set to flight in the reuse playing field. The program was a huge success and students and staff were thrilled with the collaborative project.



Kite flying on the Blue Hole Primary playing field which is irrigated with reuse water
Photo by Robin Gary

Artist Feature: Terry Zee Lee

The Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition could not have happened without Terry Zee Lee, artist, educator, and world class facilitator of kite exhibitions. She has a long history of creating cutting edge, impactful exhibitions that raise awareness and powerfully engage people through the magic of kites. As President of Sky Wind World, she curated the nationally-acclaimed Buffalo Project and Lewis and Clark Kite Exhibitions and has shared her love of art, kites, and kite building with students around the world.



Terry Zee Lee teaching kite building at Blue Hole Primary
Photo by Robin Gary

We are grateful for her remarkable collaboration with David Baker to bring the vision for the exhibit to life!



Kite Building Workshop at
Blue Hole Primary
Photo by Robin Gary



SCUBA Diver featured on the Jacob's Well Sacred Springs Poster
Photo by Jesse Cancelmo

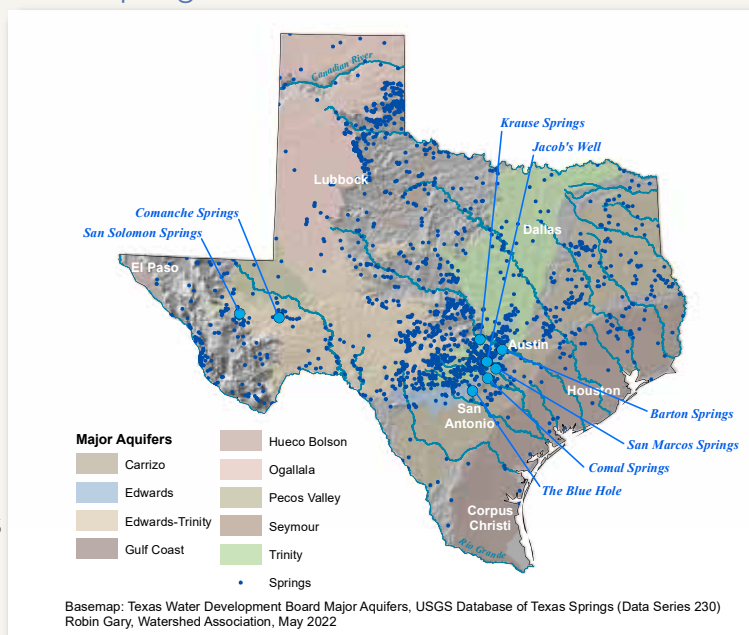
About the Sacred Springs Poster Series

To deepen the impact of the Sacred Springs Kite Exhibition, the Watershed Association created a [poster exhibit to highlight the eight featured Sacred Springs](#): San Solomon, Comanche, the Blue

Hole, Comal, San Marcos, Barton, Krause, and Jacob's Well Springs.

[The Poster Series, hosted in the 6th floor gallery of the Austin Central Library](#) during the Summer and Fall of 2022, describes the springs, discusses challenges

to water quality and groundwater storage that supports healthy spring flow, celebrates protections such as habitat restoration and coordinated groundwater management, and provides guidance for public access.



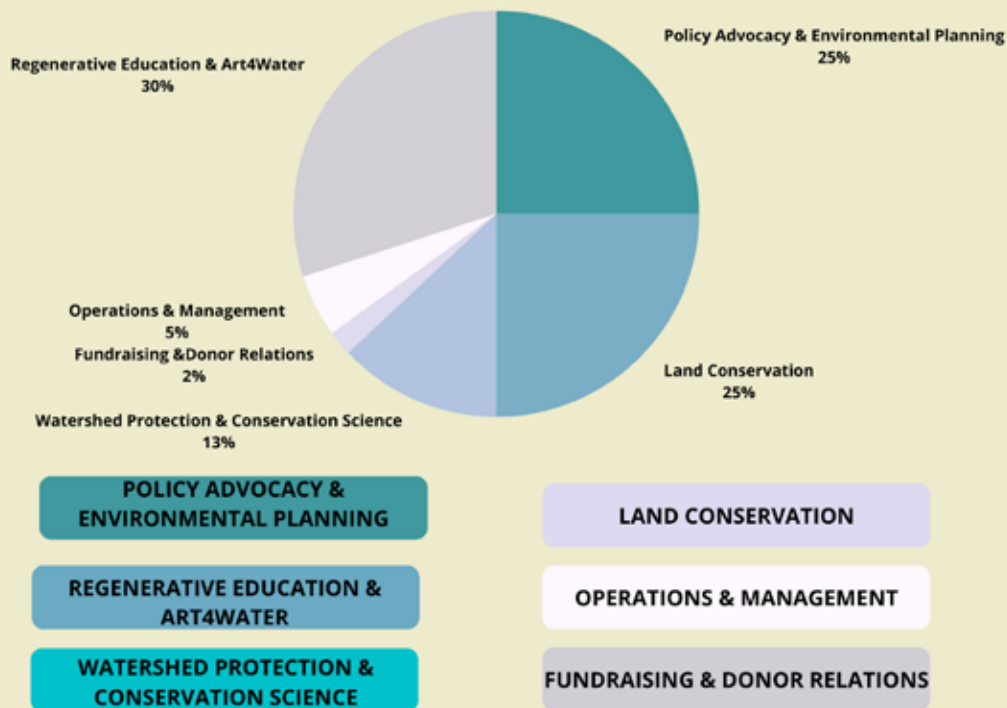
East Austin Studio Tour

The Watershed Association and Art4Water are honored to be the beneficiary of TreeGarden's EAST AUSTIN STUDIO TOUR event, "Life of H₂O." The events are a collaboration between the Watershed Association's Art4Water and TreeGarden, an east Austin organization that cultivates collaborative community through Nature + Education + Art + Wellness + Outreach. Community artists shared living art by creating artistic vessels to hold spring water and a plant cutting from Treegarden's family farm. The artworks displayed at the Studio Tour Event will generate attention, conversation, and support for the work of the Watershed Association as we conserve and protect our community's most precious resource.



2021-2022 Expenses by Impact Area

Program allocations reflect expenses for Jan 2021-Sept 2022



Rainmakers Club Founding Members

Al & Jean Ann Sander
 Art Crowe
 Barbara Turley
 Cari Marshall
 Charles Lamme
 Charles McCord
 Cynthia Beath
 David & Ellen Berman
 David Bamberger
 Dodee Crockett
 Environmental Fund of Texas
 Gina Fulkerson
 Harry L Willett Foundation
 Howard Baker
 Ira & Roxanne Yates
 Jacob Bear
 James Hillhouse
 James McMeans
 Jean Nance
 Jeff Mundy
 Jennifer Clark
 Jeremiah Bishop
 Jessica Marie
 Jim Shultz & Rikki Rivers
 Jim Wendt
 John Worrall
 Kelly Zabcik
 Kimberly Kruger
 Larry & Arlene Becker
 Lew Adams
 Lin Weber
 Linda Moore
 Lynn Slaney Silguero
 Malcolm & Terri Harris
 Marcia Lucas
 Mark Dreher
 Michael & Pam Reese
 Patrick & Brenda Cox
 Pokey & Barbara Rehmet
 Randy & Charlene Myers
 Ray Rosenbloom
 Regan Gammon
 Rick Cofer
 Rivers McNamara PLLC
 Robert Dussler
 Robert Neblett
 Scott & Carol Price
 Sheryl Cook Davis
 Stefan & Moyara Pharis
 Steve & Martha Hixon
 Susan Williford
 The Dallas Foundation
 The Henry Luce Foundation
 Timothy Larson
 Tracy K DiLeo
 Vanessa Puig-Williams
 Winkler Family Foundation

We are thrilled to announce the Rainmakers Club!

A new opportunity for our sustaining donors to support our mission and protect Texas Water for generations to come.

Find out more at wimberleywatershed.org/membership

Join the Rainmakers Club

\$500/yr
\$42/mo

ADVOCATE

\$1000/yr
\$84/mo

STEWARD

\$2500/yr
\$208/mo

PROTECTOR

\$5000/yr
\$417/mo

GUARDIAN

\$10,000
yr

LEGACY LEADER

Business
Partners
For the
Water

Our local business partners are powerful advocates for our water. Come together to conserve and protect iconic Hill Country



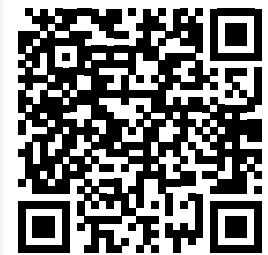
Get Involved



Image by Carl Griffin

Support the Watershed Association to inspire responsible stewardship of our watersheds. Your investment is vital to engage communities to preserve and protect the land and water of Texas Hill Country for future generations. Follow the Watershed Association and Art4Water at wimberleywatershed.org and on social media [@wimberleywatershed](https://www.instagram.com/wimberleywatershed) and [@_Art4Water](https://www.instagram.com/_Art4Water) to stay informed of the latest news and events.

The Watershed Association
PO BOX 2534
Wimberley, TX 78676
Ph 512.722.3390
admin@wimberleywatershed.org



*Use your smartphone's
QR code reader
for our donation page*



Image by Andy Heatwole