

For Immediate Release
October 1, 2024

First-ever Hill Country Alliance Night Sky Preservation Fund begins accepting submissions

Today, the Hill Country Alliance (HCA) opened the submission period for applicants seeking financial assistance in night sky preservation work across the Texas Hill Country region. The *Hill Country Alliance Night Sky Preservation Fund* aims to support locally-led work to improve outdoor lighting, decrease wasted energy costs, and to reduce light pollution and its negative effects.

Thanks to the generous support of the Coypu Foundation, HCA's Night Sky Program is excited to roll out this new funding opportunity for regional nonprofit organizations, sole proprietorships, local governmental entities, and small businesses interested in protecting their views of the starry night sky. Interested parties are encouraged to apply for up to \$5,000 in reimbursement funds for night sky preservation efforts by October 31, 2024. Some of the projects that would be eligible to receive funding include International Dark Sky Place applications, lighting retrofit projects, education and outreach resources, and groups interested in pursuing recognition through HCA's Night Sky Friendly Businesses or Neighborhood programs.

In addition, HCA hopes this effort will support the development and growth of International Dark Sky Places, diminish greenhouse gas emissions, and expand education and advocacy. Applicants needing financial assistance in line with these goals must provide products or services within one or all of the twenty-two counties in the target region. These counties include: Bandera, Bexar, Blanco, Burnet, Comal, Edwards, Gillespie, Hays, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Lampasas, Llano, Mason, Medina, Real, San Saba, Travis, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Williamson.

"We are excited to provide the Texas Hill Country and our partners with this funding opportunity to support their night sky efforts and hope it will help raise awareness around the need for more financial assistance in the arena of night sky preservation," said Dawn Davies, Night Sky Program Manager for the Hill Country Alliance. While there are many opportunities for funding land and water conservation initiatives across the state, there is often a lack of funding available to support local lighting improvements. This is the first such funding opportunity for night sky protection in the region.

This announcement comes on the first day of October's Hill Country Night Sky Month, an annual celebration of the region's most dazzling night-time feature – the star-twinkling, planet-glowing, comet-crossing night sky – where beauty and wonder abound.

Anyone with questions about the fund is encouraged to attend a virtual Information Session scheduled for Tuesday, October 8, from 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. CDT. To learn more about the application submission process, how to contribute to the fund, or how to register for the information session, visit hillcountryalliance.org/nightskyfund

Both the Hill Country Alliance and the new Night Sky Preservation Fund are dedicated to protecting our stunning night skies from light pollution and ensuring that the breathtaking celestial views that define our landscape remain vibrant and accessible for generations to come. While this funding period is limited, the Hill Country Alliance hopes to offer this fund again in the future. Those interested in contributing to the fund and helping to safeguard our region’s nighttime natural splendor are encouraged to make a donation at <https://bit.ly/HCAfundthenight>

About: *The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization bringing together a diverse coalition of partners to preserve the open spaces, starry night skies, clean and abundant waters, and unique character of the Texas Hill Country. Learn more at hillcountryalliance.org.*

Contact: Leah Cuddeback, Storytelling and Public Engagement | leah@hillcountryalliance.org

Photos:



Photo Credit: Todd Winters, Guadalupe Canyon Milky Way

Night Sky Fund Application Graphics:

