

For Immediate Release

November 19, 2024

Hill Country leaders gather for a meeting on water challenges and One Water solutions

On Wednesday, November 13th, city leaders and staff from across 15 cities in Central Texas gathered for the second “One Water in the Hill Country” meeting, co-hosted by Hill Country Alliance (HCA) and the City of Boerne. This annual event provides the opportunity for Hill Country communities to share ideas and solutions for managing scarce water resources in a time of drought and intense growth. Cities in attendance included Bandera, Blanco, Boerne, Buda, Fair Oaks Ranch, Fredericksburg, Kerrville, Kyle, Lakeway, Liberty Hill, New Braunfels, San Marcos, Wimberley, Woodcreek, and Austin.

As the name of the event implies, One Water was the overarching theme of the day. One Water is a holistic approach to managing all water resources - including drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater - in a way that maximizes benefits for the community, economy, and environment.

Many communities in the Hill Country are already putting a One Water approach into practice, from investing in buildings that capture rainwater and AC condensate, to installing purple pipes to distribute reclaimed wastewater. “The challenge,” HCA Water Program Manager Marisa Bruno says, “is communicating the benefits of these investments and working with the private sector to share in these investments.”

Municipal leaders agreed that cities can and should set the example when it comes to innovative water management. “When a developer comes to Boerne and we ask them to put in place features like rainwater harvesting, it helps to be able to say that we as a city are making these investments, too,” says Boerne City Manager Ben Thatcher.

As part of the meeting, participants were invited to tour an innovative project in New Braunfels: Headwaters at the Comal. This 16-acre site is both the start of the Comal River and the original waterworks for the City of New Braunfels. To safeguard this resource, New Braunfels Utilities established the nonprofit Headwaters at the Comal to manage and transform this historic site into an education center that showcases sustainable development, onsite water reuse, green stormwater infrastructure and functional native ecosystems.

education conservation collaboration



“Water-wise landscaping presents a huge opportunity for water savings,” explained David Hubbard, New Braunfels Utility Chief Administrative Officer. City leaders agreed: as the Hill Country continues to experience severe drought, it is crucial for cities, residents, and developers to embrace more native and resilient landscaping that does not put as much pressure on our water resources as the traditional green lawn.

The day’s agenda also included presentations from key staff at the cities of Boerne, Buda, and Austin on their respective approaches towards advancing One Water in private and public development.

Based on the positive discussion and response from attendees, there will likely be another regional One Water conference next year.

About: [Hill Country Alliance](#): The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization that brings 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.

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

Photos:



Photo Credit: Jenna Walker (1) and Robin Gary (2)

Caption: Municipal officials tour Headwaters at the Comal, a project that showcases sustainable development, onsite water reuse, and drought-tolerant landscaping.