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Hill Country Alliance Announces Night Sky Preservation Fund Awardees

On January 21, the Hill Country Alliance (HCA) announced the recipients of its second annual Night Sky Preservation Fund. Spanning eleven counties, the selected projects will improve regional night sky quality by enhancing outdoor lighting, educating communities about the benefits of night sky preservation, and measuring changes in sky quality across the Hill Country over time.

With generous support from the Coypu Foundation and individual night sky advocates across the region, HCA invited applications during last October's annual Hill Country Night Sky Month. The Night Sky Preservation Fund supports regional nonprofit organizations, local governments, and small businesses working to protect the Hill Country's starry night skies. By reducing light pollution, these efforts conserve energy, protect wildlife and migratory pathways, improve nighttime safety, and support night-sky-driven recreation and tourism across the region.

The 2026 HCA Night Sky Preservation Fund received 22 applications and selected 14 organizations and projects to support across 11 counties in the Hill Country, including Bandera, Bexar, Blanco, Burnet, Comal, Hays, Kendall, Lampasas, Real, Travis, and Uvalde—an increase from the Fund's inaugural year, when 9 organizations and 11 projects were supported.

2026 HCA Night Sky Preservation Fund Recipients:

- **Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky**, will expand night sky preservation awareness through targeted multi-media engagement
- **Camp Riverview**, will implement sky quality monitoring, modeling night sky stewardship, and supporting regionwide data collection
- **City of Wimberley Parks and Recreation Department**, will establish sky quality monitoring at Blue Hole Regional Park and promote dark sky awareness through education, outreach, and community engagement
- **Comal County Friends of the Night Sky**, will expand upon and enhance their existing sky quality monitoring network
- **Friends of Guadalupe River/Honey Creek, Inc.**, will improve on non-compliant street and parking lot lighting through fixture retrofits, supporting their applications for International Urban Night Sky Place designations
- **Friends of Lost Maples**, will establish sky quality monitoring throughout the park in support of their application for a designation as an International Dark Sky Park
- **Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas**, will advance education and outreach through the development of Dark Sky Adventure Kits that will be made available for checkout through the local public library system

- **Hays County Friends of the Night Sky**, will expand upon their sky quality monitoring network and enhance their education and outreach efforts through the development of portable lighting demos that will rotate through the county's libraries, schools, and civic buildings
- **Jonestown Night Sky Advocacy**, will expand upon its existing sky quality monitoring network to continue supporting its International Dark Sky Community designation and regionwide data collection
- **Keep it Real Beautiful, Friends of the Night Sky**, will implement sky quality monitoring, model night sky stewardship, and support regionwide data collection
- **Kendall County**, will establish sky quality monitoring in support of their application for countywide designation as an International Dark Sky Community
- **Smithwick Mill Estates Property Owners Association**, will advance night sky preservation education and outreach to its residents and local commercial enterprises
- **Travis County Parks Foundation**, will improve non-compliant lighting with fixture retrofits at the Bee Creek Sports Complex in support of their application to be certified as part of DarkSky International's Dark Sky Friendly Sports Lighting program
- **Vision Lampasas**, will provide night sky preservation outreach and education, resources, and networking opportunities through their annual Stars at Night Event.

"We are proud to support these projects and grateful to every organization that applied to the fund this year," said Katherine Romans, Executive Director of the Hill Country Alliance. "The Night Sky Preservation Fund's second year reflects a commitment shared by the Hill Country Alliance, partners, and communities across the Hill Country to protect our night skies and celebrate them as part of our region's heritage. By expanding the Fund's reach to more organizations and more counties, we are strengthening our collective ability to safeguard the starry skies that define this region—now and for years to come."

Across Texas, many funding opportunities exist for land and water conservation, while far fewer are dedicated to addressing light pollution and its impacts. The Night Sky Preservation Fund helps fill this gap by supporting projects that safeguard dark skies, and—with continued support from organizations and individual donors—will remain an ongoing resource for communities across the region. Those interested in contributing to this work are encouraged to donate 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.*

[Image for the Night Sky Preservation Fund awardees available here.](#)