

## 2023 HILL COUNTRY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

# FROM VISION TO ACTION

THURSDAY, SEPT. 28 | 8 AM - 6 PM | THE HALL @ JESTER KING

8:45 – 9:00

**Welcome to the 2023 Hill Country Leadership Summit**

9:00 – 9:45

**Creating a Shared Vision: A Natural Infrastructure Plan for the Hill Country**

*Earlier this year, the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network released their latest resource, the Hill Country Land, Water, Sky, and Natural Infrastructure Plan. This plan provides a shared vision for the Hill Country, where natural systems are protected and invested in. In this panel we'll explore key takeaways and discuss multiple perspectives on how this resource can be utilized.*

Presenter + Moderator: Rachael Lindsey – Hill Country Conservancy

Panelists: Ben Eldredge – Cibolo Center for Conservation | Katherine Romans – Hill Country Alliance | Azalia Rodriguez – Defenders of Wildlife

9:45 – 9:55

**(Almost) 20 Years of the Hill Country Alliance**

*It's hard to believe that the Hill Country Alliance is just short of celebrating 20 years of dedicated work throughout our beloved Texas Hill Country. As we move into this landmark year, hear more about what HCA has been up to and our plans to continue our vital work to preserve the Hill Country for future generations. Thank you for joining us today as we network, collaborate, and learn!*

Mayor Rebeca Gibson, City of Bandera + Hill Country Alliance Board Member

9:55 – 10:15

**BREAK**

10:15 – 10:25

**Spotlight on the Night Skies Program - Texan by Nature + Hill Country Alliance**

10:25 – 11:10

**Hill Country at the Crossroads of the Eclipses**

*In just a few weeks – and after years of anticipation and preparation – the Hill Country will experience its first of two solar eclipse events. Communities across the region are gearing up for large scale celebrations, unprecedented crowds, and unique stresses on resources. In this panel, we will hear from local experts in rural and urban counties on what it takes to prepare for these solar phenomena and the tourists flocking to the Hill Country to experience them.*

Moderator: Dawn Davies – Hill Country Alliance

Panelists: Blair Manning – Burnet County | Sarah Rowley – The Witte | Randy Millican – Kimble County

11:10 – 11:55

**KEYNOTE: From Vision to Action – Mapping a Conservation Movement**

*Each of our paths have led us to be leaders concerned with the long-term protection of the Texas Hill Country. Ultimately it will take a movement to be successful in protecting the most unique features of this special part of Texas. In this keynote address, we will explore the “staircase to stewardship” - how we move individuals from awareness to active stewardship - and get inspired to grow our network of champions for the Hill Country - both today and in the future.*

Keynote Speaker: Ky Harkey – The Visitor Experience

12:00 – 1:00

**LUNCH BREAK**

**1:00 – 1:30**

**Heart of the Hill Country Award**

*The Heart of The Hill Country Award is an award created by HCA in 2019 to recognize and thank our region's greatest natural resource champions. Previous recipients of the award, David Baker and Karen Ford will present the 2023 awards. This year's honorees are Dianne Wassenich, founder of the San Marcos River Foundation, and Milan Michalec, Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District President - two individuals who have spent decades championing and stewarding the natural resources of our region.*

Presented by Past Recipients: David Baker and Karen Ford

Honoring: Dianne Wassenich and Milan Michalec

**1:30 – 2:15**

**Stewarding Small Acreage in the Hill Country**

*As the Hill Country becomes increasingly fragmented, we must consider the role of the small-acreage landowner in stewarding natural resources on which we all depend. Learn more about some of the tools, resources, and programs available to support small-acreage land stewardship during this panel with landowners and partner organizations.*

Moderator: Dr. Angelica Lopez – Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute

Panelists: Christine Middleton – Hays County Master Naturalists | Jared Schlottman – Texas Wildlife Association | Steve Janda – Hill Country Landowner

**2:15 – 2:45**

**BREAK**

**2:45 – 3:30**

**When Life Gives You Drought: Innovations for a Better Water Future**

*Droughts bring a myriad of extreme challenges to our region—from declining spring flows and low lake levels, to reports of dry wells and stressed community water supplies—but they can also be the catalyst for innovations that move us towards a more sustainable water future. In this panel, we'll hear from local leaders and elected officials on the opportunities to shore up our water supplies and protect our water resources for future generations.*

Moderator: Marisa Bruno – Hill Country Alliance

Panelists: Representative Tracy O. King – District 80 | Hays County Commissioner Lon Shell | Dave Mauk – Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District | Sharlene Leurig – Texas Water Trade

**3:30 – 4:00**

**Lightning Round: Local Advocates Taking Action – 5-minutes each**

- Texans for Responsible Aggregate Mining: Building a Statewide Coalition – *Milann Guckian, Preserve Our Hill Country Environment*
- Environmental Economics and Empowering the Next Generation – *Dr. Joni Charles, Texas State University*
- Preserving Starry Skies Over Bee Cave – *Amanda Padilla, City of Bee Cave Senior Planner*
- The Impact of Local Engagement – *Councilwoman Emily Kirchner, Fredericksburg*
- Latino Outdoors: Celebrando Crecimiento in Texas – *Josie Gutierrez, Latino Outdoors*
- Tools to Manage Growth: Two New Resources for Local Leaders – *Cliff Kaplan, Hill Country Alliance*

**4:00 – 6:00**

**HAPPY HOUR NETWORKING RECEPTION**