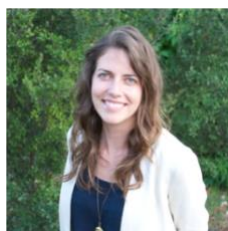
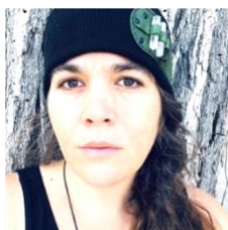


**2023 Hill Country Leadership Summit
Speakers and Bios (in order of appearance)**



Katherine Romans, Executive Director – Hill Country Alliance

Katherine brings a decade of nonprofit and legislative experience to the Hill Country Alliance. She worked for several years as a legislative aide for the Committee on Natural Resources within the US House of Representatives and has spearheaded programming at both local and regional conservation nonprofits. Katherine holds a Masters from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, is currently the Chair of the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network, and serves on the board of the Hill Country Land Trust.



Rachael Lindsey, Director of Science & Stewardship – Hill Country Conservancy

Rachael Lindsey is the Director of Science & Stewardship at the Hill Country Conservancy. Rachael serves on the Executive & Steering Committees of the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network as well as the Co-Chair of the Network's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee. She holds a Master of Science in Wildlife Management from Texas Tech University and a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Management with a Forestry minor from the University of Tennessee.



Ben Eldredge, Vice President of Conservation – The Cibolo Conservancy

Ben Eldredge is Vice President of Conservation at Cibolo Center for Conservation, board member of the Cow Creek Groundwater Conservation District and the Hill Country Alliance and serves on the steering committee for the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network. Eldredge has over 20 years of experience working as a land steward and advocate for the conservation of natural resources. He currently participates in Boerne's Mobility Master Plan Advisory Group, the Kendall County Water Committee, and is active on numerous additional planning and policy focus groups in the Hill Country.



Azalia Rodríguez, Texas Representative – Defenders of Wildlife

Azalia Rodríguez is the Texas Representative at Defenders of Wildlife. She also serves on the Steering Committees of the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network. Azalia is an outings leader for Latino Outdoors Austin and a partner of the state-wide campaign of Lights Out, Texas. Azalia advocates for imperiled native wildlife in the Texas Hill Country.



Rebeca Gibson, Mayor – City of Bandera

In November 2022, Rebeca Gibson was elected Mayor of Bandera during her fourth consecutive term on the Bandera City Council. An avid collaborator, Gibson is inspired by multi-agency cooperation and tapping into community intellectual resources to find effective solutions. Gibson works as a realtor with Hunt Real Estate, federal navigator for CentroMed, and project manager for Vaccinate Bandera. She received her BA from University of Houston and currently serves on the Board of Directors for both the Bandera County River Authority & Groundwater District and Hill Country Alliance.

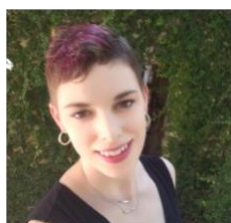


Dawn Davies, Night Sky Program Manager – Hill Country Alliance

Dawn brings over a decade of astronomy outreach and dark sky preservation experience to Hill Country Alliance as the Night Sky Program Coordinator. Before joining HCA, she served on the board of the Austin Astronomical Society and as a volunteer advocate for the International Dark-Sky Association. A dedication to education and accessibility led her to become an ambassador for the Astronomy in Chile Educator Ambassador Program and the International Astronomical Union.

**Blair Manning, Tourism & Marketing Director – Burnet County**

Blair Manning is the Tourism & Marketing Director for Burnet County. She sits on the Burnet Chamber board, the Marble Falls & Highland Lakes Area Chamber Ambassadors board, the Burnet County Historical Commission and the Burnet Community Coalition. Blair started the Eclipse Task Force to build a partnership of short-term rental property owners, businesses, and regional stakeholders to fully address the impact the 2024 eclipse will have on the Highland Lakes region.

**Sarah Rowley, STEM Education Manager – The Witte Museum**

Judge Rowley is an informal science educator with over ten years of experience in the field. As the STEM Education Manager at the Witte Museum, she creates various hands-on, interdisciplinary STEM learning experiences. As the co-chair of the Alamo STEM Ecosystem's Eclipse Working Group, she is leading multiple organizations in creating a year-long, city-wide celebration of space and eclipses. Rowley holds an M.S. in Leadership in Museum Education from Bank Street College, an M.Ed. in Special Education from

Montclair State University and a B.A. in Psychology and Education from Mount Holyoke College.

**Randy Millican, Emergency Management Coordinator – Kimble County**

Lowell Randall (Randy) Millican is a 50-year Law Enforcement Officer. Randy began his career in LE in DFW Metroplex. He was the first triple trained (Law enforcement, Firefighter, Paramedic) individual in the State of Texas. He also served his country as a Medic in Vietnam in the prestigious unit known as DustOff and received many medals for heroism. He retired from Town of Highland Park with 35 commendations, three-time recipient of Officer of the Year; DFW Top Cop Award; Sons of the Republic Law Enforcement Commendation Medal;

Master Instructor and President of the Union. Randy also was the co-founder of Santa Cops in Highland Park DPS. In addition to the assignment as a Detective/Public Information Officer, he also served on the Dignitary Protection Unit for the Secret Service, State Department and FBI. Upon retiring he became a Reserve Deputy for Kimble County. He now serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the Office of Emergency Management. He also is a published author.

**Ky Harkey, Founder – The Visitor Experience**

Ky founded The Visitor Experience group in 2022 to spread joy, protect parks, and serve visitors. The services of his team and the educational products they support build capacity for parks and conservation groups to share nature connections. In his past role as Director of Interpretation for Texas State Parks, he led 35 program staff and 65 park educators to develop projects and products which engage new audiences and improve 10 million annual visits. Ky also spent time as a National Outdoor Leadership School Instructor,

Wilderness EMT and Wilderness First Aid Instructor, as well as board time with the Austin and Texas Children in Nature Collaboratives.

**Angelica Lopez, Research Scientist – Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute**

Dr. Angelica Lopez joined the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute as a research associate in 2010. Her research interests are in rural sociology and underrepresented groups, environmental and natural resource attitudes, behaviors and participation constraints, human dimensions of natural resources, borderlands and program evaluation. A native Texan, Angelica studied animal science, agricultural education, rural sociology and recreation park and tourism sciences with an emphasis on community engagement.

**Jared Schlottman, Conservation Education Specialist – Texas Wildlife Association**

Jared collaborates with TWA partners to engage adults across Texas through innovative natural resource management programs. One of his great passions is educating others in private land stewardship, wildlife habitat management, and other natural resource related topics. Originally from Round Rock, Texas, Jared completed an undergraduate degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science at Texas A&M University, followed by a master's in Rangeland, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management, also from Texas A&M. Prior to joining

TWA, Jared worked for the TAMU Natural Resource Institute in several different roles including as a graduate researcher and an extension program aide.

**Christine Middleton, Education Project Leader – Hays County Master Naturalists**

Christine Middleton trained as a Hays County Master Naturalist in 2010. Since then she has been passionate about educating the community on the wonder of nature and the fragility of our Hill Country ecosystems. Christine delivers presentations designed to enhance community-wide understanding of the unique water cycle in the hill country, water conservation, and riparian stewardship. She was instrumental in the foundation of a program called HELM (Habitat Enhancing Land Management), a Master Naturalist program designed to engage small acreage property owners in land stewardship.

**Steve Janda – Hill Country Landowner**

Steve Janda grew up in rural Victoria County and spent many long, hot summer days on his grandparents' cotton and small dairy farm in Lavaca County. His family camped annually on the Frio River at Garner State Park where he fell in love with the Texas Hill Country. Steve is a former director of the Texas EMS/Trauma System for the Texas Department of State Health Services. He retired in 2011 and continues to do volunteer medical work, as well as volunteering with the Hays County Master Naturalists. He

became a small landowner in 1992 and for three decades has stewarded his 28-acre wildlife management area on property located 3 miles northwest of Driftwood in Hays County.

**Marisa Bruno, Water Program Manager – Hill Country Alliance**

Marisa joined the Hill Country Alliance as Water Program Manager in 2022 after spending a past summer as a Water Resources Fellow. She completed a Master of Environmental Management at the Yale School of the Environment, where she specialized in water resource management and policy. Her graduate research focused on Texas groundwater management and community water planning. Marisa became passionate about Texas water while working for the Texas Water Foundation as a program strategist. Prior to

working in Texas, Marisa worked as a Venture for America Fellow, helping small businesses scale and create jobs in their communities.

**Representative Tracy O. King, Chairman – Texas House Natural Resources Committee**

Representative King is currently the Chairman of the powerful House Natural Resources Committee and serves as a member of the Licensing and Administrative Procedures Committee. He previously served as chairman of Border and International Affairs; Agriculture and Livestock; and Licensing and Administrative Procedures Committee. During his tenure in the Texas House of Representatives he has served on committees such as Appropriations, Ways & Means, Calendars, Environmental Regulation, Culture,

Recreation and Tourism and Energy Resources. He also serves on the Edwards Aquifer Oversight Committee and the Energy Council.

**Lon Shell, Commissioner Precinct 3 – Hays County**

Commissioner Shell has served as Hays County Commissioner, Precinct 3 since 2017, serving much of western San Marcos, portions of Kyle to the south and west, the Wimberley Valley, and rural areas west and north of Dripping Springs. He is President of the San Marcos Hays County EMS Board of Directors, Chairman of the Hays County Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission and the Combined Emergency Communications Center Executive Board, and serves on the boards of the Greater San Marcos Partnership,

Region 11-Guadalupe Flood Planning Group, and Capital Area Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CARTPO). Shell is a graduate of San Marcos High School and Texas A&M University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering.

**Dave Mauk, General Manager – Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District**

Dave has been with the District since 2009 and is a Bandera County Resident. Dave is a passionate steward of the natural resources for the State of Texas. He serves on several regional water planning groups including, but not limited to: Groundwater Management Area 9, Region J Plateau Planning Group, San Antonio River Basin Regional Flood Planning Group, and is a liaison to the Nueces River Basin Flood Planning Group. Dave is also a

board member for the Medina River Protection Fund. Prior to his tenure at the District, Mr. Mauk worked as a Bail Bondsman and Professional Bounty Hunter for 14 years in Baltimore City, MD. He also served as a Paratrooper in the Army Reserves and Army National Guard.

**Sharlene Leurig, CEO – Texas Water Trade**

Sharlene is a sustainable water finance expert with extensive experience in Texas on long-range water planning, infrastructure finance and water transactions. Formerly, she directed the Texas Environmental Flows Initiative, a collaboration of The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, the Harte Research Institute, The Nature Conservancy and several other groups, to purchase water for the bays and estuaries of the Texas Gulf Coast. She also chaired the Austin Water Forward Task Force, which developed a

groundbreaking 100-year water plan approved unanimously by the Austin City Council in 2018. She holds a BA in Physics and English from Washington University in St. Louis and a master's in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she was a fellow in the MIT-USGS Science Impact Collaborative.

**Dr. Joni Charles, Associate Professor of Economics – Texas State University**

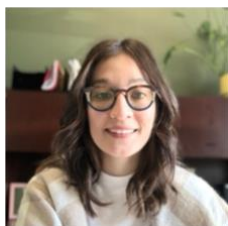
Dr. Charles is an applied economist whose recent research intersects groundwater governance, groundwater management, and sustainable groundwater use by rural and urban communities. Her interest is in working with interdisciplinary teams to apply analytical tools of environmental economics such as cost-benefit analysis and qualitative and quantitative methods to understand the socio-economic factors, perceptions, attitudes and behavior that drive community use of resources and resource user

behavior. She graduated from Howard University with a B.A. (Hons.) degree in Economics and from Purdue University with an M.S. and Ph.D in Economics.

**Milann Guckian, President – Preserve Our Hill Country Environment**

Milann is a resident of Comal County following a 26+ year career as lead process technician with Valero Energy Corporation. She became involved with other area residents in trying to stop a 1500-acre quarry from going in atop the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and helped found the all-volunteer grassroots organizations Stop 3009 Vulcan Quarry and Preserve Our Hill Country Environment. Milann is a founding member of the Texans for Responsible Aggregate Mining (TRAM) coalition and has worked

tirelessly the last 6+ years to bring common-sense reform to the aggregate industry and to educate citizens, government officials, and agencies on the negative impacts of this poorly regulated industry in Texas.



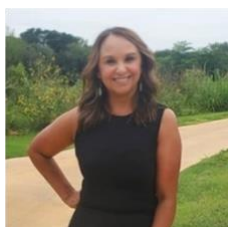
Amanda Padilla, Senior Planner - City of Bee Cave

Amanda Padilla is the Senior Planner for the City of Bee Cave, a role she has held since 2021. Prior to that position, she was the Senior Planner for Dripping Springs, the first Dark Sky Community in Texas. Amanda took the lead in helping the City of Bee Cave achieve their Dark Sky Community designation. While she is relatively new to the Dark Sky Community, her enthusiasm for learning and dedication to enlightening others about the significance of preserving a Dark Sky environment shine brightly.



Councilwoman Emily Kirchner – City of Fredericksburg

Emily Eppright Kirchner is a graduate of Texas A&M University and has a master's in Public Affairs from the LBJ School at UT-Austin. She worked at the Texas Capitol for over a decade, serving in the offices of three State Representatives and the Speaker of the House. Councilwoman Kirchner, her husband Tim, and their two young children reside in Fredericksburg, where she serves on the boards of the Fredericksburg Parks Foundation and the Little Hearts Child Development Center.



Josie Gutierrez, San Antonio Regional Coordinator – Latino Outdoors

Deeply rooted in the Latino community, Josie has had a lifelong dedication in celebrating the love of her heritage. In 2013, Josie founded a fitness blog about her enthusiasm for outdoor fitness which led her to connect with Latino Outdoors. After eight years as the Program Coordinator for Latino Outdoors, Josie now serves as San Antonio Regional Coordinator which gives her the opportunity to promote programs that reflect her love for childlike wonderment in Mother Nature for all. In partnership with incredible

organizations and foundations, Latino Outdoors in Texas continues to expand to other cities. Josie serves on the Regional Council with NPCA, Texas Parks & Wildlife Urban Council, OLE! San Antonio Chapter and is in progress to help develop a San Antonio Children's Outdoor Bill Of Rights (COBOR).



Cliff Kaplan, Program Director – Hill Country Alliance

Cliff first worked with the Hill Country Alliance in 2015 to coordinate a partnership between HCA and the University of Texas that resulted in the publication of a set of proposed regional conservation strategies. At the completion of that project, Cliff joined the HCA staff as a program manager. He now supports HCA's Water, Night Skies, and Communities programs. He also co-chairs the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee of the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network and serves as secretary of the

Texans for Responsible Aggregate Mining (TRAM) coalition. He is a founding board member of the Comal County Conservation Alliance and the Friends of Lost Maples.