



ANNUAL REPORT

2020



LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends,

Great Springs Project was founded for the singular purpose of preserving and protecting the four Great Springs in the Central Texas region of the Texas Hill Country: San Antonio Springs, Comal Springs, San Marcos Springs, and Barton Springs.

These springs, filtering up through purifying limestone and emerging from the Edwards Aquifer as cold, clear water, have been a source of life for wildlife and humans alike for millennia and the reason the communities around them were established and have thrived. Today, less than four percent of the land in our state is accessible to the public. The shortage of access to open space is magnified in rapidly-developing Central Texas.

San Antonio Springs, at the southern end of the Great Springs system and the source of the San Antonio River, were once fountain springs rising up to twenty feet in the air.

Northward along the Balcones Escarpment lie Comal Springs, which feed the rolling Guadalupe River and are the largest springs in Texas and the American southwest.

To the northeast is San Marcos Springs, one of the oldest continually inhabited sites in North America and designated a critical habitat for five endangered species.

Barton Springs, at the northern-most site of the Great Springs, is the crown jewel of Austin.

Great Springs Project founder and Board Chair Deborah Morin and a small band of dedicated Texans have made it our mission to protect and connect these Great Springs for the benefit of all people.

Our promise is to build a network of trails from the historic Alamo in San Antonio to the Texas Capitol in Austin by the Texas Bicentennial in 2036 and develop a national park-sized corridor of protected lands to preserve the four Great Springs. The Great Springs Project is a Texas-sized civic project requiring hard work, commitment, and large-scale funding, and it is a legacy and gift to our state that will live on for generations. What we need now is a coalition of doers and generous donors to realize this Lone Star Dream. As GSP Board Director Tim McClure says, "Nature created Great Springs, Texans are blazing the trail."

We hope you'll join us.

Garry Merritt
GSP Chief Executive Officer

A REGIONAL VISION IN THE
HEART OF TEXAS

OUR PURPOSE

To protect our precious Texas water resources and the land that watersheds them, and provide greater access to outdoors and healthy activities for all people.

OUR PROMISE

To blaze the Great Springs Trail, a 100-mile-long network of hike-and-bike trails from the Alamo to the Capitol, scheduled for completion by the Texas Bicentennial in 2036, and conserve an additional 50,000 acres of land for the protection of the springs along the trail.

Texas' population will exceed 54M by 2050, expanding at a growth rate four times that of California. In Central Texas, over two million people already depend on the Edwards Aquifer between San Antonio and Austin for their drinking water.

In Texas, less than four percent of the State is public lands, and access to the outdoors is often reserved for those that can travel or own it privately. GSP's mission to protect and connect Texas' beautiful natural surroundings is underpinned by a commitment to equity, inclusion, and access. As our state's population increases, public access to greenspace will only become more challenging.

Booming development in this region – among the fastest growing in the nation – threatens to increase the strain on this vulnerable water supply, increase flooding, threaten the ecology, and limit access to nature for tourists and residents. The Central Texas region must find a way to accommodate the influx of people without sacrificing the natural water resources that attract and sustain its residents and environment.

GSP encourages healthy community activities through public access to a hike-and-bike trail from San Antonio to Austin. GSP's vision provides for sustainable development in our region that will preserve the Hill Country and its iconic springs for generations of Texans to come.

PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS

2020 Highlights

JP MORGAN CHASE EMERGING LEADERS

In late 2019, JP Morgan Chase & Co (JPMC) selected Great Springs Project (GSP) for its Emerging Leaders Program in which JPMC employees leverage their skills and expertise to help the firm's nonprofit partners address strategic business challenges. GSP was assigned a team of eight JPMC executive directors within the firm's Asset Wealth Management division located across the United States, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Spain. The intensive program involved weekly meetings with JPMC's international team to evaluate and develop GSP's social investment strategy and materials. The program resulted in a template executive summary for potential investors and with GSP being showcased in the firm's annual Emerging Leaders conference in early 2020.

FEBRUARY 2020 LANDOWNER WORKSHOP

Great Springs Project, in collaboration with the Hill Country Alliance (HCA), was proud to support Comal County Conservation Alliance (CCCA) in cohosting a landowner workshop in February of 2020 focused on creating a legacy for future generations by preserving family lands. The event drew a total of 68 attendees with over two dozen Hill Country landowners, two Comal County Commissioners, four regional land trusts and two Texas Parks and Wildlife staff in attendance. The day-long workshop addressed the importance of land conservation, explained the role of land trust organizations and provided an overview of conservation easements followed by a robust Q&A. The workshop concluded with a landowner panel, giving attendees an opportunity to hear first-hand testimonials from conservation landowners and to imagine a future of land conservation for themselves.



GSP EQUITY FRAMEWORK

With a mission dedicated to ensuring unconditional access to Texas' iconic natural beauty of the land and springs over the Edwards Aquifer, Great Springs Project first implemented an organization wide Equity Commitment outlining an organic, evolving pledge to help address social, health and recreational equity in its conservation corridor. GSP then sought to better understand the rich history and perspectives of its stakeholders by creating a 16-member Equity Task Force representing the area's geographic, economic and cultural diversity.

The Equity Task Force is developing an Equity Framework, due to be completed in May of 2021, consisting of best practices and guidelines to integrate equity principles into GSP's comprehensive trails planning.

GSP FEATURED IN FIRST NEWS ARTICLE

On June 28th, GSP was featured in an article in the San Antonio Report, "Great Springs Project Envisions a Network of Trails From Austin to San Antonio." GSP Co-Founder and Board Chair, Deborah Morin, explains the founding of GSP and our plans to create a Great Springs Trail connecting San Antonio to Austin.

COX CONSERVES HEROES AWARD

GSP was honored to nominate our friend, Sherwood Bishop with the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, for the National Cox Conserves Heroes Award. Sherwood was selected as the regional and national award winner - the first ever from Texas - for which San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance received a total of \$60,000 to go towards trail building efforts in San Marcos, Texas.

TRAIL JAM

On October 29th, Great Springs Project hosted the first working meeting of on-the-ground trail blazers for insights, lessons learned, and next steps towards creating a network of spring-to-spring trails from the Alamo to the Capitol.

GSP's Trail Jam was a moderated forum with county-by-county presentations of the great work by our local partners in our four-county conservation corridor, including representatives from the City of San Antonio, ActivateSA, Comal Trails Alliance, City of New Braunfels, San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, City of Kyle, Hill Country Conservancy, and the City of Austin. Thank you to Jason Reyes, Senior Planning Associate with Alta Planning & Design, for facilitating this important discussion to lay the groundwork for the development of the Great Springs Trail Plan.



PROP A & B PASS IN CITY OF AUSTIN

Voters passed both Prop A (Project Connect) and Prop B (Safe Mobility Bond) with over 67% of the vote. The passing of these bond packages secures the transformation of Austin's active transportation structure and provides for important safe mobility efforts throughout the city.

PROP A PASSES IN HAYS COUNTY

Prop A (Hays Parks for People) passed in Hays County, providing funding for important parks, open space, and trail projects in the county. Some of these funds will be allocated to the protection of priority parcels in the GSP corridor totaling over 1,000 acres.

GSP SELECTED FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ASSISTANCE

GSP was selected to receive a community planning and technical assistance grant from the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). GSP was selected through a competitive process and will receive support to help make outdoor recreation and conservation spaces vital, life-enhancing parts of the communities along the I-35 corridor. NPS assists these efforts by pairing our network of professional landscape architects and community planners with communities to achieve on-the-ground successes.



OUR PARTNERS

Partners help put trail on the ground, build funding capacity, and conserve land essential for water quality in the four-county corridor of Travis, Hays, Comal, and Bexar Counties. Great Springs Project brings a regional vision to support local projects and is proud to work with:

Activate SA

Audubon Texas

Austin Outside

Budaful Hiker

Cities of Buda, Kyle, San Marcos, Wimberley, and Hays County

City of New Braunfels and Comal County

City of San Antonio and Bexar County

Colorado River Alliance

Colorado River Land Trust

Comal County Conservation Association

Comal Trails Alliance

Conservation Fund

Emerald Crown Trail Working Group

Green Spaces Alliance

Guadalupe Blanco River Authority

Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust

Hill Country Alliance

Hill Country Conservancy

Hill Country Land Trust

Lower Colorado River Authority

Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University

San Antonio River Authority

San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance

San Marcos River Foundation

Shoal Creek Conservancy

Texas Land Conservancy

Texas Water Foundation

Texas Water Trade

The Nature Conservancy

Travis Audubon

Trust for Public Land

Wimberley Valley Water Association

"Texas Parks & Wildlife is proud to partner with Great Springs Project whose bold vision will create a lasting legacy for generations to come."



CARTER SMITH

Executive Director, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

OUR SUPPORTERS

2020 Donors

Amazon Smile Foundation
Laura Agnew & Hill Abell
Anne Ashmun
William Barker
Lorraine Bier
Sherwood Bishop
Karen & Ray Brimble
Margaret & Tony Carter
Camille Denton
Misty Downing
Meredith Dreiss
C.B. & Anita Branch Trust
Catherine Easley
Stacey & John Ferguson
Nick Fox
Tom Gardner
Ceci Goldstone
Marty & Steve Hixon
Ann Hughes
Lauri Che Kelly
Dorothy Lurie
Deborah Morin & John Mackey
Michael Moritz
Shell & Andrew Morrison
Scott Nicholson
Janneth & David Pederson
Kevin Quist
Cindy Raab
Carolyn Radabaugh
Kristen Ragain

Jean & Dan Rather
Deborah & David Rogers

REI Emergency Fund hosted by
Network for Good

Jennifer & Lonnie Samford
Nancy Scanlan
Charles Scarborough
Tamara Scott
Marc Segal
Lynn D Segall
Catherine Stewart & Matt O'Hayer
Nancy & Robert Strehlow
Joanne Summerhays
Lisa Versaci
Hunter Warren
Dianne Wassenich
Karla & Jeffrey Wentworth

2020 Grants

Cynthia & George Mitchell Foundation
Jacob & Terese Hershey Foundation
National Park Service
REI Co-op
Water Funder Initiative

"There will be a national park-sized preserve from San Antonio to Austin with a spring-to-spring trail!"



DEBORAH MORIN
GSP Co-Founder & Board President



ORGANIZATION FINANCES

January 1 - December 31, 2020

INCOME

Direct Public Support	
<i>Grants</i>	\$402,533.45
<i>Individual & Business Contributions</i>	\$1,051,323.17
Total Direct Public Support	\$1,453,856.62
Total Income	\$1,453,856.62

EXPENSES

Contract Services	\$212,800
Facilities & Equipment	\$30,802.63
Operations	\$144,018.97
Liability Insurance	\$1,828.75
Payroll & Benefits	\$942,662.14
Travel & Meetings	\$13,869.22
Total Expenses	\$1,345,981.96

MARKETING METRICS

2020 was an awesome year full of marketing "firsts" for Great Springs Project. We created our Facebook and Instagram profiles in March and implemented a Google Analytics account to monitor website activity in September.

Here are some metrics worth highlighting:

Social Media Highlights

FACEBOOK



GSP ended March 2020 with 140 page likes. We finished the year with 379 page likes.

INSTAGRAM

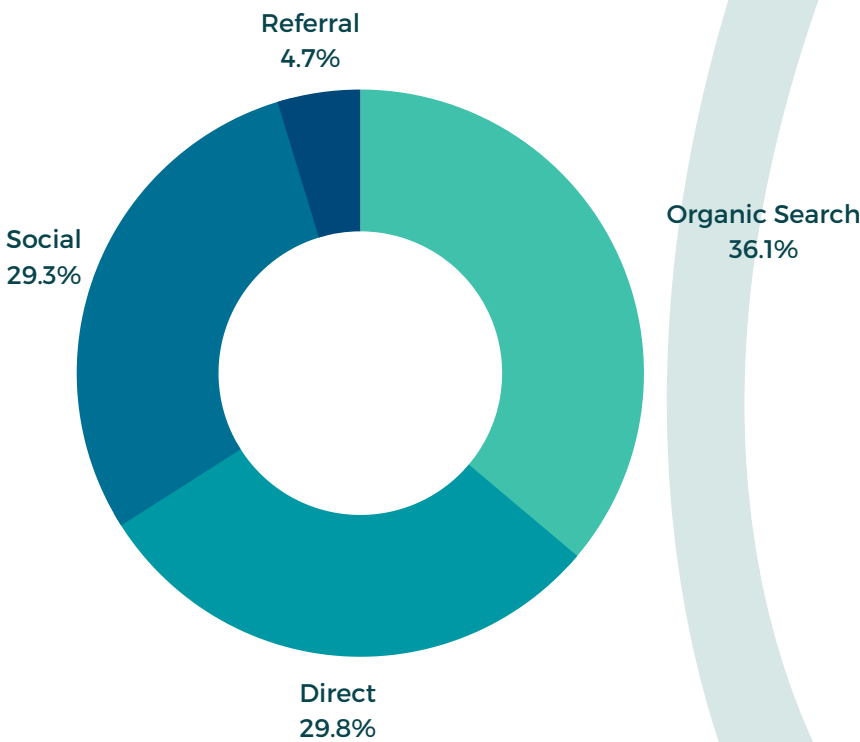


GSP ended March 2020 with 60 followers. We finished the year with 372 followers.



We ended April 2020 with 135 page followers. We finished the year with 403 page followers.

Website Highlights



EOY GIVING CAMPAIGN

Performance Report

DONATION OVERVIEW

\$20,650
RAISED FROM NOV. 12 - DEC. 31

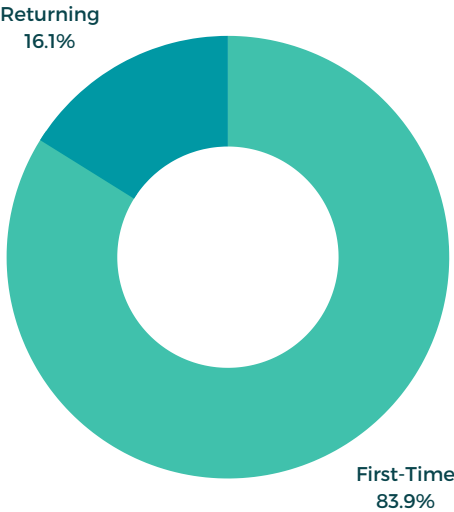
With a total of 31 generous donors, Great Springs Project raised \$20,650 during our EOY Giving Campaign.

83.9%
FIRST-TIME DONORS

Of the 31 total donors, 26 or 84% were first-time donors.

10,225%
% INCREASE IN \$ RAISED IN 2019

In 2019, Great Springs Project raised \$200 throughout the last two months of the year. In 2020, we've experienced an approximate 10,225% increase in donation dollars.



EMAIL CAMPAIGN



solicitation emails sent to subscribers

35.6%
AVERAGE OPEN RATE

Of the 6 solicitation emails, the average open rate was 35.6%, which is 10.4% higher than the national average.

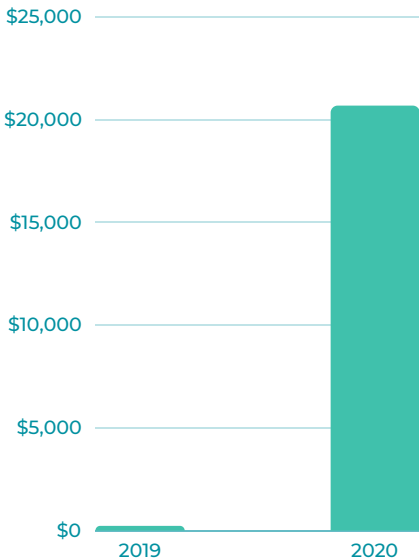
SOCIAL CAMPAIGN



solicitation posts to Facebook & Instagram

1,520
TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS

This is the amount of total engagements on our Facebook and Instagram solicitation posts combined.



WHO WE ARE

Board of Directors

- Deborah Morin, President of the Board
- Dianne Wassenich, Secretary
- Kyndel Bennett, Treasurer
- Hope Andrade
- Tim McClure

Advisory Board

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Anne Ashmun | Bill Johnson |
| Ray Brimble | John Mackey |
| Mike Burke | Les Shephard |
| Ted Flato | Lee Walker |
| Phil Hardberger | Bill West |

Staff

- Garry Merritt, Chief Executive Officer
- Emma Lindrose-Siegel, Chief Development Officer
- Lyda Creus Molanphy, Chief Strategy & Operations Officer
- Bill Barker, FAICP, Regional Transportation Planning Director
- Scott Parker, Land Transactions Director
- Kristi Shepperson, Senior Executive Administrator
- Lacey Ellis, Land Conservation Coordinator
- Jennifer Berrong, Grants Coordinator
- Gabriella Hernandez, Development & Communications Associate
- David Bemporad, Intern

