



great springs  
P R O J E C T

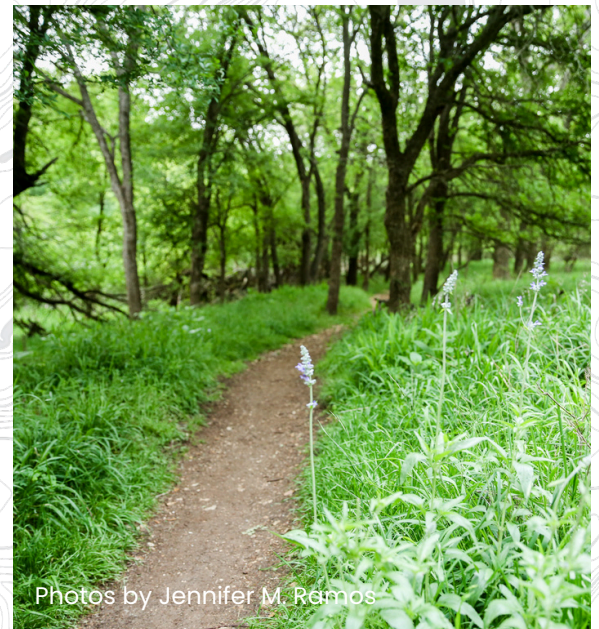
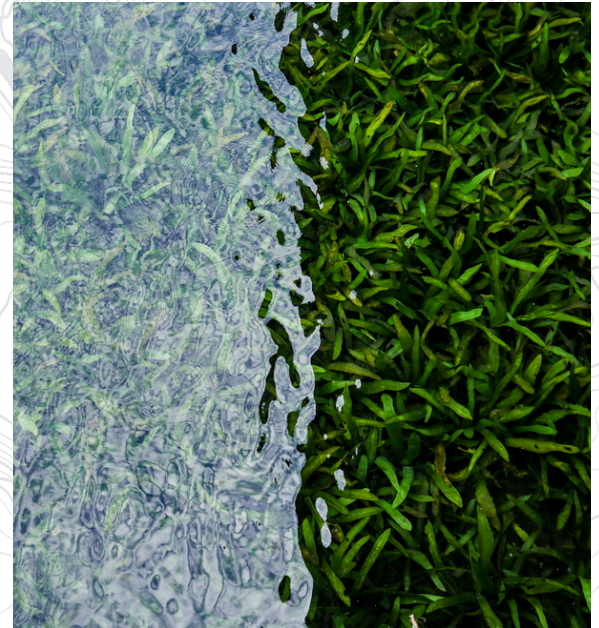
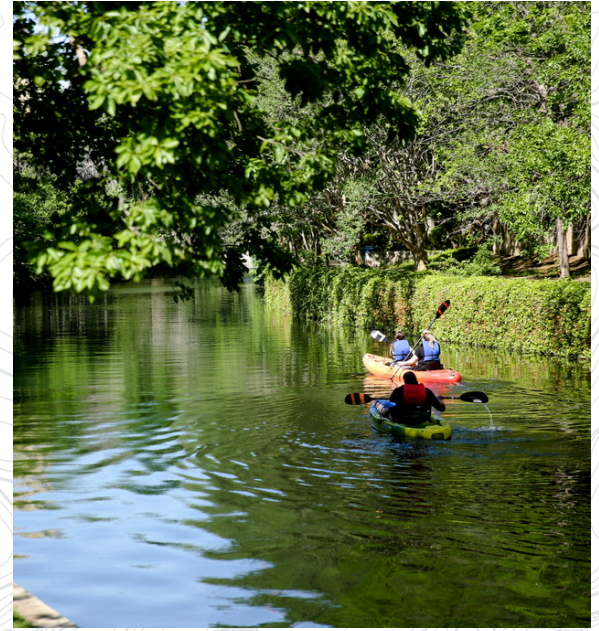
**2024  
Annual  
Report**





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Photos by Jennifer M. Ramos

*"The Great Springs Trail is more than just a hike and bike trail. It will conserve a breathtaking part of Texas in the most quickly developing region in the United States."*

ACADEMY AWARD WINNING ACTOR,  
MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY





# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends of Great Springs Project,

The Hill Country unites us in so many ways: the open plains, the Ashe juniper forests, the crystal-clear springs that breathe life into the land—the incredible environment of this region provides for us, protects us, and creates community for all Texans.

As we reflect on 2024, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your support of Great Springs Project's mission and work. Your commitment to protecting natural lands and open spaces, conserving precious water resources, and connecting our communities through trails is what propels this project forward.

2024 was a year of progress. We proudly celebrated conservation victories such as providing public access to the Morton Preserve, a pristine 288 acres of Hill Country overlooking the Guadalupe River. We completed the two-year Landowner Outreach Initiative in which we created a holistic database of high-conservation properties in Central Texas and fostered essential relationships with the owners of those properties, effectively laying the groundwork for our conservation projects for the next decade. Trail progress has also advanced through funding received from Texas Parks and Wildlife for trails to be constructed in 2025 and 2026 and in the protection of natural areas like Limestone Link in San Marcos, which is open to the public and provides essential connecting trail in Hays County.

At its core, Great Springs Project is a connector—not just of trails and green spaces, but of people, organizations, and stakeholders dedicated to conservation.

By fostering partnerships between landowners, local governments, businesses, and community groups, we drive progress toward protecting our region's most precious resources. Our mission is an essential investment in community and environmental health. Protection of natural lands and water resources can ensure we maintain and improve the quality of life in the San Antonio-Austin corridor for generations to come.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce an exciting new collaboration—a corridor-wide study funded in part by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and engaging all the cities, counties, and other stakeholders from San Antonio to Austin to accelerate the construction of the trail network from the Alamo to the Capitol. This partnership represents a major leap forward in planning and progressing essential green space infrastructure in this region, and its results will be a catalyst for the 100-mile trail network's development.

Now, we ask for your continued support. Help us spread the word, engage with your communities, and advocate for the protection of the region's natural lands and springs. Together, we can ensure a future that continues to see Central Texas and the Hill Country, its people, and its natural resources thrive.

Sincerely,

Garry Merritt





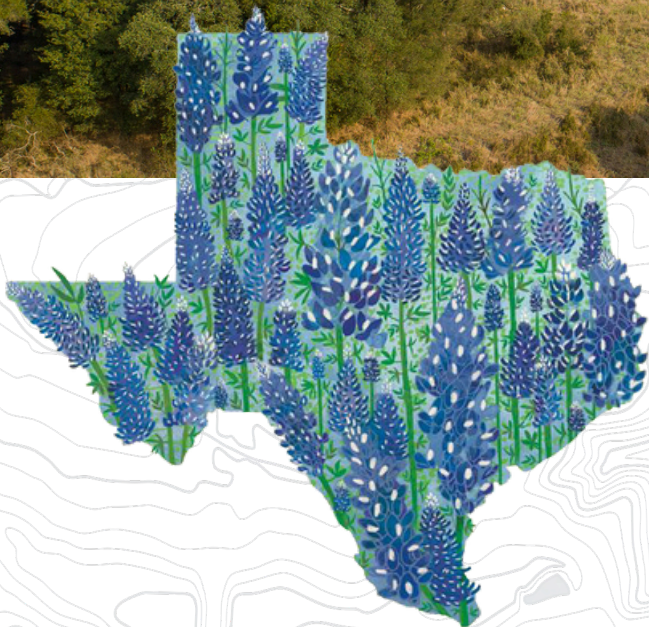


# BUILDING A REGIONAL VISION FOR CONSERVATION & CONNECTIVITY

Great Springs Project (GSP) is working to create a greenway of 50,000 acres of additional protected lands between Austin and San Antonio over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone. This green corridor will be connected by a 100-mile network of spring-to-spring trails, linking four iconic springs in Central Texas: Barton Springs, San Marcos Springs, Comal Springs, and San Antonio Springs. GSP works to unify existing local efforts and green infrastructure projects to address the most critical water, land, wildlife, and public health challenges facing the Central Texas region.



Presa Grande , Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos



*"Great Springs Project is the perfect way to connect Texans both with nature, as well as with economic development. From Austin to San Marcos, to San Antonio, establishing this green protected corridor will preserve the greatness of Texas' natural resources."*

**– Governor of Texas, Greg Abbott**



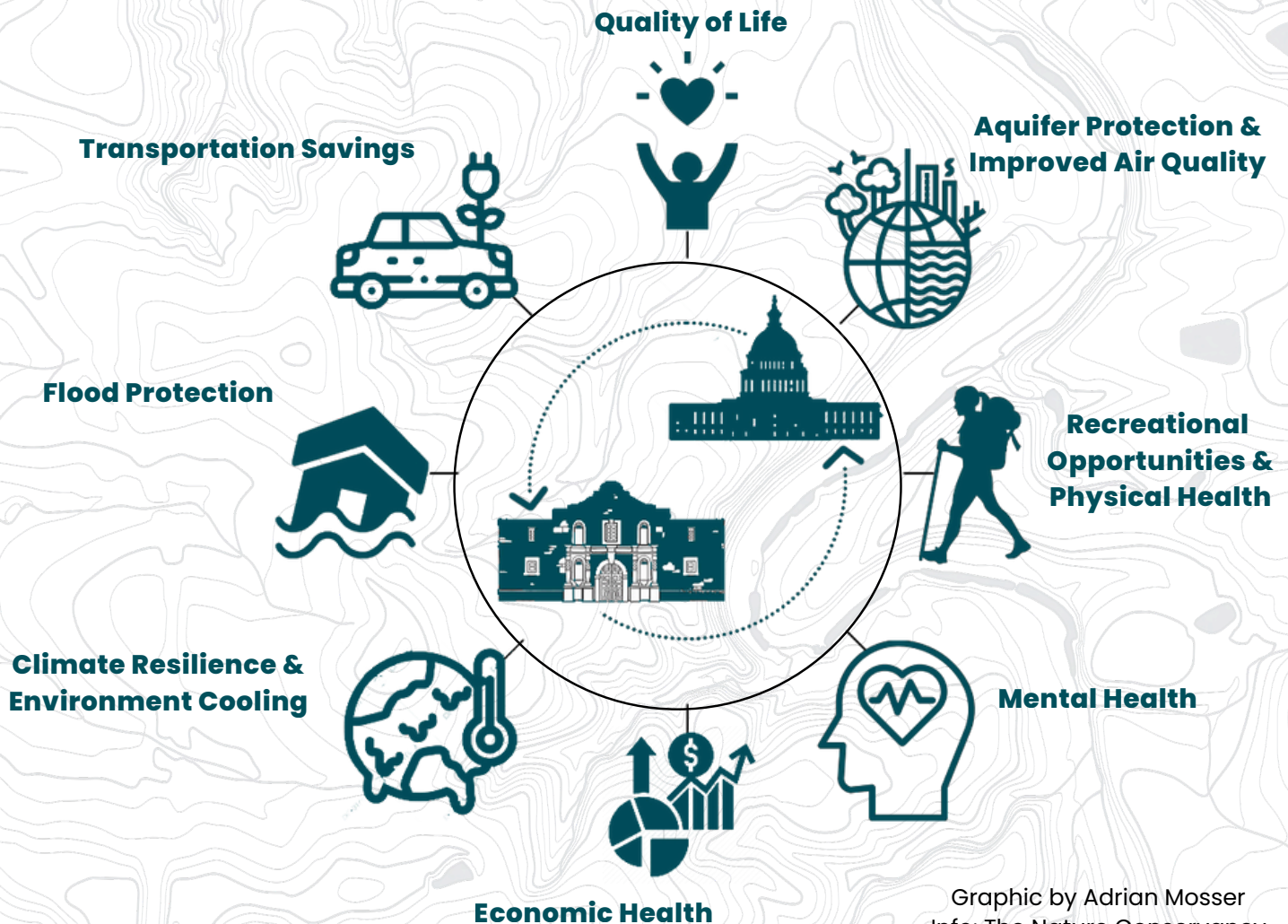
# THE NEED FOR PUBLIC GREEN SPACE



Butler Hike & Bike Trail, Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos

## GREEN SPACES FROM THE ALAMO TO THE CAPITOL

Trails, parks, natural areas, and other green spaces provide extensive environmental, economic, and public health benefits to the areas that surround them.





## CONTINUED MISSION THROUGH COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

Great Springs Project's mission to conserve natural lands and build trail across the Austin-San Antonio corridor is a vital project to building more sustainable, connected, and healthier communities for the future of this region.

### TRAIL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

HIKING  
BIKING  
KAYAKING  
SWIMMING  
PADDLEBOARDING  
BIRDING  
GEOCACHING  
FISHING



Purgatory Creek Natural Area  
Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos



Graphic by Adrian Mosser





Horsethief Dells, Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos

## ECONOMIC ASSET \$23 MILLION

The projected annual tourism and leisure spending value of local and non-local trail users in the Austin-San Antonio Region

*Great Springs Project's 2022 Economic Benefits Report*

## COOLING COMMUNITIES 6.5° F

In 2023, the Austin area experienced its hottest, driest summer on record. Green spaces are known to cool surrounding areas by up to 6.5 degrees during peak temperature times.

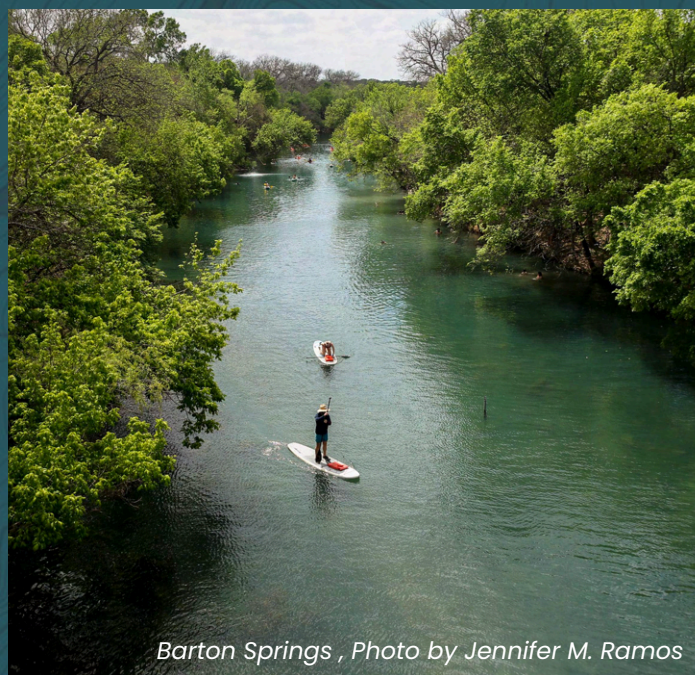
KXAN Austin, NASA



## HEALTHY LIFESTYLES 50% INCREASE

In self-reported adequate daily exercise for individuals who live near trails or parks compared to those who do not.

*Texas Statewide Regional Trails Study by TPWD*



Barton Springs, Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos

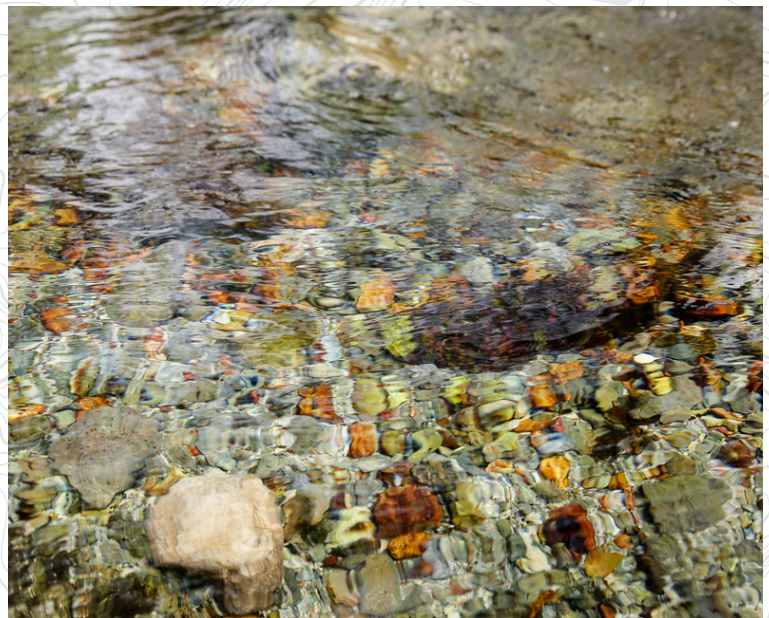






## PROTECTING AQUIFERS & SPRINGS

Land conservation and the creation of public green spaces, such as parks and trails, offer benefits that extend beyond community health—they play a crucial role in protecting aquifers, particularly in the Austin–San Antonio region. This area is primarily supplied by the Edwards Aquifer, a karst aquifer that provides drinking water to over 2.5 million people. Preserving natural lands helps maintain the integrity of recharge zones, where rainwater percolates into the aquifer, while reducing contamination risks from urban runoff and development. Green spaces with native vegetation also enhance water filtration and slow stormwater flow, preventing excessive erosion and sedimentation that can degrade water quality. By prioritizing land conservation, communities not only safeguard their natural landscapes but also ensure a sustainable and clean water supply for generations to come.





# AQUIFER RECHARGE

## 1. Rainfall Hits Recharge Zone

Rainfall and runoff occurs over the aquifer's contributing and recharge zones.

## 2. Water Seeps Through Ground

Water enters the aquifer through the limestone karst's cracks, crevices, caves, and sinkholes in natural 'recharge zone' lands.

## 3. Water Collects in Aquifer System

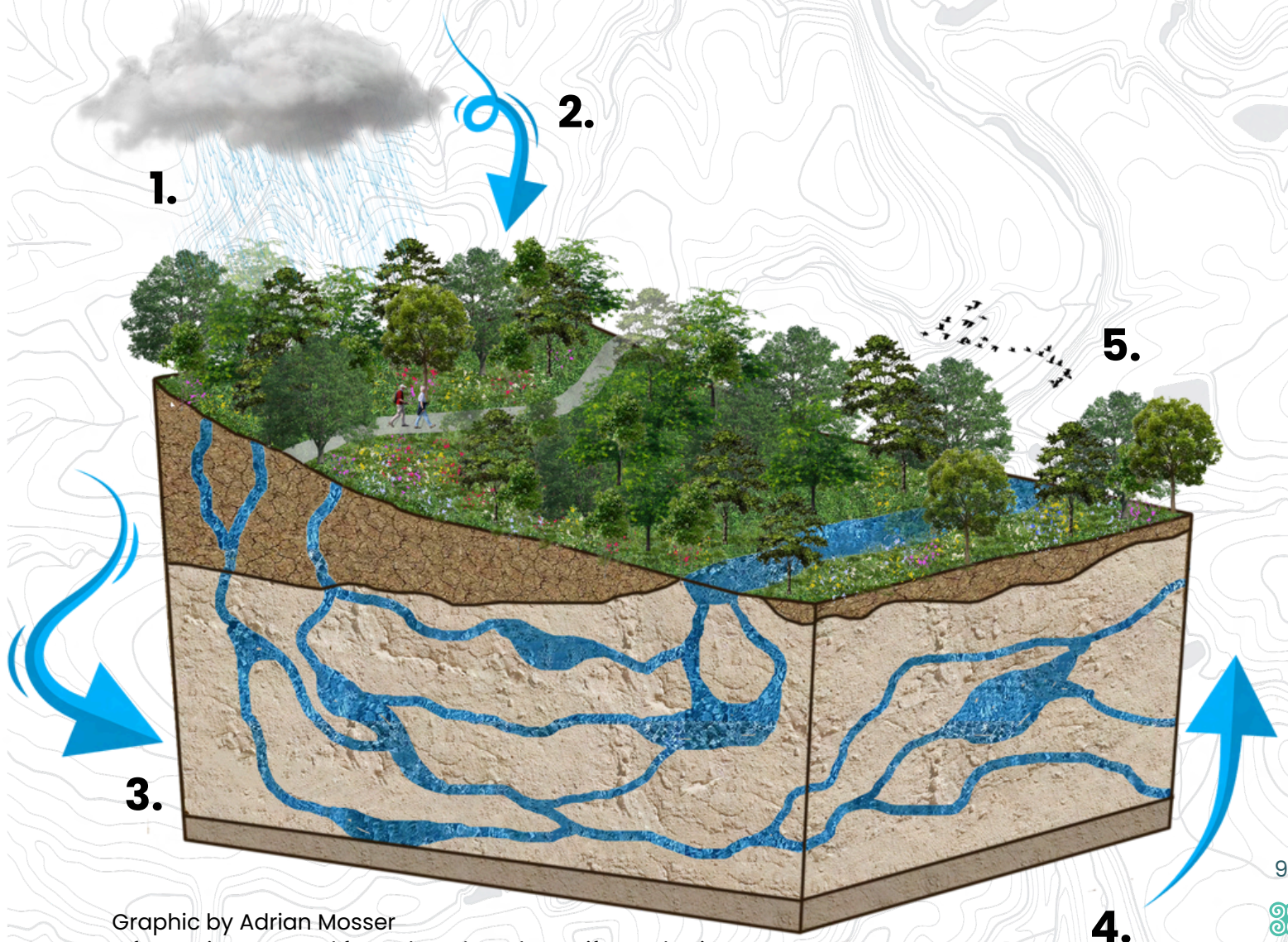
The water percolates further underground into the artesian zone, where it is stored in a complex network of interconnected caves.

## 4. Water Surfaces at Natural Springs

Water surfaces at natural springs, such as the Comal and San Marcos Springs.

## 5. Water Use From the Aquifer

Communities utilize water from the aquifer through wells and other extraction methods. Over 2.5 million people utilize water from the aquifer daily.







# LAND CONSERVATION & WATER PRESERVATION

## CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL ECOLOGICAL TRANSECT: THE ANIMALS THAT CALL IT HOME



BLACKLAND PRAIRIE  
SAN ANTONIO

RIPARIAN ZONE  
SAN MARCOS  
TO  
NEW BRAUNFELS

EDWARDS PLATEAU  
NEW BRAUNFELS  
TO  
DRIPPING SPRINGS

BALCONES  
ESCARPMENT  
BUDA/KYLE  
TO  
AUSTIN

Great Springs Project's regional conservation efforts go beyond building better communities. Preserving natural lands also directly protects and sustains habitats for the many incredible species that call these ecosystems home. As this corridor further develops, we can ensure the future of the region's wildlife through large-scale land conservation efforts.



**Blackland Prairie** – Found on the eastern side of Austin, stretching south along I-35.

- White-Tailed Deer
- Black-Tailed Jackrabbit
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Scissor-Tailed Flycatcher
- Red-Shouldered Hawk
- Northern Cardinal
- Turkey Vulture
- Crested Caracara
- Eastern Screech Owl
- Eastern Gray Squirrel

**Riparian Zone** – Found along rivers, creeks, and springs, including the Colorado River, San Marcos River, Comal River & Guadalupe River.

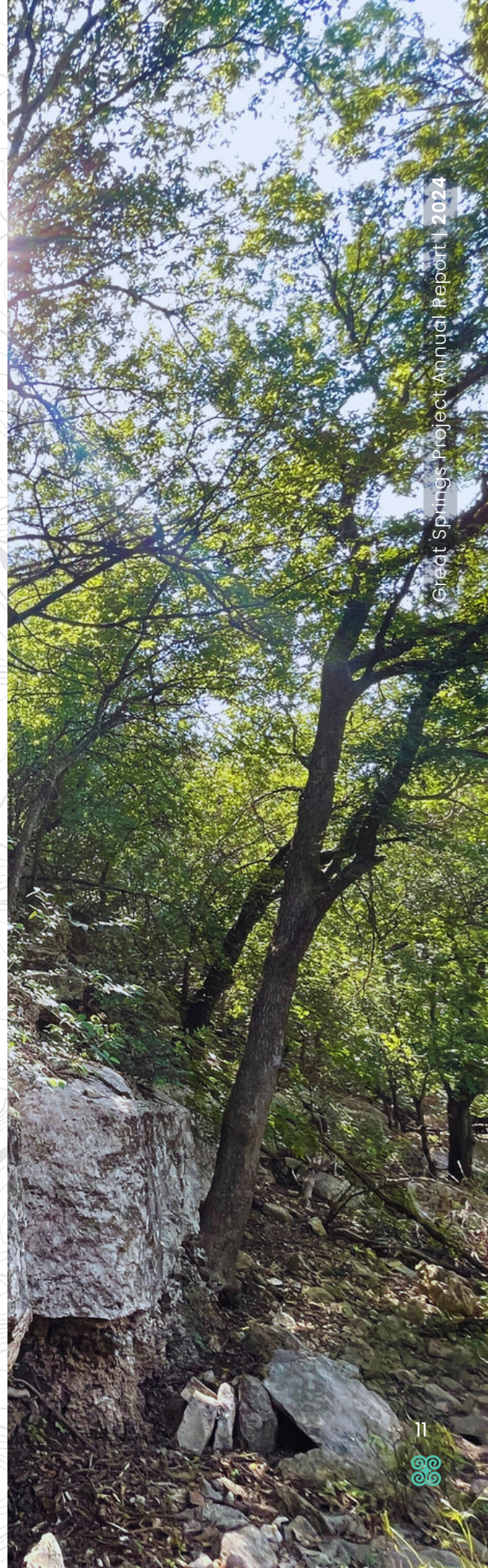
- Guadalupe Bass
- Fountain Darter
- Texas River Cooter
- San Marcos Salamander
- Central Texas Blind Salamander
- Comal Springs Riffle Beetle
- Channel Catfish
- Plains Killifish
- Great Blue Heron
- Belted Kingfisher

**Edwards Plateau** – Covers much of the Hill Country, west of I-35 & recharge zones.

- Golden-Cheeked Warbler
- Black-Capped Vireo
- Greater Earless Lizard

**Balcones Escarpment** – A transition zone between the Blackland Prairie and Edwards Plateau, running along the I-35 corridor.

- Golden-Cheeked Warbler
- Black-Capped Vireo
- Greater Earless Lizard





# NATIVE & ENDEMIC SPECIES

*These species can be found in the San Antonio – Austin corridor*

## CAGLE'S MAP TURTLE

A freshwater species found in the Guadalupe and San Antonio river basins of Texas. It relies on a healthy river ecosystem, fed by the Edwards Aquifer.



## AUSTIN BLIND SALAMANDER

Lives exclusively in the underground waters of the Edwards Aquifer beneath Austin. Since it never leaves the aquifer, it depends on stable groundwater flow and purity for survival.



## TEXAS FATMUCKET

A freshwater mussel found in the San Marcos and Guadalupe. It relies on aquifer-fed streams as pollution and reduced flow threaten its survival.



## FOUNTAIN DARTER

A small fish living in the San Marcos and Comal Springs, depending on consistent water temperatures and flow from the Edwards Aquifer.



## SAN MARCOS SALAMANDER

Inhabits the clear, spring-fed waters of the San Marcos River, emerging from the Edwards Aquifer.



## BARTON SPRINGS SALAMANDER

Endemic to Barton Springs in Austin, where it depends entirely on the Edwards Aquifer's water flow. Any changes to the aquifer's quality or levels threaten its survival.



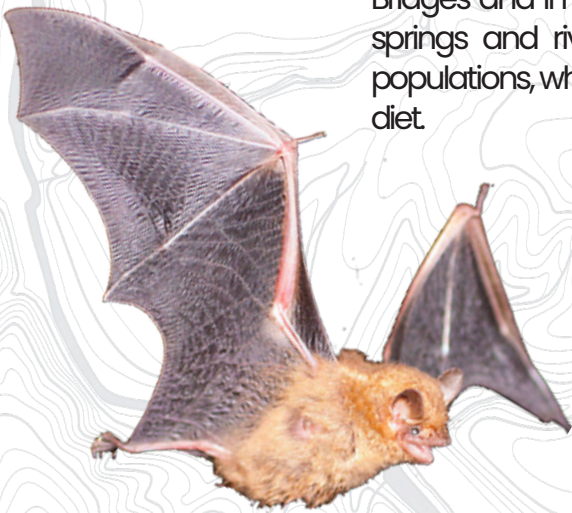
## TEXAS WILD RICE

An endangered aquatic grass found only in the clear, spring-fed waters of the San Marcos River. It relies on the constant flow of clean, cool water from the Edwards Aquifer, making it highly sensitive to changes in water levels and quality.



### **MEXICAN FREE-TAILED BAT**

Forms large colonies under Central Texas Bridges and in natural caves. Aquifer-fed springs and rivers help maintain insect populations, which are crucial for the bat's diet.



### **TRI COLORED BAT**

The tricolored bat roosts in Texas caves and trees, relying on the aquifer-fed waterways for insect populations. Habitat loss and disease have severely impacted its numbers.

### **COMAL BEETLE**

An aquatic beetle found in the Comal Springs, directly dependent on the steady flow of clean, oxygen-rich water from the Edwards Aquifer to survive.



### **MONARCH BUTTERFLY**

Migrates through Texas and relies on native milkweed and nectar plants, which depend on aquifer-fed ecosystems to remain healthy.



### **BLACK-CAPPED VIERO**

Relies on the shrubby woodlands of Central Texas, which are sustained by the water resources of the Edwards Aquifer.

### **GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER**

Nests exclusively in the Ashe juniper-oak woodlands of Central Texas, which are indirectly affected by aquifer health. Drought and habitat loss due to land development threaten its breeding grounds.







# LANDOWNER OUTREACH INITIATIVE

At the beginning of 2023, Great Springs Project launched an ambitious two-year Landowner Outreach Initiative to meet with the owners of 1,400 high-conservation value land parcels, 50 acres or greater in size. The goal of this engagement includes conservation easements, land purchases, trail right-of-way, land use management practices, and other conservation outcomes. The end of the calendar year 2024 marks the conclusion of the initial 2-year outreach phase, but the conservation work is just beginning. The Landowner Outreach Initiative has created a comprehensive regional database of land ownership and relationships with over 800 landowners. This can help GSP and partners move properties into conservation outcomes. The Landowner Outreach Initiative will feed GSP's conservation pipeline for the next 10 years. This phase of the initiative has already resulted in over 60 conservation projects ready for conservation outcomes.

Engaging directly with landowners has allowed GSP to better understand their aspirations and concerns while providing an educational resource on the benefits of conservation. As we continue to foster relationships with landowners, GSP and partners also work to connect funding opportunities and resources to help drive conservation outcomes forward. This initiative is creating conservation opportunities in this region at unprecedented rates. With the goal of permanently conserving 50,000 additional acres in this region, GSP is seeking funding for these projects through a combination of public and private funds as well as establishing a first-of-its-kind land investment fund.

**The Landowner Outreach Initiative is directly supported by:**

**80 20 FOUNDATION**



**Jacob & Terese Hershey  
FOUNDATION**

**flex**

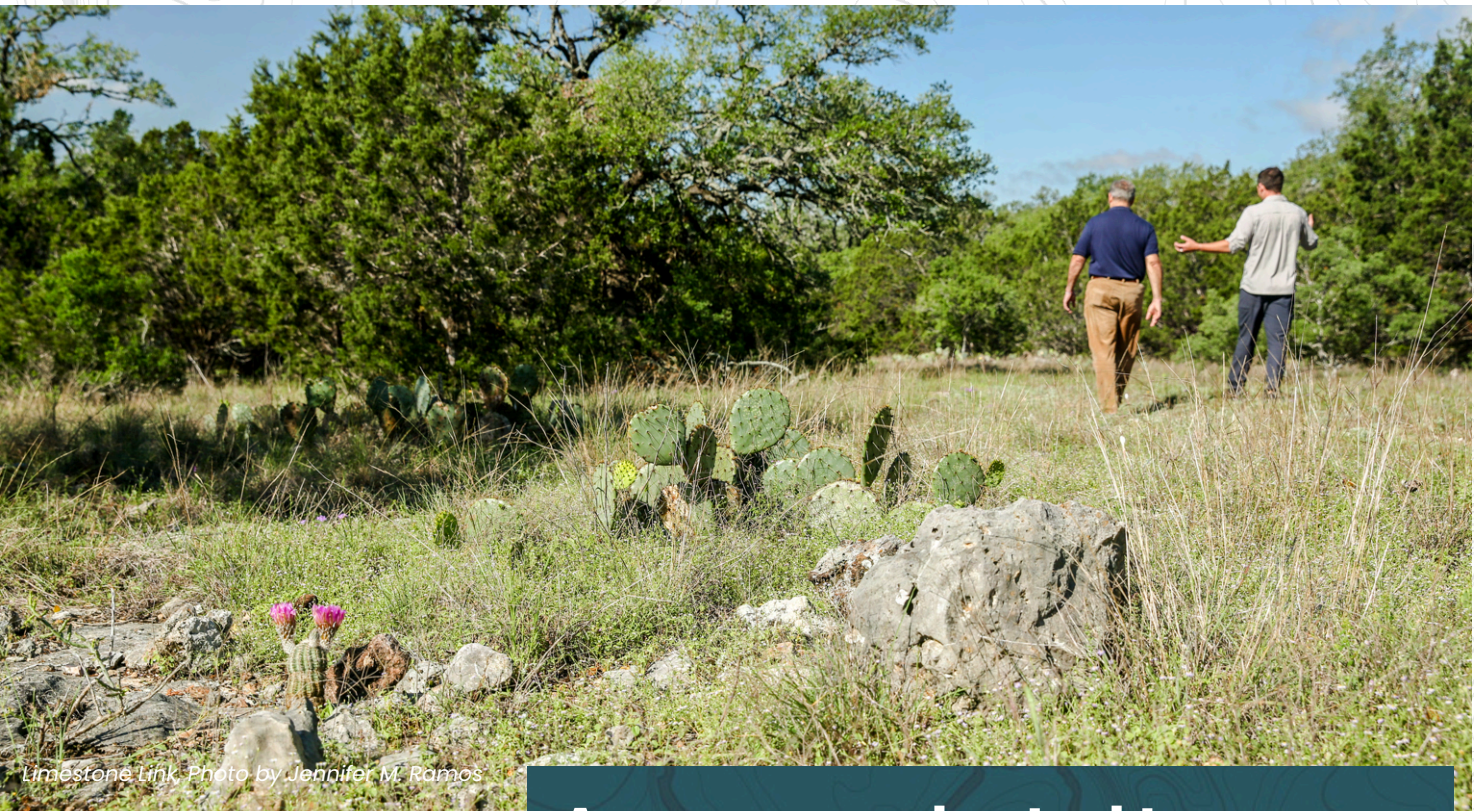
**Michelle Whitwell Pokorny**

The generosity of our Central Texas landowners brings projects like the Great Springs Project to life. The care, stewardship, and deep respect these landowners have for their properties embody the true spirit of Texas.



*Dry Comal Creek Nature Park, Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos*





Limestone Link. Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos

**An unprecedented two-year initiative aimed at moving land into conservation.**



## THE RESULTS



**831**

**Total Landowners** Identified by Landowner Outreach Initiative



**1,527**

**Land Parcels** Represented by Contacted Landowners



**274,720**

**Acres** Represented by Contacted Landowners





# TXDOT CORRIDOR STUDY

In late 2023, Great Springs Project received a \$2m+ Transportation Alternatives grant award by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT). This grant will fund a Corridor Study that will create a comprehensive strategy and plan to advance the Great Springs Trail network from San Antonio to Austin. Specifically, through stakeholder engagement and careful analysis, the study will not only categorize our targeted and priority areas but also identify constraints and opportunities. The result will be a document of developable projects taken through schematic level design with associated budgets.

Projects will extend throughout corridor in all our 4 counties and will align with regional ecological restoration objectives including the recharge of the Edwards Aquifer. This study will commence in the Summer of 2025 with the final output anticipated in 2026.

**Directly supported by:**



**Great Springs Project is the first non-profit to receive an award from this program. Over 30 key project stakeholders including mayors, municipalities, and state representatives provided letters of support.**

**The Great Springs Trail Network may look different across various settings.**



**HILL COUNTRY RURAL**

**RANCHLAND RURAL**

**SMALL TOWN**

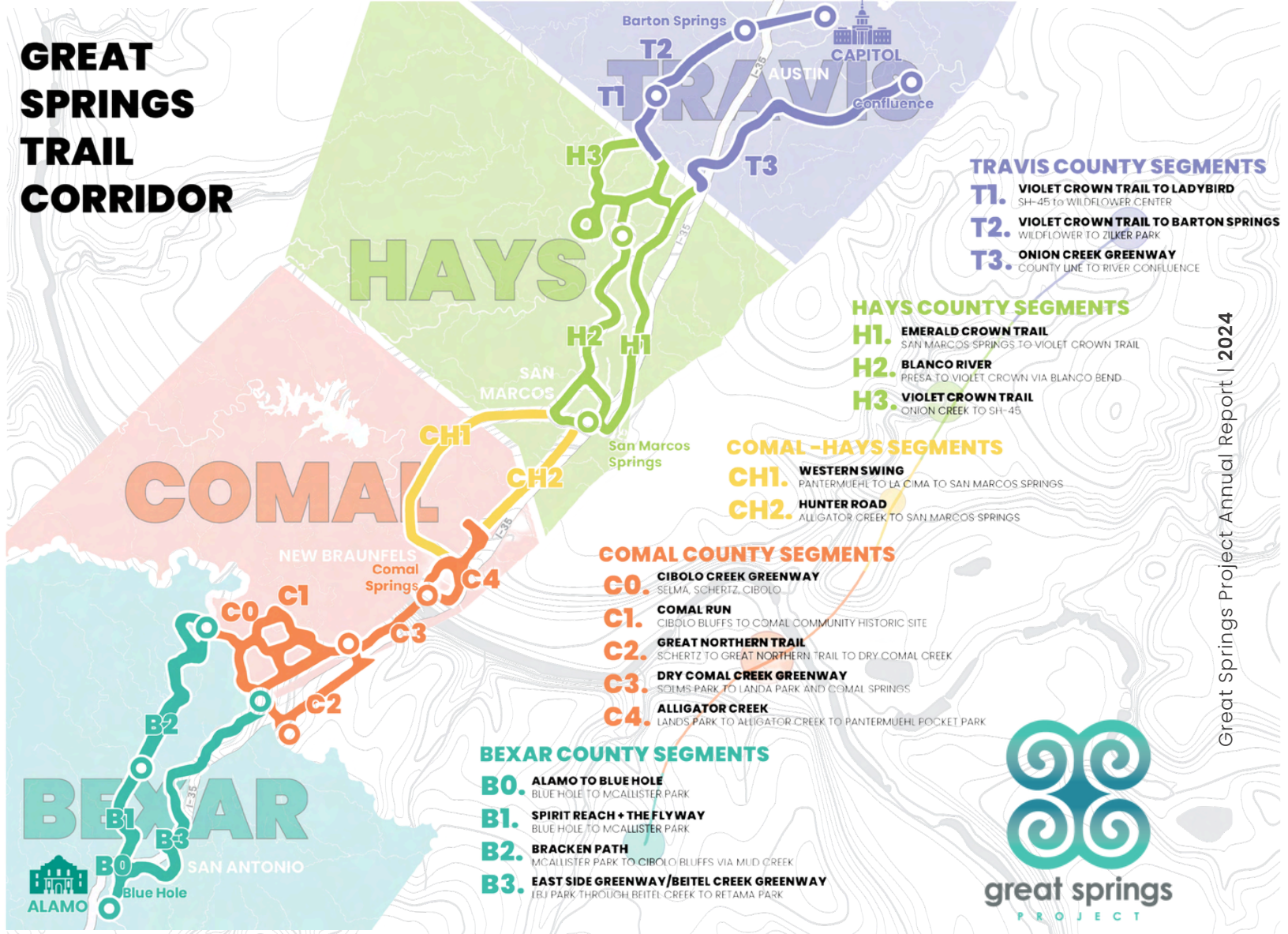
**SUBURBAN**

**URBAN**





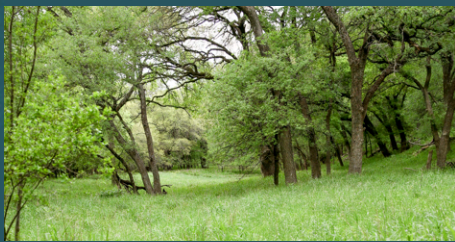
# GREAT SPRINGS TRAIL CORRIDOR



Butler Hike & Bike Trail, Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos



# New Trail on the Ground



HILLTOP PARK & WEST CREEK



CIBOLO CREEK CONNECTOR

BEXAR COUNTY

NEW  
BRAUNFELS

SELMA

SCHERTZ

COMAL SPRINGS

SAN ANTONIO  
SPRINGS







SAN MARCOS LOOP



ONION CREEK GREENWAY



THE MORTON PRESERVE



131 ACRES OF FUTURE PARK



Images 6 & 8 credited to Kenny Skrobanek

Images 1, 5, 7 & 9 credited to Jennifer Ramos







# THE MORTON PRESERVE

The Morton Preserve, a stunning natural sanctuary dedicated to the protection of endangered species, is now officially open to the public. This beautiful 288-acre site, located on Bluff End Road just off River Road between the Second and Third Crossings, was acquired by Comal County in 2008 through a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund.

The Morton Preserve is a vital habitat for various endangered species, including the Golden-Cheeked Warbler, a small songbird native to Central Texas. This initiative really shows how dedicated Comal County is to protecting our region's amazing wildlife and preserving our natural environment.

Great Springs Project collaborated with Comal County, U.S. Fish & Wildlife and Texas Parks & Wildlife on a management plan for the Preserve.

*"Collaborative projects like this require trust, time and resources. Great Springs Project is honored to work with our public agency partners and conservation supporters to protect critical habitat, provide appropriate public access, and ensure the future of iconic Texas landscapes like the Morton Preserve"* –Scott Parker, GSP's Land Transactions Director

Visitors have the opportunity to explore the Preserve from September through February, with a reservation system in place managed by Comal County. Because of its ecological significance, access is limited to a small number of visitors at a time.

*"I am grateful to the Great Springs Project, U.S Fish and Wildlife, as well as Texas Parks and Wildlife for all their help in getting the management plan in place. The management plan allows the preserve to be open to the public on a limited basis outside of the Golden Cheeked Warbler mating season. I would like to give a special shout out to the Road Department for their excellent work and Robert Boyd our engineer who was point man on this project. We have been working on this quite a while."*

**–Donna Eccleston, Former Comal County Precinct 1 Commissioner**









# SAN MARCOS LOOP



Graphic by Adrian Mosser

## Freedom

The Great Springs Project was awarded \$248,640 for the construction of a new 1.41-mile, 8-foot wide multiuse decomposed granite trail as part of the Freedom Segment of the Emerald Crown Trail.

## Freeman Ranch

In 2024, Texas State University received \$135,740 Recreational Trail Grant to construct a 0.95-mile multi-use natural surface trail, specifically the Freeman Ranch segment of the San Marcos Outer Loop Trail.

## La Cima

This 1.75-mile trail to be constructed runs through the La Cima development and adjacent natural areas and will be linked with two other trail segments, offering 4.5 miles of new trails for the San Marcos community.



## Limestone Link

This 102-acre property was originally purchased by GSP investors in 2017, then was acquired by Hays County in Fall 2023 and designated to become an open space preserve. Efforts to prepare the property for public access were conducted throughout 2024.

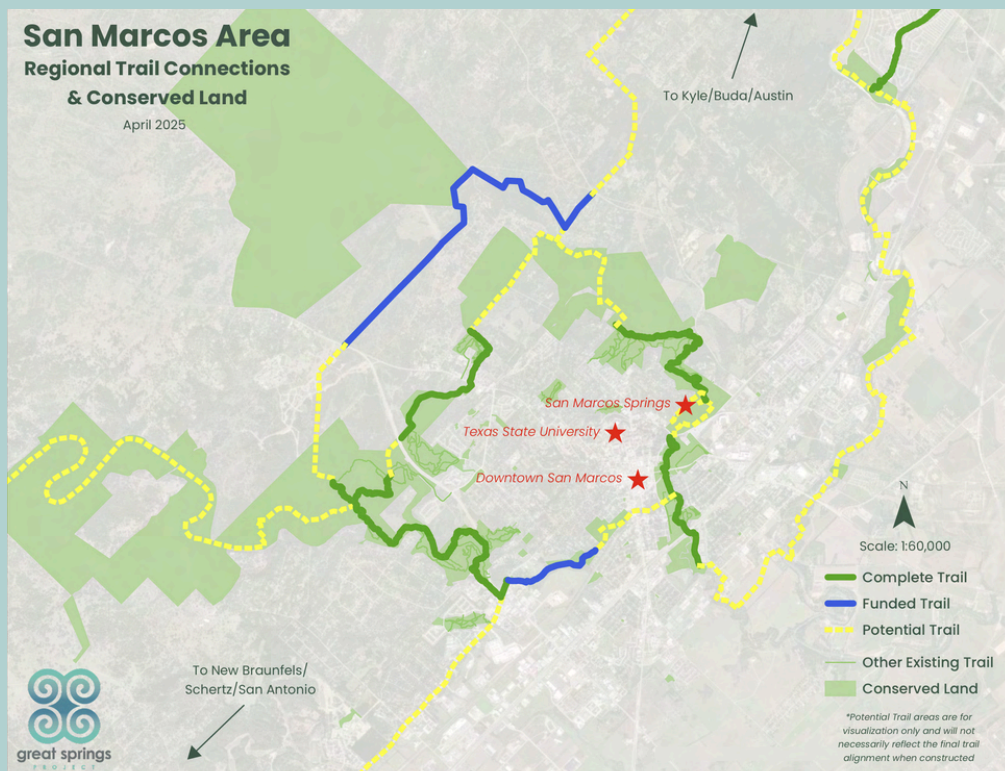
Great Springs Project, San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, the San Marcos River Foundation, and Hays County coordinated the preparation of the site, and trail planning is completed. A huge thanks to the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance volunteers for their continued efforts on the property! The new trail on Limestone Link will connect existing trails at Ringtail Ridge Natural Area and River Recharge Natural Area. The trail is open to the public in Spring 2025!

## Presa Grande

Presa Grande is a remarkable 844-acre tract of land just minutes from downtown San Marcos. Located in the Sink Creek watershed, this property is riddled with karst and aquifer recharge features, making it a crucial component of protecting water quality, quantity, and inflows into San Marcos Springs. With its ability to absorb and channel water from storm events, the property also mitigates the impact of flash flooding. Presa Grande supports many plant and animal species and contains habitat for the endangered Golden-Cheeked Warbler. Presa Grande has been protected via conservation easements thanks to the Edwards Aquifer Authority, and in 2024, Hays County received \$300,000 for construction of another segment of the San Marcos Outer Loop Trail on the property. The Presa Grande Segment will be a 1.8-mile, 5-foot wide multi-use natural surface trail with benches, a bridge, and a trailhead kiosk.

### San Marcos Area Regional Trail Connections & Conserved Land

April 2025







# LAND & TRAIL ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Graphic by Adrian Mosser



Limestone Link, Photos by Jennifer M. Ramos



## Cibolo Creek Connector in Selma, TX

The City of Selma received funding from the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Cibolo Creek Trail Extension. Construction of a shared-use path along Cibolo Creek will connect existing trails at Evans Road and Stage Stop Park.

## Schertz Developing Hilltop Park and West Dietz Creek Trail Projects

The City of Schertz and Schertz Parks and Recreation recently received significant grant funding to propel two park and trail projects forward. Funds from Texas Parks and Wildlife will initiate further development in Hilltop Park, greatly expanding and improving the infrastructure and features of the space. Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization grant funds will initiate a new West Dietz Creek Trail Project, creating an accessible 1.76-mile trail along the creek.

## Future 131-Acre Park Purchase Near Alligator Creek in New Braunfels

In early February 2024, the City of New Braunfels approved a 131-acre tract for future public green space. This land acquisition, funded by the New Braunfels Economic Development Corporation, could soon become one of New Braunfels' largest parks and will be a significant addition to protected green spaces within Comal County.

GSP's CEO, Garry Merritt, on the new park development: "Great Springs Project celebrates the City of New Braunfels's decision to purchase and dedicate 131 new acres for parks and green space. This incredible vision and investment will help preserve the quality of life in New Braunfels and provide value for today's residents and generations to come."

## Onion Creek Greenway

Travis County approved a bond to connect McKinney Falls State Park and Richard Moya Park via trail. Great Springs Project is working with other stakeholders to continue connections through Barkley Meadows and Southeast Metro Park in Austin.





## Trail Connect VI | October 2024

Hosted in partnership with the University of Texas at San Antonio, this half-day conference brought regional stakeholders together to build a vision for the future of green and public spaces, highlighting exciting planned projects and initiatives. Through trail connect, GSP hopes to expand the growing network of stakeholders working to build a bright future with green infrastructure and sustainable development practices.



Trail Connect VI was generously supported by:



The University of Texas at San Antonio™



*"Great Springs Project will provide connectivity from San Antonio to New Braunfels, to San Marcos, to Austin, and back. It will be a trail that brings people closer to nature. We have great things happening, the question is how to bring it together. I want [Great Springs Project] to be a lasting legacy for our children, our grandchildren, and for future generations so that they too can enjoy the trail projects we are talking about today."*

**-Bexar County Judge Peter Sakai**







## Great Springs Trail Race | October 2024

Our 2nd trail race was again held in partnership with Tejas Trails at the Purgatory Creek Natural Area in San Marcos. These trail race events help bring awareness to the GSP mission, showcase incredible trails, and help grow the incredible active outdoor community we have in Texas. Thank you to the runners who joined us on the trail in 2024!

**The Great Springs Trail Race was  
generously supported by:**

**ANCIRA.COM**  
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**SAN MARCOS  
LIONS CLUB**  
San Marcos, Texas



Great Springs Trail Race Annual Report | 2024





# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## LAUNCHING GSP'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

In 2024, over 200 volunteers graciously donated more than 1,400 hours of their time to GSP – a value of nearly \$45,000. Our generous and dedicated volunteers removed 900 pounds of waste from trails and creeks, removed invasive species, reintroduced native plants, and built 5 miles of new trail in Travis and Hays Counties. We are incredibly grateful for their time and dedication.

*"It's great to volunteer your time for this worthy cause!"*

**-Tricia J, INTERA Executive Vice President Marketing & Principal Scientist**

**GSP's Volunteer Program is Directly Supported by:**



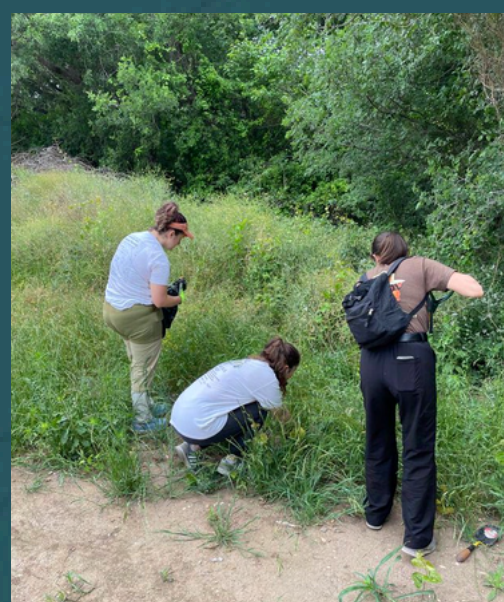
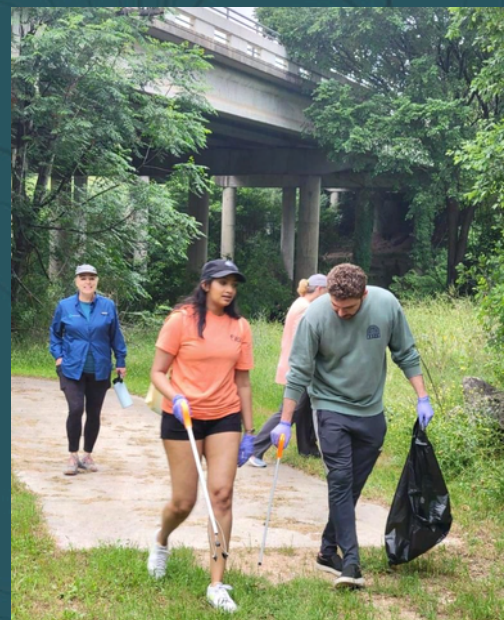


## TRAIL BUILDING

Great Springs Project, Tejas Trails: Trail Crew and the Travis County Parks Foundation volunteers worked together on carving new trails at Southeast Metropolitan Park in Travis County. Thank you to the dedicated volunteers who have spent hours carving over 5 miles of new trail for public use. These new trails will be showcased in a Trail Race in March 2025!

## CREEK CLEANUPS

Great Springs Project partnered with Keep Austin Beautiful's Adopt-a-Park program, conducted creek cleanups and invasive species removal at the Onion Creek Soccer Complex in South Travis County. A total of 5 cleanups were conducted in 2024.





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS



39

**Total Presentations** from GSP to community stakeholders



20

**Total Community Outreach Events** with GSP & partners



4

**Creek Cleanup Events** along Onion Creek & watershed



7

**Trail Building Days** in Travis County with Tejas Trails



12

**GSP Newsletters** highlighting regional trail & conservation progress







## FROM THE PRESS

### MySA

"Plan for 100-mile trail from San Antonio to Austin still trekking on"  
February 26th, 2024 by Priscilla Aguirre

"100-mile trail from San Antonio to Austin aims to open portion in 2025"  
August 7, 2024, by Priscilla Aguirre

### Texas Standard

"Great Springs Project's trail network between San Antonio and Austin continues to grow"  
August 5, 2024, by Jack Morgan

## SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT



**189k**

**Total Views**

**5.9k**

**Page Visits**



**61.8k**

**Total Views**

**5.7k**

**Page Visits**

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# DONORS



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## Donors to Great Springs Project provide crucial support for:

- Land conservation and restoration efforts to protect water and key wildlife corridors and habitats
- The creation of green spaces and parks for water protection and public enjoyment
- The lasting protection of the Central Texas Hill Country benefitting the health of the aquifer and great springs







# 2024 DONORS

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Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation  
Darcie Schipull  
Darrell Dwain Gest  
David Poston  
David W. Pasley  
David W. Sullivan  
Dawn Hammond  
Devaki Allen  
Devon Spencer  
Dianne Wassenich  
Dirk Davidek  
Dorothy Lurie  
Edward Aguilar  
Edward Woodall  
Elizabeth Bowerman  
Elizabeth Helen Tschurr  
Elizabeth Stewart  
Emily Hillegeist  
Emma Lindrose-Siegel  
Emy Lou Sawyer  
Eric Buehler  
Expedia  
Exponent Philanthropy  
Frank B. Arnold  
Frazier Family Giving Fund  
Gary C. Gilmer  
Gary Rogers  
George Eckrich  
Geroge Cofer  
Gordon Achtermann  
Greg Carter  
Gretchen Reuwer  
GSI Environmental, Inc.  
Guadalupe Blanco River Authority  
Halff Associates  
Hays County  
H-E-B  
Helen M. Orme  
Helena P. Finley  
Henry G. Cisneros  
Hope Andrade  
Ian Pierce  
Insperity  
Ivery Kaiser  
J.W. Couch Foundation  
Jacobs  
Jason Samfield  
Jenna McEachern  
Jennifer Berrong  
Jennifer Bristol  
Joe Williams III  
John Bailey  
John C. and Carolyn Noonan Parmer Private  
Foundation  
John Mackey & Deborah Morin  
Jordan Allen  
Julie Bartlett  
Julie Whitaker  
Julio R. Hasfura Buenaga  
Karen Werth  
Katie Goetz





Katrina Martin-Valenta  
Kerry & Hunter Armistead  
Kevin Lally  
Kira Elizabeth Dell  
Kristi Shepperson  
Kyle Martin  
Kyndel Bennett  
Lauri Che Kelly  
Lawrence G. Bassett  
Leah Harrell  
Lee Lahourcade  
Lisa Townsen Weathers  
Lonnie Samford  
Lower Colorado River Authority  
Luta Sempre Charitable Fund  
Lyssa Allen  
Marc R. Lisker  
Marilyn O. Brister  
Marjesca Brown  
Mark Wierzbicki  
Mary C. Muenster  
Mary M Standifer  
Mathieu Saenz  
Matt O'Hayer  
Matthew Criswell  
Matthew Smith  
Michael Dugan  
Michael R. Mathioudaksi II  
Michael Springer  
Michelle Whitwell Pokorny  
Mitchell W. Keogh  
Mr. & Mrs. Poffenberger  
Nancy Bowermaster  
Nancy Scanlan  
Native Plant Society  
Neal Sutton  
Nicholas Linder  
Nikhil Batra  
Nungesser/Esserlieu Family  
Pamela Peck  
Pape-Dawson Engineers  
Patricia Stein  
Paul C. Hudson  
Paul Carter

PayPal Giving Fund  
Phil Hardberger  
Raba Kistner  
RAMBLER, Sparkling Water  
Richard Bilanceri  
Richard Crumly  
Robert G. Huth  
Robert Lynch  
Robin Dombrowski  
RS&H, Inc  
Rufino Coronado  
Salesforce  
San Antonio River Authority  
San Marcos Lions Club  
Sandy Morris  
Sara Villarreal  
Sarah Murrin  
Savannah Savoy  
Scott Miller  
Shannan Gorden  
Sheila Beck  
Sheryl Calhoun  
Shield-Ayres Foundation  
Shireen A. Brathwaite  
Steve Hixon  
Steve I. Amos  
Steven O'Malley  
Sue Russell  
Susan G. Chambers  
Susan Vaughan Foundation  
Tamara Robertson  
Teryn Grater  
The Jacob & Terese Hershey Foundation  
The Silver Nutria of New Braunfels  
Tiffany Bergeron  
Todd Werner  
USAA  
Virginia Larson  
Wendy Dunnam Tita  
Wendy Todd  
William Barker  
William Johnston  
William Suttle  
Winn Family Foundation  
Ylda Capriccioso







# ORGANIZATIONAL FINANCES

## EXPENSES:

**23.2%**

Trail Planning

**16.3%**

Development

**12.1%**

Operations

**1%**

**34.8%**

Land Transactions & Conservation

**1.4%**

Accounting & Legal

**1.6%**

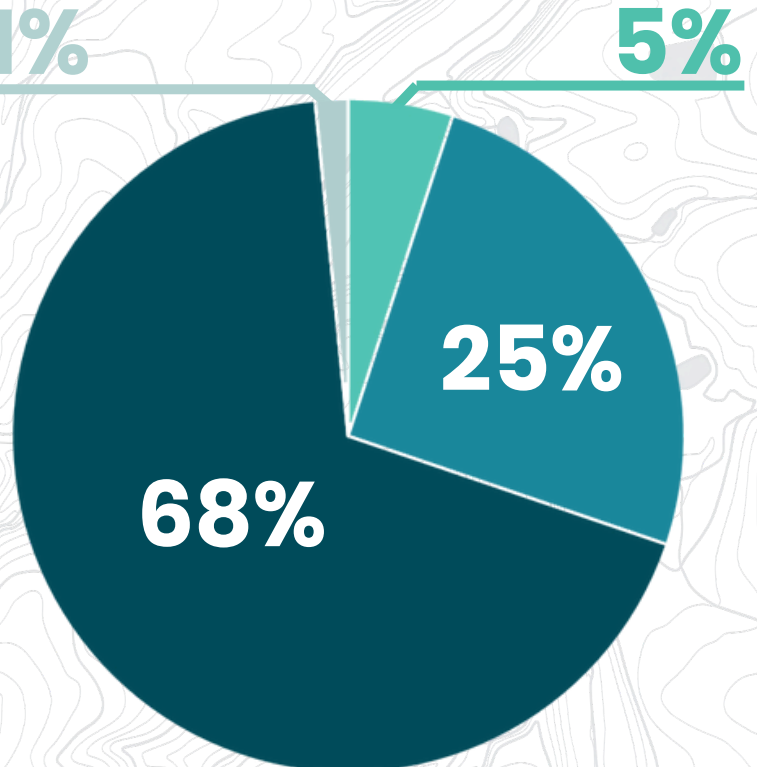
Facilities

**10.6%**

Education

## INCOME:

- INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS
- GRANTS
- CORPORATE DONATIONS
- PUBLIC REIMBURSEMENT







Lady Bird Lake, Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos

## BEYOND THE BUDGET

Great Springs Project is a 501c(3) nonprofit that works alongside a diverse set of project stakeholders to advance the region's natural land conservation and public green space projects. GSP works as a catalyst in the region, advancing land conservation outcomes and trail and park projects by working closely with municipalities, counties, infrastructure entities, and other stakeholders. Through GSP's work and advocacy, a regional vision for the future of green spaces in this region now includes the GREAT SPRINGS TRAIL, and progress on this 100-mile trail network connecting the San Antonio-Austin region is well on its way.



# WHO WE ARE

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Deborah Morin, President**  
**Dianne Wassenich, Secretary**  
**Kyndel Bennett, Treasurer**  
**Hope Andrade**  
**April Ancira**  
**Cindy M. Matula**  
**Tom Bacon**  
**Andrew Sansom**

## ADVISORY BOARD

**Anne Ashmun**  
**Ray Brimble**  
**Mike Burke**  
**Ted Flato**  
**Phil Hardberger**  
**Bill Johnson**  
**John Mackey**  
**Lee Walker**  
**Bill West**

## 2024 STAFF

**Garry Merritt**.....Chief Executive Officer  
**Emma Lindrose-Siegel**.....Chief Development Officer  
**Kristi Shepperson**.....Operations Director  
**Scott Parker**.....Land Transactions Director  
**Sarah Esserlieu Khalil**.....Director of Development  
**Sara Villarreal**.....Director of Program Strategy  
**Bill Barker**.....Regional Transportation Planning Director  
**Jennifer Berrong**.....Grants Manager  
**Drake Blanchard**.....Data Coordinator  
**Marjesca Brown**.....Real Estate Associate  
**Ryan Cox**.....Development Associate  
**Miles Elsey**.....Trail Corridor Coordinator  
**Mikey Goralnik**.....Trails and Transportation Planner  
**Tony Kimball**.....Landowner Outreach Coordinator  
**Virginia Larson**.....Associate Director of Development  
**Madison Lozano**.....Grants Manager  
**Courtney Lyons-Garcia**.....Parks & Trails Specialist  
**Emma C. Parsley**.....Community Engagement Manager  
**Ruby Ramos**.....Trails and Transportation Planner  
**Darcie Schipull**.....TXDoT Coordinator  
**Kenny Skrobanek**.....Trails and Transportation Planner

## 2024 INTERNS

**Bailey Bass**  
**Luke Lastovica**  
**Andrea Osteicoechea**  
**Max Sebbar**  
**Carmen Whitten**



## STAFF BY COUNTY

**6** **2** **3** **11**  
**Bexar** **Comal** **Hays** **Travis**







# Join The Growing GSP Mission

Great Springs Project is an accelerator for new trail, land conservation, collaboration, and healthy communities. The vision of the Great Springs Project's mission is a sustainable, connected region.

Thanks to all our donors for supporting this work in 2024 so we can keep up the pace in 2025! If you or your organization wants to work with GSP, please visit our website at [greatspringsproject.org](https://greatspringsproject.org) or email us questions at [info@greatspringsproject.org](mailto:info@greatspringsproject.org).







Photo by Jennifer M. Ramos



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