



Hill Country Night Sky Program

Hill Country Alliance

HQ: DRIPPING SPRINGS, TEXAS



THERE IS SOMETHING MAGICAL ABOUT THE STARRY NIGHT SKY IN THE HILL COUNTRY. Stargazing is a part of human heritage that connects us with the natural world, inspiring art, literature, photography, curiosity, and space exploration. However, light pollution threatens dark night skies. The Hill Country's population has grown 50% in the last 20 years, now at 3.8 million, and is expected to increase by 35% over the next 20 years, resulting in 5.2 million people calling the Hill Country home by 2040. As more people move to the Hill Country, they bring more development and, often unintentionally, more light pollution. In fact, recent studies show that **we are losing our night skies at an alarming rate of up to 10% each year.**

Light pollution has harmful effects on our health, economic prosperity, and the natural cycles and habits of plants and wildlife. To address this, the Hill Country Alliance (HCA)'s Night Sky Program collaborates with counties and cities to minimize the environmental and economic impacts of light pollution through supporting in the following ways as needed: Education and outreach, recognition of best practices, creation and revision of outdoor lighting ordinances, technical assistance with night sky quality readings, and celebration of designated Dark Sky Places.

Over the past 12 years, this program has supported and partnered with 15 community-based Friends of the Night Sky groups and helped to grow the Night Sky movement to prominence in the region through Hill Country Night Sky Month and other outreach programs. Meanwhile, over the past two years, the Hill Country Eclipse team—which began as a spin-off of the HCA Night Sky Program has grown to over 500 members, spilling out beyond the Hill Country, across 50 cities in over 23 counties, all preparing for the annular solar eclipse in October 2023 and the total solar eclipse in April 2024.

The HCA Night Sky Program is also working towards the creation of an International



11 MILLION
ACRES

POTENTIAL TO IMPACT OVER
11 MILLION ACRES IN THE
TEXAS HILL COUNTRY



3.8 MILLION+
HILL COUNTRY RESIDENTS

BENEFIT FROM DECREASED
LIGHT POLLUTION



IMPROVEMENTS IN OUTDOOR
LIGHTING COULD RESULT IN
~\$300 MILLION
SAVED ANNUALLY IN
ENERGY COSTS.

Dark Sky Reserve surrounding Enchanted Rock State Natural Area. This Reserve would provide a designation to the landscape and encourage additional protection for the starry skies above, spanning both public and private lands. The foundation for this regional effort was laid in 2013 when volunteers working with HCA began educating local elected officials and communities to secure the needed local ordinances to make the Reserve a reality. HCA aims to assist in a Reserve designation by 2027.

MISSION

The Hill Country Alliance (HCA) Night Skies Program helps counties and cities minimize the impacts of light pollution through education and outreach, business and neighborhood recognition programs, the establishment of outdoor lighting policies, and the recognition and celebration of starry night skies across our region.

PARTNERS

Hill Country Alliance would not be able to protect Texas' night skies without the support of the following partners:

- Bandera County Friends of the Night Sky
- Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky
- Comal County Friends of the Night Sky
- Enchanted Rock State Natural Area
- Friends of Enchanted Rock State Natural Area
- Gillespie County Friends of the Night Sky
- Hays County Friends of the Night Sky
- DarkSky and the Texas Chapter of DarkSky
- Jonestown Night Sky Advocacy
- Kendall County Friends of the Night Sky
- Kerr County Friends of the Night Sky
- Lago Vista Starry Skies
- Lampasas County Friends of the Night Sky
- Llano County Friends of the Night Sky
- Spicewood Starry Skies
- Travis County Friends of the Night Sky
- Uvalde County Friends of the Night Sky
- Wimberley Valley Dark Sky Committee

In addition to the Friends of the Night Sky groups above, this work is supported by local governments, chambers of commerce, utility companies, and so many more across the Hill Country.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE:



For more information visit texasbynature.org or contact us at programs@texasbynature.org or 512-284-7482.



NEEDS

Hill Country Alliance was selected as a Texan by Nature Conservation Wrangler based on the project's positive impact to people, prosperity, and natural resources. Through the program, Texan by Nature is working with Hill Country Alliance to address the following needs:

- **Media visibility** to bring awareness to the Night Sky program and its benefits to local communities and their economy, environmental services, and ecotourism.
- **Diverse partnerships** with industry, landowners, and conservation organizations to expand the adoption of night skies practices.
- **Impact reporting** to incentivize the value of night skies to people, natural resources, and the economy.

