



Bill Lindemann of Fredericksburg has been elected president of the Hill Country Land Trust by its board of directors. Lindemann succeeds Bart English, who has served as the Land Trust's president since its organization in 1998. English will continue as an officer on the board in the position of past-president. Elin Elisofon of Fredericksburg and Jim Stanley of Kerrville were re-elected to serve as vice-presidents; Kevin Pickard as Treasurer; and Paula Smith of Austin and Edwards County as Secretary. Serving as directors of the Land Trust are Ed Barnes of Bandera, Paul Barwick of Boerne, Dan Potter of Dripping Springs and Carolyn Vogel of Austin.

Lindemann, a native of Gonzales, earned two degrees in geology at the University of Texas in Austin. After a 34 year career with Exxon as a worldwide explorationist for oil, gas and minerals, he retired to Fredericksburg in 1994. In 2000, he led an effort to establish the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center and a Nature Center in Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park, serving as its president. Lindemann has served the Native Plant Society of Texas as its president in 2001 and 2005; received the Nancy Benedict Memorial Award for an act of conservation/public service for establishing the Fredericksburg Nature Center, and the Benny J. Simpson Memorial Award for service by a member for the enrichment of the Society.

Lindemann joined the Board of Directors of the Hill Country Land Trust in 2002 and was a vice-president up until his election as president. He has been a weekly newspaper columnist for the past twelve years writing on the "Birding in the Hill Country." He is a frequent speaker in the region and state on natural history subjects. His primary interest is promoting historical and natural preservation in the Hill Country through education, outreach and example.

The Hill Country Land Trust, a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization was founded in 1998 by a group of volunteer Hill Country landowners concerned about the increasingly intense development pressures throughout the Hill Country threatening to destroy its very nature. Their goal was to help neighbors protect their legacy, whether it be a working farm or ranch, a watershed, recreational land, or open range. The Hill Country Land Trust is active in Menard, Kimble, Mason, Llano, Burnet, Blanco, Hays, Comal, Kendall, Gillespie, Bandera, Real, Kerr, Edwards, Schleicher, Sutton, Lampasas, San Saba and McCulloch counties.

The Hill Country Land Trust can provide the legal tools, called conservation easements, to ensure long term protection of the property. The Land Trust works with private landowners who voluntarily elect to preserve the natural character of their property through the donation of a conservation easement. A conservation easement is a permanent deed restriction the owner may choose to place on his or her land to protect

productive agricultural land, water, wildlife habitat, historic sites or scenic views. The landowner doesn't give up his rights to continue utilizing the property as he has in the past, but restricts future development that the owner does not want on his property. A conservation easement does not transfer ownership, nor grant free access, nor restrict any uses reserved by the grantor of the easement.

The Hill Country Land Trust currently holds nine conservation easements covering more than 2,300 acres and is actively working on others. The land trust assists the landowner in creating the legal document that preserves his long term wishes and conducts annual inspections to ensure those wishes are being carried out. There are potential tax benefits to the landowner who restricts his development rights; the benefits relate directly to the restrictions placed by the landowner and differ from property to property. The HCLT recommends interested landowners to consult with their legal and accounting advisors for specific applications to their properties.

The Hill Country Land Trust promotes the dissemination of information on programs and practices that foster responsible land stewardship without sacrificing the economic viability of the land. The HCLT also tries to raise public awareness of preservation issues in the Hill Country. Lindemann states, "the HCLT stands ready to work with any landowner about his preservation goals and what the best course of action might be to attain those goals. Current favorable legislation laws regarding tax implications are set to expire at the end of 2009; therefore, I hope landowners will look at their options, talk with their advisors and give the HCLT a chance to assist them with their preservation goals." Lindemann adds, "We want the Hill Country to remain as one of the state's unique natural treasures for all future generations to enjoy, so call or email us to discuss your choices."

For more information about the Hill Country Land Trust, please call 830-997-0027 or email: landtrust@hughes.net.