

*Our choices today create
the Hill Country of tomorrow.*



Hill Country Land Trust

Summer Newsletter | 2016

Hill Country Land Trust Board hires first Full-time Executive Director: Jennifer Lorenz

The Board of Directors of the Hill Country Land Trust (HCLT) is excited to announce the selection of Jennifer Lorenz as our first full-time Executive Director. Jennifer began her new role August 15th and has already hit the ground running.

Jennifer has 25 years of non-profit management experience, including the past 15 years serving as the Executive Director of the Houston-based Bayou Land Conservancy (BLC). During her tenure with BLC she grew that organization from 3 conservation easement holdings to 56, protecting more than 12,000 acres. One of her work highlights was spearheading the fastest, most effective, land conservation project in Texas history, raising \$4 million in 6 weeks to permanently protect the Deer Park Prairie in southeast Harris County. This remnant pristine 50 acres of coastal prairie with 300+ native plant species was in immediate danger of being swallowed by a housing development. She was named "Houstonian of the Year" by the Houston Chronicle for her successful last-ditch efforts to save it.

At BLC she spearheaded unique volunteer training and membership programs which significantly increased the numbers of committed people who have a vested interest in supporting the conservation efforts of BLC, particularly along the Spring Creek Greenway corridor: the longest, urban, forested contiguous greenway in the country. While land conservation has been the primary mission of Jennifer's career, getting kids outdoors has also been a focus, including her initiation of a statewide-award-winning "No Child Left Inside" environmental education program.

Prior to joining BLC, Jennifer served for over 5 years as the Executive Director of the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation in Corpus Christi where she worked daily on Nueces Bay freshwater inflow issues. During her time there she helped form the Coastal Bend Land Trust to better protect the land and surrounding estuarine systems.

Jennifer is a multi-generation native Texan with deep central-Texas roots. She grew up in NE San Antonio and graduated from UT-Austin. She spent many weekends of her childhood in the Texas Hill Country, and frequent recent trips back to Fredericksburg made her feel more than ever that she would like to use her 25 years of conservation experience to now help the Hill Country region that she and her family so dearly love. She looks forward to helping the Hill Country Land Trust grow in our efforts to protect the rural heritage, water resources, scenic vistas of Enchanted Rock, and special natural habitats of the heart of Texas.

"We couldn't be more pleased to welcome Jennifer to the HCLT team," said Mike Krueger, retired Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist and current HCLT board president. "Jennifer's more than two decades of experience, coupled with her passion for conservation and her innovative approaches to fundraising and community engagement, is going to take HCLT to new heights."





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Kate Peake

HCLT Office
320 West San Antonio Street
Fredericksburg, TX 78624

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1724
Fredericksburg, TX 78624

Phone
830-997-0027

Email
office@HillCountryLandTrust.org

 facebook.com/HillCountryLandTrust

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www.HillCountryLandTrust.org

Conservation Easement Tax Incentives Made Permanent

By Katherine Peake, HCLT Board Member

Some say that it was the most important conservation legislation in 20 years. We agree. At the end of 2015, federal tax incentives for protecting our natural, scenic and historic resources were given permanence with the PATH Act of 2015 (Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes).

If you are contemplating donating a conservation easement, you are now able to protect the land you love while realizing significant federal tax benefits that have finally been made permanently increased benefits (as for many years these enhanced benefits were only temporarily in place!) Better than previous land conservation tax legislation, it extends over 20 key tax provisions permanently, and it provides these specific benefits to anyone considering donating a conservation easement:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of his or her adjusted gross income in any year to 50%; (qualifying farmers and ranchers can deduct up to 100%!)
- Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions from 5 to 15 years.



Vermilion Flycatcher, photo by Bill Lindemann, HCLT Board member

Conservation easement donations remain subject to the same restrictions as they were before. For example, easements must meet the “conservation purposes” test defined in the existing law and they must be donated to a qualified organization like Hill Country Land Trust. But these permanently enhanced incentives should spur many considering preserving their land (and their money!) to make the call to us.

To learn more, give us a call and download the Conservation Easement Tax Incentive Brochure published by the national Land Trust Alliance which can be found on our website.



HCLT Board and Staff held their summer retreat Aug. 19th at the gorgeous Pedernales Cellars in Stonewall. After the meeting was a wonderful wine tasting. And thanks to Clear River Deli on Main St. in Fredericksburg for our great lunches.

HCLT works in the following counties - Menard, Kimble, Mason, Llano, Burnet, Blanco, Hays, Comal, Kerr

Brush Control Field Day Draws Crowd

By Jill Nokes, HCLT Board Member



On April 9th, 2016, the Hill Country Land Trust hosted the first of two educational field days for 2016 at the C.L. Browning Ranch in Blanco County. Led by Browning Ranch manager and HCLT board member Scott Gardner, and former board member and well-known natural resource educator Steve Nelle, the workshop offered a number of strategies and methods for managing Ashe juniper (more commonly called cedar).

The primary message for the day was that properly-planned juniper thinning on a site-by-site basis can improve plant diversity, wildlife habitat, livestock forage, and aesthetic value. Conversely, improperly planned or extreme juniper removal can increase soil erosion and habitat loss, leading to reduced land value.



Photos by Stanley Farrar, HCLT Volunteer

Scott Gardner described how the C.L. Browning Ranch planned their project to reduce Ashe juniper throughout the nearly 1,000 acre ranch, including the important decision of where to leave it to serve the landscape. Demonstration sites were set up so attendees could study which tools and strategies got the job done best and led to the impressive recovery of plants and soil.

Like most stewardship practices in the Texas Hill Country, juniper management is not a one-time project. As Scott and Steve emphasized, it requires a life-long commitment to regular follow-up control. For more information on managing juniper, visit our website to watch an educational video on managing juniper and download the companion guide.



Our next field day will be in October. To register for this event (look to our website soon for exact date and time) call us at (830) 997-0027 or email info@HillCountryLandTrust.org to be included on the invitation list.

Welcome new HCLT Board Member Brad Bayliff, Blanco County

Brad Bayliff is an attorney based in Blanco County. Prior to moving to Texas, Brad served in the Indiana House of Representatives. His firm advises clients on a broad range of issues involving electric utility, communications, cable television, and regulatory law. Brad also represents land

trusts in condemnation hearings.

In March, Brad presented a program at the Texas Land Trust Council annual meeting. He is a Master Gardener and active in a number of conservation education programs in the region.





**Hill Country
Land Trust**

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Fredericksburg, TX 78624

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The Mission of the Hill Country Land Trust

*is to conserve and protect the agricultural lands, scenic beauty, wildlife habitat
and watersheds of the Texas Hill Country for present and future generations.*

Yes! *I support the work of Hill Country Land Trust*

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Name _____

Address _____

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My donation of \$ _____ is enclosed

To make a secure donation online,
visit our website at www.HillCountryLandTrust.org

This gift is made:

In memory of: _____

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conservation easements/HCLT

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other: _____

I would like to receive my newsletter electronically
to save postage and paper

Please remove my name from your mailing list



HCLT revamps website!

Hopefully you've seen our newly redesigned website's many new features, including:

- Our new video series on land stewardship strategies including our latest video on prickly pear management
- Articles on conservation issues specific to the Texas Hill Country
- An interactive contact box where readers can submit questions and share information

Photos by Melissa Mial



While prickly pear bear beautiful blooms, they can also take over the diversity of our natural Hill Country landscapes. Visit our website to see this new video highlighting the many ways to reduce this ever-growing succulent.

*Our next video will be on managing Ashe Juniper (Cedar).
Let us know if you have any other subjects you'd like to learn more about!*