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**Hill Country Conservancy Now Accepting Applications of Eligibility for Hill Country
Headwaters Initiative**

Qualified Landowners Invited to Participate in the \$5.15M Award for Private Land Stewardship

May 2, 2019 - AUSTIN, TEXAS - Hill Country Conservancy (HCC), the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network and 18 partner organizations today announced Applications of Eligibility are now being accepted from farmers, ranchers and wildlife managers to take part in the \$5.15 million pledge awarded by the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP) in July 2018. The funds are being offered as [Environmental Quality Incentive Program](#) (EQIP) funds as land stewardship financial assistance for qualified landowners actively managing, maintaining and expanding conservation activities on private land within critical river basins throughout the Hill Country.

Last Fall, HCC and its partners, including a then-newly launched [Texas Hill Country Conservation Network](#), banded together to create the [Hill Country Headwaters Initiative](#) (HCHI), which is focused on the long-term conservation of sensitive land through partnerships with Hill Country landowners. HCHI is financed and made possible by the \$5.15 million award from RCPP, which is part of the USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS). Now, the 20 partners are taking the first step in distributing this award to landowners who wish to carry out conservation practices to enhance water resources, soil condition and wildlife habitat.

“Private landowners throughout the Texas Hill Country are caring daily for our precious natural resources, growing our food and keeping our land beautiful, often without recognition or compensation for their work,” said Frank Davis, Chief Conservation Officer for Hill Country Conservancy. “These projects will support long-term agricultural viability and healthy native

wildlife habitat while ensuring the conservation of natural resources on private lands, which provide drinking water and innumerable other benefits for millions of Central Texans.”

The Network and its partners have pledged to help landowners with projects addressing short-term and long-term conservation of water quality, native wildlife habitat, and drought and flood management through the NRCS funding. Roughly 48 percent will be allocated to the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), 39 percent will go to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and 13 percent will go to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

The Hill Country Headwaters Conservation Initiative is accepting Applications of Eligibility **now through May 21, 2019 at 12:59 p.m.** The application form can be found online at hillcountryconservancy.org/hchi/. To be considered for this financial award, landowners must take this first step in the application process by the specified deadline. Qualified applicants will be notified of their advancement and receive information about next steps by June 3, 2019. The final selection will be based on a ranking process developed in a collaborative effort between HCHI partners and NRCS.

HCHI funds will be directed towards key land stewardship projects within the following river basins: Upper San Marcos River, Blanco River, Onion Creek, Barton Creek, Pedernales River, Sandy Creek and Llano River (shown on this map). All interested and qualified parties are encouraged to apply.

For more information, please visit hillcountryconservancy.org/hchi/ or contact Frank Davis at frank@hillcountryconservancy.org.

About Hill Country Conservancy (HCC)

Hill Country Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust committed to preserving not only the natural beauty and open spaces of the Texas Hill Country but also its economy. Hill Country Conservancy preserves vital natural resources through conservation, community collaboration and engagement to sustain our region now and forever.

For more information, visit HillCountryConservancy.org.

About the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network (the Network)

In 2017, a coalition of organizations and agencies came together to form the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network (the Network) to advance shared goals of conservation and sustainable growth in the Texas Hill Country. Working across a 17-county region of Central Texas, the

Network aims to significantly scale the impact of conservation-focused organizations, universities, agencies, businesses, and individuals working to protect natural resources, rural heritage, and quality of life of this region.

About Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) draws on a long history of helping people help the land. For more than 80 years, NRCS and its predecessor agencies have worked in close partnerships with farmers and ranchers, local and state governments, and other federal agencies to boost agricultural productivity and protect our natural resources through Conservation.

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