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**HISTORIC CHERRY SPRINGS RANCH EARNS CONSERVATION EASEMENT**

*Hill Country Conservancy and Partners Announce New Protection for Spicewood Ranch*

**AUSTIN, TEXAS – September 24, 2019** – Hill Country Conservancy (HCC) today announced a conservation easement with Cherry Springs Ranch in Spicewood, Texas. The HCC-held easement will allow the historic 1,038 acre ranch to restrict certain property usages in an effort to protect its natural, productive and cultural features. The addition of Cherry Springs Ranch brings HCC’s total conserved land to more than 12,500 acres and 37,600 feet of linear waterway.

The land was once owned by Texas historian and folklorist J. Frank Dobie. Much of his work was inspired by his time spent on the ranch, which he aptly named Cherry Springs Ranch after the area’s abundance of flowering escarpment black cherry trees. In 1958, he sold Cherry Springs Ranch to the Edwards family, who now works diligently to preserve the ranch’s natural resources and its rich history.

“Today, we are privileged to celebrate one of our **largest closings to date**,” said HCC’s Director of Land Conservation Frank Davis. “The preservation of Cherry Springs is a remarkable achievement not only for HCC, but for the entire conservation community; it is a true testament to the importance of our mission. To see the Edwards family reap the benefits from this conservation easement and know that their land is protected for decades to come is exactly why we do what we do. This has not only made an impact on the Edwards - but all of us here at HCC.”

The ranch straddles the Burnet and Blanco County lines and features varied landscapes, ranging from dramatic cliffs to lush vegetated grottos and creeks. Found on the property are 77 unique species of birds and 16 native wildlife species listed on Texas’ Greatest Conservation Need. The land reveals glimpses of its historic and prehistoric past through sauropod dinosaur tracks and stone fragments of tools used by Native Americans. Modern settlement of the area has been tracked back to the mid-1800s as evidenced by the many rock wall remnants found on the property.

Over the years, the land has been used for livestock breeding, an array of agricultural crop production, and, of course, Dobie's writing retreat. In the early 2000s, the Edwards family repurposed the ranch for wildlife management, and today, it thrives with diverse plant communities and extensive native wildlife.

"This property has been our family's pride and joy for over half a century, and now, we are blessed with the comfort of knowing it will remain this way forever," said Bill Edwards, the current owner of Cherry Springs Ranch. "I am so grateful to HCC and their partners in conservation for the good work they're doing to preserve this land - ours and beyond in the beautiful Texas Hill Country."

The conservation easement on Cherry Springs Ranch would not have been possible without the support of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), as well as the many partners in the Texas Hill Country Conservation Network.

For more information about conservation easements and other tools being used to ensure long-term protection of private lands, visit:

**ABOUT HILL COUNTRY CONSERVANCY:**

Hill Country Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust committed to preserving open spaces in the Texas Hill Country. Preserving vital natural resources through conservation, community collaboration and engagement, HCC works to sustain our region now and forever. For more information, visit [HillCountryConservancy.org](http://HillCountryConservancy.org).

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