For immediate release:
March 31, 2023

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City of Austin and Hill Country Conservancy Celebrate Completion of the Violet Crown Trail Whirlpool Patio Education Center
Grand Opening Community Celebration To Be Held This Saturday, April 1

WHO:
○ Mayor Pro Tem Paige Ellis
○ Kathy Miller - CEO, Hill Country Conservancy
○ Pirouz Moin - Pirouz Moin, Assistant Director, City of Austin Public Works
○ Nico Hauwert, Ph.D. - Professional Geoscientist and Program Manager, Austin Water
○ Drake Allen - Coordinator, Community Relations at Circuit of The Americas

WHAT: Ribbon cutting & community celebration for the Whirlpool Patio Education Center

WHEN: Saturday, April 1 at 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: Violet Crown Trail Dick Nichols Trailhead - Latta Drive and Convict Hill Road

The City of Austin Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP), Hill Country Conservancy (HCC) and Austin Water are excited to announce that the Whirlpool Patio Education Center has been completed with fun, new additions to the space!
Residents are invited to check out the patio this Saturday, April 1 from 12-4 p.m.

Built in 2021 through a partnership between HCC and the City of Austin’s Urban Trails Program, the Whirlpool Patio serves as a gathering place and educational center along the Violet Crown Trail. The patio’s design includes a handmade hardscape spiral design of limestone and grout in homage to the nearby Whirlpool Cave. Located under the MoPac overpass at Latta Drive and Convict Hill, educators and students use this space as an outdoor classroom on field trips to the Whirlpool Cave.

To further enhance the space, HCC applied to the City’s Neighborhood Partnering Program to partner in funding and resourcing the addition of 12 interpretive educational panels exploring the mysterious world of caves, along with a stone salamander carving. Austin Water resourced the new cave murals framing the space. The patio's educational elements are intended to interactively connect the community directly to nature and to encourage understanding of the Hill Country's unique geological profile.

“Connection to nature, recreation opportunities for the entire family, and exploring unique aspects of the Hill Country are at the heart of the Violet Crown Trail experience,” said Kathy Miller, Chief Executive Officer of the Hill Country Conservancy. “By building the Whirlpool Patio and Education Center, Hill Country Conservancy and our partners at the City of Austin and Circuit of Americas have created an engaging place for our community to learn about and interact with the unique ecology and geography found in the Hill Country. As our region is one of the fastest growing in the nation, only a conservation-minded community will be able to protect our beautiful Texas Hill Country for future generations to enjoy.”
Austin residents are invited to celebrate this new community amenity at the Whirlpool Patio Education Center Grand Opening event on Saturday, April 1 from 12 p.m. - 4 p.m., sponsored by Circuit of the Americas. This community celebration will include cave tours of Whirlpool Cave, snacks, giveaways, and family-friendly activities led by local organizations like Austin Bat Refuge. At 2 p.m., local leaders will share remarks and cut the ribbon on the completed project. Cave tour capacity is limited, so reserve your spot in advance to guarantee entry!

To learn more about the Violet Crown Trail, VioletCrownTrail.com. To learn more about the City of Austin’s Urban Trails Program’s projects along the trail, visit AustinTexas.gov/VioletCrownTrail.

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🌿 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.

🛠️ About NPP: The City of Austin’s Neighborhood Partnering Program helps local groups enhance public spaces in their neighborhood through cost-sharing, project planning, and construction. In turn, local groups help with cost-sharing and project maintenance.