***Colorado River water supplies in the Hill Country***

**Background**: Conservation easements permanently protect individual pieces of landby limiting development, subdivision and groundwater use, prohibiting unsustainable management practices (such as overgrazing and the use of some pesticides and fertilizers) and prohibiting groundwater exports. The goal of this project is to learn where land conservation – specifically the use of strategically located conservation easements - can have the greatest long-term impact on water quality and quantity in the Colorado River within the Hill County.

**Objective**: It is now widely known there are numerous threats and limitations to the water supplies for people, agriculture and wildlife within the Texas Hill Country. Austin, Pflugerville, Cedar Park, Marble Falls and nearby communities are highly dependent on clean, abundant surface water from upstream in the Colorado River watershed. Due to these threats, Hill Country Conservancy is currently involved in “strategic conservation analysis” to determine how conservation easements could most effectively protect the quality and quantity of the water in the Colorado River, which contributes to those cities’ drinking water supplies. The major objective of this analysis is to locate the properties that contribute the greatest amount of groundwater to the major contributing springs that are upstream of the water treatment plants that serve those cities.

