

Living in our precious Texas Hill Country piece of remarkable terrain gives pause for us to appreciate just what we enjoy in Comal County. As so much of the natural space around us is subject to rapid development for housing and commercial purposes, time and space for exploration and discovery diminishes daily. While acreage remains across our countryside, it is time to wonder and consider what might best remain green and spacious.

The privilege of more years than I expected is providing me with both perspective and memory that shapes possibilities for the future. My own life experience as I look back appreciatively and amazed was the good fortune of space and time to explore the outdoors. My grandparents' farmstead included cared for productive fields and numerous domiciles for domestic productivity. The surrounding areas of a pine forest, a lively pond supporting much stirring life, magnificent Gulf coastal ancient oaks and space to roam in retrospect was rich and varied. In the course of time, I developed a long list of observations and curiosities that informed much of my formal and informal journey of learning.

Decades later, as Karen and I were fortunate to create some modest space in a lovely oak motte for active retirement years, I entered a time with no expectation to appropriate my early life learnings in a tiny piece of Texas Hill Country ranch life. One of the gifts of these recent years has been a steady stream of grandchildren as well as grand nieces and nephews. Along with a myriad of endeavors, I have taken the youngest on exploratory walks around and about. With my well-worn walking stick in hand, we have peered in and through some of the bosky areas to note all manner of micro and macro surprises. We have perused alongside and through the creeks, sometimes dry sometimes flowing for adventures galore. Sitting quietly and observing life at one of the tanks or in the expansive branches of a heritage oak have given us much to discuss. Domestic and wildlife skeletal pieces along with fossils and artifacts from much earlier occupants on this land have taught us much. Sparkling skies on clear nights have gifted us surprises and stories as well.

This recitation from bookend decades of a fortunate life shapes an advocacy for outdoor learning and discovery for all our children and youth. Set-aside space that allows for such becoming to happen requires protecting in parks, trails and other expanses of space. Such spaces are essential for the young and young at heart to thrive in discovery. A fuller life is to be experienced in the natural world.

Comal Conservation is endeavoring to assist in shaping such an agenda. Our Land Fund is providing modest assistance for those with acreage to consider alternatives to the rapid building on every available acre. Our outreach is to work with elected officials and staff to honor the need for green space. This takes willing workers and volunteers. Our hope is to foster better water usage and disposal and the maximizing of what rainwater comes our way. It will take all of us pitching in to make a difference. Check out the opportunities for support and participation at [comalconservation.org](http://comalconservation.org). On October 26 at 6pm, a fun gathering of folks who care about natural space and conservation will take place at OLD TAVERN IN THE GRUENE. We'd love to include you, your family and neighbors. Contact Ryan Spencer, our Executive Director at 830-369-8747 or [ryan@comalconservation.org](mailto:ryan@comalconservation.org).

Do find a way to lend your voice to enhance DISCOVERY in, through and from our wondrous natural gifts here in our Comal County neighborhood.