

**INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT AMONG
HAYS COUNTY, CITY OF WIMBERLEY, CITY OF WOODCREEK,
THE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION, AND THE MEADOWS CENTER FOR WATER AND THE
ENVIRONMENT REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CYPRESS CREEK WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN**

This Interlocal Agreement is made and entered into, effective the ____ day of _____, 2023 ("Effective Date") by and among Hays County, Texas ("Hays County"), City of Wimberley ("Wimberley"), City of Woodcreek ("Woodcreek"), and the Watershed Association, jointly known as the "Financing Parties" and the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment ("The Meadows Center." This interlocal Agreement is entered into by the Financing Parties and the Meadows Center pursuant to the authority granted and in compliance with, the provisions of the "interlocal Cooperation Act," as amended, Texas Government Code, Chapter 791. This interlocal Agreement is intended to further the purpose of the Interlocal Cooperation Act, which is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments.

WHEREAS in 2006, the Cypress Creek Project ("CCP") was established to restore and protect the water quality in Cypress Creek, a major tributary of the Blanco River in the Guadalupe River Basin of Texas, and each Party named above has representatives on the CCP Steering Committee that is described in and operates under the Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan; and

WHEREAS since the establishment of the CCP, over four (4) million dollars have been dedicated to the development and implementation of the highly recognized Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan ("WPP"); and

WHEREAS, the Cypress Creek WPP is a roadmap to restore water quality and quantity in Cypress Creek and includes data collection and water quality monitoring, implementation of best management practices and protection of groundwater to address nonpoint source pollution from agriculture and urban sources, adequate spring and stream flows, and outreach and education; and

WHEREAS, the Cypress Creek WPP satisfies the US Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA") guidelines and expectations for a WPP; and

WHEREAS the Cypress Creek Watershed Coordinator ("CCP Watershed Coordinator"), through an existing grant from Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) payable and available to the CCP Watershed Coordinator, facilitates the CCP; secures funding through writing grants, tracks the progress of implementing the Cypress Creek WPP; and reports water quality and quantity trends resulting from implementation of the Cypress Creek WPP; and

WHEREAS, in September 2023, current federal funding for the CCP Watershed Coordinator will end; and

WHEREAS, the Financing Parties desire to insure continued implementation of the Cypress Creek WPP;

NOW THEREFORE, the Parties have mutually agreed to enter into this interlocal Agreement regarding implementation of the Cypress Creek WPP and to proceed as follows:

ARTICLE I
PILOT PROGRAM

The Financing Parties agree to establish a three (3) year pilot program for the funding of a Southwestern Hays County Watershed Coordinator position for continued implementation of the Cypress Creek WPP. Such program will be the responsibility of the CCP. The CCP will appoint a Managing Partner who will manage a CCP Watershed Coordinator.

ARTICLE II
CCP

The CCP Steering Committee will designate one (1) CCP member to be the Managing Partner of the CCP. The CCP Steering Committee is also responsible for the development of the job description and responsibilities of the CCP Watershed Coordinator and the annual budget for the three (3) year pilot program. The CCP Steering Committee will establish Ground Rules once funding is secured.

ARTICLE III
MANAGING PARTNER

The Managing Partner, after consulting with CCP Steering Committee members, will hire an individual, to be the Southwestern Hays County Watershed Coordinator. Additionally the Managing Partner will supervise the position. The Western Hays County Watershed Coordinator will be housed in the watershed at a location that the Managing Partner, after consulting with the CCP Steering Committee, decides.

ARTICLE IV
CYPRESS CREEK WATERSHED COORDINATOR

The primary responsibilities of the CCP Watershed Coordinator are stated and listed on Attachment A to this interlocal Agreement.

ARTICLE V
FUNDING

The CCP Steering Committee will develop the annual budget for operations of the CCP. A proposed sustainability plan, including a proposed draft budget, is set forth on Attachment B to this Interlocal Agreement. Additionally the CCP Steering Committee will submit this ILA to the TCEQ for a Clean Water Act §319(h) nonpoint source grant for the completion of the WPP grant. The Financing Parties agree to cooperate and coordinate together in determining the amount of funds that will be necessary to financially support the pilot program over the next three (3) years in accordance with the adopted Budget. The Financing Parties understand and agree that any funding commitment by a particular Financing Party is subject to approval and appropriation by the governing body of such Financing Party. Any payments made by or financial obligations of any Financing Party shall be made from current revenues available to the Financing Party and shall be made to the Managing Partner. The Managing Partner is authorized to deposit all funds received from Financing Partners pursuant to this Interlocal Agreement in applicable bank accounts and is authorized to spend such funds to implement this Interlocal Agreement in accordance with the approved budget, provided however, any proposed expenditure of funds herein in excess of \$1,000.00 except the salary and benefits of the Southwestern Hays County Watershed Coordinator which shall be approved on an annual basis by the CCP Steering Committee shall be first approved by the CCP Steering Committee. The CCP Steering Committee estimates that the annual cost for the pilot program, as shown on Attachment B to this Interlocal Agreement, will be approximately \$341,000 annually, consisting of funds for salary and benefits, office supplies, publications, travel expenses, and educational workshops.

The Financing Parties further agree that other opportunities for funding shall be actively pursued by the CCP Steering Committee, the Managing Partner and Southwestern Hays County Watershed Coordinator throughout the course of this Interlocal Agreement. Other sources of funding which shall be pursued include, but are not limited to, federal, state, non-profit, non-government affiliated private or public grants; and various state and federal funding opportunities.

ARTICLE VI
STATISTICS AND DOCUMENTS

The Managing Partner shall properly, accurately and completely maintain all documents, papers, records, and other evidence regarding implementation of this Interlocal Agreement. To further the purpose of cooperative administration of the activities described within this Interlocal Agreement, the Managing Partner agrees, if requested, to make documents and record materials associated with expenditures under this Interlocal Agreement available to each Financing Party, upon reasonable notice, and as often as each Financing Party may require for purpose of inspection, examination, and/or copying of same.

The Managing Partner shall maintain and retain a complete set of any and all documents, papers, records, and other evidence produced as a result of this Interlocal Agreement and to ensure that this Interlocal Agreement is publicly available shall post a PDF version of this Interlocal Agreement on the CCP website. If necessary, a reproduction of a document may be submitted and it shall be so marked.

ARTICLE VII
DISPUTES

The Financing Parties agree to use due diligence to cooperate and communicate with each other to resolve any and all disputes which may arise under this Interlocal Agreement. The Financing Parties agree that before they will exercise the termination rights described in Article IX, they will attempt to resolve the dispute and will allow the non-disputing Financing Parties the opportunity to cure the alleged dispute. In the event they are unable to do so, the Financing Parties agree to mediate the dispute prior to exercising their termination rights.

ARTICLE VIII
TERM

This Interlocal Agreement shall be effective and in place on the date the last of the Financing Parties signs this Agreement (the "effective date") with the financing obligation described commencing for a period of one fiscal year beginning September 1, 2023. The term of this Interlocal Agreement shall be automatically renewed each fiscal year not to exceed three (3) fiscal years unless terminated earlier as provided in Article IX or amended as provided in Article X.

ARTICLE IX
TERMINATION

This Interlocal Agreement terminates on August 31, 2026. In the event a Financing Party to this Interlocal Agreement determines it is in the best interest of that Financing Party to withdraw from this Interlocal Agreement, the Financing Party making that determination may withdraw by giving written notice of such intent to the remaining Parties at the addresses provided in Section XII of this Interlocal Agreement no later than May 31 of a calendar year.

The withdrawing Financing Party shall cooperate with the remaining Financing Parties to achieve a proper transition time period to allow the remaining Financing Parties to restructure the contributions provided by the Financing Parties. The withdrawing Financing Party shall remain liable for such Financing Party's allocated share of the budget for and including the entire CCP fiscal year prior to such Financing Party's withdrawal.

ARTICLE X
AMENDMENT

No amendment, modification or alteration of the terms of this Interlocal Agreement shall be binding unless it is in writing, dated subsequent to the date hereof, and be agreed to and duly executed by each of the Financing Parties after official action by each of the respective governing bodies of the Financing Parties.

ARTICLE XI
NOTICES

Notices to any Financing Party required or appropriate under this Interlocal Agreement shall be deemed sufficient if in writing and mailed USPS postage prepaid.

To Hays County. Notices to Hays County shall be addressed

to: Hays County Judge
Hays County
111 East San Antonio Street
San Marcos, TX 78666

and to such other addresses as may hereafter be designated in writing by the Hays County Judge.

To Wimberley. Notices to Wimberley shall be addressed to:

Mayor
City of Wimberley
221 Stillwater
Wimberley, TX 78676

and to other such addresses as may herein be designated in writing by the City Manager of Wimberley.

To Woodcreek. Notices to Woodcreek shall be addressed to:

Mayor
City of Woodcreek
41 Champions Circle
Woodcreek, TX 78676

and to other such addresses as may herein be designated in writing by the City Manager of Woodcreek.

To the Watershed Association. Notices to the

Watershed Association shall be addressed to:

Executive Director
The Watershed Association
P. O. Box 2534
Wimberley, TX 78676

To the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. Notices to the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment shall be addressed to:

Director of Watershed Services
The Meadows Center for Water and
the Environment
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666

ARTICLE XII
**RELATIONSHIP OF FINANCING
PARTIES**

Nothing contained herein shall be deemed or construed by the Financing Parties, or by any third party, as creating the relationship of principal and agent, joint venture or any other similar relationship among the Financing Parties. It is understood and agreed that no provision contained herein nor any acts of the Financing Parties hereto create a relationship among the Financing Parties other than that of independent contractor. In keeping with the provision of its services as an independent contractor, each Financing Party shall be responsible for its respective acts or omissions. No Financing Party has the authority to bind the other Financing Parties or to hold out to third parties that it has the authority to bind the other Financing Parties separately or collectively.

ARTICLE XIII
APPLICABLE LAW

This Interlocal Agreement shall be construed under and in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas and all obligations of the Financing Parties created hereunder are performable in Hays, County, Texas.

ARTICLE XIV LEGAL
CONSTRUCTION

In case any one or more of the provisions contained in this Interlocal Agreement shall for any reason be held to be invalid, illegal or unenforceable in any respect, such shall not affect any other provisions hereof and this Interlocal Agreement shall be construed as if such invalid, illegal, or unenforceable provision had never been contained herein.

ARTICLE XV
COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND ORDINANCES

The Parties hereby agree to comply with all federal, state and local laws and ordinances applicable to the work or services to be performed under this Interlocal Agreement. The Parties acknowledge that they are each subject to the Texas Public Information Act and the exceptions stated in such Act.

ARTICLE XVI
PARTIES BOUND

This Interlocal Agreement shall be binding upon and inure only to the benefit of the Parties hereto and their respective successors and assigns where permitted by this Interlocal Agreement.

ARTICLE XVII
DEFINITIONS

The "Parties" means the entities that have executed this Interlocal Agreement in their separate capacities.

The "CCP Steering Committee" is the group of individuals listed in Attachment B to this Interlocal Agreement that directs the actions of the "Cypress Creek Project" and with the terms of this Interlocal Agreement.

The "Managing Partner" is the person or entity selected by the CCP Steering Committee to be, and operates as, the managing partner of the CCP and has the duties and responsibilities described in both the "CCP Ground Rules" and in this Interlocal Agreement.

In Witness Whereof, the Financing Parties have executed in multiple originals, each of which shall have the full force and effect of an original, this Interlocal Agreement.

By: _____

By: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

City of Woodcreek

The Watershed Association

By: _____

By: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment

By: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT

ATTACHMENT A

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOUTHWESTERN HAYS COUNTY WATERSHED COORDINATOR/Coordinator of the Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan

Full Time- Reports to Watershed Association Executive Director

- Inspires the Community and local stakeholders to become lifelong stewards of their watershed
- Supports Western Hays County Watershed Protection Plan and the Watershed Association Executive Director and staff to implement land, water and education programs
- Conducts scientific research and projects to forward organizational goals, programs and initiatives
- Acts as a representative for the organization at private and public meetings, conferences and other engagements to communicate the mission and provide comment and feedback to government and agencies on the organization's behalf.
- Creates maps, graphs and data analysis to communicate the research and plans through ArcGIS online and online platforms to diverse stakeholders and partners in support of all Southwestern Hays County watershed protection programs and initiatives
- Educate and inspire stakeholders and community members about the science, water quality, quantity threats and implementation of best management practices for watershed health and sustainability
- Works to maintain appropriate relations with other professional, public, government and social service groups in the community for the purpose of education and increasing awareness of Watershed programs and local-regional water issues through science and engagement.
- Serve on community committees and boards as directed by the Executive Director.
- Advocate for One Water implementation projects across the Texas Hill Country region
- Coordinate comprehensive local and regional water quality monitoring program through participation in the Texas Clean Rivers Program monitoring events in collaboration with GBRA and the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment
- Coordinate and manage the Wimberley Water Advisory Group and local bacteria water sampling program for the Blanco River and Cypress Creek Watershed and other local watersheds as needed.
- Serve as a liaison to local governments, Groundwater Conservation Districts, GMA-9, Texas Hill Country Conservation Network, Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance, No Dumping Sewage Coalition and other regional entities to advance public policies that advance groundwater and surface water protection.
- Participate in the Greater San Marcos Partnership Decision Support System planning and implementation and develop and maintain online Arc GIS map viewer for Watershed Association website

Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan Implementation

The Watershed Protection Coordinator is responsible for the coordination and implementation of all activities supporting the Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan (CCWPP). Watershed Coordinator will develop a project work plan, manage cost, facilitate communications, and allow

for prompt implementation and execution of the plan. The coordinator will provide leadership in implementing and adapting a watershed management plan through the collection and analysis of land use, water quality and groundwater data and resource information, identification and clarification of stakeholder concerns, establishment of goals, and supporting locally initiated strategies.

Additionally, the WPP plan and associated activities must align to EPA's nine elements for a Watershed Protection Plan.

Tasks and Responsibilities as follows:

- Provide leadership in community outreach efforts related to watershed planning.
- Develop and disseminate outreach materials to stakeholders at venues such as community stakeholder meetings and networking among agencies, organizations and individuals.
- Responsible for maintaining the project website and preparing press releases and publishing associated analysis of scientific data and relevant reports.
- Direct and implement the Texas Clean Rivers Program and volunteer water quality monitoring programs.
- Oversee volunteers and coordinate with Meadows Center staff and other consultants as needed to ensure all appropriate QAPPs (Quality Assurance Project Plans) are followed and filed with Guadalupe Blanco River Authority, Clean Rivers Program at TCEQ and EPA.
- Present updates on CRP at the annual coordinated monitors and stakeholders meetings and local government and stakeholder meetings annually in conjunction with the Meadows Center.
- Coordinate all Executive Committee and Steering Committee activities including providing technical support and assisting in preparation of the meeting agenda and coordinating activities to implement projects.
- Provide leadership to develop strong working relationships among steering committee members, stakeholders, and other federal, state, local governments and assist subcommittees as needed.
- Oversee grant funding. Responsibilities include but not limited to tracking cost share information, maintaining and reporting financial records necessary to manage grants and keep project on time and on budget. Write quarterly and final reports to report as required by TCRP and other partner agencies and to be submitted to Watershed Association for seasonal updates and board reports

The Executive Director of the Watershed Association will provide overall guidance along with Cypress Creek WPP Executive Committee. The Watershed Coordinator will manage the Texas Clean Rivers Program water quality monitoring program in collaboration with Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. The TCRP is administered by Guadalupe Blanco River Authority, TCEQ, EPA.

Watershed Community Engagement

- Communicates the mission and initiatives of the Watershed Association through monthly newsletter, direct involvement in public relations programs, development of print & digital materials and website content
- Manages website content and updates, including web form generation and maintenance of forms via NeonCRM
- maintains Constant Contact email list for newsletter distribution

- Posts and publishes for WVWA on Facebook; updates WVWA event calendar; and promotes happenings with partner organizations.
- Collaborates with the Executive Director to prepare board update reports for board meetings

TYPICAL DUTIES of the WPP coordinator position include, but not limited to the following:

1. Work with Counties, Cities, local boards, and businesses within the Cypress Creek and Blanco Watershed to implement management strategies identified in the Cypress Creek WPP to improve water quality in the Cypress/Blanco Basin and develop funding mechanisms for putting them in place.
2. Work with state and federal agencies and organizations, as appropriate, to bring technical and financial resources to benefit the watershed.
3. Identify funding opportunities, develop, and submit grant proposals to reduce or cover costs for the project (salary and operating).
4. Track and document implementation efforts to assess progress toward established goals of the Watershed Association's CCWPP and TCRP.
5. Manage and direct Texas Clean Rivers Program, special studies and volunteer water quality sampling and evaluate surface water quality data to monitor progress and determine the need for new approaches.
6. Coordinate and conduct water quality monitoring and related scientific research, outreach education efforts across the Cypress Creek, Blanco Watersheds, including organizing training programs, participating in local community events, and partnering with local schools.
7. Develop publications (e.g., newspaper, newsletter, factsheets), and website content to promote and communicate watershed efforts.
8. Conduct regular stakeholder meetings, including CCWPP Executive Committee, Steering Committee and Work Groups, throughout the watershed to gather and incorporate local input and encourage citizen participation.
9. Provide Counties, Cities, and other partners/stakeholders within the Cypress Creek and Blanco Watershed with regular updates on progress and seek their input and recommendations on needed activities.

Reference the project tasks described in the Work Plan for the Cypress Creek WPP Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Program Grant, "Coordinating Implementation of the [Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan](#)".

ATTACHMENT B
Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan
Sustainability Plan

Cypress Creek Project Watershed Protection Plan Implementation Phase IV Final Sustainability Plan

Contract No. 582-20-10155

Report: 2023-06

Introduction

Cypress Creek watershed stakeholders seek the continuation of coordination efforts to ensure a clean, clear, and flowing future for Cypress Creek. With federal funding for the Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan (CCWPP), also known as the Cypress Creek Project, concluding in August 2023, local stakeholders will have the opportunity to build on a mature and multifaceted watershed protection program already established over more than a decade. For this effort to be successful, a sustainability plan is presented below to highlight the need for a locally-led program and to outline the path for its establishment.

Sustainability Plan Highlights

- **Watershed Association to serve as dedicated Watershed Coordinator**
- **Meadows Center to maintain Clean Rivers Program (CRP) monitoring**
- **Funding through Interlocal Agreement of local partners and key stakeholders**
- **Continuation of stakeholder-led process**

A recognition of the economic value of a clean, clear, and flowing Cypress Creek provides the basis for a locally funded approach to watershed protection and sustainability of the Wimberley Valley. To ensure transparency and adequate resources to continue the most important aspects of the CCWPP, an interlocal funding agreement among partners with a vested interest in the long-term health of the watershed is under development. The Interlocal Agreement will include specific requirements and recommendations for project partners including monitoring, reporting, communication, and other key deliverables. A budget will be established for each component of the plan with partner investments determined by a combination of geographic, population, and economic factors to ensure equitable levels of support.

It is recommended that primary fiscal contributors to the Interlocal Agreement would make up a Southwestern Hays County Watershed Task Force to oversee Cypress Creek Project operations. Each fiscal contributor would select a representative to the executive committee with a chair and vice-chair elected by members of the committee. Once membership has been established, by-laws for task force governance and participation could be adopted. It is anticipated that the planning, special studies and implementation of best management practices and infrastructure investment-construction will cost over \$10,000,000 or more over the next three to five years. The Watershed Association and Meadows Center for Water and the Environment in partnership with the executive committee and stakeholders will lead the fundraising and grant writing to secure a goal of two to one match of the budget presented below over the next three to five years to achieve the priorities and aims of the Watershed Task Protection Plan.

Primary fiscal partners are anticipated to include:

- The Watershed Association
- Hays County
- City of Wimberley
- City of Woodcreek
- Guadalupe Blanco River Authority
- Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District
- Wimberley Water Supply Corp
- Aqua Texas

Note: Task Force members could choose to allow a number of “at-large” members of the public to serve on the committee. These members would be appointed or selected through an application process.

The budget projected for sustainable operations of the most critical CCWPP components is \$341,000 annually, with a three-year total of \$1,023,000 (Table 1).

Table 1. Cypress Creek Project Sustainable Operations Three Year Budget

Item	Description	Total
Watershed Coordinator	Hays County funded Watershed Coordinator staff salary + fringe (base salary \$75,000) Watershed Association manages WC to oversee all WPP operations, serve as primary point of contact for Watershed Task Force responsible for project reporting/communications, lead special projects, and contracting as needed.	\$300,000
Watershed Association Senior Staff	Management of watershed coordinator staff	\$85,500
Meadows Center Water Quality Monitoring, Reporting, and Advisory	Quarterly monitoring of Cypress Creek and Blanco River Clean River Protection sites, including Meadows Center staff time, travel, laboratory analysis, and equipment maintenance. (\$28,500 per year)	\$85,500
Project Communications and Events	Migrate and preserve project website, reports, advertising, public communications, and watershed events.	\$22,000
Special Studies	Aquifer Pump Test, Modeling, Planning, Aquifer Storage and Recovery, One Water Infrastructure Plan, Karst Habitat Protection	\$250,000
Southwestern Hays County Watershed Task Force	Planning initiative for updating WPP goals including coordination for regional land/water/transportation master plan, policy recommendations and ordinance updates including land use and conservation investment planning, water, wastewater, stormwater infrastructure engineering and Task Force facilitation consulting services	\$250,000
Administrative and overhead	Office space, utilities, supplies,	\$30,000

expenses	transportation, maintenance, and other administrative expenses.	
Year 3 Total		\$1,023,000

Project Purpose and Background

Recognizing a significant threat to the aquatic health of the watershed posed by future development, the CCWPP received approval from the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality and the United States Environmental Protection Agency in 2010 as a first-of-its-kind, *preventative* watershed protection plan. In June 2011, The Meadows Center at Texas State University was awarded the first of three rounds of Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant funds to begin implementation of the plan.

Together with local partners including the Wimberley Valley Watershed Association, City of Woodcreek, City of Wimberley, Hays County, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority, Hill Country Alliance, and Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District, a non-regulatory, incentive-based program was established to preserve flow and prevent future degradation to Cypress Creek from water pollution. The next phase of grant funds and programming spanned August 2016 through February 2020. In December 2019, TCEQ awarded the Meadows Center a final round of funds for a final phase to be completed by August 2023.

The CCWPP established goals and milestones for policy improvements, structural best management practices, education, and local coordination. Education and outreach have been the cornerstone of the project shining a spotlight on the importance of monitoring groundwater levels, preventing nonpoint source pollution, and demonstrating how residents can personally protect Cypress Creek.

Stakeholder meetings, annual newsletters, workshops, and speaker series within the watershed introduced ways that water quality is impacted by people and encouraged ongoing stewardship of the creek. As was hoped, an educated citizenry helped clear the way for policy improvements including water quality ordinances for Wimberley and Woodcreek limiting impervious cover in future development to 20 percent and ensuring riparian setbacks. In 2020, the Jacob’s Well Groundwater Management Zone was established through a stakeholder-led effort of the Hays-Trinity Groundwater Conservation District. Wimberley ISD’s Blue Hole Primary School opened its doors as “the first One Water school in Texas” after an outpouring of public support for the effort led by The Meadows Center and Wimberley Valley Watershed Association.

Table 2 below outlines the current Cypress Creek Project executive committee members. Awarded 319 funds and concurrent matching funds gave the watershed team the launch pad needed to fulfill the watershed mission statement: “Cypress Creek: Let’s keep it clean, clear, and flowing.”

Study Area

The Cypress Creek watershed is home to a unique set of rural and urban communities, ecosystems, and has a long-standing reliance on groundwater for both drinking supply and recreational uses. The watershed is located in the Central Hays County Texas Hill Country, is comprised of the upper dry or intermittent and the lower wet or perennial streams, and collectively encompasses an area of 38 square miles or 98 square kilometers.

Local geology plays a significant role in the hydrology of the area and is characterized by cavernous limestone rock formations that comprise the underlying karst system. Perhaps the

watershed's most iconic feature, Jacob's Well, is an expression of underground water stored in the Trinity Aquifer that discharges at the land surface. The artesian spring perennially feeds water to the lower third of the creek. Flow between land surface and the subsurface creates a complex interaction between groundwater and surface water in Cypress Creek.

Although water quality in Cypress Creek is primarily meeting water quality standards, data reveals both spatial and temporal trends that may be due to climate variability, nonpoint source pollution, and changes in land use and management in the watershed. Water quality parameters vary considerably from site to site throughout the perennial part of the stream.

In general, the water chemistry at the three upper most water quality monitoring sites (Jacob's Well, RR12 north, and Blue Hole) tends to be highly influenced by inflow of groundwater, while the lower two sites (RR12 downtown and the Blanco confluence) tend to show the influence of local stream conditions and runoff from contributing watersheds. Issues of concern include excess sediment in the creek, high bacteria concentrations, and occasionally very high nutrient levels which are exacerbated by low flows. Figure 1 below shows a map of the project area.

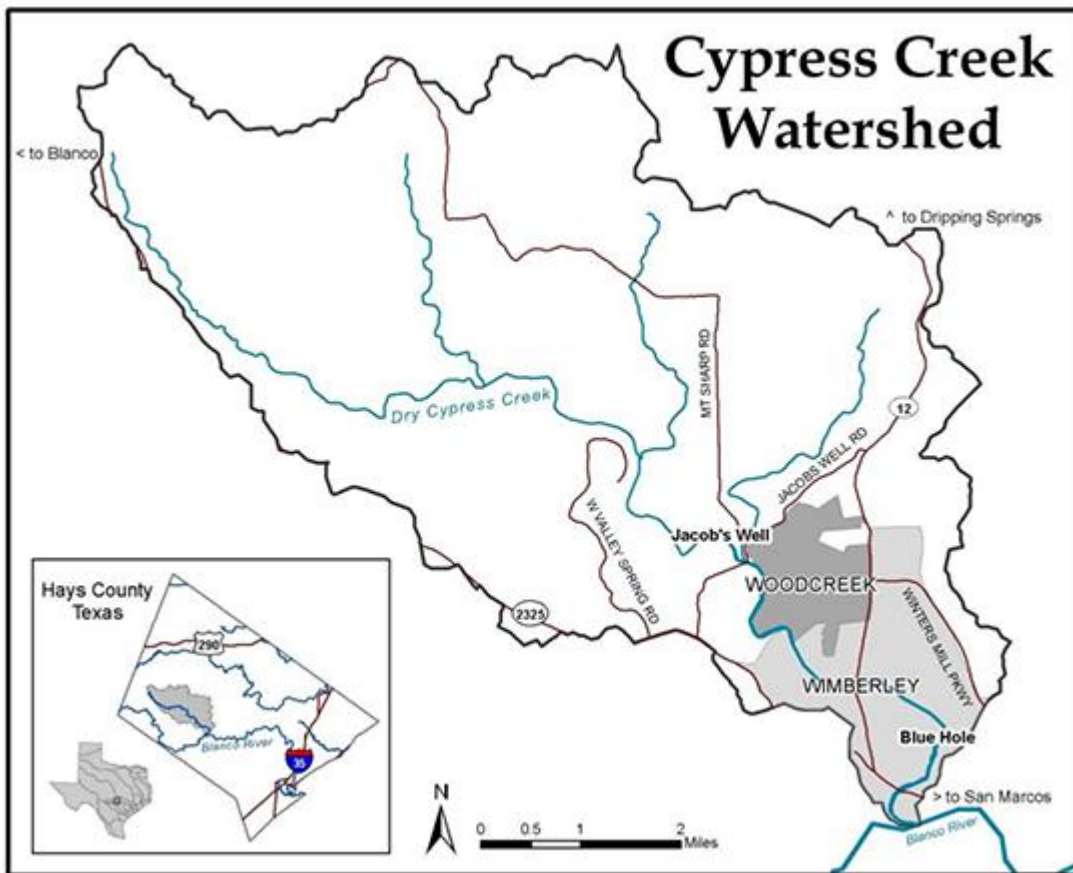


Figure 1. Cypress Creek Watershed

Historical Review

Since the formalization of the CCWPP in 2014, city, county, civic organizations, and citizens of the Wimberley Valley have actively collaborated towards conservation and preservation efforts for the Cypress Creek watershed. The community-led, EPA approved Watershed

Protection Plan is a valuable tool used to help guide efforts to effectively manage the Cypress Creek Watershed by utilizing Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to mitigate nonpoint source pollution, anticipate future water quality impairments, and protect groundwater resources. The partnership has celebrated significant improvements in incorporating stormwater controls into site planning, implementing numerous best management practices, and enthusiastic participation in workshops and meetings. To compile feedback from stakeholders for the sustainability plan, the core team developed an extensive survey soliciting input from each section of the CCWPP in June 2022. There were 36 participants from 10 participating organizations.

When polled, stakeholders identified CCWPP accomplishments as important in helping support the mission of their agency or organization (listed in ranked order):

- 1) Making Wimberley Independent School District's new school a One Water Campus
- 2) Green Infrastructure Projects (Pervious pavers, bioswales, rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, etc.)
- 3) Creation of the Jacob's Well Groundwater Management Zone (GMZ)
- 4) Water Quality Sampling and Reporting
- 5) Flow Measurements and Reporting
- 6) Transition of Downtown Businesses and Residents to Centralized Sewer
- 7) Updated Water Quality Ordinances
- 8) Technical Resource Guides (Green Infrastructure, Best Management Practices)
- 9) Educational Signage
- 10) Workshops

Increased public awareness, working relationships between CCWPP partners, and land conservation efforts were also identified as important accomplishments.

Collective Goals of Current Stakeholders

Despite significant accomplishments since the project's inception, many challenges remain ahead. Development pressures and persistent drought conditions warrant continued collaborative effort toward safeguarding water quality and water availability.

Regarding impacts to flow and groundwater availability, stakeholders identified drought and population increases, education of new residents, management of groundwater pumping, and unmanaged growth in sensitive areas as near-term challenges. Regarding impacts to managing water quality, stakeholders identified maintaining flow, managing growth and development while minimizing impervious cover and maximizing water reuse, managing and treating stormwater, and proper maintenance or upgrades to old septic systems as near-term challenges. Furthermore, stakeholders identified flow and groundwater availability as the highest priority parameter to address for future CCWPP projects. All stakeholders agreed that the CCWPP has helped them or their organization and that work on the Watershed Protection Plan should continue.

Participating stakeholders identified future project needs and ranked them by priority for the next phase of the Watershed Protection Plan are:

1. Source switch or alternate water supply feasibility for growing groundwater demand
2. Stormwater study, analysis, and/or engineering audit
3. Community-scale Type 1 reuse feasibility study (benefits & pitfalls)
4. Demonstration project or mitigation BMP for untreated downtown stormwater flows
5. Impact analysis of water quality ordinance changes
6. Web-based water quality data accessibility enhancements

Financial Considerations

The Watershed Protection Plan represents a coordinated effort, including significant collective investment toward the common goal. Local investments have been consistently leveraged with federal grant funds throughout the project thus far. During the project's first phase from 2008 to 2010, partners provided \$211,000 in waived indirect costs and in-kind match towards the total project sum of \$527,000. Phase 2, spanning 2011 to 2015, included \$154,000 in match towards the \$386,000 total. Phase 3, spanning 2016 to 2019, included \$536,562 in match towards the \$1,341,405 total. Partners have contributed \$122,000 in match towards a total of \$305,000 during Phase 4 of the project from 2020 through 2023. The tremendous dedication of partners over the past 15 years is evident in these match amounts.

Several foundations and non-profits have donated significant funds towards additional initiatives that complement the Cypress Creek Project goals. For example, the Way Foundation has funded the Meadows Center to perform several supplemental water quality sampling studies over the life of the project that go above and beyond the scope to further identify pollutants and hindrances in the watershed. The Watershed Association raised \$250,000 to assist with the development of the Wimberley ISD Blue Hole One Water Primary School – the first One Water school in Texas designed to acknowledge the importance of protecting sensitive water resources.

Jacob's Well has stopped flowing six times in recent history—2000, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2022, and 2023. Zero and low flow conditions have major ramifications for Cypress Creek, aquatic habitat, tourism, and groundwater users. In 2022, Jacob's Well stopped flowing for the longest period on record—35 days with an average of zero flow, impacting park operations at both Jacob's Well Natural Area and Blue Hole Regional Park. Hays County suspended swimming at Jacob's Well on June 29, 2022, due to high bacteria counts brought about by heavy recreational use and low flow. The City of Wimberley suspended swimming at Blue Hole on August 1, 2022, for similar concerns. Hays County Parks and City of Wimberley Parks staff estimate a loss of \$150,000 at Jacob's Well Natural Area and a loss of \$250,000 at Blue Hole Regional Park in swim reservation revenue in 2022. Because of exceptionally low flow at the beginning of 2023, the County decided not to open swim reservations this year, which would be a projected loss of approximately \$200,000 this year.

The Wimberley Valley economy benefits substantially from the tourism industry, with 70 percent of sales tax revenue coming from tourism and hospitality (Assessment of the Economic Contribution of Cypress Creek to the Economy of Wimberley (2013)). Nature-based tourism activities attract thousands of visitors each month. Visitors come to visit area parks, swim at Jacob's Well and Blue Hole, and enjoy the beautiful Hill Country landscape in the Wimberley Valley and in turn, lodging, restaurants, and shops provide services. The City of Wimberley's approved FY2022 budget projected \$1,285,657 in sales tax revenue (City of Wimberley Website), which would indicate that nearly \$900,000 of the sales tax comes from the tourism industry.

Strategic Vision for Sustainability of the Cypress Creek Project

Groundwater and surface water resources of Jacob's Well and Cypress Creek are critically important to many governmental organizations, water providers, non-profit organizations, and research institutions. The CCWPP provides a shared vision for partners to collaborate to better protect these shared resources. Table 2 lists active partners, their interest in the

CCWPP, and direct benefits from successful groundwater and surface water management.

Table 2. CCWPP Partners, Interests, and Benefits

Project Partners (Organizations)	Interest in WPP	Direct Economic Benefits of WPP
Governmental Organizations and Water Providers		
Aqua Texas Water Supply	Several water supply wells pump water from the Middle Trinity Aquifer with about 2,250 connections (residences and businesses) within the Cypress Creek Watershed. A Texas Land Application wastewater treatment facility serves residents and businesses downtown, Woodcreek 1, Woodcreek North, and along FM 2325. Treated wastewater is irrigated on the Woodcreek Golf Course.	Revenue from water and wastewater customers.
City of Wimberley	The City of Wimberley covers approximately 9 square miles and has about 2,800 residents. 1.4 miles of Cypress Creek pass through Wimberley, including its downtown area. Residents and visitors enjoy Wimberley’s natural beauty, nature trails, and swimming opportunities. The City of Wimberley maintains Blue Hole Regional Park and the Cypress Creek Nature Preserve, which both have significant Cypress Creek frontage.	Revenue from Blue Hole Regional Park swim reservations and programs, sales tax, and hotel occupancy tax.
City of Woodcreek	The City of Woodcreek covers approximately 1 square mile and has about 1,850 residents (2022 Census Estimate). 1.3 miles of Cypress Creek pass through Woodcreek. Residents and visitors enjoy Woodcreek’s natural beauty, nature trails, and swimming opportunities.	Revenue from sales tax and hotel occupancy tax.
Hays County	All 10.2 miles of Dry Cypress Creek and 5.5 miles of Cypress Creek are within Hays County. Residents and visitors enjoy Hays County’s natural beauty, nature trails, and swimming opportunities. The Hays County Parks Department maintains the Jacob’s Well Natural Area, which hosts Jacob’s Well Spring—the headwaters of Cypress Creek.	Revenue from property taxes and swim reservations.
Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District	The Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (HTGCD) is the local governmental body working to conserve, preserve, recharge, and prevent waste of	Management fees from service connections in public water systems with groundwater permits and

	groundwater within western Hays County. The HTGCD has approximately 100 permitted wells and coordinated 7,840 acre-feet of groundwater use in 2021.	well construction authorization transactions.
Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority	The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) supports responsible watershed protection and stewardship, provides quality operational service, and promotes conservation and educational opportunities to enhance quality of life for those we serve. The GBRA is both a water utility and a wastewater service provider.	Revenue from water and wastewater customers.
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) – NPS Program	The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is the environmental agency for the state and strives to protect Texans' public health and natural resources consistent with sustainable economic development with the goal of clean air, clean water, and the safe management of waste. Impaired stream segments cause loss of property values, recreational opportunities, and can jeopardize water supplies.	Impaired water bodies require staff and materials to mitigate.
Wimberley Water Supply Corporation	Several water supply wells pump water from the Middle Trinity Aquifer with about 1,850 connections (residences and businesses) within the Cypress Creek Watershed and greater Wimberley Valley.	Revenue from water customers.
Woodcreek Property Owners Association	The pace of development within Woodcreek North has recently increased which impacts impervious cover, water supply, and potential sources of contaminants. Water supply for the neighborhood comes from Aqua Texas, whose wells directly impact spring flow at Jacob's Well.	Revenue from POA fees.
Academic and Non-profit Organizations		
Texas A&M AgriLife – Master Naturalist Program	The Master Naturalist Program provides well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas. Active programs include the Jacob's Well Guides, Restoration Rangers, and Habitat Enhanced Land Management (HELM) programs.	Volunteer group

Texas State University - The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment	The Meadows Center is a research institute located at Texas State University that inspires research, innovation, and leadership that ensures clean abundant water. Meadows Center staff perform Clean Rivers Program quarterly and monthly monitoring on Cypress Creek and the larger watershed which supports the Meadows Center mission and research endeavors.	Research institution
Friends of Wimberley Parks (formerly Friends of Blue Hole)	The Friends of Wimberley Parks is a non-profit that works to promote, protect, preserve, and support Blue Hole Regional Park, Patsy Glenn Refuge, Martha Knies Community Park, Old Baldy Park, Sunrise Park, Oak Park, and Cypress Creek Nature Trail and Preserve.	Non-profit organization
Texas Stream Team	Texas Stream Team, a program managed by the Meadows Center, is dedicated to understanding and protecting Texas waterways through education and volunteer monitoring activities. Texas Stream Team provides training and support of community science-based water quality and environmental monitoring and technical support and assistance with water quality analyses.	Research institution
Watershed Association	The Watershed Association is a non-profit organization working to protect water through land conservation and education across the Hill Country. Watershed Association staff were instrumental in building community support for and forming the CCWPP at its inception.	Non-profit organization

Technical and Administrative needs

Partners identified three key priorities for the next phase of the CCWPP: 1) Continued coordination and communication; 2) Continued water quality monitoring and data analysis; 3) Special projects.

It is proposed that Watershed Association staff take the lead in coordination and communications and host the Watershed Coordinator. Facilitating meetings, emails, and website updates to highlight topics relevant to water quality protection and water availability in the Cypress Creek Watershed benefits all partners such that each partner organization plays a different role in management, oversight, and education. It is proposed that the Cypress Creek Project website be migrated to the Watershed Association domain where, staff can curate and update it. Quarterly email and/or website post updates are proposed to document progress towards shared goals and highlight issues of interest for the partners.

Water quality monitoring through the Clean Rivers Program of the six sites along Cypress Creek, seven sites along the Blanco River, and two groundwater monitoring sites within the Wimberley Valley documents conditions and serves as a first alert to water quality problems. The Meadows Center has been leading data collection and reporting on behalf of the Watershed Association with support from several of the CCWPP partners since 2012. It is proposed that the Meadows Center report on water quality results in conjunction with quarterly newsletter or website post updates, so partners are aware of trends.

Special projects identified by the partner organizations vary substantially in required time, funding, and skill sets. It is proposed that the Watershed Coordinator and fiscal sponsors collaboratively develop a scope of work for the special project and solicit or contribute required funds for that project.

Next Steps

The sustainability plan offers a foundation for discussions moving forward. The plan and supporting Interlocal Agreement were a topic of discussion at the final Cypress Creek watershed speaker series that took place in mid-July 2023. Stakeholders and fiscal contributors will need to determine a budget mechanism to ensure equitable funding for continued sampling and coordination of watershed protection plan efforts. The Meadows Center and Watershed Association will engage in discussions with key partners throughout the summer of 2023 to confirm support and financial contributions to the Interlocal Agreement.

An initial primary goal of the Southwestern Hays County Watershed Task Force will be to release a request for proposals to identify professional consulting services for a comprehensive planning initiative to update WPP goals including coordination for a regional land/water/transportation master plan, including land use planning, infrastructure improvements, and ordinance enhancements.

The Task Force will also pursue special studies focused on Aquifer Pump Test, Modeling, Planning, Aquifer Storage and Recovery, One Water Infrastructure Plan, and Karst Habitat Protection.