

A photograph of a diver underwater, illuminated by a bright light source, possibly a flashlight or a buoy. The water is dark blue, and there are some greenish-yellow plants or algae visible in the background.

# EAHCP STEWARD

News from the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan - March-April 2025



**R**ESA exists!" said Dr. Christina Lopez with a bit of a wry grin. "We see this new group playing a significant role in bringing various stakeholders of the San Marcos River together to protect this natural resource for the community over many years. But for now, we just need to get the word out that we are officially in business and hard at work."

Message received. Message sent.



## Stretch Run - Continued

RESA is the River Education and Stewardship Alliance organization from Texas State University that was formed in September of 2023. Their vision is to be a source of education, outreach, and resources to support a healthy and resilient San Marcos springs, river, and watershed that is respected by Texas State University students, staff, faculty, and visitors.

Lopez explained the startup of the organization happened as questions arose regarding a lack of attention being paid to the environmentally sensitive area in upper Sewell Park known as the Headwaters. People began to wonder why this environmentally sensitive area was not receiving the same maintenance scrutiny as Sewell Park across the nearby bridge. It didn't take too many conversations with responsible parties until a group began to coalesce and monthly meetings began. The group then looked at the apparent absence of university policies and general knowledge about the Headwaters area as an opportunity to create a platform which would fill that public information gap at Texas State and other San Marcos communities.



*San Marcos River water pours out into the streambed at the Headwaters.*

“We do need to be clear that RESA is not an advocacy group. We are here to share the policies and practices already in place at Texas State University,” Lopez noted. “For example, Texas State University is a permittee in the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan (EAHCP). The EAHCP is a very-well operated program carefully monitoring and researching the water quality and endangered species in and around the Headwaters location. During the summer months, there can be intense recreation there, so one of the more important items on RESA’s to-do list will be informing the public how they can help preserve the environmentally sensitive nature of the location.”

The endangered Texas wild-rice plant, fountain darters and San Marcos salamanders are all found in this San Marcos River location on East Sessom Drive across the street from the Freeman Aquatic Biology Center. People enjoying the river there can trample riparian plants which then can cause bank erosion and lead to harm of endangered species habitats.



## Stretch Run - Continued



With the students at Texas State being a primary audience for this messaging, it made complete sense for RESA to involve students in its membership and leadership. Noah Powell, the current RESA student leader, is a master's degree student in applied geography in natural resources and environmental studies.

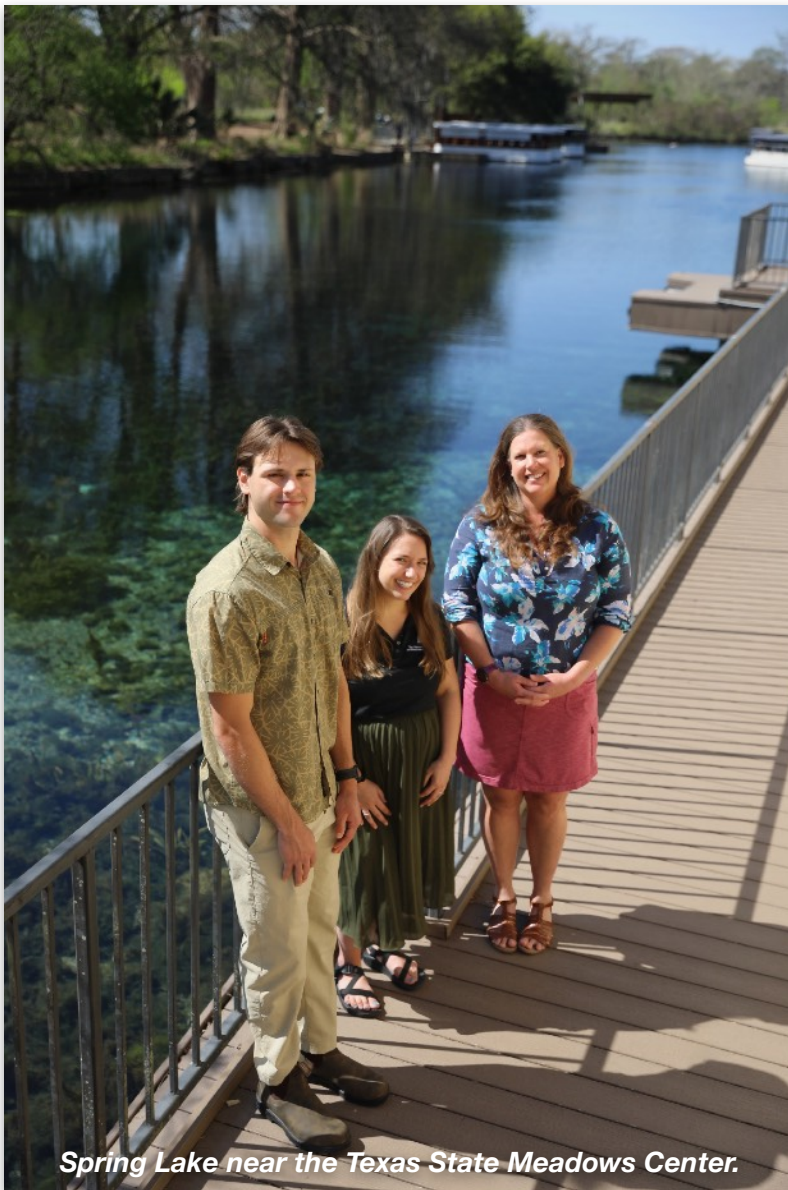
"I began attending the RESA meetings last summer, and I found that the faculty and staff wanted students to not only be the face of the organization but to lead it as well," Powell noted. "So, when the previous student leader graduated, Dr. Lopez asked me to step into that position and I agreed. One of the most important things we do is collaborate with other organizations like the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of San Marcos, the EAHCP and many departments at Texas State. That type of group effort really does help us get a lot of work done toward RESA's goals."

The EAHCP team was one of the first groups RESA approached to begin their work. Lopez explained that the signs regarding ecosystem protections in Sewell Park were outdated. Mark Enders, who is the EAHCP lead for the City of San Marcos, and Kristina Tolman, an EAHCP senior coordinator, worked with RESA in getting the signs designed and installed. The park educational signs are now in multiple languages and even some braille descriptions of the endangered species are included.

As RESA has progressed in its activities and participation, the group was recently rewarded with a Texas State Environmental Services grant of almost \$20,000. The plan for those dollars is to accelerate information outreach work to include a student-designed logo/brand, expanded social media presence and a "RESA awareness" campaign which will be featured throughout Texas State information monitors, possibly some buses and other types of pop-up signage opportunities.

"While we are spending some time in developing our look and recruitment efforts, we haven't overlooked those chances to plug into campus events," Powell said. "For example, the Texas State River Fest event is coming up in April and we will have an educational presence there. This year we proactively contacted the organizers of River Fest and invited them to present at a RESA meeting. They explained what River Fest was going to look like this year and we discussed some ways to make the festival more river-friendly and sustainable. One tangible result of that meeting was the development of a one-page information sheet about the river, springs and endangered species protections the festival organizers could use in their own festival promotions."

## Stretch Run - Continued



With a projected attendance of more than 5,000 people, RESA volunteers will also be helping with litter clean up after the event. Additionally, this year the San Marcos River will be open to festival goers and RESA will assist in “roping off” with buoys some endangered species habitat areas to prevent incursions into those environmentally sensitive locations along the river.

“In looking ahead, we definitely want to maintain and expand our opportunities with the EAHCP since it is one of the largest environmental programs happening in the Edwards Region,” Lopez concluded. “The riparian restoration efforts are ongoing throughout the San Marcos watershed and RESA will be a great group to help provide volunteers for that type of hands-on work. And as RESA grows, our information efforts regarding the endangered species and habitat protections will expand as well.

“With the San Marcos River being such a central element of life in this city, the community is constantly looking at ways to balance ecosystem improvements with ensuring students, families and visitors can enjoy this beautiful river and surrounding natural areas. One of our biggest dreams is that RESA can emerge as a key facilitator in how we succeed at creating the best of both

environmental and recreational worlds. We know there are many students who are passionate about the San Marcos River. And we think RESA can be that vehicle to help them channel those desires in productive ways. While we took our time in getting this organization off the ground, I feel we are now very well positioned to make some giant strides in the very near future.”

You can learn more about RESA at: <https://www.meadowscenter.txst.edu/research/water-conservation/resa.html>.







[Listen to this month's EAHCP Steward Podcast by clicking here.](#)

## **2024 EAHCP Annual Report Now Online**

The [2024 EAHCP Annual Report](#) was submitted to USFWS on Monday, March 31, in accordance with Condition U of the Incidental Take Permit #TE-63663A-1. EAHCP staff would like to thank the Permittees, Committee members, EAA staff, EAHCP contractors, USFWS EA Refugia staff, BIO-WEST and ICF for support in producing the report and report appendices. A 2-page Executive Summary is also available.

## **See the Updates for the EAHCP Permit Renewal Schedule**

[You can find the undated schedule for the EAHCP permit renewal here.](#)

## **Regional Upcoming Events.**

### **Live @ Landa: Concert in the Park series, dates below, 6-9 PM**

The City of New Braunfels is hosting Live @ Landa, a free Concerts in the Park series in Landa Park. Local musicians will perform a variety of songs that range from Country, Classic Rock, Folk, Tejano, and other popular music in Landa Park, adjacent to the Comal Springs.

Upcoming dates: April 10, May 15, June 12, and July 4 - [You can read more information here.](#)

### **Xeriscaping on Your Own Schedule, April 10, 6:30-7:30 PM at Headwaters at the Comal**

Texas Master Gardener, Deedy Wright, will provide an introduction to xeriscaping. Participants will learn how to replace non-native grasses with drought-tolerant natives that reduce water consumption and provide habitat for native pollinators.

Info: Free for Headwaters Members, \$5 per adult for non-members - [Register here.](#)

### **Earth Day: Grow Green with New Braunfels Parks and Headwaters, April 12, 9 AM-12 PM at Landa Park**

City of New Braunfels and Headwaters at the Comal are celebrating [Earth Day at Landa Park](#) by giving away free trees. This free, family-friendly event will have educational booths, food trucks, and more.

### **Earth Day San Marcos Festival, April 19, 10 AM to 4 PM at MCWE**

[12th annual Earth Day San Marcos](#) will be held at the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment on Saturday, April 19. This free, family-friendly event will include eco-friendly exhibitors, educational booths, food trucks, and live music.

# EAHCP STEWARD SHORT TAKES

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## **Landa Park Tour and Hike, April 26 at 10 AM**

A two-mile interpretive tour of Landa Park to explore its history, natural features, and community significance. This tour meets in the parking lot of the Landa Recreation Center at 164 Landa Park Drive. Most of the tour will be on the sidewalk and is stroller friendly. [Purchase tour via CoNB.](#)

Tour: \$20 per person, Saturday, April 26, 10 AM – 12 PM, starts at Landa Recreation Center

## **Texas Freshwater Mussel and Inland Fish Workshop, May 19-23 at TXST**

The Texas Freshwater Mussel and Inland Fish Workshop will be held at Texas State University May 19-23, 2025. This workshop and continuing education course is designed to provide up-to-date information on Texas fish and mussel identification, taxonomy, and ecology for agency personnel, consultants, NGO staff, educators, students, or other interested parties. It will include a two-day freshwater mussel identification, ecology, and sampling workshop hosted by Dr. Charles Randklev and colleagues from Texas A&M University, and two days of instruction on inland fish identification and ecology led by Dr. Timothy Bonner, Brad Littrell, and colleagues from Texas State University. The workshop will include both lecture and laboratory settings to get hands-on experience in identification of Texas fishes and mussels. Additionally, an optional field day will be held on Friday May 23 to give participants a chance to implement a variety of common fish and mussel sampling techniques (including electrofishing) and practice their identification skills on live specimens within the Guadalupe River basin. The course will provide continuing education credits through Texas State University's Continuing Education Department. Cost is \$700/person for the classroom/lab portion, plus \$125 for the optional field excursion. The course will run from approximately 8:00 to 5:00 each day, and light snacks and coffee will be provided in the mornings during the classroom portion. Lunch and lodging are not included. Due to lab size restrictions, capacity is limited to a maximum of 50 participants, so register early to ensure yourself a spot.

Registration: [Texas Fish & Mussel Identification Workshop](#)

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## EAHCP Meeting Calendar for 2025

Here is the EAHCP meeting calendar for 2025. All meetings will be held in person and can be joined online as well.

### EAHCP 2025 Committee Meeting Calendar:

2025 EAHCP Committee Meeting Calendar			
Committee	Date	Time	Location
Joint Stakeholder and Implementing Committee	February 6	10:00 AM	Pauline Espinosa – San Marcos
Science Committee	February 26	9:00 AM	STAR Park   3055 Hunter Road San Marcos, TX
Implementing Committee	March 27	10:00 AM	EAA
Science Committee	April 17	9:00 AM	STAR Park   3055 Hunter Road San Marcos, TX
Implementing Committee	May 22	10:00 AM	Pauline Espinosa – San Marcos
Joint Stakeholder and Implementing Committee	August 7	10:00 AM	EAA
Science Committee	September 10	9:00 AM	TBD
Implementing Committee	October 9	10:00 AM	Pauline Espinosa – San Marcos
EAHCP Committees Year End	December 18	10:00 AM	EAA

## How to Access EAHCP Committee Documents

[The EAHCP Committee documents are available at this link.](#)

