

Partnership Report: Building a Water-Wise Future

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment & H-E-B



**THE MEADOWS CENTER
FOR WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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Contract Report 25-001

Partnership Report: Building a Water-Wise Future

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment & H-E-B

Prepared by

The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, Texas State University

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THE MEADOWS CENTER
FOR WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

601 University Drive, San Marcos Texas 78666
512.245.9200 | MeadowsCenter@txstate.edu | meadowscenter.txst.edu

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FIELD TRIP STUDENTS TAKE A GLASS-BOTTOM BOAT TOUR

Partnership Spotlight: 2025 Impact

The Meadows Center's ongoing partnership with H-E-B continues to increase access to high-quality environmental education for thousands of Texans each year. In 2025, this collaboration allowed more than 20,000 youth and adults to engage in hands-on learning focused on water and sustainability, and it supported the development and dissemination of One Water conservation strategies for communities across the state.

Thanks to H-E-B, we have continued to advance a visionary approach to water management that is reshaping how communities across Texas think about and use water.

Inspiring Environmental Learning at Spring Lake

At the heart of the Meadows Center's educational programming is a commitment to accessible, place-based environmental education. Thanks to H-E-B's support in 2025, we reached thousands of students, families, and visitors through programs designed to foster a deeper understanding of our shared natural resources..

Field Trips: Hands-On Learning for Local Students

Our initiative to provide free field trips to Title 1 schools continues to be a transformative experience for students across Central Texas. This fall, six schools from San Marcos CISD will participate in our field trip programming, bringing approximately 570 third-grade students to Spring Lake.

Students will rotate through learning stations exploring aquatic life, watershed health, and the unique ecology of Spring Lake to gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of water and life. These hands-on experiences will be supported by partners such as the Hays County Master Naturalists and university students from Texas State's Interpretive Environmental Geography and STEM for Educators programs. This year, each third grader will also receive the *Beautiful Hays County*



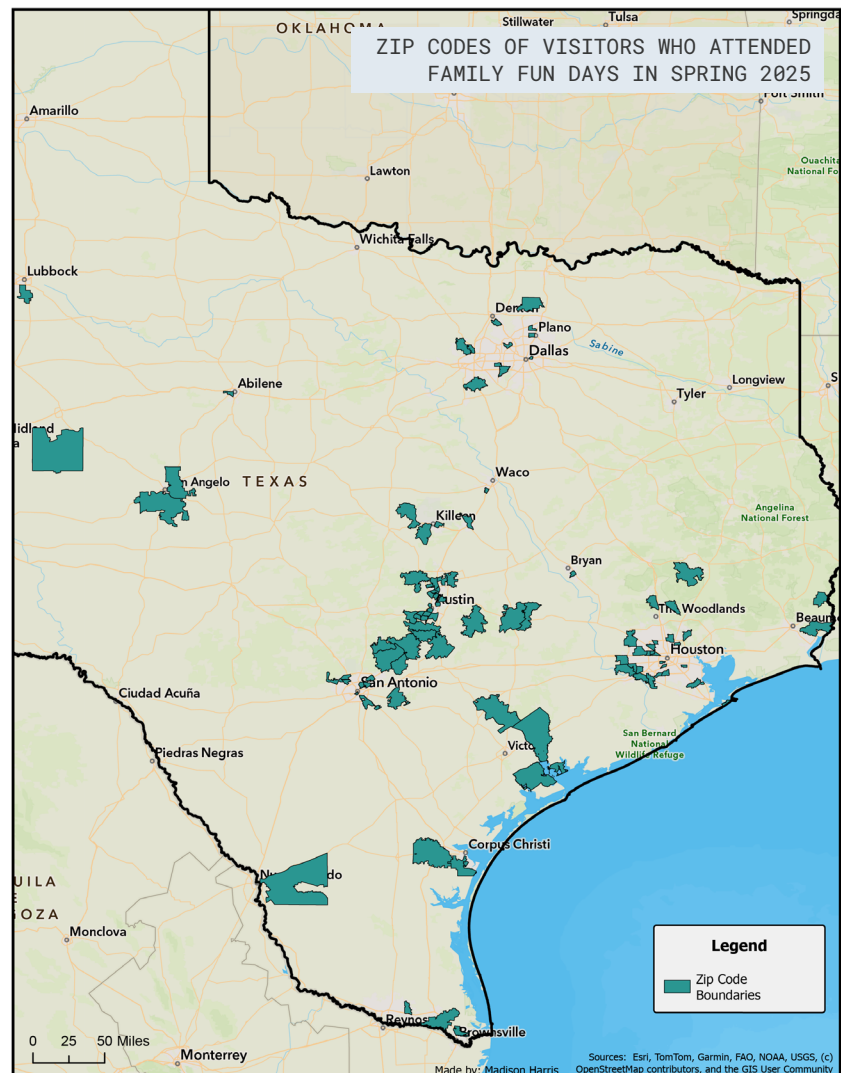
Activity Book, produced by the Hays County Master Naturalists, to reinforce the day's lessons and encourage continued exploration.

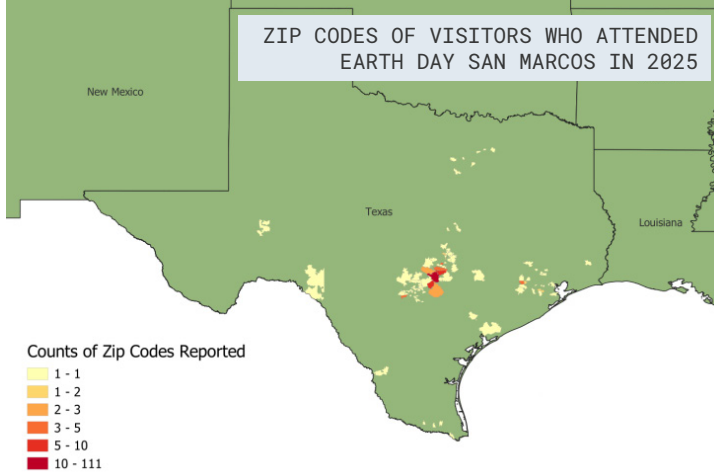
H-E-B's support ensures that these meaningful learning opportunities remain free of cost and accessible to students regardless of background.

Family Fun Days: Exploring Nature Together

In addition to field trips, our Family Fun Days have grown into beloved community events that welcome people of all ages to engage with science and the outdoors. Held throughout the year, these events invite families to explore nature through guided tours, interactive exhibits, and crafts.

From February through July 2025, over 2,900 visitors joined us for six Family Fun Days, each one centered around a different theme related to water, wildlife, or conservation. Guests came from across the region, with zip code data showing reach well beyond San Marcos—including neighboring counties and rural areas. Many return for multiple events, creating intergenerational connections around water stewardship and sustainability.





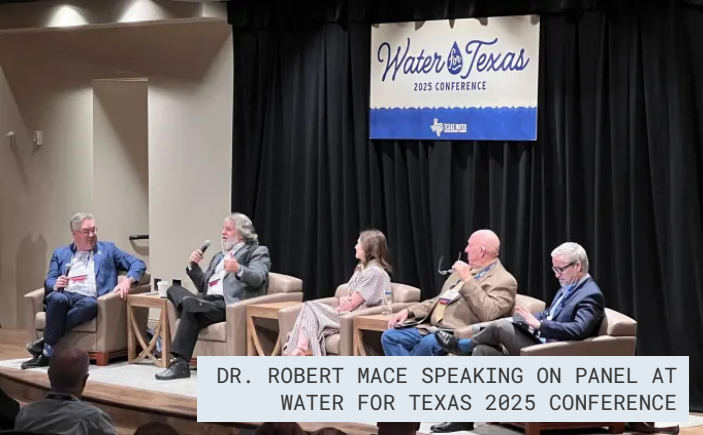
Earth Day San Marcos Festival

Every April, the Earth Day San Marcos Festival brings together people of all ages to celebrate our shared environment, and in 2025, the event reached new heights. With H-E-B as our presenting sponsor, the Meadows Center hosted one of the largest Earth Day festivals in our history—welcoming more than 1,800 people to Spring Lake for a full day of nature, learning, and community connection.

Festivalgoers lined up for over 1,000 free glass-bottom boat rides, and more than 45 educational booths and 15 eco-focused vendors offered hands-on activities, environmental resources, and locally made goods. For the first time, we invited all vendors to sign a Green Pledge, committing to sustainable practices throughout the event.

We also introduced a new feature: Eco Sessions, a series of short, informal talks hosted in our conference room. These mini-presentations provided guests with the chance to hear directly from environmental leaders, researchers, and community members in an intimate, accessible format. The sessions were well-attended and will likely become a permanent fixture of future festivals.

Planning for the festival was a collaborative effort supported by Texas State University's College of Education, the City of San Marcos, and the Office of Sustainability. With their support—and H-E-B's leadership—we were able to create an experience that was educational, inclusive, and community-driven.



RAINWATER STUDY PROJECT WEBPAGE

Advancing Water Resilience Through One Water

This year, H-E-B's funding also supported the Meadows Center's ongoing work to increase awareness and understanding of sustainable water strategies through our One Water Initiative. The Meadows Center worked with several partners to share our rainwater research, highlighting that it is a viable, alternative source of water in Texas.

Funding was used to support outreach and educational efforts through our website, social media, and publications such as Texas+Water. In addition, we facilitated conversations with stakeholders and participated in several statewide and community presentations, including:

- **Water for Texas Conference** (Texas Water Development Board)
- **Hot Science, Cool Talks** (University of Texas at Austin)
- **2024 Southwest Division of the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting** (American Association of Geographers)
- **Lone Star Hort Forum** (Texas Nursery & Landscape Association)
- **Professional Geoscientists Brown Bag Series** (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)
- **Community presentations** to the Lifelong Learning Organization of San Marcos and the Wimberley United Methodist Church's Green Team

These engagements helped share findings from our rainwater firm yield study with decision-makers, educators, and citizens. H-E-B's support ensured that research could be translated into practical information for communities exploring alternative water strategies.

Coming Soon: Texas One Water Resource Hub

Further information and research will appear in the Meadows Center's forthcoming Texas One Water Resource Hub. This online platform, funded in part by H-E-B, will continue expanding access to One Water information and tools.

Set to launch in late 2025, the Hub will feature:

- A **searchable resource library** of policies, publications, and case studies
- An **interactive atlas** highlighting One Water projects from across Texas
- **Educational content** explaining the principles and benefits of the One Water approach

Our goal is to create a central location where users can access reliable information to support One Water planning and implementation efforts. It will empower users to explore what's possible, learn from their peers, and take the next step toward implementing water-wise strategies in their own communities.

We are grateful to H-E-B for its continued partnership and look forward to growing this work together in the year ahead!



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