

**2022**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**TEXAS HILL COUNTRY**  
**RIVER REGION, INC.**

**UVALDE**  
**COUNTY**  
**TEXAS**

[WWW.VISITUVALDECOUNTY.COM](http://WWW.VISITUVALDECOUNTY.COM)





# TEXAS HILL COUNTRY RIVER REGION, INC.



## ABOUT THCRR

Texas Hill Country River Region is a not-for-profit 501(c)6 corporation that was created solely for the purpose of promoting tourism in Uvalde County. Formed in 1998, THCRR is experienced in the promotion of the River Region as a tourism destination. In the past 5 years, THCRR has implemented new leadership and a reenergized focus on its mission to promote the Texas Hill Country River Region as an overnight year-round tourism destination and to increase off-season occupancy in the regions' accommodations.

In addition to tourism promotion, THCRR manages the Uvalde County River Cleanup Program, "Don't Trash Where You Splash." This program includes volunteer efforts, a litter education campaign, management of waste maintenance contracts and supplemental cleanup contracts, and providing complimentary UP2U bags to businesses and individuals, all of which help keep litter out of the rivers, and our destination a beautiful place to live and visit.

### FUNDING SOURCE & CONTRACT

THCRR is funded by a contract with Uvalde County to manage a portion of the hotel occupancy tax revenue collected by the Uvalde County Tax Assessor. In previous years, the contract has designated 74% of total HOT revenue to be managed by THCRR for tourism promotion.

In response to a change in the way the HOT funds would be administered by the County in 2018, THCRR proposed an amended agreement that would direct 99% of total gross hotel occupancy taxes collected by the County to be allocated to THCRR, to manage using 74% for tourism promotion and 25% for river cleanup efforts. On Nov. 13, 2018, Uvalde County Commissioners Court voted unanimously to adopt the proposed amended agreement and the agreement was again renewed on December 12, 2022.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jamie Vaden Holmes, President  
Melissa Bates, Vice President  
Steven McNew, Treasurer  
Wendi Hightower, Secretary  
Lauren Diver, Member  
Jake Guerrero, Member

# 2022 IN REVIEW

2022 began with the resignation of the Executive Director, Annabell McNew. The Board accepted her resignation and began managing day-to-day operations, focusing first on obtaining Uvalde County Commissioners' Court approval of 2022 THCRR budget and strategic plan. Job profiles were either drafted or revised to reflect adjustments made in the organization meant to drive accountability, efficiency, and improved communication. The Executive Director job description was drafted and was posted on the website and on major recruiting platforms. THCRR extended an offer to a candidate in September and countered that offer. That offer was ultimately rejected, and the position remains open.

Texas Hotel & Lodging Association (THLA) membership was established for all of the Uvalde County Lodging Partners, membership benefits communicated, and login details were distributed. THLA provides lodging partners with free listings on Texas tourism websites, complimentary legal support, representation at the Texas Capitol, award-winning educational, and discounts on products and services.

The THCRR team worked with Uvalde County to confirm membership and voting eligibility and purchased a certified electronic voting platform, DirectVote, which allowed a significantly longer voting window and certified election results. The annual meeting and board elections were held on May 9, 2022. During the meeting, the process for the election was explained in detail, the 2021 Annual Report was reviewed, and the 2022 Strategic Plan was discussed.

Within that Strategic Plan presented to the Commissioners' Court and the community were several key areas of focus and objectives:

- Increased Support of and Communication with the Lodging Partners
- Eclipse Strategy Preparation for Uvalde County
- Expansion of River Clean Up efforts
- Pursue Non-River Centric Activities and Attractions
- Increased Collaboration with Uvalde Chamber of Commerce
- Resumed In-Person Collaboration Opportunities and Training for Lodging Partners
- Expansion of Off-Season Occupancies

**Communication.** With the clarified job profiles and employee training, and by sending monthly newsletters following the Annual Meeting, THCRR has improved communication. We continue to increase opportunities for education and training and will maintain the monthly newsletters. Training schedules have been distributed and free software accounts have been made available.

**Eclipse Preparation.** The initial, high level strategy and organizational framework was presented in 2022 to the Commissioners; THCRR has established leadership for all 4 task force groups and has formalized the position of Eclipse Event Manager. A world-renowned solar eclipse consultant was engaged to accelerate the planning process. Eclipse Activities are included in the 2023 THCRR Proposed Budget.

**River Clean Up Program.** Key improvements to the RCU program include purchasing of kayaks for cleaning the Nueces and Sabinal rivers, streamlined communication with the contract personnel, and increased communication with landowners. THCRR has increased collaboration with the Nueces River Authority to formalize a ‘mobile classroom’ that drives education of Uvalde County youth on the importance of clean rivers. The hourly rate for volunteer clean ups was increased from \$10 to \$15/hour.

**Non-River Centric Activities and Attractions.** During the summer months and during a record drought and water shortage in the Concan Area, THCRR established an Activity Pass which allowed tourists to attend family friendly activities free. These activities included family friendly concerts, movie nights, a game tent, and free refreshments. This summer’s drought underscored the need to have ‘non-river’ things to do for our tourists. The Nature Garden (2021 initiative) was again put on hold while we focused on minimizing disruption to our industry, but we expect it to be prioritized in 2023.

In coordination with the County, wildflower seeds were distributed on areas along Hwy 127 and Hwy 83. This effort was made possible by funds granted by THCRR to community members. Star Parties and pop-up Farmers’ Markets again proved to be a growing attraction for our community and visitors. A mural located on the wall of the Visitor’s Center was approved and funded in late 2022. It is now complete.

**Collaboration with Uvalde Chamber of Commerce.** Where possible, THCRR seeks to support efforts initiated by the Chamber and other groups, to expand overnight tourism in Uvalde County. This collaboration is demonstrated within the Solar Eclipse Task Force leadership, the continued financial support of events, the exploration of key initiatives included in the 2023 THCRR budget.

**Marketing.** THCRR maintains the original charter of increasing overnight occupancy for Uvalde County. However, 2022 presented two additional challenges: the record drought and water shortage, and the Robb Elementary tragedy. THCRR supported visiting responders by providing lodging and support and supported fundraising efforts by printing and distributing Uvalde Strong t-shirts. We immediately decreased marketing efforts to our area and ultimately paused it completely when local water resources could not support the existing tourism load. We have resumed marketing and continue to work closely with Concan Water Supply to address system and resource constraints.

**Potential Changes to Hotel Occupancy Tax Code.** At the request of landowners along the rivers, THCRR investigated potential changes to the existing Uvalde County HOT tax code, which would allow portions of the tax collected to be used for law enforcement purposes on areas primarily occupied by tourists.

After consulting with other counties and municipalities whose HOT tax code allows for this, THCRR in conjunction with THLA, drafted a revision and presented the change to Judge Mitchell and Representative King for their consideration.

**Staffing Changes.** THCRR hired Hailey Hart to replace Cassie Siegel, as River Clean Up and Social Media Manager. Hailey has strong Uvalde County roots and has already proven to continue the good change initiated by Cassie. The Director position remains open and THCRR remains hopeful to fill the position soon. THCRR is proposing the Solar Eclipse / Event Manager position which we believe is a strategic way to increase offseason, overnight occupancy via events like the Solar Eclipse and a birding festival. High-level and strategic marketing decisions are currently being made with the assistance of a marketing consultant. This approach is proving very effective.

# LOOKING AHEAD

The **River Clean Up** program is off to a strong start by

- Funding the mobile classroom initiated by the Nueces River Authority
- Developing a coloring and activity book that educates the younger tourists on how to prevent pollution and preserve our natural resources
- Establishing a contest within Uvalde County Ag Mech programs to develop an improved Up2U bag dispenser.
- Re-initiating a Uvalde County ‘Trash Bash’ and concert at the end of peak season.

**Collections** are forecasted to remain low. The interruptions of water supply and record drought yielded a sudden and unexpected end to our area’s peak season. Anecdotal evidence suggests a decrease in returning reservations. These factors have been incorporated into the proposed budget.

THCRR will **maintain the momentum** built in 2022 but tighten the focus on key areas for 2023:

- Maintaining a rigorous River Cleanup program with a heightened focus on education of our younger tourists and Uvalde County residents
- On-boarding of open THCRR positions (Director and Eclipse Event Manager)
- Off-Season Marketing & Curating Off-Season Events for 2024
- Eclipse Planning
- Support of Concan Water Supply improvement initiatives
- Development of area non-river attractions for tourists.

THCRR **accomplish these objectives** by:

- Maintaining increased communication on our accomplishments and objectives - driving increased support and engagement from our community
- Connecting with passionate community members with grant funds to accomplish meaningful objectives. Recent success stories include the Visitor Center mural and the Wildflower Project
- Leveraging local expertise to accelerate key initiatives without creating large marketing contracts or additional full-time positions.
- Partnering with the Chamber and other Uvalde groups focused on expanding tourism, leveraging Chamber resources with THCRR funding.
- Continuing to align THCRR Board Members with the areas which they are most passionate or experienced,

# Newsletter

May 2022

## Other News

Please find the Executive Director Job Posting on our website under the About section

Visitor Center Hours  
9am-5pm daily

**Schedule your river cleanup by emailing**  
[cassie@visitualdecountry.com](mailto:cassie@visitualdecountry.com)

## Follow Us on Social Media

Tag us for a chance to be featured!

**Instagram:**

@TXHillCountryRivers

@VisitUvaldeCounty

**Facebook Pages:**

Texas Hill Country River Region

Uvalde County River Cleanup

Visit Uvalde County

**Facebook Groups:**

Concan Last Minute Availability

THCRR Community Partners

What's Happening on the Frio!

## Election Results

President - Jamie Vaden Holmes  
(representing Frio Country)

Vice President - Melissa Bates  
(representing Neal's)

Secretary - Wendi Hightower - 2 year term

Treasurer - Steven McNew - 2 year term

Member - Lauren Diver - 2 year term

Member - Jake Guerrero - 1 year term

Member - Chase Roosa - 1 year term

## Yellow Bag Distribution

We will be distributing bags on the 1st & 15th of each month. If you are able to pick a bale up from the Visitor Center, please let us know and we will make sure some are available. Keep an eye out for our emails about delivery!

## Reminders

We will be starting a weekly events calendar soon! Please submit any activities or events you'd like listed to  
[info@visitualdecountry.com](mailto:info@visitualdecountry.com).



# Newsletter

**June 2022**

## Other News

Texas Hotel & Lodging Association (THLA) individual logins were sent to lodge owners via email on 5.19.22. Please contact us at the Visitor Center if you did not receive yours.

Visitor Center Hours  
9am-5pm daily

**Schedule your river cleanup by emailing**  
cassie@visitualdecountry.com

## Be water wise & reduce water use

- Take shorter showers
- Wash full loads of clothes and dishes
- Recycle indoor water & irrigate your garden
- Turn off water when brushing teeth, shaving
- Fix leaks
- Install high-efficiency toilets
- Use water-wise/native plants in your garden

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What's Happening on the Frio!

## Uvalde County River Region Beautification Grant

The Uvalde County River Region Beautification Grant will provide selected affiliate communities with funding for trash cleanup, general clean up, restoration and educational projects that impact and improve natural resources. More details can be found on [visitualdecountry.com](http://visitualdecountry.com)

## Reminders

We need vendors for the Concan Local Pop up Market! Please send referrals to [info@visitualdecountry.com](mailto:info@visitualdecountry.com).



# Newsletter

July 2022

## River Cleanup

Litterbug Eradicators crew has been hard at work this summer and has collected over 600 bags of trash from the Frio & Nueces Rivers.

**We are still pushing group cleanups, and an Air Force group from San Antonio has a cleanup scheduled 7/29/22.**

**Schedule your river cleanup by emailing**  
[cassie@visitualdecountry.com](mailto:cassie@visitualdecountry.com)

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**Website:**

[visitualdecountry.com](http://visitualdecountry.com)

## Trash Updates

Please remind your guests that yellow dumpsters are for river trash ONLY.

Household trash can be taken to the Concan Community Center for \$1 per bag!

Please also remind guests that canopies cannot be disposed of in dumpsters!

Canopies left overnight is illegal dumping and carries up to \$500 fine and possible jail time. Guests need to take down canopies each day.

## Uvalde Strong Shirts

Thank you all for the incredible response we've recieved with the Uvalde Strong shirts and stickers. We do have some inventory left, so if you are interested in a shirt, please fill out the form linked on our Facebook page, or stop by the Visitor Center.

## Reminders

Please respond to the Google Form Survey sent out regarding classes you would like THCRR to host in the fall.

If you would like events included on the Weekly Calendar, please email info to [cassie@visitualdecountry.com](mailto:cassie@visitualdecountry.com) at least 10 days prior.

Our River Region Beautification Grant is live and posted on our website under the Grant section.

# Newsletter

August 2022

## Trash Bash

Please join us for a Trash Bash Sunday, September 25th. Meet at the Uvalde County Visitor Center at 11am. A late lunch will be provided afterwards. More details to follow!

**Schedule your river cleanup by emailing**  
[cassie@visitualdecountry.com](mailto:cassie@visitualdecountry.com)

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## Solar Eclipse

The 2023 and 2024 Eclipses are soon approaching! Join us for our first meeting on Wednesday, September 7th from 3-5 pm at the Visitor Center. More details to follow.

## Canva Subscription

THCRR is actively working on providing useful software for lodging partner use. To access our shared Canva Pro account, please email [cassie@visitualdecountry.com](mailto:cassie@visitualdecountry.com). Please do not change emails or passwords.

## HCA Night Skies

The Hill Country Alliance Night Skies program helps Hill Country counties and cities minimize the impacts of light pollution through education and outreach. Join us in our effort to stop the spread of light pollution and keep our Texas night skies "big and bright". Join us October 4th to learn more. More details to follow!

## Reminders

Please respond to the Google Form Survey sent out regarding classes you would like THCRR to host in the fall.

If you would like events included on the THCRR Event Calendar, please email info to [cassie@visitualdecountry.com](mailto:cassie@visitualdecountry.com) at least 10 days prior.

Our River Region Beautification Grant is live and posted on our website under the Grant section.

Our final Star Party is this Friday, August 2nd.

# Newsletter

## September 2022

### Trash Bash

**Please join us for a  
Trash Bash Sunday,  
September 25th!**

Meet at the Uvalde County Visitor Center at 11am. A late lunch will be provided afterwards at the food trucks behind Andy's on River Road!

**Schedule your river  
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**Website:**

**visitualdecountry.com**

### Solar Eclipse

The 2023 and 2024 Eclipses are soon approaching! Our next meeting will be on November 2nd at 3pm, location TBD.

For more information, please go to  
visitualdecountry.com > About > Solar Eclipse.

### River Cleanup Efforts

A portion of the Hotel Occupancy Tax that is collected by lodging partners funds contracted river clean up efforts that now extend year-round. It is important that they are able to safely park their vehicles and trailers at the various entrance and exit points along these three rivers, which may include your business or property. If you have concerns about allowing this temporary access, please contact THCRR to address your concerns. Please communicate with your own employees about allowing Litterbug Eradicators to park their car or motorcycle on your property for a few hours, or to return to collect larger items (like canopies). It is vital to the success of this effort that we work together to keep our rivers clean.

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### Reminders

Please respond to the Google Form Survey sent out regarding classes you would like THCRR to host in the fall.

If you would like events included on the THCRR Monthly Event Calendar, please email info to cassie@visitualdecountry.com at least a month prior.



# Newsletter

## October 2022



### River Cleanup

Thank you to all of those who attended our river cleanup on September 25th. Stay tuned to our Facebook pages for future cleanup events!

**Schedule your river cleanup by emailing**

**[cassie@visitualdecounty.com](mailto:cassie@visitualdecounty.com)**



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**Website:**

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### Solar Eclipse

The 2023 and 2024 Eclipses are soon approaching! Our next meeting will be on November 2nd at 3pm at Neal's Dining Room.

For more information, please go to [visitualdecounty.com](https://visitualdecounty.com) > About > Solar Eclipse.

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### CPR Class

We are offering a free CPR training and certification class at the Visitor Center on Tuesday, November 8th, 2022 from 10am - 2 pm.

**If you would like to attend, you must reserve your spot by Friday, October 28th at 3pm. Please see email for more information**



### Reminders

Please respond to the Google Form Survey sent out regarding classes you would like THCRR to host in the fall.

If you would like events included on the THCRR Monthly Event Calendar, please email info to [cassie@visitualdecounty.com](mailto:cassie@visitualdecounty.com) at least a month prior.

# Newsletter

## November 2022

### Holiday Party

We are excited to bring back our Holiday Party this year! All community members are welcome to attend. Please RSVP by Google Calendar or by emailing Cassie.

Date: December 1st, 2022  
Location: Outlaw View  
577 Mountain Valley Drive  
Concan, Texas 78838

### Follow Us on Social Media

**Please tag us so we can share your posts!**

#### Instagram:

@TXHillCountryRivers

@VisitUvaldeCounty

#### Facebook Pages:

Texas Hill Country River Region

Uvalde County River Cleanup

Visit Uvalde County

#### Facebook Groups:

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THCRR Community Partners

What's Happening on the Frio!

### Solar Eclipse Meeting

The 2023 and 2024 Eclipses are soon approaching! Our next meeting will be on January 11, 2023. Location and time TBD.

For more information, please go to [visituvaldecounty.com](http://visituvaldecounty.com) > About > Solar Eclipse.

### Solar Eclipse Glasses

THCRR will be ordering a limited number of solar eclipse glasses. We plan on selling them to lodging partners at a low cost. Once we receive our order, a form will be sent out to all partners via email. Glasses will be sold on a first come first serve basis.

### Jingle & Mingle

The Frio Canyon Chamber of Commerce would like to invite you to participate in "Jingle & Mingle" in the Frio Canyon on Friday, December 9, and Saturday, December 10. We ask that all members who participate be open during the hours of 10 am - 6 pm. If you are interested in participating, please contact Melissa Bates by Wednesday, November 30. There will be LIVE MUSIC for the finale of each of the shopping evenings!

Friday Night - The Back Porch at Leakey Inn

Saturday Night - Music Event produced by Sarah Trapp at the Leakey Showbarn

### Reminders

THCRR is hosting a holiday party on December 1st. Please RSVP via Google Calendar invite. Email Cassie with any questions.

If you would like events included on the THCRR Monthly Event Calendar, please email info to [cassie@visituvaldecounty.com](mailto:cassie@visituvaldecounty.com) at least a month prior.