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### **Texas Water Trade launches first-of-its-kind statewide water market program**

**AUSTIN, TEXAS – May 18, 2020** – Texas Water Trade (TWT) announced today the launch of an ambitious new program to advance voluntary water transactions in key rivers and basins across Texas. The program, Texas Water Market Makers, will deliver technical expertise and dedicated strategic support to three conservation entities committed to protecting and enhancing freshwater flows in Texas’ rivers and bays. Over the next two years, TWT will support the selected Market Makers – Galveston Bay Foundation, Audubon Texas and Wimberley Valley Water Association – to develop science-based market plans for their priority basins.

The work will span the state of Texas, from the Blanco River and beloved Jacob’s Well, to the fishing and recreational hubs of Matagorda and Galveston Bays, to the Pecos River in the heart of oil and gas country. “These basins represent the remarkable hydrological and ecological diversity of Texas,” says TWT Board Member and former Texas Water Development Board Chairman Carlos Rubinstein. “TWT’s goal is to enable their conservation partners to create value for landowners while making verifiable improvements in freshwater availability for the rivers and bays Texans depend on.”

“Market Makers is a centerpiece program for TWT because it is the operational machinery to advance one of our core theses - that water markets can help us create reliable flows for people and nature if we get more boots on the ground developing deals,” says TWT Chief Executive Officer Sharlene Leurig. “Our Market Makers are the boots on the ground; for each of them, TWT will be providing strategic and technical support to build a pipeline of environmental water deals that will set the state for flows restoration goals for the next decade across Texas. I am especially proud of this work because it encapsulates so well the collaborative spirit of Texas Water Trade.”

More about the Market Makers:

#### **Galveston Bay Foundation**

Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) works to preserve and enhance Galveston Bay through conservation efforts and habitat restoration of wetlands, coastal prairie, oyster reef and seagrasses. As a Market Maker, GBF and TWT will work together to complement those efforts and drive voluntary, market-based solutions to protect and enhance critical freshwater inflows to Galveston Bay.

Special emphasis will be placed on protection of the Bay's oysters, which depend on freshwater inflows. Prior to the damage wrought by Hurricane Ike and the drought that followed, and overharvest due to closures of reefs in other areas of the Gulf of Mexico for health reasons, the Bay produced more oysters - about 6 million pounds - than any other body of water in the country. "We work with landowners on a variety of conservation programs that protect Galveston Bay's oyster reefs and marshes and the fish, shrimp, crab and other wildlife that depend on these habitats," says GBF Government and Regulatory Affairs Manager Scott Jones. "However, freshwater inflows to the Bay from our rivers and bayous are the life blood of our estuary. Without them these efforts could be for naught. We must find ways to keep the water flowing to our estuary at the end of the pipe, so to speak."

### **Audubon Texas**

Audubon emphasizes restoration and conservation of degraded and vulnerable landscapes that support sensitive species of birds, habitats, and communities in Texas, focused on habitat strongholds where threats to water, land use, and natural processes can be reduced through on-the-ground improved science-based stewardship. "We look forward to working with TWT and their team of experts to advance efforts to integrate cutting-edge land stewardship and emerging water markets to protect healthy Texas waterways and bodies by enhancing flows, quality, and riparian health for critical geographies like Matagorda Bay and West Texas," says Scott Moorhead, Audubon Texas Director of Policy.

Interested in improving water quality and quantity in Texas, Audubon Texas as a Market Maker will leverage its Conservation Ranching Initiative to create value for landowners and wildlife in Matagorda Bay and in the Pecos River Basin.

### **Wimberley Valley Watershed Association**

Wimberley Valley Watershed Association (WVWA) envisions a future with clean, plentiful and sustained water for Jacob's Well in the Texas Hill Country. WVWA's primary focus has always been to protect the Trinity Aquifer that sustains flow to Jacob's Well through groundwater and surface water management. "Maintaining Jacob's Well spring flow into Cypress Creek and the Blanco River through sustainable management of the Trinity Aquifer is essential for the functioning of our regional ecosystems and the long term health of our local economy," said Wimberley Valley Watershed Association Executive Director David Baker.

During recent droughts, Jacob's Well has stopped flowing due to increased groundwater pumping during dry periods. As a Market Maker, WVWA will work to implement market-based strategies to reduce groundwater pumping to better protect Jacob's Well springflow, especially during times of drought.

Read more about the program [here](#).

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### **About Texas Water Trade**

Texas Water Trade is a nonprofit organization harnessing the power of markets and technological innovation to build a future of clean, flowing water for all Texans. Learn more at [www.texaswatertrade.org](http://www.texaswatertrade.org)