

The Comal River Water Trail

Designated National Water Trail, June 2024!



The Comal River

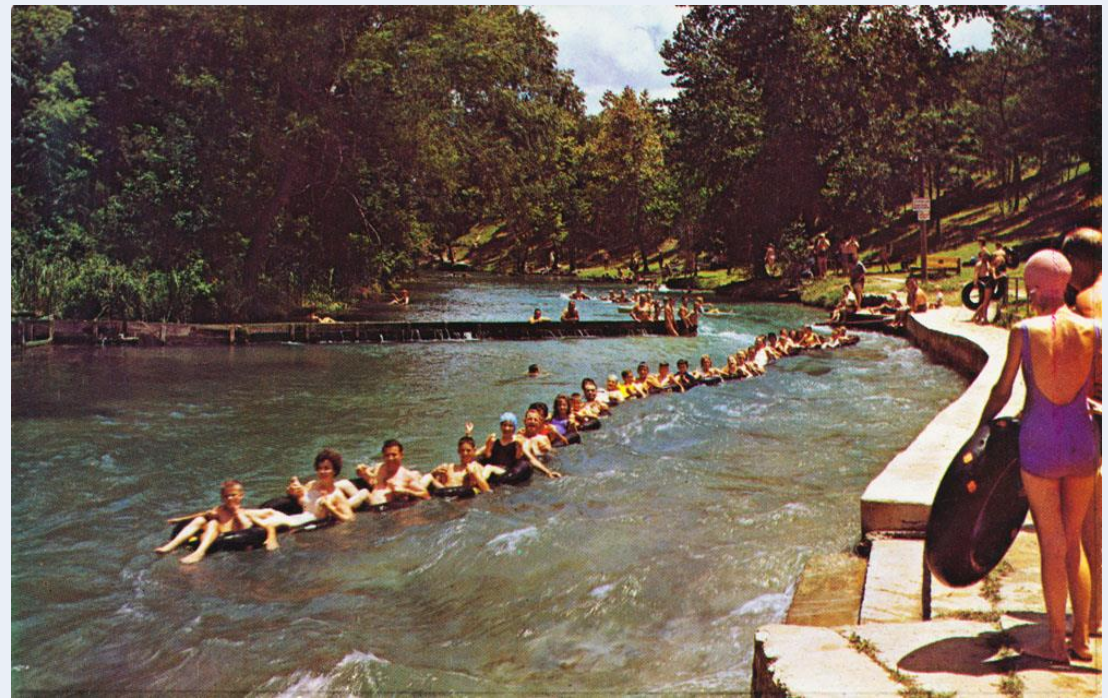
New Braunfels, Texas

- ~ 2.5 miles long and exists entirely within the city limits (*1.5 miles designated for the trail*)
- Spring fed from the Edwards Aquifer
- 4 endemic endangered species!
- Historically used to power watermills, cotton gins and provide hydroelectric power
- Multiple conservation initiatives
- Popular recreation destination



River Recreation

- Known for tubing!
- Up to 400,000 visitors per year
- Full time River Management team
 - New Braunfels Police Department
 - Full time and seasonal park rangers
- City Ordinances
 - *The Disposable Container Ordinance*
- Annual litter cleanup contract



The Comal River

Motivations to Apply

- Established recreational river with devoted River Management team
- Expanding our recreation options to other seasons
- Connecting with a greater community of water resource managers
- Encouragement from the River Management Society
- To continue to reinforce a good reputation for recreating on the Comal River



Application Process

1. Confirm eligibility

- ✓ Public availability
- ✓ No gaps
- ✓ Maintained according to BMPs
- ✓ In compliance with land use plans and environmental laws

2. Written letters of support

- ✓ State Trails Administrator
- ✓ New Braunfels City Manager
- ✓ Public Works Director
- ✓ River Advisory Committee
- ✓ Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Residents



BMPs

Community Support

Conservation

Education

Maintenance

Planning

Public Information

Recreation

Application Process

- Understanding the 7 Best Management Practices
- Filling out the online application
- Creating trail map(s)
- Gathering photos and other supporting documentation
- Communication with program coordinator

Helpful Resources



- Application Website:
<https://www.nrtapplication.org/>
- Communication with the National Recreation / Water Trail Coordinator
- American Trails Webinars
- ★ [Download a PDF exploring the BMPs](#)

Application Challenges

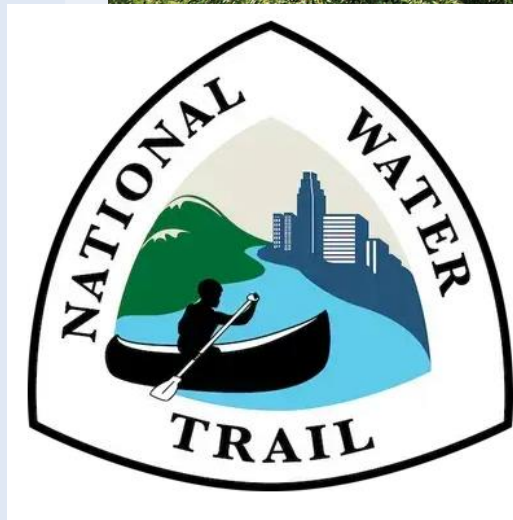
- Thorough documentation: Safety signage, water quality testing
- Resident and river outfitter hesitation
- River stigma
- Specific state laws



Designation Benefits

The Comal River Water Trail

- Great platform to highlight the river trail to those looking for outdoor recreation
- Networking and training opportunities
- Connecting with a larger group of water resource managers
- Letters of support for fundraising and trail protection efforts
- Positive recognition





Thank you!

