

Imagine that we live in a quiet, peaceful corner tucked into the canyonlands of the beautiful Texas Hill Country. So idyllic is this spot in fact, that when the first European settlers came and drank in the beauty that surrounded them they named one of the communities Utopia.

Imagine that, as we go about our quiet way of life, we strive to keep our employment routines in such a way to not disturb the ecosystem, as we enjoy the unspoiled setting, feeding the birds, counting the butterflies every year to participate in a nationwide survey, swimming in and paddling the rivers. We strive to maintain a balance that honors nature, the native wildlife, and the rural way of life that our great grandparents, our grandparents, our parents lived, and to maintain that same tranquil way of life we found when we became stewards of the land. We and they have worked hard to keep the serenity of this unspoiled place.

Now imagine that a very large corporation decides to bring their brand of summer youth camps into our setting. They come with admirable stated goals, a Christian camping experience for young adolescents. In this case they apparently wish to develop a campground that would serve a much-expanded attendance from that of the former owners of a camp at the same location. Imagine, such a well-funded corporation – a corporation that urges their supporters to cement their legacy in this life by giving real estate, business interests, oil, gas and mineral rights to fund the camp corporation – a corporation so well-funded that it can spend millions to develop massive new uses of the natural resources they have found available in this chosen spot.

And now you need not imagine any longer! Young Life has come to Utopia. While we applaud one of the basic tenants of their values stated on their website “Observing the highest standards of stewardship of all the resources placed in our trust” this high standard does not seem to include avoiding the risk of irreparably polluting our beautiful Sabinal River.....

Now we find that they and a neighboring landowner are also seeking to draw a very significant volume of ground water in an area of our canyonlands where some landowners wells have reportedly already gone dry!*

FOR THE WASTEWATER DISCHARGE PERMIT: Send your comments to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (<https://www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/> Enter permit : WQ0015892001) asking that the **PERMIT BE DENIED** to discharge 60,000 gallons of water daily into creeks that ultimately flow into the Sabinal River .

Please alert your neighbors to do the same. If we are to protect this gift of nature we must stay alert, be willing to make our voices heard. Together our community can save this treasured place we call home.

Merry Langlinais

** We asked you to speak out about this challenge AND YOU DID! The Young Life application was tabled for now, the neighbor withdrew his request! Stay with us folks, more challenges are coming down the pipe!*

FOR THE WATER WELL PERMIT: Please make your voice heard. Send your comments to Bandera River Authority and Groundwater District (dmauk@bcragd.org and hphillips@bcragd.org) BEFORE this agenda item is heard TOMORROW, Jan 14, 2020.