

## **Group Calls for Environmental Impact Statement**

by Bill Neiman

*Published in the **Junction Eagle**, March 3, 2010*

JUNCTION, TX – Organizations across the Hill Country are asking state and federal agencies to ensure that protecting the Hill Country environment is a primary consideration as sites are selected for the high-voltage transmission lines soon to be built throughout the region.

“From the beginning, the Clear View Alliance (CVA) has maintained that Hill Country residents need to speak with a collective voice as we stand up for our beautiful region,” President Bill Neiman said. “We applaud the Mason Sub Regional Planning Commission’s request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conduct a full fledged Environmental Impact Study as part of the CREZ transmission line project. The request from Mason reinforces a similar demand made by the Kimble County Commissioners in June 2009.” An Environmental Impact Statement is much more comprehensive and detailed than an Environmental Assessment.

CVA worked closely with the Kimble County Commissioners to complete its resolution that also called for the use of monopoles instead of lattice towers and called for a setback of 1,400 feet from any residences.

Since that time, CVA has also helped organize or participated in two meetings with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, encouraging the agencies to require the LCRA TSC to complete an Environmental Impact Statement instead of an Environmental Assessment.

“These high-voltage transmission lines are going to permanently change the landscape of the Hill Country, impacting wildlife, water and viewsheds,” Neiman said. “We cannot afford to let LCRA shirk its corporate responsibility to protect and conserve the fragile environment of the Hill Country. Because the Hill Country will get no second chances, we have to demand that LCRA does the right thing, not the easy thing. Once it’s gone, it’s forever.”