## New BRAUNFELS UTILITIES New Braunfels Utility: Water Cycle & Wastewater Treatment

New Braunfels, Texas



A Texas water utility re-envisions its role as water steward by restoring 16 acres at the headwaters of the Comal River, transforming a municipal lot into a biodiverse headquarters facility that demonstrates wastewater treatment and reuse.

## SERVICES

Ecological Restoration Conservation Infrastructure Water Urban Ecology he spring-fed Comal River is critical to the ecology, culture, and community of New Braunfels. To help advance its protection and stewardship, New Braunfels Utilities sought to restore a 16-acre site municipal storage and facilities lot in the vicinity of the river's headwaters to a premier Hill Country education and community center. Biohabitats was a key member of the design team led by Lake|Flato Architects. Working alongside the utility and guided by community input, the design team created a plan to replace paving and hardscape around the springs with native plants and a landscape designed to absorb and filter stormwater to protect and enhance water quality.

Walking paths, viewing points over the spring, and interpretive signage introduce visitors to the utility's nature-based approach to water stewardship. The site's original large, metal buildings are slated to be upgraded for administrative use, and in some cases, stripped back to the shells to provide community education and experience pavilions. One pavilion will be home to the new onsite wastewater treatment and reuse system designed by Biohabitats. The system features constructed wetlands that demonstrate a natural-systems process for treating waste and reclaiming water for reuse in toilet flushing.

Biohabitats provided the wastewater treatment system planning, design, and engineering, working collaboratively with the utility and design team members to integrate the treatment cells within one of the repurposed steel pavilions as an interpretive element for the site.