

# VANESSA PUIG-WILLIAMS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic, collaborative, and enthusiastic leader with over a decade of experience in environmental law and policy. Passionate and thoughtful conservation advocate and diplomat. Successful fundraiser. Water policy guru. Skilled researcher, writer, and communicator. Driven, self-motivated, entrepreneurial spirit. Innovative thinker and doer who inspires, amplifies, and executes change through relationship and team building.

## EXPERIENCE

### **Puig-Williams Law, PLLC**

*Solo Practitioner; January 2015 – Present*

Experience includes representing landowners and landowner groups on issues related to groundwater regulation and wastewater issues, representing land trusts in conservation easement transactions, advising landowner clients on strategy related to conservation funding, and conducting research and writing on water policy issues, such as the rule of capture and regulatory impediments to “One Water” projects in Texas.

### **Trinity Edwards Springs Protection Association (TESPA)**

*Executive Director and General Counsel, January 2015 – Present*

Responsibilities include managing and overseeing all contractors, partners, and volunteers; leading board meetings and workshops; directing strategy and program development and implementation; fundraising and handling donor relations; managing operating budget including planning and spending; writing grant applications and grant reports; collaborating with diverse and often competing stakeholder groups including scientists, lawyers, elected officials, businesses, governmental agencies, and community advocates; running social media channels and website; executing all communication materials including emails, blog posts, and videos; and representing TESPAs by organizing community educational meetings, writing opinion editorials, presenting at conferences, moderating and participating on panels, and participating in radio and news interviews and videos.

Program highlights/accomplishments include: drafting and filing lawsuit challenging the rule of capture in Texas; contesting groundwater production permit applications and drafting and filing public comments on groundwater conservation district rules; successfully proposing draft consensus based legislation to protect domestic groundwater wells at the Texas Water Conservation Association, authored by Chairman Larson in the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislative session; leading and developing community education; testifying at legislative hearings; drafting legal briefs and motions and arguing at hearings before the State Office of Administrative Hearings; collaborating with stakeholders to develop recommendations to create a groundwater management zone around Jacob’s Well, an iconic Hill Country spring; initiating and raising funds for the development of a groundwater/surface water model in the Blanco River Watershed; advancing messaging relating to landowners’ rights to conserve groundwater in place; and engaging local elected officials in efforts to sustainably manage groundwater.

### **Kay Bailey Hutchison Center for Energy Law and Business**

*Affiliated Fellow, May 2012 – May 2017*

Research and writing on water policy, energy, and the environment. Past work has focused on environmental flows, endangered species protection, state water planning and groundwater conservation districts in Texas.

### **Goldsmith, Bogisch, and Chaires**

*Contract work, February 2015 – April 2016*

Research related to issues impacting oil and gas leases and royalty interest holders.

### **The Law Firm of Burgess Jackson**

*Contract work, January 2010 – January 2015*

Assisted in matters related to conservation easement transactions and mitigation banking, such as drafting and reviewing conservation easements and management agreements and reviewing mineral leases and chain of title issues.

### **Attorney General of Texas, Natural Resources Division**

*Assistant Attorney General, October 2006 – January 2009*

Litigated environmental enforcement suits on behalf of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality involving solid waste, air and water quality issues.

### **Lower Colorado River Authority**

*Law Clerk, August 2005 – November 2005*

**Lloyd, Gosselink, Rochelle & Townsend, PC**

*Environmental Law Clerk, Summer 2005; Spring 2006*

**Texas State Senator Jon Lindsay**

Staff Member, 78th Legislative Session, 2003

**Texas State Representative Robert Talton**

Staff Member, 1999 - 2002

**EDUCATION**

**The University of Texas School of Law, Austin, TX**

JD; May 2006

TEXAS ENVIRONMENTAL LAW JOURNAL

**The University of Texas, Austin, TX**

BA in History and BA in Geography, May 2002

Phi Beta Kappa

Most Outstanding Geography Undergraduate

**PUBLICATIONS**

[Why You Should Care About Groundwater Pumping in Hays County](#), Austin American Statesman, June 25, 2019

[The Endangered Species Act and Texas Law of Water Resources](#), Essentials of Texas Water Resources, (6th Edition)

[Groundwater Conflicts in Unregulated Areas](#), TEXAS WATER JOURNAL, November 2016

[Protecting Species or Hindering Development: How the Endangered Species Act Impacts Development on Western Public Lands](#),

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW REPORTER, November 2016

[The Endangered Springflow Act](#), Energy Center, January 2015

[The Conflict between Endangered Species and the State Water Plan](#), Energy Center, April 2014

[Implementing SB 3, Adopting Environmental Flows in Texas](#), Energy Center, September 2013

**PRESS**

[Texas Public Radio](#), Texas Water Symposium Legislative Outlook for Hill Country Water Resources, April 2019

[Video on Groundwater Pumping in Hays County](#), May 2017

[Texas Tribune Q&A](#) with Vanessa Puig-Williams, November 2016

[Lawyers Say Ruling Bad for Landowners](#), Texas Tribune, June 2016

[Next Wimberley Water Fight](#), Austin American Statesman, November 2015

**SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

Moderator, *Texas Water Symposium: Legislative Outlook for Hill County Water Resources* with Representatives Andy Murr and Vicki Goodwin, April 2019

Water Policy Panel, *Texas Land Trust Council Annual Conference*, March 2019

Speaker, *Lonestar Groundwater Forum*, March 2019

Texas Water Policy Panel, *Hill Country Alliance Leadership Summit*, September 2018

Moderator, Groundwater Law Panel, *Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts Annual Conference*, August 2018

Speaker, *An Evening on Texas Water*, University of Texas Jackson School of Geosciences, April 2018

Groundwater Law Panel, *Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts Annual Conference*, August 2016, August 2017

Groundwater Law and Ethics, *CLE International Texas Water Law*, June 2017

Groundwater and Conservation Law, *Texas Land Trust Council Annual Conference*, March 2017

Groundwater Conflicts in Unregulated Areas, *Texas State Bar Changing Face of Water Rights CLE*, February 2016

**COMMUNITY**

Fellow, Meadows Center for Water and the Environment

Appointee, Council Member Paige Ellis, City of Austin Water Forward Task Force

Vice President, Hill Country Alliance

Treasurer, Wimberley Valley Watershed Association

Member, Austin One Water Working Group Onsite Water Reuse Subcommittee

County Judge Appointee, 2017 Travis County Citizens Bond Advisory Committee  
Member, Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts  
Member, Environmental Section of the Austin Bar Association  
Member, Texas Water Conservation Association  
Former Member, Travis Forward Political Action Committee, Fundraising Committee

**CERTIFICATIONS**

Completed 40-hour mediation training through the Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution at the University of Texas