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New Braunfels Utilities and the Headwaters at the Comal Kick-off the Big Dig A Rare and Unique Archaeology Excavation to be Made Public

(New Braunfels, TX – October 18, 2018) – In 2010, New Braunfels Utilities (NBU), compelled by its mission to be a trusted partner in the community, and driven by its core value of stewardship, made a decision that will have a lasting impact on the New Braunfels community and beyond for generations to come. Rather than redeveloping or selling portions of the NBU 16-acre old warehouse and fleet/facility center on Klingemann Avenue, near downtown New Braunfels, NBU recognized the property was a vital ecological and historically significant site containing the first of the Comal Springs (the headwaters of the Comal), the largest springs in the American Southwest and the original water source for the City of New Braunfels. Restoring this property back to a natural state, improving water quality in the Comal River, and honoring the cultural significance of the property inspired the project we now know as the Headwaters at the Comal.

During the recent Phase I of restoration of the Headwaters at the Comal, a number of significant cultural resources and artifacts were discovered, including a number of rock middens and hearths, indicating habitation of the site. Most features contained organic materials, lithic tools, and debris, which suggests good preservation and excellent research opportunities. Samples researched to date indicate resources range from the Early Archaic and Middle Archaic through Paleo-Indian periods.

Mason Miller, Ama Terra Environmental, Inc., Media Director/Archaeology Principal Investigator commented, “We, at AmaTerra Environmental, Inc., are privileged to have an opportunity to work with the Headwaters at the Comal, and NBU, on this amazing archaeological site. We are eager to peel back the soil and peer back through the millennia to some of the best-preserved evidence of the lives of what may well be some of the earliest inhabitants of this area ever recorded. This site is something for New Braunfels to be proud of. We have a chance to learn so much about what these earliest peoples’ lives were like; how their world changed over time, and how they reacted to that change. Plus, we get to do so in such a beautiful setting! As if that wasn’t enough, being able to do this research on a site that will complement the outreach mission of this facility so well is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We want to make the most of this serendipity by encouraging members of the community and those farther away to learn about this site through different activities on site and online, and see how modern humanity’s interaction with nature is just the latest in a much longer story that connects us all together.”

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New Braunfels Utilities and the Headwaters at the Comal to Kick-off the Big Dig

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Page 2

Since its inception, the Headwaters at the Comal has aspired to be a unique and visionary place to educate and honor the cultural and environmental history of this site and the entire region. The discoveries that may lie ahead have the potential to influence our understanding of human history in Texas, and support the stewardship of our environment.

"The Headwaters at the Comal is a conservation legacy by NBU, and today I could not be more proud to introduce and share this rare, educational opportunity to individuals and organizations who are committed to preserving these historic artifacts. The potential for unique discoveries are abundant. This is a real opportunity to discover what and who came before us - and their way of life," noted Ian Taylor, NBU, CEO.

The public is encouraged to observe the archaeologists at work and witness the discovery of history and ancient civilization unearthed at the Headwaters at the Comal, which has early indication that it has been a special gathering place for people for thousands of years. Nancy Pappas, Managing Director of the Headwaters at the Comal added, "We will offer the public an opportunity to be part of this historic opportunity. Beginning October 23, 2018 through early 2019, a number of select locations on-site at the Headwaters at the Comal will transform into an Archaeological Recovery Excavation or 'Big Dig.' Archaeologists and specialists from AmaTerra Environmental, Inc., and Texas State's Center for Archaeological Studies will excavate approximately 90 cubic meters of soil to understand the lives and environment of the pre-historic people who have visited the Comal Springs for thousands of years."

News Conference footage, interviews, and photos can be accessed at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/huyio6jl16kmdkg/AADe-BZE3aF871XZ9y9wXUVoa?dl=0>

To learn more about the Headwaters at the Comal archaeology excavation, and how you can participate in upcoming events, visit: headwatersatthecomal.com/archaeology.

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About New Braunfels Utilities: Dedicated to excellence in service, New Braunfels Utilities is one of 2,000 community-owned, not-for-profit public power electric utilities in the nation. The mission of New Braunfels Utilities is to enhance the quality of our community by providing innovative, essential services. Governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of local residents appointed by the New Braunfels City Council, New Braunfels Utilities is committed to being a recognized and trusted community partner, providing electric, water, and waste water services. Utility revenues are continually invested back into the systems of the customers, which benefits the community. New Braunfels Utilities makes an annual transfer to the City of New Braunfels, which in turn helps to pay for services such as fire, police, and parks. Follow NBU on Facebook at [newbraunfelsutilities](https://www.facebook.com/newbraunfelsutilities), on Twitter at [nbutility](https://twitter.com/nbutility), and to learn more visit nbutexas.com.

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New Braunfels Utilities and the Headwaters at the Comal to Kick-off the Big Dig

A Rare and Unique Archaeology Excavation to be Made Public

Page 3

About the Headwaters at the Comal: The Headwaters at the Comal, where everything begins – is the intersection of water and history. Upon completion, the Headwaters at the Comal will be an environmental showcase for all ages – a place for research, learning, and enjoyment that highlights the hydrological environmental, and cultural history of the region. To learn more about the Headwaters at the Comal, visit headwatersatthecomal.com.

About AmaTerra: AmaTerra Environmental, Inc. is an Austin, Texas-based environmental consulting company that is celebrating its 20th year. AmaTerra specializes in helping public- and private-sector construction project teams successfully navigate through environmental permitting processes and local, state, and federal agencies appropriately manage those precious environmental, biological, and cultural resources that they oversee. AmaTerra's staff includes professional ecologists, wildlife biologists, architectural historians, archaeologists, public outreach specialists working in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and throughout the United States on projects ranging from small city sidewalks to massive multi-county water pipelines and more – not to mention the occasional spacecraft landing facility! AmaTerra's archaeologists and architectural historians have been working with the design team on the Headwaters at the Comal since 2013 and are thrilled with the opportunity to continue working on such an important site.

About the Texas Historical Commission: The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is the state agency for historic preservation. The Texas Historical Commission works to save the real places that tell the real stories of Texas. The THC also assists sponsors of development projects like the Headwaters at the Comal in complying with state and federal laws that protect and consider historic and archeological sites.