



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Victoria J. Li, P.E., Director
Watershed Protection Department

DATE: July 28, 2011

SUBJECT: Renewal of Federal Incidental Take Permit for Barton Springs Salamander

In order to maintain operation of Barton Springs Pool, habitat for the endangered Barton Springs Salamander, and associated scientific activities, the City of Austin must have an "incidental take" permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, issued pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 10(a)(1)(B). The City's current permit, issued in 1998, expires in October 2013. Because of the extensive federal review process involved in endangered species permit actions, the Watershed Protection and Parks and Recreation departments are now initiating the process to obtain a new permit for the Barton Springs Salamander (*Eurycea sosorum*).

The federal permit was issued based on the actions described in the City's Habitat Conservation Plan for the Barton Springs Salamander. A new Habitat Conservation Plan, which focuses only on City activities in and around Barton Springs Pool, will not be substantially different from the current version. The new plan will include the Austin Blind Salamander (*Eurycea waterlooensis*), in advance of its probable listing as an endangered species, and will modify some existing conservation measures based on the results of extensive scientific studies conducted since the current plan was developed in 1998. The new plan will also include potential repair, maintenance and restoration projects envisioned in the Barton Springs Pool Master Plan.

There will be multiple public input opportunities throughout the permit renewal process beginning with briefings for the Environmental Board and the Parks and Recreation Board during August 2011. Members of the public will also be encouraged to visit an informational website, http://www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/salamander_guidelines.htm, which will be updated frequently with meeting schedules and documents as they are developed. Interested citizens also may email comments directly to a dedicated email address: salamander@ci.austin.tx.us

If you have any questions about the permit process, please contact me at 974-9195 or contact our project manager, Chris Herrington, at 974-2840.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Sue Edwards, Assistant City Manager
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager
Sara Hensley, CPRP, Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Mike Personett, Assistant Director, Watershed Protection Department