



Record of Decisions

**Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan
Coordinating Committee
March 14, 2012, 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Travis County Commissioners Courtroom
324 W. 11th Street, 1st Floor
Austin, Texas**

Attending:

Mayor Lee Leffingwell, Chair
Precinct 3 Commissioner Karen Huber, Member
Mr. Adam Zerrenner, Member (Ex Officio)
Mr. William Conrad, Secretary

- 1. Citizen Communications** – Hill Abel spoke as an advocate for public access for the past fourteen years. In that role he served on the BCCP Trail Master Plan (TMP) Task force. He expressed concern that the TMP provided for completion of a study by the BCCP Scientific Advisory Committee on the effects of Mountain Biking and other trail uses on golden-cheeked warblers. He noted that a subcommittee was formed by the SAC to complete this but they only met once and that they haven't met since 8/24/2010. Mr. Abel said he was frustrated because he spoke to the Coordinating Committee Secretary about his concerns and received assurances that the chair of the subcommittee would be replaced and the process would be restarted. This has not happened and Mr. Abel asked coordinating committee members for their support by providing direction to the SAC. He also asked that the subcommittee chair, David Steed, be replaced because he considers Dr. Steed biased.

Chair Leffingwell noted that this issue needs a definitive answer and that the issue of mountain bike access on BCP will not go away without it.

Member Huber asked for a summary of the minutes from the subcommittee and its history.

- 2. Approve Record of Decisions for the October 27, 2011 meeting** – Motion from Huber, Second by Leffingwell, carried 2/0.
- 3. Report on options to change the size and composition of the Coordinating committee and take action** – Member Huber said she had only received the memo

regarding this issue from the Assistant County Attorney and Assistant City Attorney five minutes before the meeting. [John Hille and Mitzi Cotton provided members with a memo responding to the question as to whether the BCCP governing documents allow for changes to the Coordinating Committee. If so what process is involved? The memo noted that changes can be made following the process in section 7.2 of the BCCP Interlocal Agreement, which might constitute a major amendment of the BCCP permit.] Chair Leffingwell asked if an executive session should be convened for this discussion. Mitzi Cotton, Assistant City Attorney, advised members that this topic did not qualify for executive session under Texas Open Meetings statutes because of the nature of legal representation for individual members.

Commissioner Huber asked how the composition is defined. She stated that she was not interested in a major rewrite of BCCP. "Good policy is often the result of negotiation". She is concerned that the current committee membership is constrained in a manner that limits the ability of this committee to make good policy. Because of committee size the members are unable to speak and negotiate directly. Instead staffs are in the position of negotiating and making policy that the committee then administers.

Mitzi Cotton responded that all negotiations must currently be conducted in an open meeting. Commissioner Huber noted that that method is effective ninety percent of the time. However, when particularly sensitive matters arise it might be better if, in the context of a larger committee, officials from the City and County could meet outside a quorum and discuss matters.

Commissioner Huber explained, "The current challenge is policy versus administration. I would like to look a little bit deeper to see what we could do without triggering a major revision." She asked Mr. Zerrenner if the Service has any insight about whether this would constitute a major amendment. He said he had not seen the memo. He asked for a copy and he offered to have his solicitor look at the issue and provide advice on behalf of the service.

This item was tabled until the Service has the opportunity to review the matter and provide their advice to the Coordinating Committee.

4. **Report from Coordinating Committee Secretary on Adaptive Management actions for WTP4 Jollyville Transmission Main** – Willy Conrad Provided a verbal and written report to the Committee.
5. **Report from Scientific Advisory Committee** - David Steed, Chair, presented a verbal report to the committee. He noted that the SAC supports the adaptive management plan for Jollyville Transmission Main. He also reported to the Coordinating Committee about SAC concerns over recent discovery in Travis County of Raspberry crazy ants. He introduced Wizzy Brown, Entomologist, Texas Agrilife Extension Service who gave a brief presentation about this recently discovered invasive species in western Travis County. Following her presentation Willy Conrad advised the members that BCP staffs have informed a task force. The task force and the Coordinating Committee Secretary will be reaching out to agencies within the City and County that manage infrastructure to educate them about these ants and provide them with information about who to respond to if they encounter them. Chair Leffingwell asked to have the Coordinating Committee kept apprised as this issue develops.

6. **Report from Citizens Advisory Committee** - Peter Torgrimson introduced himself to members as the newly elected chair of the CAC. He reported that the CAC has a committee that is revising portions of their bylaws to clarify duties of officers and to revise the election process. He also reported that his committee has heard reports and is currently concerned about two issues: Turkey Creek Trail compliance with its Trail Master Plan agreement, and threats of wildfire.
7. **Receive reports from BCP partners on wildfire planning and actions, take action as appropriate** – Willy Conrad gave a verbal report on behalf of the City BCP. Rose Farmer gave a verbal report on behalf of the County. She reported that Travis County has applied for a grant to manage potential wildland fire fuels on 145 acres by creating twenty five miles of shaded fuel breaks along the Wildland Urban Interface. Adam Zerrenner noted that the Balcones National Wildlife Refuges has been working for years to understand and document the effects of prescribed fire on golden-cheeked warblers. He also reported that the Service is current examining several best management practices that might be effective in reducing fire risk without affecting habitat for Endangered Species. Chair Leffingwell noted the BCP presents several issue when working to prevent wildfires. He credited all of the folks from the City and County who have been working to improve local fire safety. He also noted that he worked with numerous local officials to hold a recent Emergency Management Summit that focused on wildfires. He said he intends to continue that work. Member Huber also commended the work of the County and City wildfire task forces, and their decision to work together and become a Joint Wildfire Task Force. She made a motion of support for all of the joint wildfire planning efforts occurring within and near the BCCP area. Chair Leffingwell noted that the item is posted for action, seconded the motion, and it carried 2/0.
8. **Receive Law Enforcement reports from BCP Partners** - Ron Phillips from Travis County and Willy Conrad representing the City gave verbal reports
9. **Receive reports on the status of BCCP Public Participation and Infrastructure Mitigation processes** Shelley Miller and Willy Conrad gave verbal reports.
10. **Land Acquisition and Section 6 Grant Update report** - Rose Farmer gave a verbal report.
11. **Receive a briefing regarding possible Managing Partner Agreement with the City of Sunset Valley** – Carolyn Meredith, representing the City of Sunset Valley, presented a letter from her City Manager proposing a managing partner agreement between the City of Sunset Valley and BCCP. She gave a brief presentation. Rose Farmer gave a brief verbal presentation about efforts being led by Travis County to facilitate this agreement. Chair Leffingwell directed staff to negotiate this agreement and bring it back to the Coordinating Committee for consideration
12. **Receive Land Management Updates from BCCP partners staffs** – Shelly Miller, Linda Laack, and Willy Conrad presented and discussed their written reports.