



Record of Decisions

**Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan
Citizens Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting
November 5, 2013 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM
Waller Creek Center Room 104
625 East 10th Street
Austin, Texas 78701**

Attending:

Bill Moriarity
John Gosdin
David Whatley
Ken Beck
Lynne Weber

Tom Hegemeyer
Peter Torgimson
Mary Ann Neely
Hill Abel
Joe Lessard

Absent:

Valerie Bristol

1. **Citizens Communication** – None Presented
2. **BCP Partner Reports**
 - a. **City of Austin BCP** – Lisa O'Donnell reviewed a written report. She discussed items related to coyote population management, Tawny Crazy ants, and downlisting actions by USFWS for black-capped vireos
 - b. **Travis County BCP** – Wendy Connally reviewed a written report. She discussed BCCP participation noting nearly \$30 thousand in current quarter revenues. She also reviewed county actions regarding land acquisitions (no new purchases this quarter), white tailed deer population management, and wildfire mitigation.
 - c. **LCRA BCP** – Jarrod Depew presented a verbal report. LCRA is busy assessing and resolving flood damage from recent flood events and they are busy preparing their portion of the BCCP annual report. He noted that incidence of trespass seems to be down on LCRA managed BCP.
 - d. **Other BCP Partners** - none
3. **New Business**
 - a. **Update regarding USFWS published Final Rule for determination of Endangered Species Status for Austin Blind Salamander and Threatened Status for Jollyville Plateau Salamander throughout Their Ranges** – Tanya Sommer gave a brief verbal report for USFWS to members. USFWS listed Jollyville Plateau salamander (JPS) as Threatened and Austin Blind salamander (ABS) as Endangered on September 19, 2013. The Service is also completing two listing decisions for other salamanders in this region. For JPS and ABS no recovery plans or regulations for permits have been developed yet. The service could not begin that process until listing

was effective. Once the Service has completed their additional listing decisions the it will focus on plans and regulations for these newly listed species.

b. Announce elections for CAC officers and Open nominations as prescribed by CAC bylaws:

Officers shall be a Chair and a Vice-Chair to be elected for one year terms at the first Committee meeting of the calendar year. At the last meeting of the calendar year the current Chair will announce that an election will be held at the next scheduled Committee meeting and that both self-nominations and nominations of others will be accepted by the secretary. The secretary will compile and distribute the election slate to the Committee ahead of the first Committee meeting of the year, with prior discussion and agreement from the nominees – Member Lessard Made a motion to open the floor for nominations, Member Neely seconded. Carried 10/0. Member Gosdin nominated Peter Torgrimson as chair, Neely seconded.

The chair advised members to consider other nominations and forward those to the Secretary so that he can confer with the proposed nominee to see if they will accept. Thee Secretary will maintain nominations and will present a ballot at the next regular meeting.

c. Members' Issues and Concerns – John Gosdin reminded members about the COA volunteer recognition dinner.

4. Old Business

- a. Approve the Record of Decision from 9/10/13 –** Motion to approve as submitted from Beck, second by Neely carried 8/0 with Moriarity abstaining
- b. Update from the Coordinating Committee Secretary regarding a request for Construction Approval to build a new road in a BCP infrastructure Corridor. Take action ad appropriate –** Secretary reported that Leander ISD has asked the Coordinating Committee to postpone to a future meeting any action on their appeal. The school district is evaluating one or more non-BCP alternatives to address their safety concerns. They may ask to have their appeal heard at a future meeting if these new alternatives do not work out.

The secretary also reported Coordinating Committee concerns over reports from constituents about frustrations with the advisory committee process and concerns that they were not treated with respect. He also advised members that he reviewed the recording of the meeting and did not find any dialog from members that created a sense of disrespectful or arrogant tone. Instead he noted that he observed a case of citizens asking hard questions of proponents.

Members Lessard, Neely, and Webber each discussed their observation of actions by this committee to hear out anyone wishing to discuss this item. At one point the committee considered ending discussion in order to act on this item within the scheduled timeframe for this meeting. In the end the committee agreed to extend the meeting if needed and here everyone who wished to speak.

They also noted the initial motion was to recommend denial of the appeal. That motion was amended to recommend to the Coordinating Committee

that should they determine that the proposed road was the most feasible means to address safety concerns, then LISD should be allowed to use the proposed corridor for a road as long as any affected habitat is fully mitigated.

During discussion at this meeting member Lessard noted that there has never been any sort of report, evidence or documented assessment of safety concerns and solutions. He said that all that has been presented is anecdotal discussion with no documented assessment. This places members of this committee and the Coordinating Committee in a very difficult position because they are being asked to alter policy with little or no formal data to consider.

He also recommended that should the road be approved, approval should include the condition that the road will be allowed only as long as these schools are on this site and serving students. Since the preserve is perpetual, should the schools ever close, be demolished ... the road should be closed, decommissioned, and the site restored to appropriate habitat.

c. CAC Annual Work Plan

i. Report from subcommittees

- 1. Wildfire and fire support** - Secretary Conrad reported that the County-Wide CWPP draft has been received. It is considered deficient and Joint Wildfire Task Force members are working with the consultants to bring it into compliance with the contract.
- 2. Invasive species in landscaping** – Secretary Conrad will work with members to convene this task group.
- 3. Friends of BCP group** – Torgrimson, Lessard, and Neely reported on past work of this group. Webber asked whether there were documents that described recommendations and plans,. There are and Torgrimson will work with other members to get those redistributed. Conrad will work with members to reconvene this task group.