

**AGENDA**



**Recommendation for Council Action**

Austin City Council - Commissioner's Court Meeting	<b>Item ID</b>	34268	<b>Agenda Number</b>	88.
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<b>Meeting Date:</b>	8/7/2014	<b>Department:</b>	Watershed Protection
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**Subject**

Authorize negotiation and execution of an interlocal agreement with the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District to coordinate management activities relating to the protection of the Barton Springs and Austin Blind salamander species.

**Amount and Source of Funding**

**Fiscal Note**

There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

<b>Purchasing Language:</b>	
<b>Prior Council Action:</b>	November 3, 2011 - Council passed Resolution No. 20111103-034 to authorizing the City Manager to prepare and submit to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service an application under the Endangered Species Act Section 10(a) for the operation of Barton Springs.
<b>For More Information:</b>	Chris Herrington, Watershed Protection Department, 512-974-2840
<b>Boards and Commission Action:</b>	
<b>MBE / WBE:</b>	
<b>Related Items:</b>	

**Additional Backup Information**

Because Barton Springs is habitat for the federally endangered Barton Springs Salamander (*Eurycea sosorum*) and Austin Blind Salamander (*Eurycea unterloensis*), the City of Austin is required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to maintain a permit under the Endangered Species Act Section 10(a). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a revised and extended permit to the City of Austin in September 2013 (TE 839031-1) to allow for the continued operation and maintenance of the springs through 2033 (<http://austintexas.gov/department/salamander-management-guidelines>).

The continued survival of these endangered salamander species is dependent not only upon appropriate habitat management by the City of Austin within Barton Springs consistent with the City of Austin Habitat Conservation Plan approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but also upon maintenance of sufficient quantity of groundwater discharging from the springs. Withdrawal of groundwater from the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer is regulated by the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (BSEACD). The BSEACD is currently in the process of obtaining a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their operations.

A provision of the City of Austin permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Barton Springs requires the development of a cooperative agreement with the BSEACD to formalize collaborative efforts to protect endangered *Eurycea* salamanders and the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer by September 2014. The proposed draft interlocal agreement between the City of Austin and BSEACD formalizes on-going cooperative efforts and includes provisions relating to routine communication, data sharing, collaboration on hydrogeological and biological studies, on-going hosting of the Kent Butler Memorial Summit, and collaborating on regional issues affecting the quality and quantity of water in the Edwards Aquifer. The majority of the provisions in the draft interlocal agreement describe City of Austin and BSEACD activities which are currently on-going although on an informal basis.