



Record of Decisions

Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) Coordinating Committee

February 9, 2018, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Travis County Multi-Function Room B
700 Lavaca Street, Austin, Texas 78701

Attending:

Travis County Commissioner Precinct 2 – Brigid Shea, Chair
Austin City Council Member District 7 – Leslie Pool, Co-Chair
USFWS – Adam Zerrenner, Member (Ex Officio)
BCCP Coordinating Committee Secretary – Kimberlee Harvey

1. **Citizen Communications** – Three citizens spoke about the BCCP Public Access Chapter Land Management Plan draft update. They requested more language from the 1999 Public Access chapter regarding grandfathered access be included in the new draft and requested more opportunity to work with BCP staff on the next revision.
2. **Approve Record of Decisions for the December 1, 2017 Regular Meeting** - Motion from Pool to approve, second by Shea, Carried 2/0
3. **Community Reaction to Nextdoor Post of Letter from Coordinating Committee to BCP Neighbors**– Johanna Arendt, Travis County Community Liaison, presented public comments posted in response to the community outreach letter.
4. **Public Access Issues Discussed at National Habitat Conservation Plan Coalition Annual Meeting** – Melinda Mallia, Travis County Natural Resources Program manager, and Nico Hauwert, City of Austin Program Manager for the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, gave a presentation illustrating the benefits and challenges of public access into caves and on the preserve.
5. **Current Events: RM 620 at RM 2222 Regional Mobility Improvements Project** - Secretary reported that TxDOT is working on a Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the RM 620 at RM 2222 Regional Mobility Improvements project, and conservation measures for the project may benefit the BCP.
6. **BCCP Draft Land Management Plans: Updates and Approval Timelines** – Secretary
 - **Chapter 5: Infrastructure Corridor Management**- The updated chapter was approved by the Coordinating Committee at the last meeting on December 1, 2017
 - **Chapter 6: Fire Management**- The City's Fire Coordinator has resumed his

review of the current Fire Management Chapter and is working on an updated document outline to guide BCP staff on the revised draft. When the draft is completed, it will be distributed to partners for comment. Once those comments are incorporated, it will be publically posted with opportunity for public comment.

- **Chapter 12: Public Access Management-** BCP staff is currently working to incorporate more of the guidance and language from the 1999 Public Access Chapter into the newest proposed draft of the Public Access Chapter. When the draft is completed, it will be posted and available to partners and the public before it is presented to the Coordinating Committee

7. **Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) Member Updates** – Secretary reported that the Commissioner's Court appointed Dr. Amy Belaire to the CAC, and that the Consensus Environmental Interests seat was vacant.
8. **2017 BCCP Annual Report** – Kayla Miloy, Travis County Public Participation Administrator, reported that the 2017 Annual Report had been submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and posted online at <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/bccp/2017-annual-report>
9. **BCP Research Plans and Priorities** – Mallia gave an overview of some BCP research plans including looking at how the preservation of BCP land has possibly reduced traffic congestion, and a Tawny Crazy Ant study with UT. Lisa O'Donnell, City of Austin Senior Biologist, gave a presentation with a highlight summary on pending lawsuits for delisting the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Bone Cave Harvestman, and the proposed rule to delist the Black-capped Vireo. She then spoke about avian research including intensive monitoring, color banding, nesting monitoring, and population viability analysis, genetic viability, effects of anthropogenic noise, and effects of Tawny Crazy Ants. Hauwert spoke about karst research including species taxonomy, cricket exit counts, cave faunal survey data trend analysis, hydrogeological studies of water sources, water-quality sampling of cave drips and springs, cave air studies, cave restoration efforts, and geophysical surveys to locate cave habitat. Hauwert also gave a brief update on the Flint Ridge Cave study and analysis, at the request of Shea.
10. **Receive BCCP Partner Reports** – BCP Partner Reports for October through December 2017 were presented. Miloy stated that there were 16 BCCP applications processed and 11 Participation Certificates issued. She also spoke about recent BCP acquisitions by Travis County to support BCP configuration requirements. Linda Laack, Travis County Natural Resources Field Supervisor, reported on field activities including the removal of deer and hogs, wildfire fuel reduction projects, new fencing and gates, oak wilt trenching, and vireo habitat restoration. Arendt reported on the BCP education summary including volunteer programs for guided hikes, programs and presentations, land stewardship activities, ecological monitoring, visiting groups and educators, campouts and training. She also spoke about self-guided public access on the preserve. Cait McCann, Outreach Coordinator for City of Austin Wildland Conservation Division, spoke about the upcoming Austin Cave Festival at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center on February 10, 2018. Hauwert discussed spring location mapping, soft bodied tick and relapsing fever research, preserve encroachments and fencing.

11. **BCCP and BCP Questions, Thoughts, and Direction Discussions** – Shea directed staff to find a mechanism for meeting with folks interested in the Public Access chapter revision. She requested additional information about delisting effects on the Permit and BCP, and the Flint Ridge cave study. Pool asked for an update on a legal encroachment issue. She also spoke about community volunteers who are organized to help with preserve maintenance, for example a “Friends of” group with once or twice yearly workdays. Pool asked about any preserve related conferences or national meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 11:52 am

Video of this meeting can be found on the Travis County TX YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WHfMHSPM9I>