



Record of Decisions

**Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan
Coordinating Committee
May 7, 2014 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon
Austin City Hall, Council Chambers
301 West Second Street
Austin, Texas 78701**

Attending: Mayor Lee Leffingwell, Chair
Precinct 3 Commissioner Gerald Daugherty, Member
Tanya Sommer for Adam Zerrenner, Member (Ex Officio)

Call to Order 10:03 AM

1. **Citizen Communications** – None.
2. **Approve Record of Decisions for the February 5, 2014 regular meeting** – Motion by member Daugherty to approve Second by Leffingwell Carried 2/0.
3. **Distinguished Service Award, David L. Steed Ph.D.** – The Coordinating Committee presented Dr. David L. Steed with a distinguished Service Award for his more than twenty years of service to BCCP, including eleven years as Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee.
4. **Report from Scientific Advisory Committee** - Chair Jean Krejca began by acknowledging Dr. Steed's service on behalf of the SAC, who recommended him for this award.

Ms. Krejca advised members that the SAC has elected officers for the next year. Jean Krejca was elected chair, Craig Farquhar was elected vice-chair. All subcommittee chairs remain unchanged.

The SAC prepared a position statement regarding the Road in the Bull Creek Macrosite previously proposed by the Leander Independent School District. Krejca presented the position statement to Coordinating Committee members.

The SAC reviewed and commented on the draft BCP Land Management Plan Karst and Oak Wilt chapters; and recommends them to the Coordinating Committee.

SAC subcommittees have taken no action during their recent meeting.

5. **Report from Citizens Advisory Committee** - Chair Peter Torgrimson gave a verbal report. He advised members that Forrest Arnold joined the CAC as the representative for the City of Sunset Valley.

The CAC took action to initiate a State of the BCCP report. They will invite the SAC to collaborate on this report. It will include metrics reporting on preserve acquisition and status, public participation and infrastructure mitigation, and economic accomplishments of BCP.

The CAC updated its work plan. They removed the Friends of BCP Component as their role in this is complete, and the challenge is to now find a champion for this friends group. They will monitor progress and assist as necessary.

6. **Recognize and acknowledge the eighteenth anniversary of BCCP** – Secretary Conrad gave an eighteenth anniversary accomplishments report to the Coordinating Committee.
7. **Receive and take action on revisions to guidelines for the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee as directed by the Coordinating Committee on 2/5/14** - Secretary Conrad provided revised guidelines for the SAC and CAC. Revisions included changes and additions requested by Coordinating Committee members during their February 5, 2014 meeting. Motion to approve by Daugherty, second by Leffingwell, carried 2/0.
8. **Receive a report from the Secretary regarding Advisory Committee Attendance for 2014. Take action as appropriate.** Secretary Conrad reviewed a written report detailing two CAC members with two absences during the current calendar. He recommended that Members Abell and Moriarty absences be excused. Daugherty made a motion to excuse those absences. Second by Leffingwell. During discussion Chair Leffingwell asked what might happen if either of these members were to miss a third meeting. Conrad advised that they would be referred to the Coordinating Committee again for consideration and action. Action could include dismissal or being excused at the discretion of the Coordinating Committee. Question called, carried 2/0.
9. **Receive and take action on a staff recommendation to renew Consensus Appointments to the Citizens Advisory Committee and five appointments to the Scientific Advisory Committee** – Secretary Conrad reviewed a written report. CAC members Lessard and Bristol asked to step down. Secretary Conrad recommended reappointment of members Torgrimson and Whatley to the CAC. He recommended reappointment of members Krejca, Farquhar, Steed, Hauwert, and Cornelius. He noted that SAC members Treuer-Kuehn and Whitehead were appointed in February 2014; and their appointments are still current. Daugherty moved to reappoint the listed members to each committee, second by Leffingwell.

Secretary Conrad advised Coordinating Committee members that he will convene the Advisory Committee Task Group as provided in the CAC guidelines and that he will request that Coordinating Committee members appoint a person from their staff to represent them on the task group. Chair Leffingwell asked to include an item to accomplish this, be placed on the August Coordinating Committee Agenda.

- 10. Receive a report and staff recommendation from the Secretary regarding Revised BCP Land Management Plan chapters for Oak Wilt (Chapter 3) and Karst Management (Chapter 9). Take action as appropriate** – Secretary Conrad presented drafts of the BCP Karst Land Management Plan chapter and the BCP Oak Wilt Land Management Plan chapter. After an overview discussion Member Daugherty asked SAC Chair Jean Krejca whether his vote on the Karst chapter has the potential to affect the proposed State Highway 45 Southwest. He advised that this highway is in the vicinity of Flint Ridge Cave. This cave is protected by BCCP as habitat for two species of concern. He noted that he did not want to vote for something that might be problematic for the highway. Krejca advised members that the karst chapter does not contain any new information related to Flint Ridge Cave or any other karst features in the vicinity of the highway. Environmental review contracted for the highway would detail that information instead. It is the property of the planners [CTRMA/TxDOT].

Chair Leffingwell advised members that since member Daugherty's question had been raised he had become uncomfortable with acting on the karst chapter without further review and consultation between drafters and himself. He suggested tabling any action on the karst chapter.

Secretary Conrad advised members that he is involved with CTRMA and TxDOT in their environmental investigations related to SH45. He noted this involves karst investigations. He also noted that the City of Austin is conducting a hydrogeological investigation to delineate the subsurface drainage basin for this cave in order to help evaluate how the proposed highway may impact the cave and its protection required by the BCCP permit. He also noted that none of this information is included in the Karst Management chapter because it is not yet complete. He advised members that he will arrange for staff to meet with members individually and address their concerns before approval of this chapter is brought back before the committee.

Member Daugherty moved to approve the Oak Wilt chapter and to postpone any action on the Karst Management chapter until members have the opportunity to review it further - second by Leffingwell, carried 2/0.

- 11. Receive reports from BCP partners on wildfire planning and actions; take action as appropriate** - Secretary Conrad gave a verbal report noting that the County-Wide Community Wildfire Protection Plan being prepared for Austin Travis County Joint Wildfire Task Force is expected to be completed and released in June.

Chair Leffingwell asked member Daugherty whether Travis County has taken a position regarding purchase and operation of Firewatch Systems to detect wildfires. Member Daugherty noted that costs are high and the systems' effectiveness is unclear. He also noted that there are many other vendors and products available. He advised that the Commissioner's Court is committed to doing everything it takes to make sure communities are safe from wildfire, including those near preserves. He also noted that it's time to slow down and learn more before taking any action related to this system.

Leffingwell noted that there are still many questions, and the proposed pilot project is small scale. This system is used in other countries but not in the U.S. He suggested that others must have evaluated this and we could benefit from their work. He also noted that the proposed schedule to monitor the system is limited to a short period during elevated fire danger. All of this causes him to wonder what the bang for the buck will be.

- 12. Receive reports from BCP staff regarding land management, Public Outreach, BCCP Participation, Infrastructure Management, and BCCP compliance** – Sherri Kuhl reviewed the City’s written report. She directed members’ attention to efforts to develop practices to minimize the spread of Tawny Crazy Ants, an invasive species that poses serious threats to BCP and its protected species. She discussed work to help plan and manage educational cave access. Kuhl discussed the current efforts to complete the fourth year of the golden-cheeked warbler population viability model, and habitat suitability model, being contracted with the U.S. Forest Service.

Wendy Connally reviewed the County’s written report. She updated members on recent land acquisition efforts. She noted that Sunset Valley is in full swing implementing their Managing Partner Agreement with golden-cheeked warbler monitoring in the Gaines Creek Greenbelt and preserve. Connally advised members that BCCP Participation has increased notably this summer. She also noted that the County now has a Jollyville Plateau Salamander monitoring permit from the USFWS.