



Record of Decisions

**Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan
Scientific Advisory Committee
May 11, 2015, 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM
Reicher Ranch Cana House
3621 S. Ranch Road 620
Austin, Texas 78738**

Attending:

Jean Krejca
David Steed
Nico Hauwert

Sam Whitehead
John Cornelius
Amy Treur-Kuehn

Excused:

Craig Farquahr

- 1. Approve Record of Decisions from regular meeting on 10/14/14** – Motion from Krejca to approve, second Treur-Kuehn, carried 5/0/1 Hauwert abstained. Secretary Conrad advised members that while the CAC and SAC have agreed to help the Secretary with this project he has not yet taken any action. He plans to convene a task group after the June Coordinating Committee. The goal will be to complete the report before the BCCP 20th anniversary in May 2016. The goals of the report are to evaluate the state of the permit and HCP, the state of the Preserve, and the state of the science for species covered by the permit. The report will then recommend a roadmap to complete BCP and fully comply with the permit and HCP by the end of the permit term in 2026. BCP partners will then use the report to develop plans and take actions to ensure that BCCP is fully successful by the end of its permit's term.
- 2. BCCP Karst Substitution Workshop Update-** Secretary Conrad, Nico Conrad representing the Karst Subcommittee, and Jean Krejca representing the Substitution Task Group briefed members. Conrad presented and reviewed Version 4 with input from Hauwert and Krejca. He believes that is a near-final draft that will be provided to the Coordinating Committee for review on June 3. He hopes to have the Coordinating Committee approve the policy during their August 23 meeting.
- 3. Subcommittee reports**

- a. **Golden-cheeked Warbler modeling task group** – Member Steed reported that the journal article has been accepted by___ and is going through that publication’s editorial process. This task is complete
 - b. **Mountain Bike Experimental Design** – Member Steed reported that he needs to complete the final report. Subcommittee members that the Davis et al publication is generally a good study with a supportable conclusion that mountain biking in occupied GCWA habitat potentially has an adverse effect on GCWA behavior and nesting success. Members also recommend use of the monitoring procedures in the USGS Marion publication as standards for monitoring adverse physical effects from mountain bikes on habitat and associated natural resources. Steed will complete a final report before the next meeting with support from City staff. This will complete this task.
 - c. **Karst** – Hauwert referenced the previous discussion on Karst Substitution. He reported about the ongoing study to delineate the subsurface drainage basin for Flint Ridge Cave. He reported strong, high confidence results showing a direct connection between the land surface in the SH45 ROW and drips in Flint Ridge Cave. Phase II of the study is nearing completion and phase III will begin this summer.
 - d. **BCP Strategic Research Plan** – Whitehead reported that no action was taken since the last meeting. He expects to have a draft plan for review during the summer meeting in July
4. **Staffs’ reports** – Jon White introduced Melinda Mallia as the Environmental Program Manager for Travis County responsible for managing their BCP. Melinda reviewed her written report. He also updated members about ongoing transportation projects of interest to BCCP. He noted that CTRMA/TxDOT have issued their Final EIS and Record of Decisions for SH45 Southwest. Travis County Commissioners Court has instructed County staff to engage those agencies to ensure that the best storm water and pollution controls possible are integrated into that project. Secretary Conrad advised members that U.S. Fish and Wildlife service has advised various elected officials and members of the BCCP Coordinating Committee that SH45, as described in the FEIS, might have an adverse impact on Flint Ridge Cave that could affect the good standing of BCCP’s federal permit. He advised members to take action before that impact occurs.

White also advised members that the BCCP Partners had reviewed the Draft Habitat Conservation plan submitted by LISD to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and provided comments from various partners staffs to LISD via a letter from the Coordinating Committee Secretary. He noted that while the letter to LISD offered advice on how the district might move their plans forward in a manner that did not jeopardize BCCP, those comments were not well received.

White Also mentioned a proposal for a road through BCP by District 6 City Council Member Don Zimmerman. Secretary Conrad noted that there has been no formal proposal submitted to the Coordinating Committee or the City Council. He advised that the proposed road would likely require a major amendment of the BCCP federal permit in order for the road to be routed and built as described in the press.

Sherri Kuhl reviewed her written report and the joint Austin-Travis County outreach report.

5. **Members' Issues and concerns** – none presented