



## Record of Decisions

**Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan  
Coordinating Committee  
August 26, 2016, 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon  
Travis County Commissioners Courtroom  
700 Lavaca Street, Austin, Texas 78701**

### Attending:

Precinct 3 Commissioner – Gerald Daugherty, Chair  
District 7 City Council Member - Leslie Pool, Co-chair  
USFWS - Adam Zerrenner, Member (Ex Officio)  
BCCP Coordinating Committee Secretary – Kimberlee Harvey

### Call to Order 10:00 AM

- 1. Introduction of new BCCP Coordinating Committee Secretary** – Sherri Kuhl introduced Kimberlee Harvey as the new BCCP Coordinating Committee Secretary. She fills a new full-time position created for this role that is jointly funded by the City of Austin and Travis County.
- 2. Citizen Communications** – Tomas Pantin spoke about the proposed upcoming review of the Public Access chapter of the Land Management Plan and its relationship to the Trail Master Plan. He explained his hope that the chapter would be revised with participation from interested stakeholders and asked to be on that list. He would like to see a new section added to the chapter which would detail steps BCP staff would take to modify grandfathered public access use. He feels those steps should include final review at the Coordinating Committee as well as City Council or the Commissioners Court with a 5 month prior review period by stakeholders.
- 3. Approve Record of Decisions for the April 29, 2016 regular meeting** - Motion from Pool to approve, second by Daugherty, Carried 2/0.
- 4. Report from Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)** - Chair Jean Krejca gave a brief report to the Committee. She stated that the Strategic Research Plan Subcommittee was reported to be progressing by electronic communications in order to get something finalized.
- 5. Report from Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)** - Chair Peter Torgrimson gave members a report. He reported about changes to the CAC membership including John Gosdin leaving the committee as well as two vacancies for Consensus appointments representing Development interests and Environmental interests. Torgrimson also talked about the committee's past efforts in wildfire mitigation and invasive species and what contribution they should have in these areas moving forward to avoid duplication

of staff effort.

6. **Appointment of new CAC Travis County member** – Sherri Kuhl announced that Laurie Dries was appointed to the CAC by the Travis County Commissioners Court.
7. **Appointment confirmation for new CAC consensus member for development** - David Smith was approved as the Consensus member for Development. Motion from Pool to approve, second by Daugherty, Carried 2/0.
8. **Upcoming Land Management Plan Revisions for Public Access, Infrastructure Management, and Fire Management Chapters** – Harvey reported that staff members are starting to work on the Land Management Chapter revisions. She stated that the Public Access chapter was scheduled to be revised after the Trail Master Plan was completed and now that staffing levels were back up they were continuing that effort. Harvey stated that the Infrastructure Management chapter needed some minor revisions to reflect the fact that they were moving some of the spatial data to a digital environment. She announced a revival of the Fire Management Committee composed of City, County, and USFWS staff. Their first objective will be to clarify the composition, function and necessity of a Fire Management Committee. The draft revision will be created by the group and made available for review and comment by BCP Partners and then the final composition of the committee would be defined in the draft and then established when the updated draft was approved. Luke Ball, Fire Manager of the City's Wildland Conservation Division is leading this effort.
9. **Update on BCCP 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration** – Harvey reported that the Celebration event was held outside on a beautiful day at the City's Reicher Ranch BCP. It was well attended with many distinguished guests and speakers. There were guided hikes led by staff which gave participants the ability to see Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat overlooking Lake Austin. There were also native plant giveaways. Several new marketing products were highlighted at the event including a 20-year timeline poster, videos produced by Travis County highlighting accomplishments and karst studies, and animated maps showing the growth of the BCP and development permit participation over time. Council Member Pool added that it was a nice afternoon, with a very celebratory feel, and that everybody put a lot of effort into making it a successful event.
10. **Update on State of the BCCP report** – Harvey reported that she has had discussions with staff and advisory committees about the need, direction, goal, and audience for the report. She conveyed that the response from staff was that they had report fatigue and that efforts should instead be directed towards creating updated, multi-media marketing products. That would be more in line with the goals of modernizing the way the public consumes information about the BCP and BCCP in order to accommodate the digital shift in the way the public searches for information. Commissioner Daugherty and Council Member Pool both expressed support for program awareness and suggested the reduction in the use of acronyms in marketing materials in order to help the community really understand what we are talking about. Zerrenner suggested looking at SXSW Eco to evaluate if it could be a good thing to tap into for BCP awareness ideas.
11. **Receive reports from BCP partners on Wildfire Planning and actions, Land Management, Public Outreach, BCP Participation, Infrastructure Management**

**and BCCP Compliance; take action as appropriate** – Melinda Mallia reported that the Austin/Travis County Wildfire Coalition group continues to include multiple agencies. Mallia mentioned that there was the creation of an evacuation planning committee and an effort to modernize the Wildland-Urban Interface development code. Mallia introduced Debra Scott as the County's new Environmental Project Manager. Kayla Miloy reported that BCCP public participation applications continue to be submitted at a steady pace of one to two applications per week and that the County has issued 17 Participation Certificates so far this year, which is one more than last year. Linda Laack gave the Travis County report, briefing members on field crew activities as they transition to fall land management activities. Council Member Pool asked about the general health of the preserve and how it relates to wildfire. Mallia answered that there has been drought related tree die-off but that recent wildfire modeling by Baylor University showed that there is less of a risk in a closed canopy environment than in surrounding neighborhoods and cleared areas. Laack reported that recent rains have helped the trees with increased moisture content but it has also spurred the growth of fine fuels which may be a wildfire concern during future droughts. Laack also explained that some the patches of tree-die off within the preserve were as great as 20 acres in size. They are evaluating options for removing some of the dead fuels that are accessible. Zerrenner asked how feral hog and deer control management were being done. Laack explained that hog management was trap and shoot, mostly handled in-house with the help of two contracted private citizens and that deer management was performed by a wildlife service contractor. Zerrenner then asked if plans to allow public hunting had been considered, much like at the Refuge. Mallia answered that they have discussed it but concluded that because there was no public access on the tracts, it was not considered as a viable option at this time with the current public access restrictions. Mallia also mentioned that because the BCP was smaller than the Refuge and surrounded by urban areas, that type of hunting program would not be as safe.

Kuhl gave the COA staff report. She reported that there were three staff vacancies that needed to be filled; the GIS Coordinator position vacated by Harvey, the BCP Program Manager position vacated by Kuhl, and the Outreach Coordinator position vacated by Amanda Ross. Kuhl also reported on the acquisition of the Village of Western Oaks karst preserve; that Black-capped vireo numbers were up this year; McNeil High School karst feature habitat restoration; Bracted twistflower survey numbers were up from last year; the Blowing Sink project to restore karst features filled with sediment; staff's fall land management activities; wildfire CodeNEXT regulations; volunteer efforts; and the law enforcement incident of preserve tree clearing by an adjacent landowner that resulted in a felony based on tree value estimates and resulted in his arrest. Council Member Pool reiterated the need for better outreach and education to neighbors and vegetation maintenance crews they may hire. Commissioner Daugherty asked if this could be a president setting case and Kuhl agreed that it could be because of the large scale of the clearing. Commissioner Daugherty asked if bird numbers had increased on the Cortaña BCP tract and Kuhl affirmed there was an increase in Black-capped Vireos. Commissioner Daugherty brought up Water Treatment Plant #4 nearby and asked how a project of this size affects nearby preserve land. Daryl Slusher explained that it was permitted under the original BCP and reminded that the location was moved from the first proposed location due to environmental concerns to the final site which was already proposed for a large high-density development which would have had more of an impact than the water treatment plant has had. Slusher offered

committee members the chance to take a tour of the treatment plant.

A written report from LCRA was provided in the packet.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:05 am**