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MINUTES  
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD  
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD  
December 16, 1997

A joint meeting of the Parks Board and the Environmental Board was held on Tuesday, December 16, 1997, to discuss the transmittal of Tier III Land Management Plan Reports for the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP).

Parks Board Members present: Elaine Carter, Secretary, Erma Linda Cruz-Torres, Rosemary Castleberry, Chair, Rocky Medrano, Vice-Chair, Mary K. Isaacs, Jeff Francell, Dewayne Naumann.

Environmental Board Members present: George Avery, Chair, William Harvey, Joyce Conner, Jessica Christie, Vice-Chair.

PARD staff present: Jesus M. Olivares, Kim Mitchell, Dr. Juan Valera, Lee Stone, Mel Hinson, Mary Ybarbo.

Drainage Utility Department staff present: Roderick Burns.

Rose Farmer with Travis County Natural Resources was present.

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Rosemary Castleberry.

Jesus M. Olivares informed those present that an overview of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves Land Management would be given by Dr. Juan Valera, Division Manager for the Natural Resources Division of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Dr. Valera informed those present the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Regional Habitat Conservation Plan was included in the regional 10A permit which provides an orderly and successful mitigation on a regional basis for federally-protected endangered species lost to development in the west Austin area. A complete copy of the permit can be found in Appendix C of Tier I.

The goals of BCP include acquiring and managing 30,428 acres of endangered species habitat within western Travis County. About 7,463 acres remain to be acquired. Another goal is to manage the land according to the approved "Land Management Plans."

Protected species include Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-capped Vireo, Cave Species (six invertebrates), Canyon Mock-orange and Texabama croton plants, twenty-five Karst species. No salamanders are covered (has separate 10A permit).

Total acres acquired to date is 22,965 with a remaining 7,463 acres to be acquired. The break down for each participant is as follows: Travis County (507 acres), Travis Audubon Society (680 acres), Texas Nature Conservancy (TNC) (4,269 acres), Privately owned (1,809 acres), LCRA (2,680 acres) and City of Austin (12,842 acres).

Within the 12,842 acres managed by the City of Austin, a further break down can be found in the following microsites: Bull Creek (3,269 acres), West Austin (217

acres), Cypress Creek (494 acres), North Lake Austin (3,889 acres), South Lake Austin (3,126 acres) and Barton Creek (1,847 acres).

The City of Austin and Travis County govern the BCP through a Coordinating Committee consisting of the Mayor, a Travis County Commissioner and a non-voting representative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Partners in the management plan who assist each other in the development of the plans and in implementing management practices include the LCRA (2,680 acres), The Nature Conservancy of Texas (4,269 acres) and Travis Audubon Society (680 acres).

Holders of individual 10(a) permits are encouraged to meet with the permit holders and partners to share information and resources.

B.C. National Wildlife Refuge, consisting of 15,444 acres contributes to the ultimate long term viability of the species. Refuge staff meets with BCP staff regularly to share information and resources, such as assisting in prescribed burns.

A chronology for completion of the BCP Land Management Plans is listed as follows:

- \*May 2, 1996 - 10A permit issued to City of Austin
- \*June 1996-May 1997 - Development of standard report format by all regional land managers
- \*May 1997 - Draft of preserve overview report (Tier 1) completed and submitted to USFWS with request for extension to complete management plans
- \*July to December 1997 - Initial biweekly all-day workshops opened to the public to discuss all Tier I, II and III reports
- \*July/September/November 1997 - Submittal of completed and reviewed drafts of Tiers I, II and III to Council and Environmental Board and Parks Board
- \*December 16, 1997 - Joint Environmental/Parks Board meeting which includes a staff briefing
- \*December 1997 to February 1998 - Public review and comments
- \*March 1998 Anticipated date for approval by Coordinating Committee and submittal to USFWS.

Tier I Plan Management provides an overview of the relationships among the permit holders and the public and private partners. Included further are sections on Executive Summary, Preserves Management Plan and Concepts, Purpose and Need for the Preserve System, Biological Resources, Caves, Preserve Management, Preserve System Challenges, References Cited, a Glossary, Tables, Figures and Appendices.

Tier II Plan Management presents details regarding Technical Guidance Handbook (Tier II-A) addressing a variety of management issues; Plan Administration (Tier II-B) and (Tier II-C) includes permit requirements and goals by macrosites. Included further is an Introduction, Vegetation Management Guidelines for Oak Wilt, Endangered Species, Invasive Plants, and Fire Management, Animal Management Guidelines, Physical Management and Guidelines for Visitor Issues and Projects (parts of which are unfinished).

Tier II-B Plan Administration will include Agencies and Descriptions, Interagency Cooperation, Management Contracts and Other Agreements, Regulator Requirements, Budgets and Staff, Annual Report, BCP Peer Review Committee, BCP Land Management Committee, Macrosite Management Committees, approval Process and Issues and Problems. Parts of this plan remains unfinished.

Tier II-C Macrosite reports will include an Introduction, Macrosite Description, Physical Characteristics, Biological Features, Land Uses, Management Program, Goals, Issues, Objectives, Literature cited, an Appendix with Tables and Figures.

Tier III Plan Management provides specific implementation per tract with the following chapters: Background Information, Description of Tract, Physical Characteristics, Biological Features, Land Uses, Management Program, Plan Administration, Management Goals, Issues, Management Objectives, Specific Implementation Procedures and Activities, Monitoring, Literature Cited and Maps and Appendices.

Challenges facing the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves include completing preserves acquisition, public access, urbanization and monitoring preserves and research efforts.

A question and answer period followed.

Both Chairs agreed to another joint meeting after the Advisory Committee has been appointed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.