



Record of Decisions

Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan Coordinating Committee

Monday November 20, 2006 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Boards and Commissions Room

City Hall

301 West 2nd Street, Austin, Texas

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Approve Record of Decisions for 8/21/06 called meeting** – Approved as presented on a motion from member Daugherty, Second by Chair Wynn. Carried 2/0

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS

- **Skip Cameron** – spoke representing the Bull Creek Foundation. He has been involved with BCP since it began. He is concerned that BCP allows hunting on preserves but citizens are not allowed on preserve tracts. He believes this does not serve BCP because citizens can help police, protect, and educate on the preserves. He reminded members that BCP began on a hill top in the Forest Ridge Tract with a meeting between Joe Lessard and parks Director Jesus Olivares. They all agreed that that tract should have a trail narrowed to one track instead of many that would be accessible to all and scientifically studied for impacts. He expressed concern that a plan that was agreed upon by all disappeared as a result of secret meetings. Fifteen years later citizens are still trying to gain access to BCP. He described the Emma Long Park BCP tract as a site where public access exists and can be expanded. He also described the Canyon Vista BCP tract as one where public use has been allowed before and where it should be allowed again. He asks the Coordinating Committee to support the CAC [*Citizens Advisory Committee*] resolution because increased access will not hurt protects species and will provide for better preserve management.
- **Ted Siff** – spoke in reference to the resolution submitted by the CAC. He reminded members that he believes any actions under the plan [*BCCP*] must be science based. However, he also believes that limits on public access are driven more by staffing and program resource limitations. He suggested that BCP programs should have staff additions to support public access priorities. He asked Member Pine to arrange for Balcones National Wildlife

Refuge Staff to work with BCP staff to show how public access can work within the preserves.

- **David Steed** – Addressed the committee as a private citizen and not a representative of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). He reminded members of the recommendations submitted to them by the SAC last summer. He also reminded members that public access policy is set by the three basic BCCP policy documents: the federal permit, the habitat conservation plan and the interlocal agreement, and bond covenants. He said it seems people simply do not accept the policy created by these documents. He advised committee members that if the intent for BCP is changed [*preserve vs. public access*] then we must amend the federal permit first. He stated that BCP is already mitigation for other actions. It cannot serve as mitigation for new public access. He reminded members that BCCP is a compromise that already reduced the amount of protected habitat that the scientists said was needed to protect the species in our permit. Because of this action land is even more precious with respect to meeting the goal of protecting the species in the permit. To make the preserves into something else dismisses BCP. He reminded the members that the original BCCP, permit, and management plans were reviewed by multiple layers of public review before decisions were reached and that there were never any clandestine meetings where policy was changed. He said that an open preserve is unmanageable. Instead, these should only be more supervised access. He closed by reminding members that national wildlife refuges have a different legislative mandate than BCP.