TRANSPORTATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

JOSEPH P. GIESELMAN, EXECUTIVE MANAGER

411 West 13th Street
Executive Office Building
PO Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767
(512) 473-9383
FAX (512) 708-4648

January 12, 1999

Mr. Mel Hinson
City of Austin - PARD
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

RE: FY98 Annual Report for the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan

Dear Mr. Hinson,

We are submitting this letter to you, along with attachments, as the Travis County portion of the fiscal year 1998 Annual Report for the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP). We ask that you incorporate this information in the Annual Report you are preparing to be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) by Coordinating Committee Secretary Jesus Olivares. Following are the items as listed in the BCCP permit for the reporting period October 1997 through September 1998.

1. **A list of all development activities west of the MOPAC Railroad**. Accompanying this letter is the list of Travis County issued permits in an Excel spreadsheet.

2. **A list of all tracts for which Participation Certificates were purchased.** Following is a list of all Participation Certificates purchased under the BCCP; any listings indicating FWS under the "Category" column were not issued a certificate, but were permitted by USFWS and directed to pay mitigation fees to the BCCP.

Date	BCCP	Name	TCAD #	Category	Paid
9/25/97	0082	Reytex Homes	01-7478-0105	Single Family	$1500
10/10/97	0051	K. Mountain	01-5118-0201	Single Family	$1500
12/1/97	0033	Montandon Trust	various	Commercial	$58,140.50
1/9/98	0089	W. & B. Nowlin	01-3437-0634	Single Family	$1500
1/9/98	0099	W. & B. Nowlin	01-3437-0633	Single Family	$1500
2/6/98	0141	C. Clinton	n/a	FWS	$1500
2/13/98	0126	B. & G. Edelmon	04-2367-0106	Single Family	$1500
2/24/98	0024	Jester Ltd.	various	Subdivision	$76,450
2/24/98	0138	Maury Hood	01-4218-0310	Subdivision	$26,928
3/13/98	0087	Reytex Homes	01-7878-0702	Single Family	$1500
3/13/98	0149	D. & M. Michel	n/a	FWS	$1500
3/13/98	0150	Tomen-Parke, Inc.	n/a	FWS	$6,380
3/17/98	0139	M. Deak	pending	Single Family	$1500
3/27/98	0014	MaBe, Inc.	n/a	FWS	$33,000
4/10/98	0136	R. & I. Van Steenberg	01-9247-0105	Single Family	$1500
5/19/98	0097	D. Hansen / Magellan	various	Commercial	$100,375
6/10/98	0129	Tomen-Parke, Inc.	various	Commercial	$1,644.50

Date	BCCP	Name	TCAD #	Category	Paid
8/11/98	0171	Von Kreisler & Swanson	n/a	FWS	$180,000
8/28/98	0175	Fidelity Nat'l Title	n/a	FWS	$240,900
9/3/98	0172	J. & M. Zimmerman	01-8280-0123	Single Family	$1,500
9/9/98	0167	G. Ceshker	01-1837-0712	Single Family	$1,500
9/16/98	0178-83*	Lowder & Assoc.	n/a	FWS	$70,500
					$812,318.00

* This includes six lots to be issued Participation Certificates. The PCs will be issued when we have a unique description for each lot.

3. **Amount of funds collected for land acquisition through the issuance of Participation Certificates.** All the funds collected through issuance of Participation Certificates are listed under #2 above (total: $278,538). Also shown are mitigation fees paid to the BCCP under USFWS' direction based on their determinations for permits they issued (total: $533,780).

4. **Amount of funds expended for land acquisition.** The County did not expend any funds on land acquisition during this reporting period. The County submitted an HCP acquisition grant application in Fall 1997. Travis County received notice of a $2 million award last summer. The grant money was not spent in this reporting period.

5. **Amount of funds expended for operations and maintenance.** Travis County expended $218,659 for operations and maintenance for two of the three Travis County properties included in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (Hamilton Pool Preserve and Wild Basin Preserve). This figure does not include expenditures by The Committee for Wild Basin Wilderness, Inc., which has a contract with Travis County to conduct educational programming and management activities on the County-owned Wild Basin Preserve; nor does it include staff time (from the Natural Resources/BCCP Programs) spent on endangered species surveys, plant surveys, and prescribed burns.

6. **An updated map of the lands dedicated to preserve management.** There have been no changes to land status since we submitted an updated BCCP parcel map to the USFWS office in July 1998. Several tracts are pending.

7. **A list of public use and habitat management activities that have been undertaken or completed within the bounds of the preserve units.** Travis County owns three tracts that are dedicated preserveland for the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. Following are descriptions of activities for each tract:

   Hamilton Pool Preserve - Pre-existing (to the BCCP) public use continued during the reporting period. The Preserve staff maintain approximately 1.5 miles of nature trails for daily public access. Hours are restricted to day use only; fees are charged; public access is restricted to trails and pool area. Pets, fires, cooking, fishing, and collecting are prohibited. Habitat management activities included routine trail maintenance, endangered species and botanical surveys (including initiation of *Philadelphus ernestii* survey). Last winter, we conducted a 15-20 acre prescribed burn including 3 separate units in the uplands adjacent to the public road. The burned areas did not encompass any of the known nesting habitat within the preserve, and were restricted to areas burned within the past nine years.

   Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve - Pre-existing public use continued during the reporting period. The Preserve is managed by The Committee for Wild Basin Wilderness, Inc., with financial and staff

support from the County. Approximately 2.5 miles of nature trails are maintained for daily public and educational tour use. Hours are restricted to day use only; visitor access is restricted to designated trails. Picnicking, pets, and collecting are prohibited. Habitat management activities included endangered species surveys, routine trail maintenance, and creation of defensible space around the building (up to 30') for fire fighters to protect the structure against possible wild fire.

Romberg Preserve - This portion of Bob Wentz Park at Windy Point is separated by Comanche Trail from the rest of the park. The Romberg Tract is not used by the public and is not actively managed other than occasional boundary checks and endangered species surveys.

In addition to land management activities on County-owned BCP lands, Travis County staff conducted or assisted (other BCP partners) with various **educational events**, including guided tours of the BCP, presentations about the public participation process, and exhibits at community events. The audiences for these educational programs varied from real estate agencies to homeowner groups, environmental groups and individuals. The participants were people of all ages - residents, students, and visitors of Austin and Travis County. The community events were: Wildlife Expo (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department), Cave Day (Westcave Preserve), Safari (City of Austin PARD), and Wild Basin's Music and Art Festival.

Travis County staff continue efforts to determine and track cave status of 62 **karst features** covered by the BCCP 10(a) permit: 17 owned by the City of Austin and 45 privately owned, including 22 protected and 23 unprotected caves. Threats to private caves continue: accidental damage to Hole-in-the-Road Cave, Pennie's Cave may have been filled in (cannot be located), and development impacts to Cave X and the caves in the McNeil Cluster. Austin caving organizations and volunteers continue to play key and vital roles in researching and protecting the caves.

8. **A copy of all research or investigation reports that have been prepared.** Two reports were prepared by Travis County staff during the reporting period and have already been submitted to USFWS:

   Gass, Leila. *1998 Endangered Bird Survey Report,* October 1998.

   Terpening, Kristin. *Brown-headed Cowbird Trapping Program, Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan, 1989-1997.* March 1998.

If you have any questions or need additional information for the Annual Report, please contact Ms. Terri Siegenthaler or me at 473-9383.

Sincerely,

Charles Bergh
Travis County BCCP Program Manager

0905 BCCP Annual Report for Travis County

xc: Samuel Biscoe, County Judge
Karen Sonleitner, County Commissioner Precinct 2, BCP Coordinating Committee Member
Joseph P. Gieselman, Executive Manager
John Kuhl, Program Manager Natural Resources
Terri Siegenthaler, Resource Management Specialist
Rose Farmer, Environmental Specialist