



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: 1

Agenda Date: March 26, 2025

In Control: Conservation Advisory Board Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Development Services Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Shannon

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and possible action on the transfer of operations and management of Rancho Diana Huesta Cave preserve from the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program (EAPP) to the Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan (SEP-HCP).

SUMMARY:

Briefing and possible action on the transfer of operations and management of the Rancho Diana Huesta Cave preserve from the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program (EAPP) to the Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan (SEP-HCP).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The EAPP, administered by the Parks and Recreation Department, purchased the 1,152-acre Rancho Diana Huesta Cave preserve for protection of Edwards Aquifer recharge quality and quantity through the 2000

Proposition 3 (Prop 3) program for \$5,844,941.00 in 2001. Approximately 163 acres of this preserve are eligible for Karst Fauna Area (KFA) establishment, with a confirmed occupied feature present (High Quality KFA). If approved, 163 acres would be available for SEP-HCP and would generate approximately 1,670 karst enrollment acres for future project enrollments.

Development Services Department, who administer the SEP-HCP, are proposing to reimburse the EAPP the full investment of Prop 3 funding for the 163 acres (\$1,507,396.29) for the transfer of operations and management of the Rancho Diana Huesta Cave preserve. SEP-HCP accepts that the transfer will require a conservation easement placed on the property and held by the Edwards Aquifer Conservancy; an aquifer protection layer via the conservation easement will remain on the land even with the transfer of management. Moving forward, this property would benefit from two layers of protection: EAPP conservation easement and SEP-HCP requirements. SEP-HCP would then be responsible for maintenance and management.

The current ordinance requires the SEP-HCP to share 50 percent of its revenues generated from enrollments on EAPP-acquired properties with the EAPP. Alternatively, reimbursing the EAPP the full initial investment results in substantially greater funding for EAPP, which allows the program to preserve more land through future purchases.

The Southern Edwards Plateau Habitat Conservation Plan Coordinating Committee, Parks Board, and Conservation Advisory Board will consider this proposal on March 11th, 17th, and 26th, 2025 respectively. The item will require consideration by the Planning and Community Development Committee and City Council.

ISSUE:

Approval of this proposal will require City Council to authorize this alternative funding arrangement in lieu of revenue sharing. Should this not be approved, the SEP-HCP will need to identify other methods to generate further karst enrollment acres.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If approved, the SEP-HCP would fully reimburse the EAPP the total initial investment of 2000 Prop 3 funding for transfer of operations and management of the Rancho Diana Huesta Cave preserve in an amount not to exceed \$1,507,396.29.

ALTERNATIVES:

The SEP-HCP program could utilize the existing funding structure and share revenues for enrolled properties with the EAPP. This alternative would result in significantly less funding for EAPP.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Approval of the transfer of operations and management of the Rancho Diana Huesta Cave preserve from EAPP to the SEP-HCP.