



Hays County, Texas

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Information for the News Media

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March 12, 2010

County Sets Public Meetings for Dahlstrom Ranch Access

Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, TX – Hays County and its partners in the Dahlstrom Ranch conservation easement will hold public meetings on March 22 and March 31 to gather input from residents on certain aspects of public access. Hays County, the City of Austin and the Hill Country Conservancy, with additional funding from the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service, finalized an agreement in February to purchase the easement on the 2,254-acre Dahlstrom Family ranch near Buda.

A steering committee composed of area stakeholders has worked for much of the past year with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program on the challenges of managing public access to conservation lands and offered recommendations. At the public meetings, the Hays community can learn about activities and programs being considered that will maintain the land's conservation values.

The privately owned ranch will have the unique distinction of providing a 384-acre area for public education and nature activities that will be managed by Hays County. The acquisition process, a rare collaboration between a private landowner, county, federal agency and city, began in 2007 and is believed to be the first private land preservation agreement of its kind in Texas which includes public access.

"This is a remarkable piece of good fortune for the people of Central Texas," said Hays County Parks Director Jerry Pinnix. "Through the generosity and vision of the Dahlstrom Family and the partnership between various governments and non-profits, a historic ranch will provide a safe haven for our wildlife and natural resources. We're working with the Dahlstrom Family to provide public access while protecting the conservation features of this property. As much as is practical we want to incorporate ideas from the public," Pinnix said.

A conservation easement restricts the amount and type of development allowed on the property and conveys the right to enforce these restrictions in perpetuity, while preserving the right to traditional agricultural uses and limited residential use. The Dahlstrom Ranch, a sensitive aquifer recharge area,

contains numerous karst features that drain into the Edwards Aquifer and provides habitat for native wildlife and plant species.

The meetings will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday, March 22, at Dahlstrom Middle School, 3600 FM 967, Buda, and on Wednesday, March 31, at the San Marcos Activity Center, 501 W. Hopkins, San Marcos.

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