

A Texas Heritage of Ranching

Four generations of the Beck family have lived on the family's 2,000-acre homestead since its purchase in 1930.

O. E. Beck registered this brand which his grandson Regan still uses on cattle, horses, goats and sheep.



Branding cattle on the Beck Ranch in the 1960s.

Historic photos courtesy of Karen Thompson from her book *Round Rock, Texas: From Cowboys to Computers.*

Eugene O. Beck registered this "Double T" brand.



In 1947, a rodeo was held on the Beck Ranch.

Now that the caves are protected, scientists like Dr. Kemble White (right) have the opportunity to study the endangered species living in the karst formations.



The caves on the Beck Preserve are home to the endangered Bone Cave harvestman.

How You Can Help!

You can help by keeping this natural area in its native state. Please enter the site only with permission and keep it free from litter. Scientists studying the karst areas, county employees performing regular maintenance and guided tours are allowed on the Beck Preserve.

You can report vandalism and unauthorized entry by calling 512-260-4226.

For more information, visit the WCCF web site at www.wilco.org/wccf or contact Connie Watson

at 512.943.1664 or e-mail

cwatson@wilco.org.



Beck Preserve

The Beck Preserve is a natural area located on the southwest corner of R.M. 620 and Great Oaks Drive near Cedar Valley Middle School. It is habitat for endangered species that live in karst formations or caves. Karst is an area of limestone that has eroded to create sinkholes, cracks and caves. The Williamson County Conservation Foundation (WCCF) purchased the land for a preserve in 2006.

The preserve is comprised of approximately 42 acres and is named after the Beck family, as the land was the former location of the Beck Ranch. Oscar and Jennie Beck purchased almost 2,000 acres, including this site, in 1930 and transformed the land into a profitable ranch that produced cattle, sheep, goats and horses. Most recently, the land was owned by their son, Eugene, and his wife, GeNelle. Four generations of the Beck family have lived on this land.

All caves on the preserve now are gated for safety.

The tract has several caves located on it. The largest of which has a cavern-like room that would hold up to 2,000 goats during bad weather. It also served as a bomb

shelter during the Cuban missile crisis in the 1960s. All caves on the preserve now are gated for safety.

Bone Cave Harvestman

The caves on the Beck Preserve are home to an endangered species, the Bone Cave harvestman. The Bone Cave harvestman is a small troglotic (cave-dwelling), blind, pale orange, long-legged harvestman. It is about a quarter-inch in length and spider-like in appearance with long legs. It spends its entire life underground, preferring moist, cool locations. It is known only to occur in karst formations in Williamson and northern Travis counties. It was listed as an endangered species in 1988. Loss of habitat due to development is its primary threat.

To help protect this and other species, the Williamson County Conservation Foundation is working to create a Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (RHCP). The RHCP is a voluntary option for governmental entities, landowners and developers to navigate the requirements of the Endangered Species Act in a more expedient manner. Establishing preserves allows development of vital regional projects such as roads and schools while also protecting listed endangered

species in environmentally sensitive areas. WCCF purchased the Beck Preserve with funds from an Endangered Species Act section 6 grant provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Interior view of Beck Bat Cave, once used to protect livestock in bad weather.

