

Dear GEAA members and friends,

Please sign the petition below to protect a Texas Treasure and join us on [May 22nd at San Antonio City Council Chambers](#).

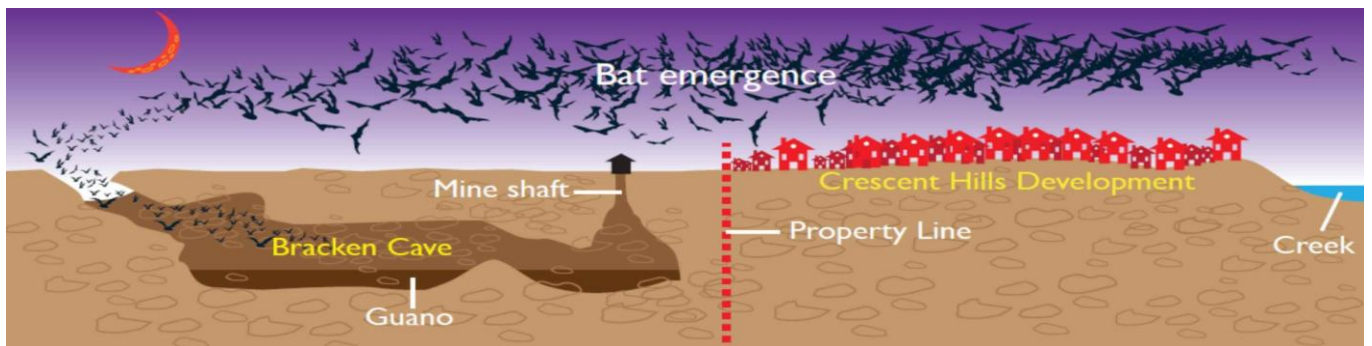
Annalisa Peace
Executive Director
www.AquiferAlliance.org

You can always keep up with interesting water news on [GEAA's Face Book page](#)

and, you can mail contributions to support GEAA to PO Box 15618, San Antonio, Texas 78212

SUBJECT: Save Bracken Cave Preserve

**What happens when you put 10,000 people
next to more than ten million bats?**



No one knows for sure, but unfortunately, we may soon find out.

Dear Bat Conservation International Supporter:

I'm the new director of Bat Conservation International and am writing today about our Bracken Cave Preserve in the Texas Hill Country.

As you probably know, Bracken is home to the world's largest population of bats. The nightly emergence of more than ten million Mexican free-tailed bats from Bracken Cave, 20 minutes north of San Antonio in central Texas, is one of the world's great natural phenomena, **and we need your immediate advice and help.**

A San Antonio developer, Brad Galo of [Galo Properties](#), has proposed a **1,500-acre, 3,800-home "Crescent Hills" subdivision** to the immediate south of our preserve, in the [twice-daily flight path of these millions of bats](#). The development also lies in the within sensitive Edwards

Aquifer-recharge zone and puts at risk the many millions of public dollars that have been invested protecting the area. Quarter-acre zoning is also out of keeping with the large ranches that characterize the area and the interspersed, one- to three-acre lots which currently constitute “intensive” development. The Galo property, like our land and nearby Nature Conservancy property, is also important nesting and foraging habitat for the federally endangered golden-cheeked warbler (the yellow circles on the map).



[View Larger Image](#)

Texas law leaves little or no room for consideration of environmental issues. The San Antonio Water System (SAWS) has granted Mr. Galo the water and sewer hookups he needs for 3,800 homes, but SAWS is not permitted to determine if adequate water supply exists, or to comment on the wisdom of putting nearly 4,000 homes in the middle of a protected recharge area. This project will ultimately come before the San Antonio Planning Commission for approval, but even the Planning Commission lacks the authority to take environmental concerns into account. In fact, if the Commission does nothing, the development will be automatically approved after 30 days.

We’ve been told by our attorneys that the San Antonio City Council and Mayor Castro are our only real recourse, and that our hopes for persuading them to take action rest in our ability to make this a significant public and media issue. Aside from the ecological issues, we’re

concerned about putting 10,000 people next to millions of building-loving adult bats and millions more juvenile bats learning to fly that will be attracted to the insects gathering around the porch and street lights of these homes. Should some poor child or parent come into contact with a sick bat or pet that picked up a sick bat and contract rabies, it won't matter that the bats have been there for 10,000 or more years. There will be a growing call for the city health department to deal with "this threat to public safety."

This, in fact, is the greatest threat to Bracken's bats.

We need your help to make this case to the city of San Antonio. **We are presenting our concerns to the City Council at their 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 22nd public meeting at City Hall** and need to fill the room with Bracken supporters. If you live in the San Antonio area, I hope you will come to City Hall next Wednesday to stand and be recognized as a supporter of bats and Bracken. We hope those who come will also engage the media, the Mayor, the Council and their staff members in side conversations.

Many of you do not live in the area, but you can help us make the case that Bracken and its bats are a global jewel that must be protected. **We need you and other members to call, write and email the Mayor, City Council and Planning Commission** before and after the council meeting.

The contact information for city officials is attached to this email, along with a list of our principal concerns and several maps that tell the story even more clearly. If you feel unable to comment on the proposed development *per se*, it will still be a significant help to speak to the importance of Bracken and the ecological and economic importance of bats and the global threats they face. I hope we can count on you and your family to come to Bracken's aid. **Please come on the 22nd** or contact Mayor Castro and other city decision makers.

[Sign our online petition](#)

Bracken Bat Cave is too important to allow such intensive development to occur along its border. Please help us convince San Antonio that Mr. Galo's proposed subdivision is an incompatible use that is sure to put people and bats into potential conflict, to the harm of both.

Thanks very much. Please don't hesitate to email us at savebracken@batcon.org or call my assistant, Shanna Weisfeld at 512 367-9721 x19 if you have any questions. Thanks very much and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Andrew Walker
Executive Director