

## **Nature Conservancy director resigns position after 7 years**

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David Braun, state director of the Nature Conservancy of Texas, is leaving the nonprofit organization, effective Oct. 31, to pursue environmentally related business and investment interests.

Robert Potts, director of conservation programs and supervisor of the Texas Hill Country Bioserve, will become acting director of the Nature Conservancy.

Braun, 41, led the conservation organization for seven years. During that time, the Nature Conservancy increased from eight employees to 54 and from 19 preserves to 34, and the membership base was doubled to 28,000.

"So you can see why he was tired," quipped Terri Bronocco, director of operations at the San Antonio-based conservancy.

The Nature Conservancy is a conservation organization whose mission is to protect rare plants and animals and the lands and waters they need to survive. This is accomplished through the acquisition of land, which the organization owns and manages as nature preserves, and in cooperation with governmental entities and with private landowners.

Braun, who previously was staff attorney at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, said he has several ideas for environmental businesses, including ecotourism, but his involvement with a nonprofit organization makes it impossible to pursue those goals.

"I will miss the Nature Conservancy and its work," Braun said, "but the results of its efforts will be around a lot longer than I am."

The conservancy has participated in setting aside preserves in all parts of the state, "but high on my list," Braun said, "would have to be the 30,000 or 35,000 acres in the Austin area that have been set aside in the last few years" in cooperation with local and federal governments.