

Braun can take pride in job at Texas Nature Conservancy

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Nothing in Central Texas is exempt from controversy and the Texas Nature Conservancy is not an exception to that rule.

Through all the minefields that dot the land-use debate here, David Braun has skillfully maneuvered the nonprofit organization. He can take pride in a job well done as he moves to the private sector.

Braun served as a general of sorts during seven of the most intense years of the ongoing local environmentalist-developer war.

The national organization is devoted to protecting ecosystems. Its central mission is to help private landowners manage land in an environmentally sensitive manner. The organization also owns and manages land and promotes regional conservation plans.

The latter objective thrust Braun into a leadership role in the formation of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan. He was responsible for pulling together the original executive committee, made up of environmentalists, developers and elected officials who seldom -- if ever -- had faced each other across a table.

Although the BCCP is not as encompassing as the Nature Conservancy would have liked, there are tens of thousands of acres set aside as green space in Central Texas because of Braun's leadership and battle scars.

The BCCP speaks eloquently for Braun and all the others who continue to pass the baton, protecting a fragile environment for future generations.