

# State and Local

## Bills to enlarge national park in West Texas

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two bills aimed at enlarging Big Bend National Park and adding to three East Texas wilderness areas were the subject of a House Interior subcommittee hearing Thursday.

The Big Bend bill, the first measure introduced by freshman Rep. Lamar Smith, R-San Angelo, calls upon the federal government to accept a 67,000-acre gift from the Texas Nature Conservancy adjacent to Big Bend.

The wilderness bill seeks the acquisition by the federal government of 690 acres of private land adjacent to three wilderness areas in East Texas.

The bill stipulates that the federal government acquire the land by either purchasing it or using land swaps if trading is unsuccessful after two years.

The three wilderness areas are Turkey Hill and Upland Island, part of Angelina National Forest, and Big Slough, part of Davy Crockett National Forest.

The Reagan administration opposes the wilderness bill, contending that in times of tight budgets the federal government should not be buying more park lands.

"Our primary reason for opposing the bill is cost," said Dale Robertson, chief of the U.S. Forestry Service.

"We simply object to the mandated purchase of these properties," he said.

He said that with the government trying to save every chance it can, spending the money to buy the land would be wrong and wasteful.

Robertson estimates it would cost between \$800,000 and \$900,000 to purchase the land.

The measure is sponsored by Reps. Charles Wilson, D-Lufkin; John Bryant, D-Dallas; Steve Bartlett, R-Dallas; and Joe Barton, R-Ennis.

They contend that most of the land, if not all, will be traded to the government for land of comparable worth elsewhere.

The Big Bend property was donated to the conservancy in late 1984 and early 1985 by brothers Houston and Ed Harte.

They stipulated that the land had

to be preserved in its natural state as a part of Big Bend.

"Thanks to the generosity of the Harte brothers we have an excellent opportunity to acquire this land at no cost to the taxpayers and thereby preserve an important part of our natural heritage for future generations," Smith said in a prepared statement.

The land is a mixture of desert, mountains and prairie and includes a large portion of the Rosillas Mountains and Buttrill Springs.

It supports an oasis in the middle of the Rosillas range, Smith said. Traces of former Indian cultures and prehistoric peoples can be found on the land.

The Texas Natural Heritage Program also has identified the area as containing more than one-third of the globally significant species it has found.

Until recently there were two oil and gas leases on the property, both of which have expired, Smith said.

"I am glad to note that (the bill) has the support of the administration, and that 11 of my colleagues from Texas have joined me in co-sponsoring this measure," Smith said.



### Making Chemistry

Chris Gulde, who graduated from A&M with a biochemistry degree in May, reaches for a solution in a laboratory located on the third floor of the Heap Building where he works for the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

Photo by Karen Kroesche

## University police deal with much more than writing tickets

By Kathryn McMinn  
Reporter

Murder is not the only crime committed by man and as long as this remains the case, the Texas A&M University police will always have plenty to do.

There has never been a crime as serious as murder committed on campus in the 17 years University Police Chief Elmer Schneider Jr. has served with the department. The most disastrous incident he witnessed was an attempted murder and suicide that occurred in the early '70s.

"This boy pumped two rounds . . . into his girlfriend and then turned the gun on himself in the All Faiths

Chapel," Schneider says. "Both of them were students."

Burglaries and auto thefts are two of the more severe crimes the police department has learned to deal with.

"Our department was responsible for knocking out two auto theft rings based out of Houston this past year," Schneider says. "We can't rid the campus of criminals, but at least we put a dent in the problem."

In addition to the regular duties the 48 officers perform, many of them have other responsibilities.

Officer Cabrina Scott has completed her college education in the five and one-half years she has been employed by the department and is now concentrating on starting a family.

"I received my associate's degree

in criminal justice in Michigan and then moved to College Station to work as a secretary," Scott says.

"When the officer position opened up, I decided to train for it and take it."

"With the opportunity to complete a degree virtually at my feet, I decided to take advantage of it and graduated from A&M in August of '86."

Motivation plays an all-important part of sticking with law enforcement, Scott says.

"Hostile feelings toward police officers on campus come with the uniform, but I can cope with it because I've been in the student's position," she says. "Every job has its good points and its bad points. If the good

didn't outweigh the bad then I wouldn't be here."

Schneider says, "People are often under the impression that the campus is not a part of the rest of the earth."

"There are no primary differences between the University Police Department and the city police department. But we always seem to run into those individuals who do not heed handicapped or no-parking signs on campus and our fines for these offenses are just as expensive as the city's."

The citations students often grumble about are issued by University-trained parking patrol officers, one of the two divisions of police employed by the University. The other type of officer is the patrolman.

Schneider says, "We end up wearing that double hat that goes with being a security agency and yet having to tow cars or write out citations, too."

The requirements involved in being a police officer on campus include taking a 400-hour intensive-training program, passing a state exam in one of three given opportunities, passing a medical and psychological exam, meeting the required educational standards — a high school diploma — and passing an extensive background check conducted by the state, Schneider says.

"The University police officer must be mentally and physically equipped to handle the same type of regular emergencies faced by any city officer," he says.

## Architecture college considers buying Italian monastery

By George Weissenberger  
Reporter

Texas A&M may turn from tenant to landlord if it purchases a monastery in Italy where the University leases space for its study abroad program.

Although plans for Spring 1988 are still being made, Daniel F. MacGilvray, associate dean of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, says the Roman Catholic Church probably will allow the program to lease La Poggerina monastery until it's sold, MacGilvray says.

The Church, he says, just decided they no longer needed La Poggerina, called "The Pogge" by the architecture college.

A&M faculty members and students who have participated in the program say they'd like to see A&M buy the monastery.

Mary Hamby, a junior English major who went there this summer, says it's in the mountains, surrounded by vineyards and olive trees.

"It's a real pretty place," she says.

The Pogge, converted for student use, has dormitory rooms for students and private rooms for faculty. It also has design studios, classrooms, an administrative office, kitchen, dining room, art gallery, small recreation room and a photography lab.

Mary Ann Marshall, a graduate student in cultural geography who went with the study abroad group this summer for independent study, says the facility and program are integrated and interwoven.

Forcing the University to buy a new facility would cause the study abroad program to start all over again, Marshall says.

While options have been considered, MacGilvray says, no decisions have been made.

MacGilvray says the facility would cost about \$2 million to purchase and maintain with an endowed fund.

The normal process of passing such a purchase through the state Legislature could take a long time and be found unjustified by the Legislature or the Texas voters, he says.

MacGilvray says he heard that some people in Milan, Italy, were interested in buying the monastery, implying that some urgency in a decision is needed.

One option is to persuade former students, friends or businesses to donate the money to A&M to buy the facility, he says. This way the University, not the state, would own the facility.

Although the money could be raised through donations and be used to buy the monastery, MacGilvray says, such an expenditure would have to be justified by the architecture college.

The architecture college, which sponsors the study abroad program, could use the money to improve the college's facilities at A&M, he says.

He says, however, that the facility is at a wonderful location.

"We would like to keep it," he says.

Meanwhile, he says, Professor Paolo Barucchi, the director for the study abroad program at the monastery, is looking for other possible locations.

MacGilvray says if purchased, the facility, used mainly by the architecture college and the College of Liberal Arts, probably would be opened to a wider A&M audience.

He says the purchase also would reduce the cost for students whose fees have paid for the lease. About \$2,000 of each student's cost goes toward paying for the lease, room and board, he says.

If one multiplies this amount by the approximately 40 students a year who use the monastery and the eight years the program has been in operation, \$640,000 already has been spent to use the facility.

Once bought, The Pogge could be converted to house 120 people which, in the same eight-year period, could save the students \$1,920,000. This amount is about equal to the cost of buying the facility.

Carole Fulbright, a senior environmental design student who participated with the study abroad program this summer, says she would be "thrilled to death" if A&M bought the monastery.

"If you went up there . . . you would say 'Buy it immediately,'" she says. "(A&M) could do so much with it. It would really be worth it."

Danny Sparks, a junior accounting student who went on the trip this summer, says he thought it would be ridiculous if A&M didn't buy the facility, since it's near Florence, the center of the Renaissance, and people could go there and study all the time.

Marshall says the monastery could easily be used as a research facility. She says it could be used as a home base for faculty and students doing research in Italy and other parts of Europe.

She strongly stresses how such an operation could be used by many of the colleges and departments at A&M.

The antiquity of the Italian culture, she says, provides an endless array of research possibilities.

It would be a shame for A&M, which wants to have world-class programs, not to sponsor such a learning program, she says.

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For additional information contact: Greg Keith 846-6949

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