

### Donation helps Texas Parks, Wildlife Dept. buy computers

The Associated Press

AUSTIN — The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, through an \$80,000 donation from the U.S. Defense Department, has acquired a computer system that will quickly identify habitats of endangered species, officials said Monday. The computer hardware, provided by Fort Hood in Killeen and Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, will be utilized by land developers so they can avoid build-

ing where endangered species live. In the past, Parks and Wildlife employees had to use hand-drawn maps to answer about 600 questions a month from developers and environmentalists, said Larry McKinney, the agency's resource protection director. "We have all this information in our department, but getting it to people and responding to those 600 inquiries a month has been very difficult," McKinney said.

"If you have a computer and a telephone modem, wherever you are, you'll be able to call in and get this information," he said. "It's a simple thing, but unbelievably important." Andrew Sansom, parks and wildlife executive director, said the department is trying to quit concentrating on particular species. "What we need to do is focus on ecological systems, and that's what this program will enable us to do," Sansom said.

Col. Joseph Graf, district engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, commended the program. "This is truly a remarkable technology that we can bring to bear in the scientific community and hopefully enhance the planning and the execution that we do in our various projects," Graf said. The Nature Conservancy will help integrate existing biological databases into the new system and make computer pictures of the that information.

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