

Good morning Commissioners and Judge Biscoe,

My name is Annie Borden and I live on Hamilton Pool Rd / Travis County. I want you to know that I should be teaching a course at ACC right this minute but because the issue is so important to me, I'm paying for a substitute instructor to teach my first class.

Almost every morning my husband and I walk along Hamilton Pool Rd from our gate, across from Westcave Preserve, down to the Pedernales River, up to the Norsworthy Ranch and back again. We love this stretch of road. Occasionally a neighbor will drive by, stop and we'll stand in the middle of the road for a brief chat before we go our separate ways. You see, there is not much traffic. It is peaceful, beautiful, rugged and we know it well.

When I heard last fall that our little piece of Paradise in a secluded corner of Travis County was part of a CAMPO plan scheduled for a 4 lane divided highway, I was first stunned, then outraged. I couldn't for the life of me understand why Campo was messing with this road. There is nothing much out here. From the Pedernales River there are about 3 miles to the Blanco County line. There are, at the most, maybe 18 homes. In Blanco county, the road meanders about 5 more miles to Cypress Mill, [SLIDES 3, 4, 5, 6] a ghost town with a church and an abandoned post office/general store. It continues on to hwy 281 and Round Mt. Round Mt. consists of 111 souls, a small strip containing a cattle auction barn, restaurant and a gas station. A 4 lane highway to nowhere makes no sense!!! We immediately started up a petition drive. Here are the **159** signatures we have so far with another **146** from the on-line petition. Please take a moment to go to this site www.petitiononline.com/hprcampo/petition.html and read people's comments.

It was even more bewildering to think that taxpayer money would be spent on something so unnecessary and unwanted, especially in light of ever increasing gasoline prices (does anyone here really think that gas is going down?) Aren't the demographics changing such that fewer people want to make long, expensive commutes. **Suburban sprawl is out and city living is in.**

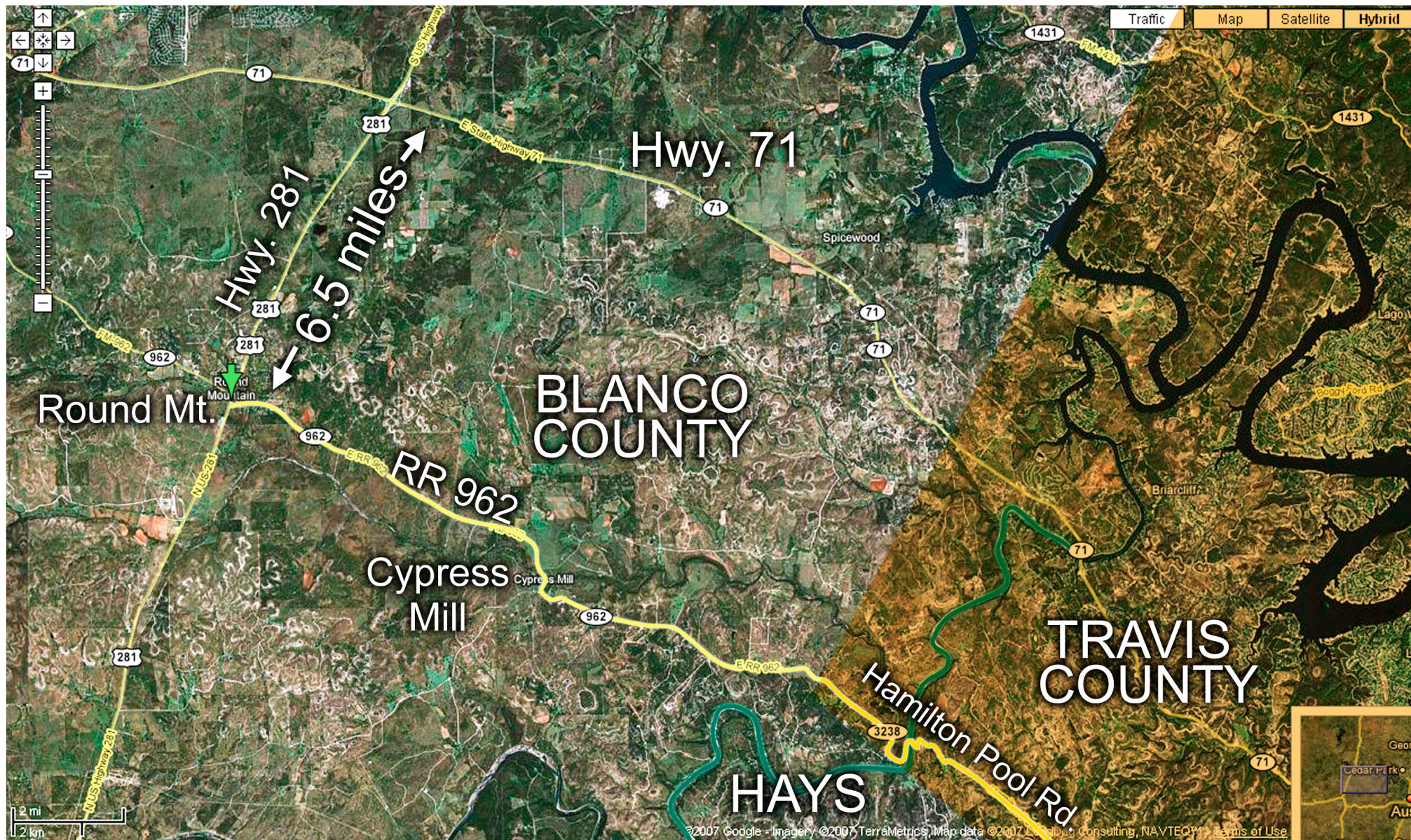
I was very pleased to hear that Mr Manilla, who had pushed the 4 lane divided hwy plan in the first place, had come to the same conclusion...that a 4-lane highway on Hamilton pool Rd from hwy 12 to the Blanco county line is just plain silly. I greeted the news last week that you were considering changing the CAMPO plan for our road back to its original 2 lane improved road with much relief, gratified that some sanity was still present in local government. Until.....I readthat the 2 lane road size you were reducing it to is 80' wide! Highway 71 at Hamilton Pool Rd, 4 lanes, a median & shoulders, is only 73' wide (yes, we went and measured it). So, let me get this straight. The plan is to take a little 2 lane road and clear an area wider than a major highway?!!! Okay, I'll grant you that there is a bit of traffic on Hamilton Pool Road from hwy 71 to RR 12. However it is but the smallest fraction of the traffic on 71. And beyond RR12 there is little traffic at all, so why bring the 4 lanes to the currently **non-existent** Reimers Peacock road

My main concern, however, is that 80' swath that Mr. Manilla wants to cut through the Pedernales river valley. When you drive the winding road down into and out of the valley, you notice the beauty and fragility of the land. There are steep rock walls on one side of the road and steep cliffs down to the river on the other. There is no place to put 40 feet much less 80'. You would have to blast the rock and completely destroy the land AND the river. It makes no sense to take a "one size fits all" approach to this unique and precious terrain.

Surely there are much more important, necessary and wanted roadway projects that our limited tax dollars could be spent on. SAVE SCENIC HAMILTON POOL ROAD and a tiny, sparsely populated part of the hill country.



Hamilton Pool Rd from Stagecoach Ranch Rd to Blanco county line.



Road to Nowhere

Hamilton Pool Road continues about 3 miles past the Pedernales River before it comes to Blanco county. This area is sparsely populated with families who want to maintain the quiet rural nature of the area. Beyond that is the ghost town of Cypress Mill and the very small Round Mountain on Hwy. 281



Busy cross road: to the left is Cypress Mill and to right (8 miles) is hwy. 281 and Round Mountain.



Cypress Mill consists of one church, one defunct post office & 2 broken gas pumps.

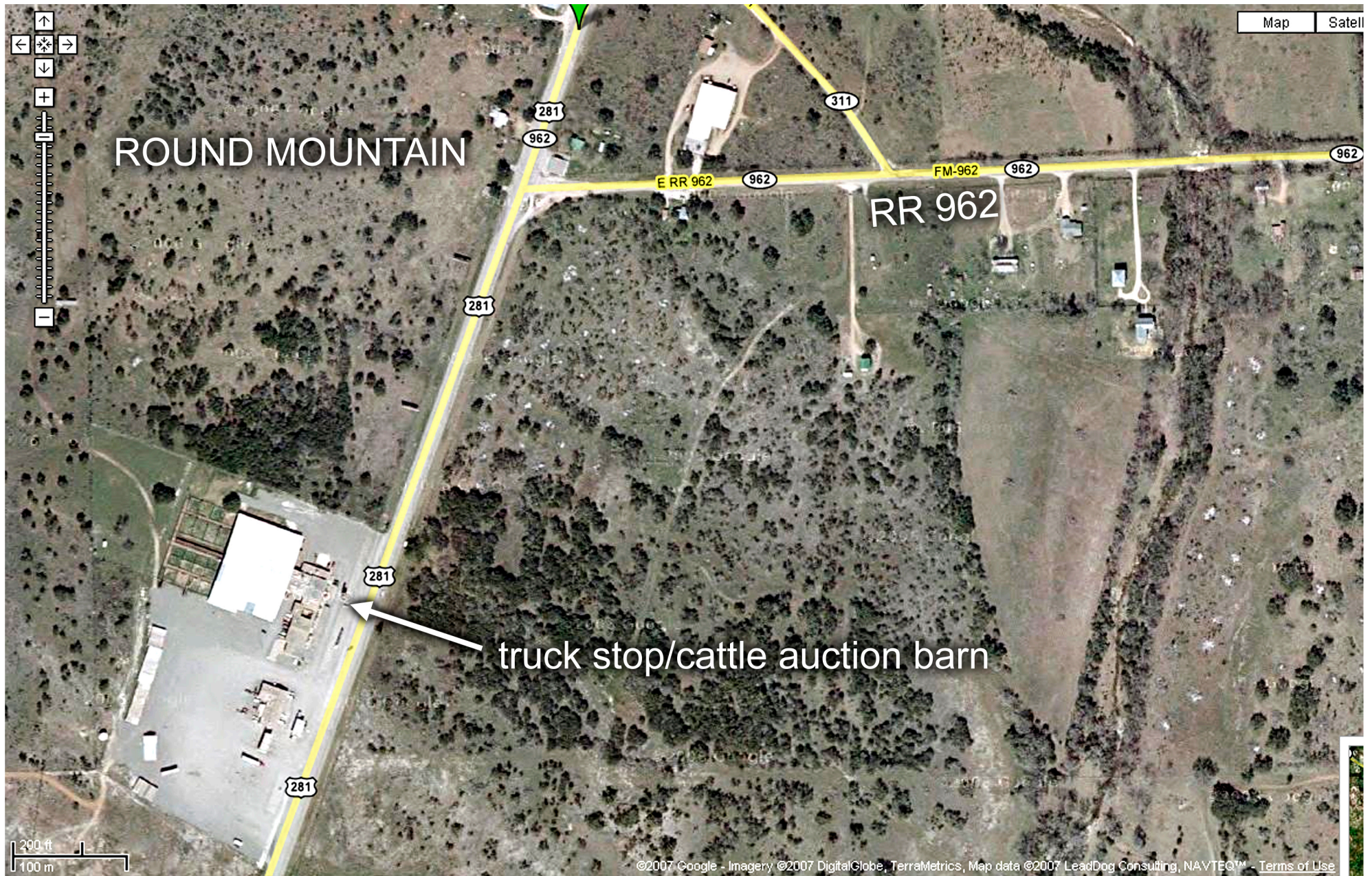
"Booming" Cypress Mill





Cypress Mill's General Store
and Gas Station





Round Mountain is a truck stop and cattle auction barn on Hwy. 281 near RR 962.

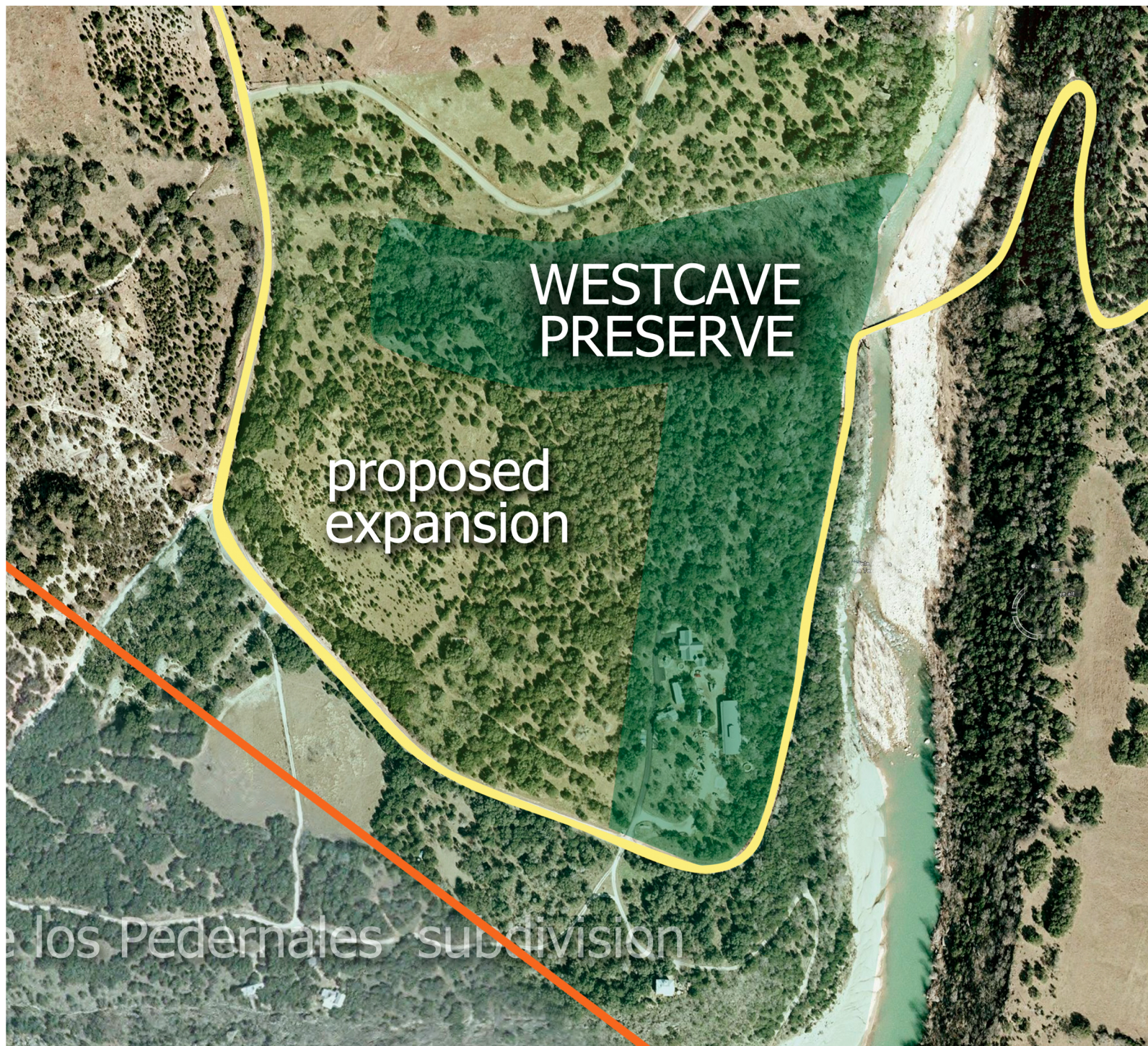
ROUND MOUNTAIN

CITY LIMIT

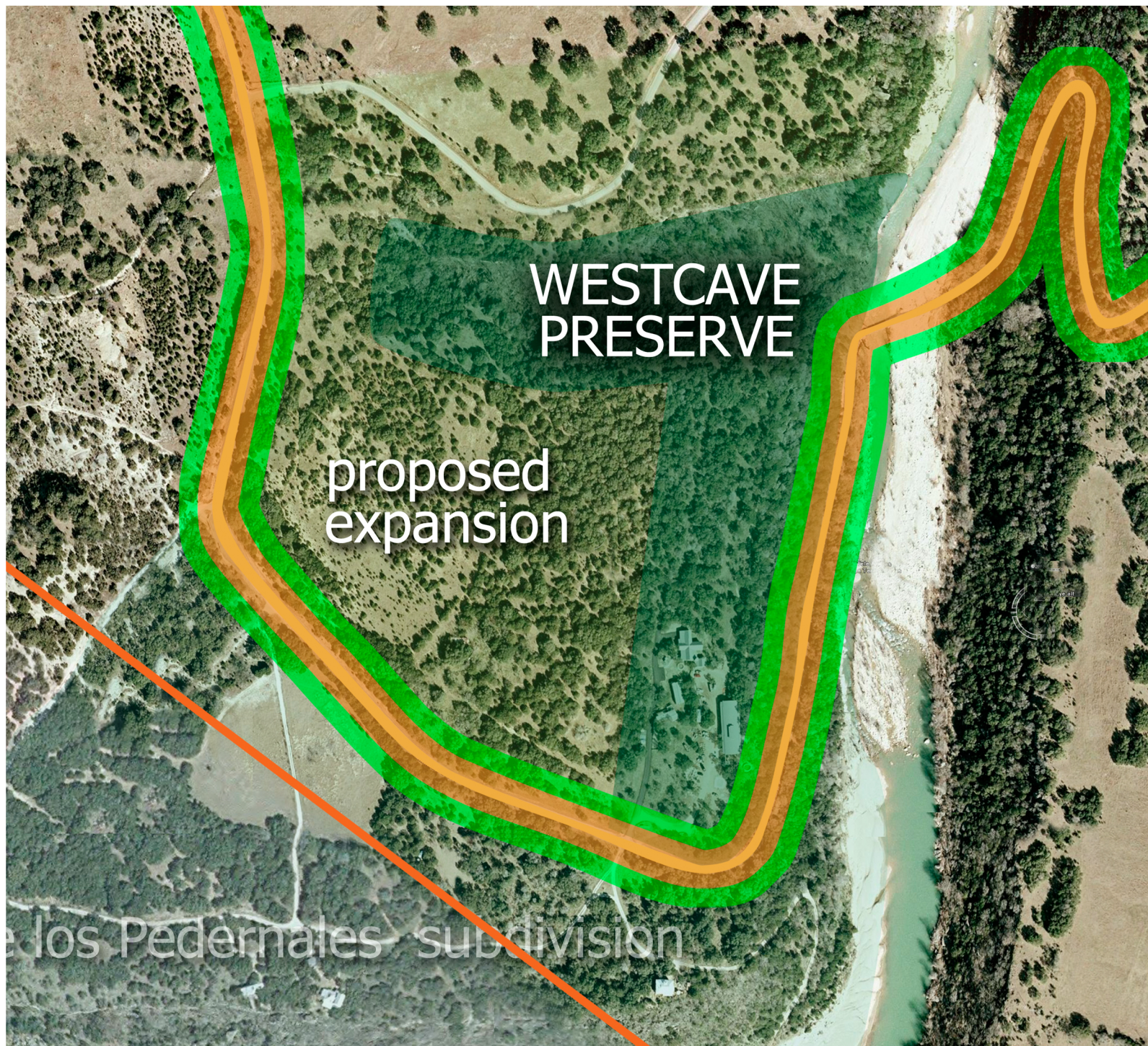
POP. 111



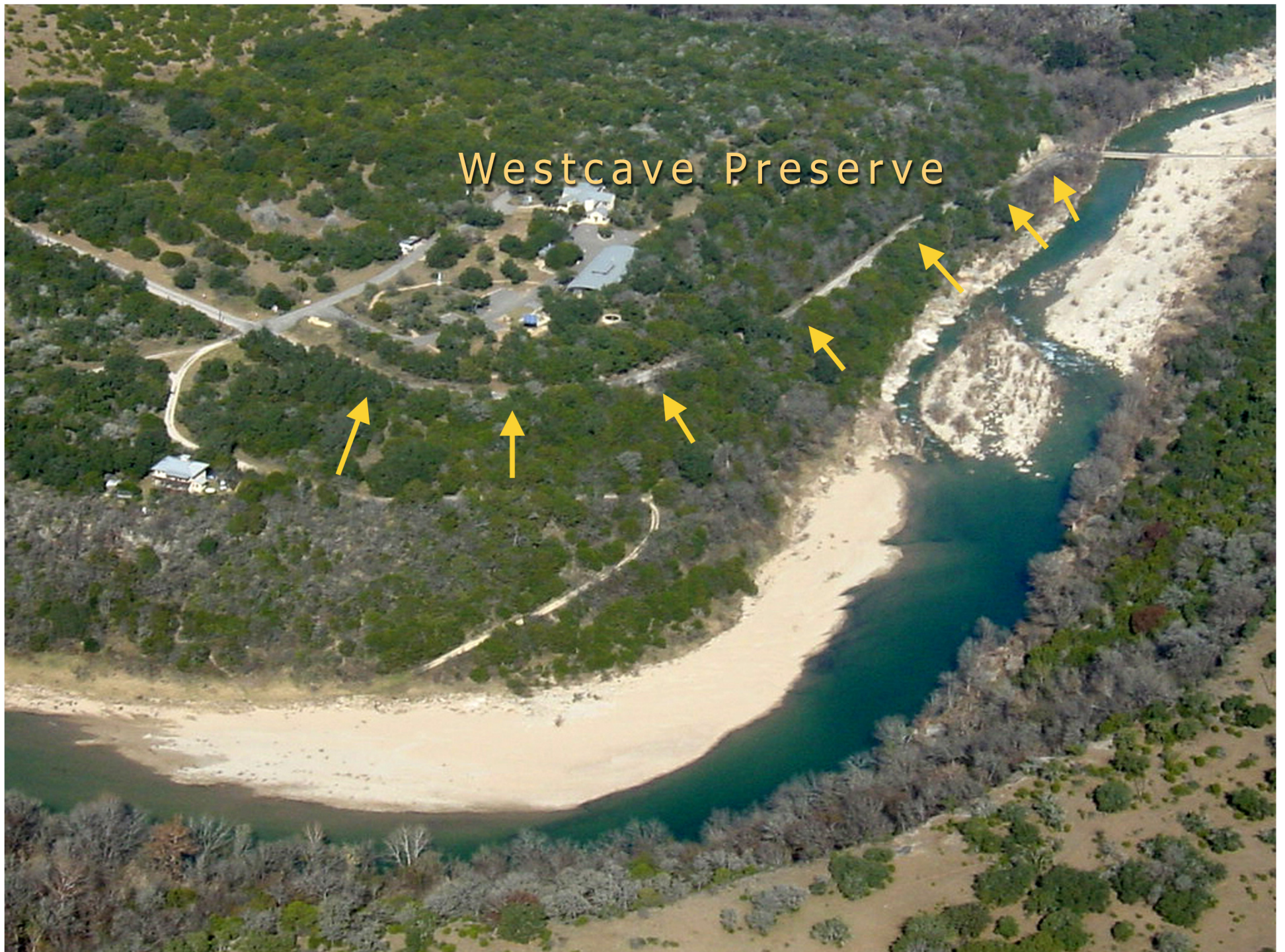
Round Mountain:
Truck Stop, cattle auction barn, restaurant.
It does have a functioning post office, however.



Close up of Hamilton Pool Road crossing the Pedernales River as it is now.



Hamilton Pool Road crossing the Pedernales River with proposed 80' cut away & 80 foot conservation easement



Hamilton Pool Road snaking through the narrow, rugged, fragile land west of the Pedernales River and past Westcave Preserve



Hamilton Pool Road just west of the Pedernales River. Note the narrow opening. The road itself is 22 feet wide with no more than 5' of space to either side of it. An 80 foot opening does not exist without intense and damaging blasting. The rock formation to the left is part of the Sycamore Geological Formation. Geology classes from area universities and geology clubs hold field trips here.