

Denton County purchases 60 acres in Copper Canyon



By Mark Smith April 19, 2023

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Photos courtesy of Denton County



Denton County has purchased the 60-acre Briarwood Retreat Center in Copper Canyon, the county announced Wednesday.

The camp, at 670 Copper Canyon Road, was first opened in 1959 by the Presbyterian congregation, and was purchased and operated by Briarwood Lutheran Ministries in 1995. The Denton County Commissioners Court authorized its \$6 million purchase on Feb. 21, using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act.



Denton County Judge Andy Eads signs the paperwork on the purchase of Briarwood Retreat Center.

In a recent letter to the ministry's community, Rev. Bishop Erik Gronberg said Briarwood has struggled financially for years, and the COVID-19 pandemic and Winter Storm Uri made things worse. After failing to find an operating partner, Briarwood's board decided to sell the entirety of the Briarwood property, including the newer Leadership Center building. In the letter, Gronberg said the unnamed buyer intended to maintain the property as a park/retreat open to the public and to preserve Briarwood's history.

The county said Wednesday the purchase includes all facilities on the property, and the county may use the property for training, shelter during major disasters, outdoor education, youth camps, adult retreats and more.

"It has long been one of my goals to preserve relatively untouched portions of Denton County land as open space for public use as we continue to see significant growth in the coming years," said Denton County Judge Andy Eads. "I want us to save this entire forest so future generations can know what the county looked like when I was a kid – filled with post oaks and pecans."

The acreage, located in the Cross Timbers region, will be preserved as open space.

"When we were alerted to the potential of saving this timberland amid an area of major urban development in southern Denton County, we realized the opportunity to preserve it for future generations," Eads said.