

NATURAL RESOURCES CODE

TITLE 10. CAVES

CHAPTER 201. CAVERN PROTECTION

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 201.001. POLICY. It is declared to be the public policy and in the public interest of the State of Texas to protect and preserve all caves on or under any of the land in the State of Texas, including tidelands, submerged land, and the bed of the sea within the jurisdiction of the State of Texas.

Added by Acts 1979, 66th Leg., p. 2003, ch. 785, Sec. 5, eff. June 13, 1979.

Sec. 201.002. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Cave" means any naturally occurring subterranean cavity, and includes or is synonymous with cavern, pit, pothole, well, sinkhole, and grotto.

(2) "Gate" means any structure, lock, door, or device located to limit or prohibit access or entry to any cave.

(3) "Speleothem" means a natural mineral formation or deposit occurring in a cave, and includes or is synonymous with stalagmites, stalactites, helictites, anthodites, gypsum flowers, needles, angel's hair, soda straws, draperies, bacon, cave pearls, popcorn (coral), rimstone dams, columns, plettes, flowstone, or other similar crystalline mineral formations commonly composed of calcite, epsomite, gypsum, aragonite, celestite, and other similar minerals and formations.

(4) "Owner" means a person who owns title to land on which a cave is located, including a person who owns title to a leasehold estate in the land.

Added by Acts 1979, 66th Leg., p. 2003, ch. 785, Sec. 5, eff. June 13, 1979.

SUBCHAPTER B. PERMITS

Sec. 201.011. PERMIT REQUIRED. No person may excavate,

remove, destroy, injure, alter in any significant manner, or deface any part of a cave owned by the State of Texas, unless the person possesses a valid permit under Section [201.012](#).

Added by Acts 1979, 66th Leg., p. 2003, ch. 785, Sec. 5, eff. June 13, 1979.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 993 (S.B. [1524](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1107 (H.B. [3502](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 201.012. ISSUANCE OF PERMIT. The General Land Office may issue a permit under this subsection if the person seeking the permit furnishes the following information:

(1) a detailed statement giving the reasons and objectives for the excavation, removal, or alteration and the benefits expected to be obtained from the contemplated work;

(2) data and results of any completed excavation;

(3) the prior written permission from the state agency which manages the site of the proposed excavation;

(4) a sworn statement that he will carry the permit while exercising the privileges granted; and

(5) any other reasonable information which the General Land Office may prescribe.

Added by Acts 1979, 66th Leg., p. 2003, ch. 785, Sec. 5, eff. June 13, 1979.

Sec. 201.013. REVOCATION. The General Land Office may for good cause revoke any permit issued under Section [201.012](#) of this code.

Added by Acts 1979, 66th Leg., p. 2003, ch. 785, Sec. 5, eff. June 13, 1979.

Sec. 201.014. PENALTIES. A person who violates Section [201.011](#) is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor, unless the person has previously been convicted of violating that section, in which case the person is guilty of a state jail felony.

Added by Acts 1979, 66th Leg., p. 2003, ch. 785, Sec. 5, eff. June 13, 1979.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 993 (S.B. [1524](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1107 (H.B. [3502](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Reenacted and amended by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 87 (S.B. [1969](#)), Sec. 16.002, eff. September 1, 2009.

SUBCHAPTER C. PROHIBITIONS

Sec. 201.041. VANDALISM. (a) A person may not, without express, prior, written permission of the owner, knowingly:

(1) break, break off, crack, carve upon, write, burn, or otherwise mark upon, remove, or in any manner destroy, deface, mar, or harm the surfaces of any cave or any natural material in a cave, including speleothems;

(2) deface, mar, or harm in any manner the natural condition of any cave; or

(3) break, force, tamper with, or otherwise disturb a lock, gate, door, or other obstruction designed to control or prevent access to any cave, even though entrance to the cave may not be gained.

(b) A person who violates a provision of this section is guilty of a state jail felony, unless the person has previously been convicted of violating this section, in which case the person is guilty of a felony of the third degree.

Added by Acts 1979, 66th Leg., p. 2003, ch. 785, Sec. 5, eff. June 13, 1979.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 993 (S.B. [1524](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1107 (H.B. [3502](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2007.

Reenacted by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 87 (S.B. [1969](#)), Sec. 16.003, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 201.042. SALE OF SPELEOTHEMS. (a) A person may not sell or offer for sale any speleothems in this state, or export them for sale outside the state, without written permission from the owner of the cave from which the speleothems were removed.

(b) A person who violates this section is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor, unless the person has previously been convicted of violating this section, in which case the person is guilty of a state jail felony.

Added by Acts 1979, 66th Leg., p. 2003, ch. 785, Sec. 5, eff. June 13, 1979.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 993 (S.B. [1524](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1107 (H.B. [3502](#)), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2007.