

A G E N D A



Recommendation for Council Action

Austin City Council	Item ID	21188	Agenda Number	18.
---------------------	---------	-------	---------------	-----

Meeting Date:	1/17/2013	Department:	Austin Water Utility
---------------	-----------	-------------	----------------------

Subject

Authorize negotiation and execution of an amendment to the Collection Agreement between the City of Austin and United States Forest Service for research, monitoring, data analysis, and population and habitat suitability modeling for the endangered golden-cheeked warbler and Balcones Canyonlands Preserve to increase the annual extension amount for the three remaining extension options by \$20,000, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$390,899.

Amount and Source of Funding

Funding in the amount of \$56,667.00 to extend the Agreement by 8 months (until 10/17/2013) is available in the Fiscal Year 2012 – 2013 Operating Budget of the Austin Water Utility. Funding for the remaining extension options is contingent upon available operating budget of the Austin Water Utility or the Participation Certificate Account

Fiscal Note

A fiscal note is not required.

Purchasing Language:	
Prior Council Action:	February 17, 2011 - Council approved the Collection Agreement with the United States Forest Service.
For More Information:	Daryl Slusher, 972-0218; Denise Avery, 972-0104
Boards and Commission Action:	Approved by the Water and Wastewater Commission on January 9, 2013 on a 6-1 vote.
MBE / WBE:	
Related Items:	

Additional Backup Information

The Austin Water Utility's Wildland Conservation Division requests authorization to increase the budget of a Collection Agreement with the United States Forest Service to provide the City of Austin with services related to research, monitoring, data analysis, and population and habitat suitability modeling for the endangered golden-cheeked warbler and Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP).

This project is a landmark study and focuses on addressing four key questions:

- What is the absolute abundance of the Golden-cheeked Warbler (warbler) on the BCP and on individual macrosites?
- How do demographics (e.g. density, productivity, survival) vary with landscape and habitat factors?
- How viable are these populations? and
- How do various management scenarios influence population viability?

Addressing these questions is critical to assure the long-term viability of the warbler which is a fundamental goal of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan and will help assure permit compliance for the City and County. To answer these questions, estimates of fecundity, recruitment, dispersal, abundance, survival, and habitat characteristics are needed across space and time within the BCP.

In order to fill knowledge gaps, understand species' response to management, and provide reasonable demographic measures based on real data for modeling population growth and persistence, this project has required intense monitoring to obtain this information. This includes color banding and tracking individual warblers, searching for and monitoring nests, conducting point counts, and collecting vegetation data for nests and point count locations across the BCP. This type of data collection is very labor and time intensive and generates large amounts of data to be analyzed. The data is essential to understanding and successfully managing habitat for the long term viability of the golden-cheeked warbler population.

The increased salary is due to unanticipated additional time for salary and benefits for the co-principal investigators, Dr. Frank Thompson and Jennifer Reidy. Upon completion of the third year (2nd extension option) of the field data collection, Dr. Thompson and Ms. Reidy will begin analyzing the demographic data and populating the population viability and habitat suitability models. Due to the complexity of the study and the large amount of successful data collected, this will require more time than originally anticipated from Dr. Thompson. The increase in budget is also due to increased cost related to fuel prices for mileage reimbursement and additional field equipment needed to best meet the needs of the project.

The Wildland Conservation Division is made up of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve program and the Water Quality Protection Lands program protecting over 40,000 acres of land from roughly Cedar Park to Kyle. The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve was established as a result of a Federal Permit issued to the City of Austin and Travis County to authorize impacts to eight endangered species. This permit requires active management, monitoring, and research for these endangered species.