

TRAVIS COUNTY'S Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan Quarterly Activities Report: November-December 2013

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	8 new BCCP applications were received and processed; 3 Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$58,375. One other USFWS-directed payment of \$1,500 was received for Permit TE-010556-0. All funds received were divided 50:50 between City of Austin and Travis County.
Land Acquisition and Protection	<p>Travis County finalized a Conservation Easement on the Hunt property for 7.2954 acres on Dec 13th.</p> <p>Sunset Valley Managing Partner Agreement approved by City of Sunset Valley on Dec 17th and Commissioners Court on Jan 7th; Next step is to go to Coordinating Committee; Once fully approved will add 21.5 acres to BCP.</p> <p>Current Preserve Totals: 30,516 acres for endangered birds; 47 of the 62 BCCP caves w/some protection.</p>
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warbler and Black-capped vireo	<p>Analyzed this year's data and wrote the Annual Report chapters for golden-cheeked warblers and black-capped vireos.</p> <p>Began planning for vireo restoration work on the Vireo Ridge tract to be conducted in February (approximately 5 acres).</p>
Karst Invertebrates	<p>Fall season faunal surveys conducted at 10 BCCP-listed caves; Fall season cricket exit counts performed at 7 BCCP-listed caves.</p> <p>Performed site assessments and faunal surveys at 2 endangered species caves on the McNeil High School campus as part of cave restoration project at the school; gave cave biology presentations to AP Environmental Science classes.</p>
Jollyville Plateau salamander (JPS)	<p>Temporarily stopped surveying since September when JPS was listed; Applied for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Permit amendment to conduct surveys but have not received new permit yet.</p> <p>Conducted water quality monitoring at 10 spring sites.</p>
Canyon mock-orange	Surveys completed at Hamilton Pool in in November; 144 plants were observed and plants were generally in good health.
Plant and Animal Control	
White-tailed deer	Deer harvest began in October; 40 deer removed from BCP during October through December.
Feral hog	Lots of hog damage seen on multiple tracts; 2 new traps ordered; currently baiting on Ribelin tract; trapping will begin in January.
Red imported fire ant (RIFA) and Tawny crazy ant (TCA)	<p>RIFA surveys and control conducted at 4 endangered species caves.</p> <p>Conducted an assessment and survey of TCA infestation at Whirlpool Cave.</p> <p>Coordinated with Ed LeBrun of University of Texas Brackenridge Field Lab on developing and submitting a USFWS Traditional Section 6 grant proposal that addresses TCA impacts to karst invertebrate assemblages and design of control methods within sensitive environments.</p>
Invasive plants	Chinaberry and Chaste tree removed on Lucas tract; Chinaberry, <i>Nandina</i> , <i>Ligustrum</i> , and <i>Wisteria</i> removed from Concordia tract; Tree of Heaven, Red-tipped Photinia, Malta star-thistle, and <i>Nandina</i> removed from Ribelin tract.
Land Stewardship	
Wildfire Preparedness	Interlocal Agreement with Lake Travis Fire and Rescue was approved by Commissioners Court on Dec 20 th ; Agreement allows LTFR to provide fuel reduction services for Travis County; LTFR will conduct a fuel reduction

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	<p>project on the Steiner Ranch tract along the Savannah Point neighborhood in January and February 2014.</p> <p>Joint Wildfire Task Force closer to Community Wildfire Protection Plan release; will contain action items for wildlands</p>
Infrastructure	Coordinated with LCRA on T-160 transmission line upgrade project which will involve pole replacement on a section of transmission line which crosses through the BCP. The project is in the early stages of planning and will take 2 years to complete.
Road Issues	<p>LISD: application postponed until City, County, TxDOT and LISD can review alternatives to the proposal.</p> <p>Texas 45 Southwest: County and City Natural Resources and Engineering staffs are participating in technical workgroups to identify issues, scope information needs, and propose solutions for karst and aquifer protection, water quantity and quality, salamanders and invertebrate conservation, and stream protection.</p> <p>Travis County commissioned a feasibility study for the realignment of Steiner Ranch Boulevard/Comanche Trail which is under review.</p>
Law Enforcement	
Trespassing	Multiple photos of trespassers entering Volente tract including with motorcycles and ATVs; A cut fence and a trespass dog were observed on the Medway tract.
Outreach/Volunteers	
Outreach	<p>Presented 4 outreach programs for England Elementary School and 2 programs at McNeil High School.</p> <p>Conducted 7 staff-led public hikes on the BCP.</p>
Volunteers	Volunteers provided 211.5 hours of service to Travis County BCP.