

Wildland Conservation Fund

Purpose and Nature of Fund

The Wildland Conservation Fund is responsible for the management of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) which preserves over 13,000 acres of City-owned property. The preserve is where the land and ecosystem can function in its natural condition and is not disturbed for purposes of agriculture, urban, or industrial use.

Program activities for BCP are covered under a federal Endangered Species Act section 10(a) permit, issued in May 1996. An interlocal Agreement between Austin and Travis County specifies that funding for implementation of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) Shared Vision and the permit is shared between the City of Austin and Travis County while each entity is independently responsible for operations and maintenance of preserve lands that they own or acquire. Additionally, revenue generated through sales of BCCP Participation Certificates (mitigation credits) are split evenly between the City and County.

The BCP provides management and administration for a regional preserve system for endangered species. The preserve protects eight endangered species, two neotropical migratory songbirds (the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo), six karst-dwelling invertebrates, and twenty-seven species of concern living in western Travis County. Management of BCP also allows these areas to act as a sponge and filter; absorbing rainfall; filtering it through plants communities; layers of soil and roots; and releasing it into watershed areas.

Benefits of wildlands:

- Absorb rainfall and reduce flooding
- Protect habitat for a wide variety of wildlife
- Conserve native plants as a genetic seed bank for the future
- Enhance air quality through presence of vegetation
- Filter pollution and dilute impacts of development
- Preserve aspects of cultural history
- Serve as locations for research
- Provide access on some tracts for recreation and education
- Store and slowly release water into creeks, prolonging their flow
- Provide mitigation of public service infrastructure activities that disturb Endangered Species habitat
- Provide an alternative process for private property owners to mitigate their activities that disturb habitat
- Offer beautiful views adding to Austin's quality of life and reputation as a community that values its environment

Factors Affecting Revenue

The Wildland Conservation Fund is funded by payments of permit fees. Fees are collected when private property owners or non-signatory public entities elect to mitigate their projects through BCCP. The fees are based on a schedule established by the BCCP Coordinating Committee, City Council, Travis County Commissioners Court, and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Factors Affecting Requirements

Requirements for the maintenance of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves are \$428,455. This year's expenditures will include \$53,455 for hiring two seasonal temporary employees to comply with permit compliance for BCP management, \$25,000 for planning and researching to develop a long-range ecosystem management plan for the Balcones Canyonlands Preserves and \$350,000 to purchase fencing.

	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Actual	2014-15 Estimated	2014-15 Amended	2015-16 Proposed
Revenue	\$196,350	\$291,674	\$253,000	\$253,000	\$253,000
Requirements	\$7,655	\$328,431	\$438,380	\$438,380	\$428,455