

The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve

A Sanctuary for Endangered Species
on the Edge of an Expanding Austin, Texas



What is the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve?

A 30,540-acre system of preserves established to protect 8 endangered species and 27 species of concern, and to mitigate for loss of their habitat in western Travis County.

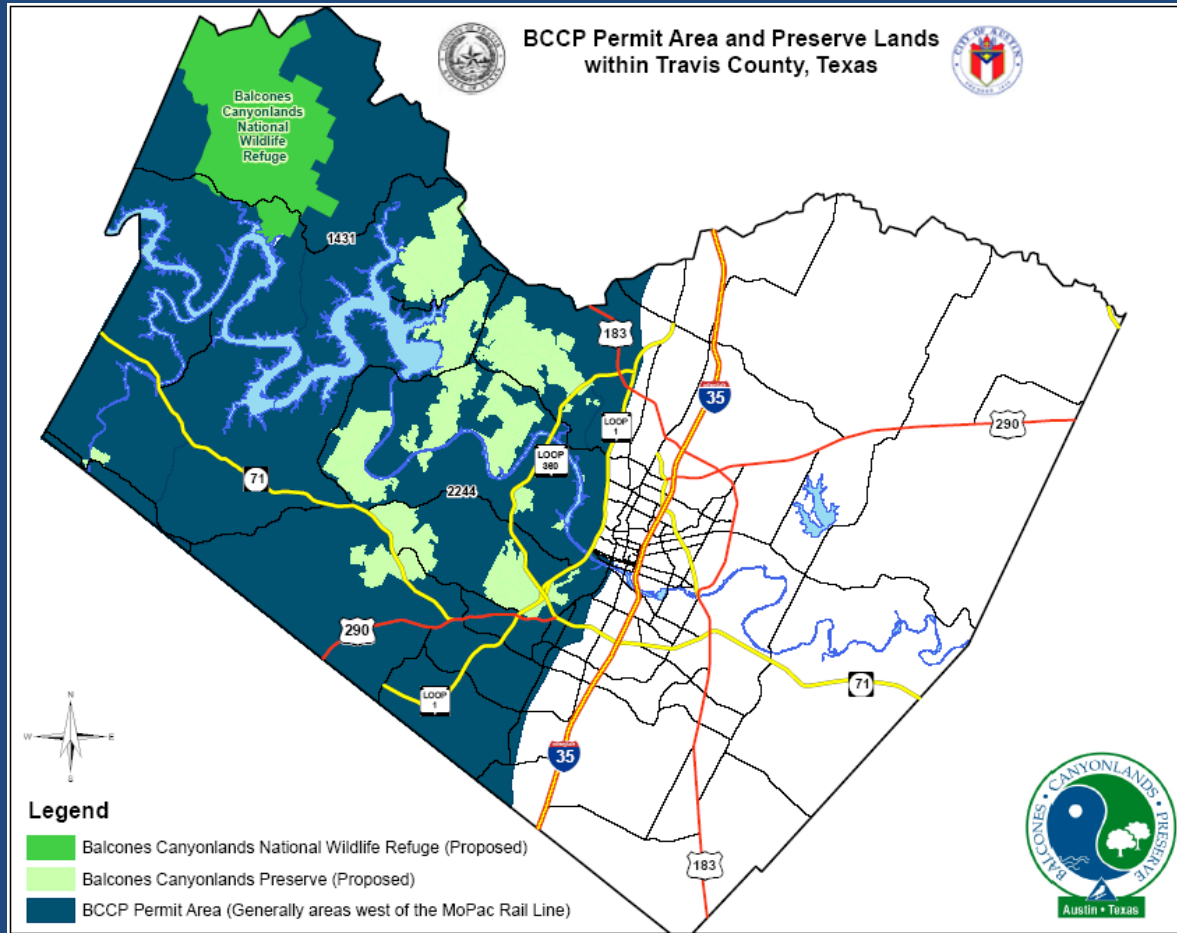
The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) is the culmination of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP)

BCCP is first in the nation multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan, under Section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act; a national model

USFWS issued a permit for the plan in 1996



Where is the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve?



Public Lands of the BCP:

- Barton Creek Greenbelt & Wilderness
- Wild Basin
- Emma Long (City) Park
- St. Edwards Park
- Bull Creek Greenbelt
- Commons Ford Park
- Hamilton Pool

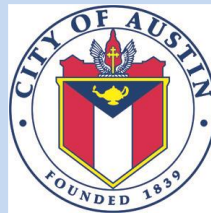
The Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge
is separate, but has a similar purpose.



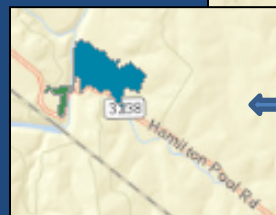
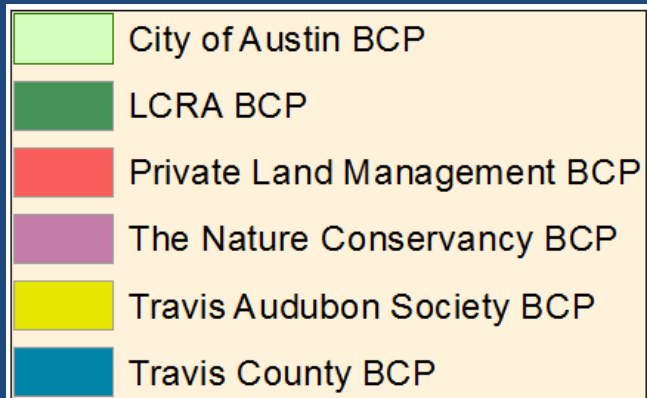
Strengthened by Partnership

The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) is not a single preserve but a system of preserves owned and managed by these partners.

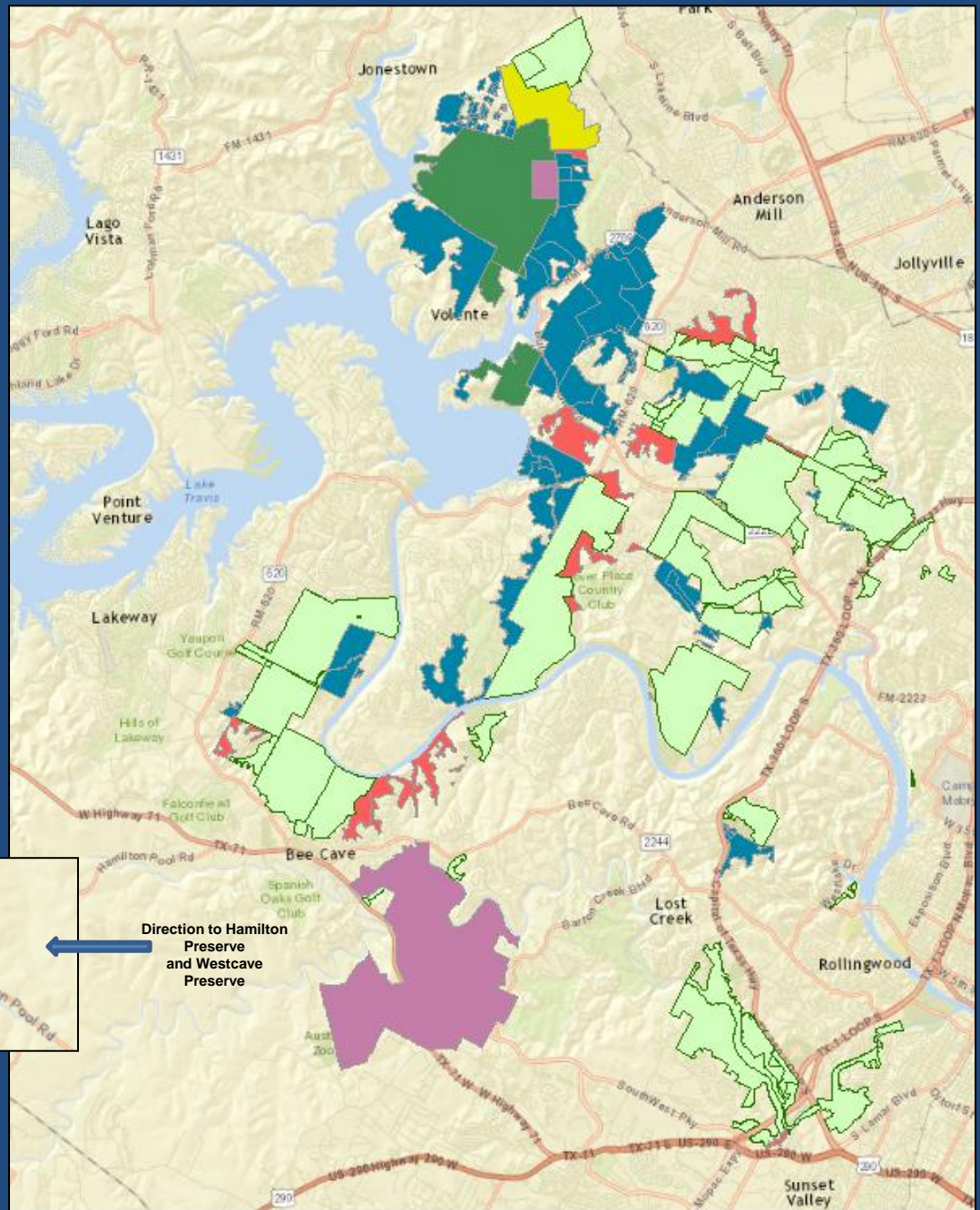
- ◆ City of Austin
- ◆ Travis County
- ◆ Lower Colorado River Authority
- ◆ The Nature Conservancy
- ◆ Travis Audubon Society
- ◆ Texas Cave Management Association
- ◆ Sunset Valley
- ◆ Private landowners



BCCP Partners



Direction to Hamilton
Preserve
and Westcave
Preserve



Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan

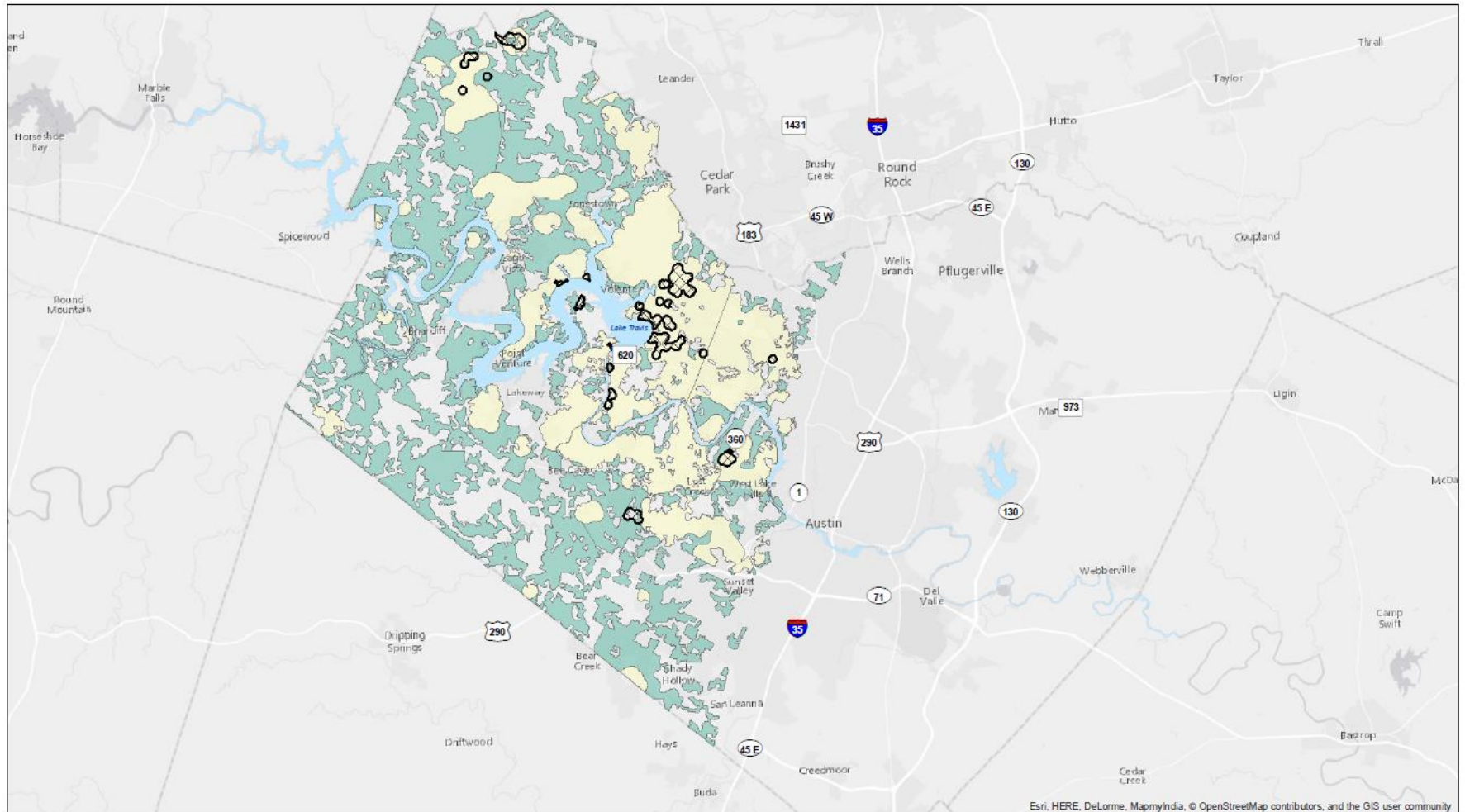
Provides Travis County, City of Austin,
and other landowners with a
streamlined approach to Endangered
Species Act compliance



The BCCP Permit allows “take” of habitat
and requires mitigation by protecting
land within the BCP



Songbird Mitigation Zones



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- Golden-cheeked Warbler Mitigation Zone 1
- Golden-cheeked Warbler Mitigation Zone 2
- Black-capped Vireo Mitigation Zone

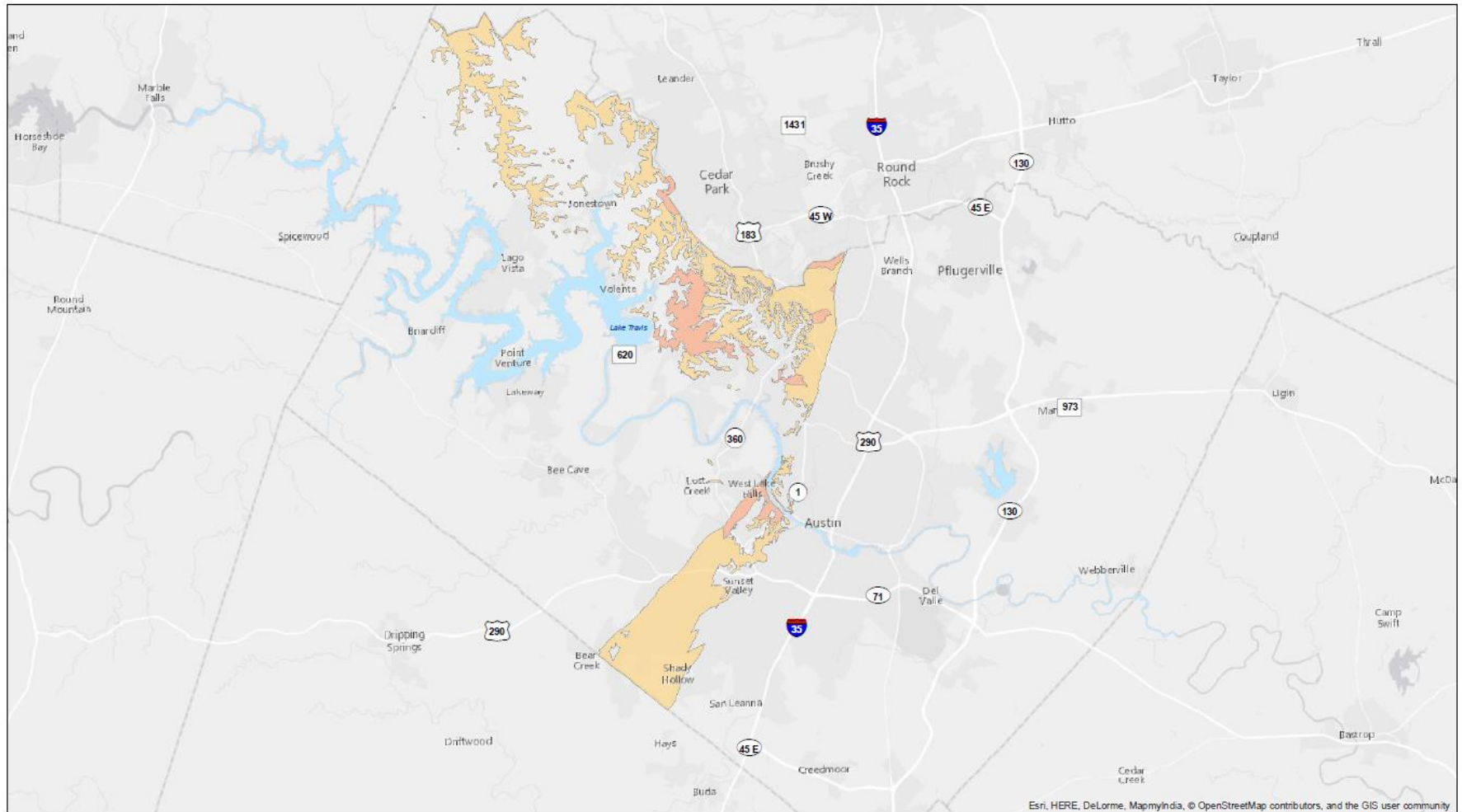


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Wildland Conservation Division
September, 2015
Balcones Canyonlands
Conservation Plan (BCCP)
Songbird
Mitigation Zones

Karst Mitigation Zones



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 Karst Mitigation Zone 1  Karst Mitigation Zone 2



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Our Charges

The endangered species of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve

- Golden-cheeked warbler
- Black-capped vireo
- Tooth Cave ground beetle
- Tooth Cave pseudoscorpion
- Tooth Cave spider
- Kretschmarr Cave mold beetle
- Bone Cave harvestman
- Bee Creek Cave harvestman



Golden-cheeked Warbler

Setophaga chrysoparia

- Small songbirds (5 in. long) recognized by bright yellow faces
- All are native Texans
- Must have the bark of Ashe Junipers to build their nests
- Need closed-canopy woodland of both junipers and broadleaved trees
- Most acreage of the BCP is devoted to warbler habitat.

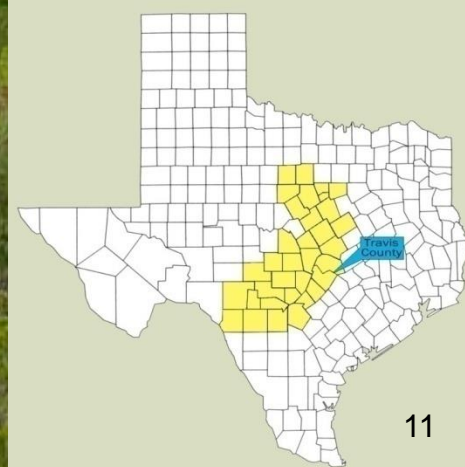


The BCP protects some of the best and largest tracts of habitat in the heart of the warblers' breeding range

Because Travis County is so critical to this species' survival, most of the BCP acreage is Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat.



Photo by John Ingram



Black-capped Vireo

Vireo atricapilla

- Distinctive dark cap contrasts with white “spectacles”.
- Needs a patchwork habitat of shrubs and open spaces.



- Never common near Austin, this bird probably depended upon periodic wildfire to create suitable habitat.
- The BCP will maintain about 2000 acres of vireo habitat.

The cave environment



Six karst invertebrates

All are troglobites

Species evolved through isolation

Physical adaptations to cave environment

- Eyeless or with vestigial eyes
- Often lack pigmentation
- More elongated bodies
- Longer appendages
- Live longer than surface-dwelling relatives

- ★ Tooth Cave ground beetle
- ★ Tooth Cave pseudoscorpion
- ★ Tooth Cave spider
- ★ Kretschmarr Cave mold beetle
- ★ Bone Cave harvestman
- ★ Bee Creek Cave harvestman

Depend upon food sources brought or washed into caves



Included on our permit are 27 species of concern

These species, if listed as endangered after the permit issuance date, are afforded protection under the conservation plan

They are:

25 other karst
invertebrates

Texabama Croton
Croton
alabamensis
var. texensis

...and

Canyon Mock-Orange
Philadelphus ernestii



We also monitor two other rare species



Bracted Twistflower

Streptanthus bracteatus

- ★ Search for colonies of this annual plant
- ★ Tally individuals each year

and...



Jollyville Plateau Salamander

Eurycea tonkawae



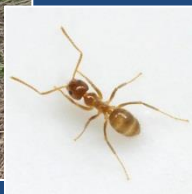
- ★ Listed as threatened in September 2013
- ★ Work with Watershed Protection to monitor populations, habitat, and water quality/quantity



BCP Management Challenges



- Small patch size/small populations
- Habitat fragmentation/edge effects
- Edge-adapted predators/parasites
- Reduced hardwood recruitment (white-tailed deer, feral hogs, oak wilt)
- Invasive, non-native species
- Wildfire
- Access management
- Public misperceptions of BCP



The Role of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve

- The BCP demonstrates that economic growth/ development and habitat protection can coexist.
- Without the BCP, economic growth and development would be at a standstill.
- Participation in the BCCP resulted in \$4.5 billion assessed valued contributing to the local tax base
- The Preserve protects all of our native wildlife while also providing important air quality, water quality, and open space benefits to communities in central Texas.

By protecting the habitat of endangered species, the BCP also protects a unique community of plants and animals



Questions? Come and Talk to Us!

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