

**Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP)  
Update for McGregor, Wheless and Westcave Preserves**

**BCCP CAC/SAC Meetings – August 2016**

**GCWA Territory Mapping at Wheless**

LCRA contracted Blanton & Associates to conduct Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) territory mapping within both the Prime and Transitional plots within the Wheless Preserve from late March through May 2016. Surveys followed the *Land Management Plan Protocol for Conducting Territory Mapping on BCP Lands*.

Blanton & Associates observed GCWA at 77 points in the Prime Plot, including 67 observations of males, nine observations of females, and one observation of juveniles. No banded birds were observed during the surveys. Territory density in the Prime Plot was estimated at 5.9 GCWA per 100 acres. This calculation was based on Blanton's estimate of four full territories and three edge territories in 93.2 acres. The pairing success rate in the Prime Plot was 100 percent (four out of the four full territories). The breeding success rate was estimated at 25 percent, based on one of the four full territories in which juveniles were detected (territory C). The average brood size was two, again based on the observations on territory C. The productivity was estimated at 0.5, based on the two juveniles observed in four full territories. Compared with the 2015 survey, fewer GCWA (males, females, and juveniles) were observed in 2016.

Blanton & Associates observed GCWA at 10 points in the Transitional Plot, including nine observations of males and one observation of a female. No banded birds were observed during the surveys. Blanton & Associates estimate one full territory, but with no females or juveniles in territory. Compared with the 2014 survey of the Transitional Plot, fewer GCWA males and females (and no juveniles) were observed in 2016.

**LCRA's McGregor Good Neighbor Program**

On May 14, 2016, LCRA's Natural Resource Conservation Department and Environmental Affairs held the McGregor Good Neighbor Program (GNP) classroom and field training for Comanche Trail Community Association (CTCA) neighbors interested in obtaining a permit to hike the preserve on designated trails. The neighbors not only received classroom and field training, but were required to sign a contract before receiving a permit. Approximately 45 people attended the training and are now permitted to enjoy the preserve per their signed contract. During the field training, a male GCWA was observed along the trail for the participants to view.

**Westcave Preserve Land Management Activities**

GCWA territory-level mapping completed by Dawn Houston (FWS permitted biologist) revealed that there were two successful territories at Westcave. The report is still being finalized. Westcave hosted "Warbler Walks" for the public. Dragonfly and Texas Barberry surveys were also conducted. Westcave continued unofficial salamander surveys and will work with Nate Bendik (COA Biologist) or Andy Gluesencamp (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Biologist) if a salamander is discovered (none to date).

The Monarch waystation habitat was installed with several species of native flowering plants. The Prairie Restoration area of the preserve was tilled and reseeded with native grass seeds as part of the prairie restoration efforts. Photo points were also taken, post-burn, for the areas where prescribed burning occurred.

NestWatch nesting boxes were monitored. Three Bewick's Wren and one Eastern Bluebird nests were found. Successful fledgings in two of the Bewick's Wren nests were documented. The data is submitted to [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org)

Water quality testing was conducted in the grotto and Pedernales River. The test results are sent to the Colorado River Watch Network (CRWN) and can be found online at <http://crwn.lcra.org/>. Texas Conservation Corp and El Ranchito crew worked on canyon trail repairs needed from flooding.