

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

**Q3 Report  
April - June 2017**

**Wheless Preserve Sale**

LCRA conveyed the Wheless Preserve property to Travis County by Special Warranty Deed dated April 27, 2017.

**Westcave Preserve Land Management Activities**

Conservation staff launched new programs/hikes offered to the general public. Seventeen programs were given and ninety-nine people served. A new conservation intern named Tejas Soman from Hendrix University started at the preserve.

In partnership with Travis County and City of Austin BCP, Westcave entered into a resighting research project for the Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA). City of Austin biologist, John Chenoweth banded two males. GCWA territory mapping was conducted by volunteer, Dawn Houston. She also offered two GCWA guided hikes.

Water quality testing was conducted in the grotto and Pedernales River. The test results were sent to the Colorado River Watch Network (CRWN) and can be found online at <http://crwn.lcra.org/>. Water quality samples and salamander surveys were conducted on Heinz Branch Creek by City of Austin Biologists.

Trail maintenance and repairs were completed on both canyon and Upland trail systems. Burn lines were maintained for future prescribed burns. Post were set for the Ahrns Grove garden expansion so the trail was rerouted. Westcave was awarded a TPWD Trails Grant for 2017.

LCRA, Conservation Services dispatched 12 feral hogs from the preserve. No new hog damage found since the last hogs were trapped. Westcave continues to monitor and trap hogs in partnership with LCRA.

Management, research and volunteer activities included the following: cowbird management, non-native plant removal and management, dragonfly surveys, NestWatch (citizen science through Cornell Lab), weeding of gardens by Hays Master Gardeners, TPWD bat research in the canyon, volunteer work days, weekly bird walks, wildflower walks and a conservation workshop on Monarch biology, ecology and research presented by Kathy Dawns.

**McGregor Land Management Activities**

LCRA was contacted by Travis County, about a breach found in the perimeter fence at the NE entrance of McGregor Preserve. Inspection revealed that the net wire had been cut and an investigation is being conducted.

LCRA's Conservation Services Department is still on track to complete the Shaded Fuel Break Project in the fall of 2017, as mentioned in the October through December 2016 quarterly report. The project will address both access and fuel mitigation at strategic points along the urban interface.