



# BCP PARTNER EDUCATION SUMMARY

FY 2017 Third Quarter: April 1- June 30, 2017

City of Austin, Travis County, The Nature Conservancy, Travis Audubon, Westcave & Wild Basin

## OUTREACH & EDUCATION (All Partners)

Activity	Location	Events	Youth	Adults	Volunteer Hours
Guided Hikes	Onsite	141	985	2,092	330
Programs / Presentations	Onsite	78	2,103	1,108	143
	Offsite	8	283	262	
Land Stewardship	Onsite	62	119	269	1,132
Ecological Monitoring	Onsite	22	1	89	760
Visiting Groups / Educators	Onsite	19	76	336	
Administrative Help	Onsite	6		4	69
Training	Offsite	2		75	
<b>Apr - Jun Total</b>		<b>338</b>	<b>3,567</b>	<b>4,235</b>	<b>2,434</b>

Monetary value of volunteer work (\$25.11/hour): **\$61,117.74**

## SELF-GUIDED PUBLIC ACCESS (Estimated Annual Visitation)

*These numbers are not included in the Outreach & Education chart above. They represent a sample of BCP areas with public access – we hope to include more complete visitation numbers in future reports.*

Hamilton Pool (Travis County): 173,136

Wild Basin (St. Edward's Univ. & Travis County): 10,000+

Baker Sanctuary (Travis Audubon): 468

Westcave - BCP portion (LCRA): 6,840



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## HIGHLIGHTS

### CITY OF AUSTIN



- The City of Austin declared May 18, 2017 Jill Harding Day. Harding has been a science teacher at Bowie High School since the early 1990s. When the school was constructed in 1989, a cave was encountered under the proposed science wing, and built over. A student later managed to find it by digging through the basement. Harding convinced a drilling firm to drill a shaft from the courtyard into the cave (for free). She then organized students, along with a few caver specialists, to excavate fill from the cave. The process took many years, but beginning in December of 2016, City staff began regular student tours, providing a remarkable opportunity to learn the science of caves and the Edwards Aquifer. It was Jill Harding's focused vision over two decades that made Bowie High School Cave an educational resource.
- 20 Austin Nature & Science Center summer staff attended training with Wildlands staff in one of the BCP permit caves. By staying on trails within the cave and leaving other areas undisturbed, hundreds of children will be able to learn about this unique ecosystem firsthand this summer.



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## BAKER SANCTUARY (TRAVIS AUDUBON)



- The 6th annual Youth Nature Camp (pictured above) took place on a sunny April weekend and was well attended by students from several LISD schools. Kids searched for golden-cheeked warbler (GCWA) on a three-mile hike and then learned about migration and GCWA natural history through immersive games.
- A new hike series was launched this spring for LISD students and their parents. 17 students and 17 adults from six LISD schools participated in hikes focusing on GCWA natural history and habitat. Plans are underway to increase participation next year, especially among middle and high school students.
- The annual Baker Open House, now called Baker Nature Day, was attended by over 200 community members. Participants enjoyed guided bird hikes, spider hikes led by Austin's Spider Joe, and Alysa Joaquin's amazing insect display. Another highlight was the raptor show put on by Sky Kings Falconry, a nonprofit that rehabilitates raptors and educates the public.



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## TRAVIS COUNTY



- 50 Oracle employees (pictured above) volunteered for Earth Day, hand-pulling the invasive plant vinca major from the BCP's Bunten tract. They helped restore native habitat, learned about the dangers of invasive species, and enjoyed a hike on the preserve afterwards.
- A small group of committed volunteers, most of whom are Native Plant Society members, have been creating and maintaining native-plant gardens at the Snowden House for the past several years. They got to show off their hard work in April when they led a garden tour and native plant hike for their fellow Native Plant Society chapter members.
- County staff provided information about the BCP and the importance of land, water, and cave preservation at community meetings and events around the county. Highlights included a presentation to new Steiner Ranch homeowners, educational activities at Huston-Tillotson's Earth Day ATX event, and a presentation to a McNeil High School class.





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## BARTON CREEK HABITAT PRESERVE (THE NATURE CONSERVANCY)



- 72 youth and 12 adults with Camp Champions of Marble Falls volunteered picking up trash from the preserve (pictured above).
- Members of Cub Scout Pack 72 were inducted into the Boy Scouts at a crossover ceremony hosted at the preserve.
- Youth from Austin Youth River Watch (AYRW) tested the water quality of creeks on the preserve. AYRW is a multi-year, after-school and summer program for high school students, combining peer mentoring with intensive environmental education. The students collect, analyze, and publish water-quality data from Austin-area streams and rivers and report their data to local and statewide agencies.
- Rose Hill Christian School of Tomball, TX 6<sup>th</sup> grade science class stopped for guided hike and picnic lunch on their way to Enchanted Rock State Park.



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## WILD BASIN WILDERNESS PRESERVE



- In celebration of Earth Day, Wild Basin hosted an opening reception for You Are Here (pictured above), an exhibit featuring 30 local artists' nature-themed artwork. More than 130 people attended the event, which also included a guided hike and live music on the deck.
- Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh, co-founder and Director of the Palestine Museum of Natural History and Palestine Institute for Biodiversity & Sustainability Research, toured Wild Basin as part of his North American lecture series. After a guided hike through Wild Basin's trails, Dr. Qumsiyeh and his group gathered in the Visitor Center to discuss biodiversity and the challenges faced by environmentalists within the Palestine-Israel conflict.
- St. Edward's University, Travis County and the Wild Basin Creative Research Center were mentioned in a New York Times article. Austin is one of nine cities contributing to the Urban Wildlife Information Network. Partners in the project use wildlife-monitoring tools like motion-triggered cameras to track animal behavior and encourage biodiversity in cities.



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## WESTCAVE PRESERVE



- Westcave Preserve has been getting a lot of great attention lately. The May issue of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department magazine featured a six-page article on the preserve. An eight-page article appeared in the June issue of Tex Appeal magazine, which included the above photo of Education Director Paul Vickery speaking to a class from Baranoff Elementary School. Both articles have brought new visitors to the preserve.
- The Andy Roddick Foundation brought 70 elementary-age youth to experience the Hill County with guided hikes and teambuilding activities as a part of their summer camp program.
- 39 people from the International Karst Records and Speleothem Conference came to the preserve for two field trips in May to learn more about ongoing research by UT's Jackson School of Geological Science. These visits were led by the UT research team who shared information about their ongoing paleoclimate study.



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## ACTIVITY DEFINITIONS

### **Guided Hikes**

Hikes on the BCP guided by staff or volunteers; includes education about the BCP, wildlife, and land management practices.

### **Programs / Presentations**

Presentations by staff or volunteers about the BCP and related scientific and land management topics; includes educational events and programs.

### **Land Stewardship**

Volunteer work on the BCP that includes removing invasive species, preparing for prescribed burns, creating fuel breaks, restoring habitat, patrolling, and maintenance of grounds, trails & facilities.

### **Ecological Monitoring**

Includes surveys of endangered species, vegetation, and nuisance species such as cowbirds, hogs and red imported fire ants.

### **Campouts**

Campouts on the BCP, usually organized by outside groups such as the Boy Scouts.

### **Visiting Groups / Educators**

Groups visiting or hosting an event on the BCP that was not organized by BCP staff.

### **Administrative Help**

Volunteer help with administrative work such as office work, research, and event coordination.

### **Training**

Volunteer training & other trainings that support the BCCP's mission. Examples include educating emergency response and infrastructure maintenance staff about protecting sensitive environmental features and complying with clearing restrictions.