

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY18 Quarter 4 Update: 1 July 2018 – 30 September 2018

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	Sixteen BCCP applications were received and processed from July 1 – September 30, 2018. Four Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$180,600.00 in mitigation payments. Fees were split 50:50 between Travis County and City of Austin.
Land Acquisition	<p>Travis County purchased the 56.1-acre Volente Valley tract in the Cypress Creek Macrosite and the 13.8-acre Morrison tract in the Lime Creek Unit on July 31. On August 28, the County purchased the 48.1-acre Woods of Greenshores Phase II tract in the North Lake Austin Macrosite.</p> <p>Two conservation easements totaling 26.5 acres were transferred to the County to satisfy the terms of individual take permits issued by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to private landowners. Both easements are located in the North Lake Austin Macrosite.</p>
Personnel	<p>Kelsey Meisenhelder started as the County's BCCP Administrator (Environmental Specialist) on July 23. This position processes take permits for residential and commercial development through the BCCP.</p> <p>Travis Clark was promoted to a Natural Resources Specialist position on August 24. Travis had been a Natural Resources Technician working on the BCP and that position will now be re-filled.</p>
Reports	<p>County and City staff completed a draft Tier II Public Access Management Chapter and distributed it to BCP Partners and the BCCP Citizens' and Scientific Advisory Committees for review.</p> <p>County staff provided written comments to the proposed Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulation revisions which were published in the July 25, 2018 Federal Register. The proposed changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. affect how species are added and removed as listed species, 2. change procedures for designating critical habitat and for conducting federal agency consultations, and 3. change regulations for how threatened species are protected. <p>Staff recommendations were that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service should not implement the proposed revisions because, in general, they weaken the ESA and its purpose of protecting and recovering species. Staff provided specific examples of concerns they had with the revisions.</p>
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warbler and Black-capped Vireo	<p>Twelve black-capped vireo territories were monitored on the Travis County BCP. Thirteen nests were monitored, showing at least 21 young were produced.</p> <p>By September, vireos and warblers had migrated to their wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America. Staff began analyzing survey data and preparing the annual report.</p>

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Karst Invertebrates	<p>Summer season faunal surveys were performed at ten caves and cave cricket exit counts were conducted at seven caves.</p> <p>Repairs were made to the cave gate at Stark's North Mine after someone had vandalized the gate to trespass into the cave earlier this year.</p>
Plant and Animal Control	
Feral Hogs	<p>Thirty-one hogs were harvested from the Kotrla Unit and the Concordia Conservation Easement.</p>
White-tailed Deer	<p>Deer surveys were started in September and will continue through October. The surveys will be used to provide population estimates and harvest recommendations for the BCP deer population.</p>
Tawny Crazy Ants	<p>Tawny crazy ant (TCA) surveys were conducted at No Rent and Whirlpool caves.</p> <p>Dr. Ed LeBrun of the University of Texas continued to study the TCA colony near the Anderson Mill Road and FM 620 intersection. He inoculated the colony with a microsporidian pathogen on July 31 and mapped the new extent of this colony in September 28. It will take time to determine if the pathogen is effective in reducing the abundance and spread of the ants.</p> <p>Dr. Ed LeBrun and Travis County employee, Travis Clark, conducted an interview with <i>Community Impact – Lakeway</i> about the TCA research being conducted on the BCP; Travis Clark gave a presentation about the TCA study to the Scientific Advisory Committee on July 17.</p>
Invasive Plants	<p>Invasive plants (Chinaberry, Ligustrum sp., Chinese tallow, Fig, Loquat, Nandina, Photinia, and tree of heaven) were removed from 12 tracts. City of Austin staff identified a grove of trees of heaven within a drainage basin on the Sam Hamilton tract. In five visits, County staff treated 478 trees of heaven within a 2.5-acre area.</p>
Land Stewardship	
Fence Construction	<p>Fence construction projects are being planned for this winter on the Kotrla Unit, Volente Peak tract, Cuevas tract, and Steiner Ranch Conservation Easement.</p>
Wildfire Preparedness	<p>Planning is underway for several fuel mitigation projects to begin this fall in the County BCP's wildland-urban interface at the Woods of Greenshores Phase II, Wheless, Volente, Toops, and Steiner Ranch tracts. Staff flagged the treatment areas and removed invasive plants.</p>
Conservation Easements	<p>The Greenshores Conservation Easement agreement was amended to address a new underground forced wastewater main line, to recognize the underlying land ownership, and to institute restitution for past breaches of the agreement.</p> <p>A habitat restoration plan is being developed for the Travaasa/Crossings expanded drip irrigation site.</p>

Law Enforcement	
Trespass and Criminal Mischief	<p>On July 10, staff supervised a work day for three individuals who had been involved in illegal cutting of vegetation, minor dumping, and illegal use of fire on the Karnik tract. The work day, which involved trash pickup and posting signs, was restitution for the damage the individuals had caused on the BCP in March.</p> <p>In July, staff identified and investigated a site on the Canyon Vista tract where trees had recently been cut on the BCP behind a neighbor's lot. Staff and law enforcement are attempting to work with the neighbor to rectify this issue.</p> <p>In July, Pedernales Electric Company (PEC) completed restitution for some damage they had done in May to some trees and a fence on the Cuevas tract. PEC repaired the fence and moved large boulders to block vehicles from entering a path PEC had created through the woods.</p> <p>Two recently acquired tracts, Woods of Greenshores Phase II and Volente Peak, had historic trespass issues and staff is now working to inform neighbors of the ownership change and new expectations. New signs, surveillance cameras, and increased patrols are reducing the problem and boundary fence will be installed in the future.</p> <p>A vehicle damaged a 40 foot section of the Lucas tract boundary fence when it veered off the road and collided with the fence.</p>
Outreach/Volunteers	
See <i>BCP Partner Education Summary FY18 Fourth Quarter: July 1 – September 30, 2018</i>	