



BCP PARTNER EDUCATION SUMMARY

FY 2020 Second Quarter: January 1 – March 31, 2020

City of Austin, Travis County, The Nature Conservancy, Westcave Preserve, Wild Basin Preserve and Travis Audubon's Baker Sanctuary

2nd Quarter: Outreach & Education (All Partners)

| Activity | Location | Events | Youth | Adults | Volunteer Hours |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Guided Hikes | Onsite | 139 | 701 | 1,996 | 294.5 |
| Programs / Presentations | Onsite | 28 | 556 | 280 | 73 |
| | Offsite | 12 | 917 | 1,660 | 317.5 |
| Land Stewardship | Onsite | 81 | 87 | 288 | 1,052.25 |
| Ecological Monitoring | Onsite | 55 | 2 | 38 | 130 |
| Visiting Groups / Educators | Onsite | 37 | 61 | 482 | 69 |
| Campouts | Onsite | 2 | 49 | 16 | |
| Training | Onsite | 5 | 1 | 64 | 227.5 |
| Jan-Mar Total | | 359 | 2,374 | 4,824 | 2,163.75 |

Monetary value of volunteer work (\$25.10/hour): \$54,310.12

SELF-GUIDED PUBLIC ACCESS

Many of the publically accessible areas of the preserve closed in March to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. These include Hamilton Pool Preserve, Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve, and Westcave Preserve.



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2nd Quarter Highlights

CITY OF AUSTIN



- This season saw wide-ranging public engagement on the City of Austin's Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, with 26 volunteer land steward workdays, the return of the #WarblerWednesday social media series, and the Austin Cave Festival that served more than 2,000 visitors.
- The City volunteer coordinator Audrey Stewart and biologist Bill Reiner outdid themselves this year, recruiting more than 70 volunteers for Golden-cheeked Warbler re-sighting surveys. In the photo above, volunteers learn about the tracts they'll be surveying. Surveys were cut short as staff and volunteers began to shelter in place as one small part of the coronavirus response.
- Forest restoration is in full swing, thanks to projects spearheaded by biologist Jim O'Donnell with the help of so many volunteers. At the end of last year, bioswales were dug on previously degraded hillsides to collect water to rehydrate the landscape and restore the forest from the ground up. In February and March, Vireo Preserve volunteers added compost and mulch to the berms and planted 190 trees of 30 different species. The effort is captured in this short video at <https://bit.ly/2K8mqwl>.



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BAKER SANCTUARY (TRAVIS AUDUBON)



- Pandemic or no pandemic, without the support of dedicated volunteers Baker Sanctuary would certainly be less well off. Over the last quarter, volunteers have assisted in the removal of hundreds of linear feet of old fencing, mulched trails and maintenance roads, removed non-native, invasive plants, improved facilities, led guided hikes, and helped survey color-banded Golden-cheeked Warblers.
- Ryan Paulsen completed work on a trailhead kiosk and Kinch Meyer on a new Chimney Swift tower for their respective Eagle Scout projects. Currently funding is being sought for new signage for the kiosk and Chimney Swifts have been spotted in the new tower's vicinity, appraising the structure with their judgmental avian eyes.
- Before the pandemic consumed Texas, the Baker Steward went on a Golden-cheeked Warbler presentation tour with educational, engaging, and some say inspirational Golden-cheeked Warbler talks for Larkspur and C.C. Mason elementary schools, St. Michael's Catholic Academy, and the Texas State University chapter of the Wildlife Society.



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TRAVIS COUNTY



- We're very pleased to announce that Jeremy Hull joined to our team as a Volunteer Coordinator in March (pictured above left). A native Texan, Jeremy has extensive experience in wildlife conservation including with black-capped vireos and golden-cheeked warblers. He also spent several years running the raptor education and volunteer program at a wildlife rehabilitation center. Despite starting his new job at an extremely challenging time, he has already played an invaluable role in developing our new volunteer hike-guide program and helping us stay connected with BCP volunteers and neighbors. We all look forward to the time when we can safely welcome the public back to the preserve for guided hikes and volunteer workdays.
- In February, we welcomed Texas Search and Rescue to the preserve for another training exercise, this time involving their K9 unit. Jennifer Failla is pictured above with her dog Squanto, who is an experienced people-finder. The volunteer "victim" left in a truck and even though he left no trail, Squanto was able to find him in the middle of the woods guided only by scent.
- At the end of January, we hosted an artist talk by Barbara Attwell, whose cave-inspired works were hanging in the Corridor-of-Art in the Travis County Administrative Building. She was introduced by Community Liaison Johanna Arendt who gave a brief overview of BCP and the cave-dwelling species it protects, some of which were featured in Ms. Attwell's art.



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WILD BASIN WILDERNESS PRESERVE



- Wild Basin welcomed professional artist, Danika Ostrowski as the Spring 2020 Artist in Residence (above left). Ostrowski is based in Austin and is a dedicated advocate for the preservation of public lands. She paints en-plein-air and also creates in-studio work based on photographs, sketches, and memories. Ostrowski painted on the porch at Wild Basin every Friday morning until Wild Basin closed due to COVID-19.
- Wild Basin provided guided environmental education hikes to various public and private school groups and scout groups during the early weeks of the spring 2020 school semester. Through March 13th, 137 children and 47 adults participated in guided hikes led by volunteer trail guides in the preserve. Two additional guided group hikes were scheduled for the first quarter of 2020, but were cancelled after Wild Basin closed due to the presence of COVID-19 in the Austin community.
- In January, Wild Basin conducted a Trail Guide Training workshop. Seven new volunteer trail guides were trained in natural science interpretation, techniques for working with school groups, and the basics of the Bee Creek watershed and the plants, animals, and geology of the preserve. At an additional workshop in January, three new volunteer guides were trained for the Tiny Footprints preschool program.



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WESTCAVE PRESERVE



- For Bee Cave Middle School's service day, 20 kids weeded our gardens and removed invasive Malta-star thistle (see above left, some students not pictured). Dripping Springs High School students also got in on the fun, with 16 kids weeding the gardens and removing invasive Malta-star thistle for their school's service day.
- During the first week of March, Westcave hosted 174 students and 17 teachers from eight AISD schools to participate in the Girls Outside program (pictured above right).
- On February 6 and 7, Westcave hosted the Texas Regional Meeting for the Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA). Workshops focused on juggling the four R's of facility management: Revenue, Reservations, Rentals and Registration. 22 people attended representing 16 organizations and public agencies throughout Texas. One person even came all the way from Louisiana!
- In late February, Westcave hosted 122 students and 11 teachers from five schools representing three school districts to participate in a National Geographic grant opportunity focused on Geo-inquiry.



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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.