

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2020 Quarter 2 Update: 1 January – 31 March 2020

<b>BCCP Administration</b>	
Public Participation	Twenty BCCP applications were received and processed from January 1 – March 31, 2020. Seven Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$87,950.00 in mitigation payments. Fees were split 50:50 between Travis County and City of Austin.
Personnel	<p>Four permanent Natural Resources positions were filled this quarter including: Audrey Gray – Maintenance Worker, Nancy Sandoval – Natural Resources Tech, Amanda Wood – Environmental Specialist, and Jeremy Hull – Volunteer Coordinator. Three seasonal techs, Kaitlin Lopez, Rebecca Woodward and Bianca Perez, were also hired.</p> <p>Shelter in Place orders due to the Covid-19 pandemic went into effect on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Field work was restricted to essential patrolling and staff shifted to teleworking.</p>
BCCP Annual Report	The FY19 BCCP Annual Report was submitted in January. It can be viewed at: <a href="https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/nr/2019-annual-report">https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/nr/2019-annual-report</a> .
<b>Rare and Endangered Resources Management</b>	
Golden-cheeked warblers	<p>The first golden-cheeked warbler spring arrival on the BCP was observed on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.</p> <p>Warbler surveys began on March 16<sup>th</sup> but were suspended on March 25<sup>th</sup> due to the covid-19 quarantine.</p> <p><u>Golden-cheeked warbler delisting:</u> On January 15, 2020, the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the USFWS's 90-day finding on a 2015 petition to delist the golden-cheeked warbler was "arbitrary and capricious...remanding to the agency for reconsideration." The opinion reverses only this portion of the district court ruling (dated February 6, 2019), which supported USFWS's finding.</p>
Karst Invertebrates	<p>Winter season faunal surveys were performed at 12 caves and cave cricket exit counts were conducted at seven caves.</p> <p>Contractor, Zara Environmental, continued conducting karst evaluations and excavations of 18 features on a property next to the Kotrla Unit. The goal of this project is to determine if any of these features have potential as substitution caves for unavailable BCCP-named caves.</p>
Salamanders	<p>On January 31<sup>st</sup>, staff took Tom Devitt, a researcher with the University of Texas, to the Martin tract to collect a salamander for his study of the taxonomy of Central Texas salamanders. Devitt is working on describing the Eurycea species found in the Pedernales basin. A video crew for a YouTube channel called Rugged Research filmed the event. Their episode on salamander research can be found at: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCp0Z5qtNXGdRhsPx6o3m2Eg/about">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCp0Z5qtNXGdRhsPx6o3m2Eg/about</a>.</p>

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<b>Plant and Animal Control</b>	
Feral Hogs	Ten hogs were removed from the Concordia Preserve and the Kotrla Unit.
White-tailed deer	Two deer were harvested on the Kotrla Unit and Webb tract.
Tawny crazy ants and Red imported fire ants	Red imported fire ant surveys and treatments were conducted at four caves. The tawny crazy ant research on the Collins tract was suspended due to the covid-19 quarantine.
Invasive Plants	Staff, volunteers, and contractors removed more than 5,100 invasive plants from seven BCP tracts.
<b>Land Stewardship</b>	
Habitat Restoration	<p>Travis County Natural Resources and Parks staff conducted a 15-acre prescribed burn on the Kotrla Unit in February. This burn will enhance black-capped vireo habitat.</p> <p>Several mechanical and hand-clearing black-capped vireo habitat enhancement projects were conducted this quarter. Twelve acres of existing overgrown vireo habitat on the Kotrla Unit and Vireo Ridge tract were cut back to improve habitat conditions. Another 1.5 acres of new habitat on the Kotrla Unit was manipulated to encourage use by vireos.</p> <p>In January, trees were planted on the Canyon Vista tract in an area of the BCP where a neighbor had previously cleared behind his lot.</p> <p>City of Austin staff gave County staff a tour of the bioswale restoration work taking place on the City's Vireo Preserve tract. The County is planning to do a similar project on County BCP lands and received valuable information on how to implement this type of project.</p>
Wildfire Preparedness	<p>Fuel mitigation projects were completed on the BCP in the Wildlife-Urban Interface along the following tracts: Collins, Toops, Romberg, the west side of Webb, the Fisher Hollow segment of the Lime Creek Unit, and the Steakhouse segment of Steiner Ranch. Shaded fuel break maintenance was completed at the north side of the Webb tract and at three segments within Steiner Ranch.</p> <p>Staff presented wildfire mitigation information to the Wildfire Coalition and to the Comanche Trail Community Association.</p>
Roads and Parking Areas	County Road & Bridge staff striped the parking lot at Wild Basin Preserve.
Utility Infrastructure Corridor	Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC), LCRA, and Austin Energy conducted inspections and trimmed vegetation along some of their transmission and distribution lines that cross through Travis County BCP land.

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Conservation Easements	During this quarter, staff conducted annual conservation easement monitoring at 13 properties which are privately owned, but are managed by Travis County through conservation easement agreements. Three properties were not in compliance with the conservation easement agreements.
<b>Law Enforcement</b>	
	<p>There were several back-of-lot issues documented on the BCP boundary this quarter including: four incidents of tree cutting, two incidents of significant yard waste dumping, and two deer feeders placed on the BCP. There were also two cases of sediment discharge onto the BCP due to adjacent construction. Both projects had to halt activities until the issues were resolved.</p> <p>Trespassing continues to be a problem. Three groups of trespassers were encountered by staff and given verbal warnings, and numerous photos of trespassers were taken by field surveillance cameras.</p>
<b>Outreach/Volunteers</b>	
<i>See BCP Partner Education Summary FY2020 Second Quarter: January 1 – March 31, 2020</i>	