



# BCP PARTNER EDUCATION SUMMARY

FY 2020 Fourth Quarter: July 1 – September 30, 2020

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

## 4th Quarter: Outreach & Education (All Partners)

| Activity                                                     | Location | Events     | Youth      | Adults      | Volunteer Hours |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Guided Hikes                                                 | Onsite   | 220        | 417        | 1287        | 10              |
| Programs / Presentations                                     | Offsite  | 5          |            | 106         | 32              |
| Land Stewardship                                             | Onsite   | 103        | 8          | 58          | 601.5           |
| Ecological Monitoring                                        | Onsite   | 44         | 4          | 64          | 313             |
|                                                              | Offsite  | 4          |            | 1           | 20              |
| <b>July-September Total</b>                                  |          | <b>376</b> | <b>429</b> | <b>1516</b> | <b>976.5</b>    |
| Monetary value of volunteer work (\$25.10/hour): \$24,519.15 |          |            |            |             |                 |

## SELF-GUIDED PUBLIC ACCESS

*Many of the publicly accessible areas of the preserve closed in March to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. These included Hamilton Pool Preserve and Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve. Both locations have re-opened for self-guided hiking with limited capacity, hours, and extended COVID safety protocols. Swimming continues to be closed at Hamilton Pool.*



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## CITY OF AUSTIN



- With the assistance of a local filmmaker, preserve staff made a short video focused on dispelling commonly held beliefs about the Ashe juniper trees that are such an important part of the Central Texas landscape in September. Preserve neighbor and longtime rancher Don Gardner discusses how Ashe juniper can help in soil building, decrease erosion, and contribute to the healthy forests that Golden-cheeked Warblers call home.
- In addition to small volunteer groups continuing habitat restoration workdays, many new and returning supporters of the BCP found community and learned about conservation with us online. We celebrated Latino Conservation week in July, shared dual-language Spanish and English story time from warbler biologists in Mexico, and continued to work with partners at Travis County to share a monthly Wild Neighbors webinar series that features expert speakers.



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## BAKER SANCTUARY (TRAVIS AUDUBON)



Most of the outreach at Baker Sanctuary is still shut down due to COVID-19, but one event was hosted in September. Sean McDermott and Boy Scout Troop 202 (pictured above) installed two trail benches to satisfy the community service requirement for his Eagle Scout badge. Typically, the most time-consuming component is digging holes in the rocky substrate, but the scouts unleashed their teen angst to good effect and, with the help of rock bars, made short work of the post holes. Group size was kept small and all participants were masked during the installation.





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## TRAVIS COUNTY



- The popular Wild Neighbors monthly webinar series continued this quarter, in partnership with the City of Austin. Above is a screen shot of July's presentation on Owls of Texas by Dr. Tania Homayoun of Texas Parks & Wildlife. Recordings of the talks are available to the public on the County BCP and City Wildlands Facebook pages, YouTube, and the Travis County website (<https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/nr/videos>).
- While the majority of our volunteer activities continued to be suspended this quarter to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, we did work with a handful of volunteers helping with essential activities including patrol and Snowden garden maintenance. All volunteers worked outside and practiced social distancing and masking protocols.
- Several new volunteer projects including fuel moisture monitoring and camera trap wildlife surveys are being planned behind the scenes and we will begin training volunteers for those opportunities soon.



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## WILD BASIN



- From July to September 2020, due to the presence of COVID-19 in the Austin community, all in-person programs for schools were cancelled. Wild Basin held one public program, a small star party night tour with REI for seven adults.
- Student interns Edere Ohwobete, Sofia Ramirez (pictured above center), and Eve Dean presented virtual poster presentations at St. Edward's University about research projects on the preserve. Student intern Kaitlyn Dawson (pictured above right) is photographing and filming short educational videos at the preserve this semester.
- Wild Basin reopened to the public for self-guided hiking on September 17. The preserve is now open with limited hours and capacity, a new online registration system, and new one-way trail signage.
- Volunteers have been conducting plant surveys to update information and document new species, as well as working on erosion control, trimming, cutting off trespass access, sign construction, and installation.
- Volunteers and interns have been checking acoustic recorders, analyzing data, collecting trail camera cards, and scoring wildlife photos for a wildlife acoustic study and wildlife photo study.



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## WESTCAVE PRESERVE



- Westcave continues to operate in a limited capacity, offering private-hike experiences to our members and small-group, socially distanced hikes to the general public.
- In August, we worked with Merlin Tuttle of Merlin Tuttle's Bat Conservation to erect a new bat-house for up to 1,000 bats along our Uplands Trail.
- In September, we hosted award winners, sponsors, and board members for small group hikes as part of a "hybrid" version of our Celebration of Children in Nature Gala.
- We have re-engaged some of our volunteer-led conservation and research programs, including Pondwatch, and a chimney-swift tower monitoring program, and the prairie is lovely these days!



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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.