

**Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP)
Updates for McGregor and Westcave Preserves**

**Q4 Report
July - September 2020**

McGregor Preserve

In early September 2020, Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) Contractors cleaned up leftover concrete from the installation of a new junction pole necessary for the reroute from the McGregor Tract over Lake Perspectives Preserve as part of PEC's Bullick Hollow Project. The concrete cleanup was on hold until the end of the breeding season. The old pole on the McGregor Preserve is projected to be removed by late October 2020.

In mid-September, new and updated signage was installed at the preserve (see photos below).





Westcave Preserve Land Management Activities

Staff built an extension of an existing trail (ADA-friendly) with money from a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) trails recreation grant. The trail is now ADA-friendly from the public parking lot to Leif's Bird Blind.

Four bat houses donated by Merlin Tuttle Bat Conservation and Fly by Night Inc. were installed. One of the houses will accommodate 1,000 bats and is the first of its kind in Texas.

The Uplands part of the preserve was re-opened to the public on September 9, 2020, after being closed since mid-March 2020.

Preserve maintenance is on-going and includes trail inspections, trail work, viewshed clearing, taking down nesting boxes, bird blind maintenance, and supplemental watering for butterfly gardens.

Research consisted of the following:

1. Ongoing, monthly Pond (Dragonfly) Watch (Xerxes Society-Citizen Scientist program) surveys were conducted by a core group of volunteers.

2. Monthly water sampling was conducted to check water quality at the Grotto and at Hammetts Crossing. Results were reported to LCRA.
3. Cave/spring research was conducted by Peter Sprouse, Jessica Gordon, and Crystal Datri. All the springs within the canyon were mapped and, in the process of mapping, four new caves were discovered. Below is a synopsis of the research.

Conduct a systematic search effort to identify, characterize, and map spring orifices and karst features. Spring areas will be assessed for fauna via visual searches of surface and subsurface habitat, grab sampling, and trapping (mop heads, drift nets, and bottle traps as appropriate). Collection of invertebrates is authorized. For neotenic Eurycea salamanders: collection of voucher specimens is authorized at previously undocumented locations under TPWD Scientific Research Permit #s: SPR-0319-051 (Wren Daytree LLC) and SPR-0608-082 (Zara Environmental LLC)