

City of Austin's BCCP Activities
Quarter 4 Update: 1 July – 30 September 2020

BCCP Administration	
Infrastructure Projects	<p>Six Infrastructure Habitat Assessment Applications were processed, and a Determination Letter was issued from July – September 2020.</p> <p>Staff worked with PARD to approve a vegetation work plan for clearing vegetation that was encroaching onto the roadway along City Park Road within Emma Long Park. The work has been completed by PARD contractors.</p>
Land Acquisition /Management Agreements	<p>AW BCP is still working toward acquisition of Bright Leaf Preserves.</p> <p>Carol Lee Preserve was successfully transferred to BCP at the end of September.</p>
Reports and Events	<p>Staff prepared a report on the history of fire incidents that occurred on and near the BCP from April 1961 to April 2020. Consistent with Baylor University's fire models, wildfire risks in Ashe juniper woodlands/forests is very low, and human sources of wildland fires are far more common than lightning-caused fires. Recommendations include coordination for fire incident reporting and data collection, updating wildfire risk models with incident data, and continuing community-based measures to minimize and mitigate wildfire risks. Fire ecology studies are also needed to assess whether wildfire risks change with changing climatic conditions and to refine prevention strategies as needed to minimize those risks to protect neighboring communities and habitat for federally protected species.</p>
Dual-managed Properties	<p>Staff suggested changes to a draft scope of work for developing a PARD Preserves land management plan proposing management goals and strategies that conflict with primary goals of the BCCP and existing provisions of the BCP management plan. When suggestions were not addressed, staff requested that properties dual-managed with PARD be excluded from the scope.</p>
Personnel	No new changes.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) and Black-capped Vireo (BCVI)	Monitoring of 2020 BCVI territories finished. Data compilation and analysis of GCWA and BCVI breeding season is ongoing.
	Population viability analysis of the GCWA within the BCP using 2009-2015 data published in the Wildlife Society Bulletin (https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/wsb.1112)
Jollyville Plateau Salamander	BCP continues to locate and conduct flow measurement, aquatic life surveys, and water-quality sampling of springs across the BCP on a periodic basis in hopes of locating new salamander locations and other rare stygobitic life.
Karst invertebrates/ karst work	COA and TC BCP staff submitted information for the Bone Cave Harvestman status review in response to a lawsuit to delist this species and subsequent 90-day finding published by USFWS in October 2019.
	Staff conducted cave faunal surveys and cave cricket exit counts in August and September.

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	Staff continued to conduct assessments of City properties for previously unknown caves and karst features with the goal of finding potential substitution and or supplementing existing BCP permit caves, and to aid in current hydrological studies, currently focusing on areas adjacent to proposed Corridor Mobility department and TxDOT roadway projects with funding support from both entities. Significant discoveries were made in Circle C Ranch at Slaughter Creek park. Field work was limited by Covid-19 virus pandemic to solo/small group assignments related to critical infrastructure support and protection.
Plant and Animal Control	
Mammals	55 hogs were removed by contractors and City staff this quarter.
Red-imported fire ants and Tawny crazy ants	Tawny crazy ants were documented at Emma Long Park, both inside and outside of the BCP portion of the park. BCP staff are working with UT researchers and PARD staff to control ants and notify the public.
Soft ticks/ Relapsing Fever	AW BCP staff continue to periodically monitor caves in the Austin area for soft ticks to improve public safety and study means for discouraging their habitation of caves. AW BCP staff continue to monitor Bullet Cave on the Barton Creek greenbelt and Live Oak Cave in the Village of Western Oaks Karst Preserve and Watershed Management Area to make certain that the warning signs and gate (on Live Oak Cave) are still in place.
Invasive Plants	BCP staff are continuing efforts to remove non-native plants on COA BCP tracts.
Land Stewardship	
Habitat Restoration	Staff and volunteers continue to implement demonstration projects at the Vireo Preserve to promote water retention, slope stabilization, soil restoration, and regeneration of native plants on degraded areas that are currently not habitat for either the GCWA or BCVI. Since Vireo Preserve supports many of the habitat types observed throughout the BCP, lessons learned from restoration work at this site are applicable to other areas within the BCP. Staff is expanding these efforts to other BCP preserves.
	We continue to monitor the decomposition of logs inoculated with wood decaying fungi to improve management of slash piles formed by the cutting of invasive plant species.
	Staff is monitoring oak seedling survival in different habitat types (with and without shade and protection from herbivory). The key finding that shade is critical for survival is consistent across three oak species and multiple sites and years.
Fencing	No fencing projects during this quarter.
Roads	Staff coordinated with TXDOT, LCRA, and PARD in planning changes to Loop 360 adjacent to Barton Creek Wilderness
Oak Wilt	Inspected most known oak wilt centers on the Preserve for signs of expansion
Wildfire Preparedness	Wildfire risk assessments of Utility assets were conducted on and adjacent to BCP properties. Primarily water treatment plants, wastewater package plants, and lift stations. Implementation of shaded fuel breaks on the BCP wildland urban interface boundary also continued.
Law Enforcement	

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Trespass and Criminal Mischief	Volunteer working at Long Canyon encountered a trespasser with off leash dogs. Staff are working to resolve how the person may have gotten onto the preserve and to educate Long Canyon neighbors about preserve boundaries and access.
	Continued patrols of Preserve boundaries.
Outreach/Volunteers	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>See BCP Partners Education Summary July – September 2020.</i></p> <p>Staff have helped create educational webinars for our Wildlands Neighbors Group, BCP Forest Restoration Training, and AFD Wildfire Division.</p>	