

A photograph of the Austin skyline seen from a distance, with the city's skyscrapers visible on the horizon. The foreground is filled with dense green trees, and the sky is a clear, pale blue. The text is overlaid in the upper center of the image.

Sponsored by:
West Point Society
Austin Parks and Recreation Department
Balcones Canyonlands Preserve
Austin Parks Foundation

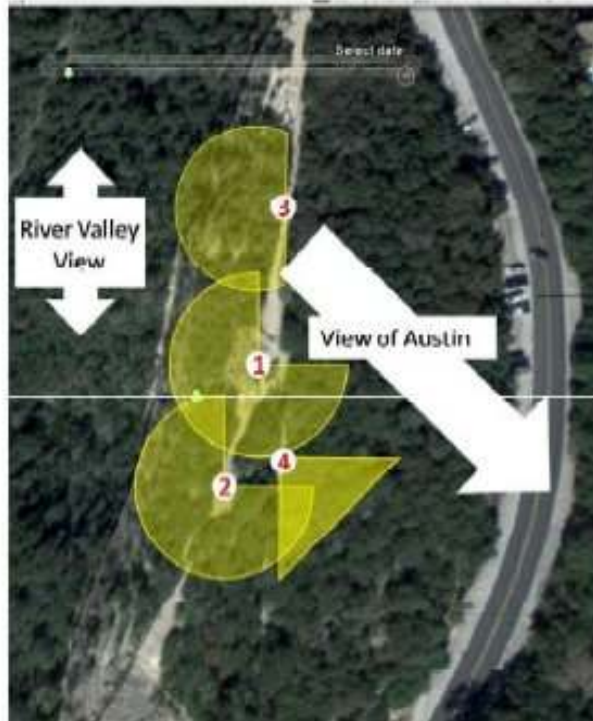
Project Description



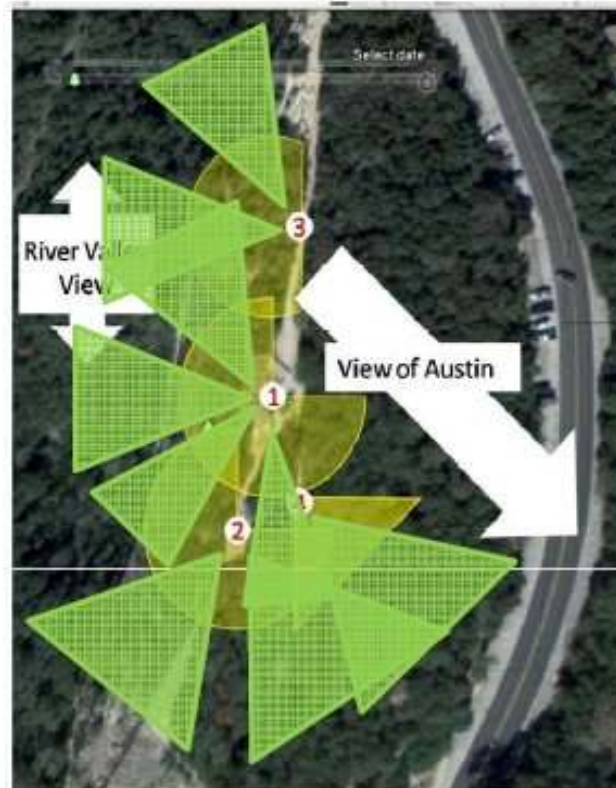
- The project is intended to improve historic views of the area, such as the downtown, the lake, and other natural areas
- Improvements of the signage and historical markers
- General improvements



FINAL TALLY



**ORIGINAL CONCEPTUAL PLAN
MAY 2010**



**ACCOMPLISHED AS OF 2/01/2011:
~80% COVERAGE OF ORIGINAL
PROPOSED SIGHTLINES INCLUDING
2 NEW PANORAMIC VIEWS OF
AUSTIN SKYLINE ***

* SCOPE OF ORIGINAL CONCEPTUAL PLAN CONSTRAINED BY PARK BOUNDARY, CONSERVATION, AND PRESERVATION CONCERNS. FINAL SCOPE OF PROJECT DEFINED IN COOPERATION WITH AUSTIN PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT, BALCONES CANYONLANDS PRESERVE, NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES, FRIENDS OF MOUNT BONNELL, AND WEST POINT SOCIETY

Project- Steps



- Parameters
 - The West Point Society submitted an application for a project at Mt Bonnell
 - Scope of the project consisted of hiring a certified arborist to trim trees and manage vegetation in order to provide a site view of downtown.
 - The West Point Society received letters of support from the two largest adjoining neighborhoods which are HPWBANA and WANG. The group also notified seven other smaller adjoining neighborhoods about the project and no objections were expressed
 - The proposal was reviewed by PARD and BCP staff. Staff from both met with the West Point Society and the certified arborist at the site to review areas of vegetation removal and areas to not impact because of the Twistflower.
 - The proposal was approved by BCP and PARD staff.



On-Site Signage



Project- Steps (cont.)



- BCP and PARD staff visited the site several times during the project.
- The PARD Forestry Staff, BCP Staff and certified arborist met on-site and determined the work plan. The vegetation management work was carefully planned, coordinated with both PARD and Balcones Canyonlands Preserve managers to insure compliance with regulations, and balanced with multiple partner goals, including enhancing views, enhancing habitat, protecting rare and endangered species, protecting the site from erosion, and managing vegetation to allow for site use by park patrons.
- The certified arborist completed the vegetation management work as specified in the approved work plan. PARD and BCP reviewed the finished work and noted several issues with the work; however nothing major was found that violated the agreement or the work plan.
- Any further work will also be reviewed by PARD and BCP staff prior to allowing the work to continue.



Issues after the Project



- Increased views
- Increased visitor traffic on unauthorized trails
- Potential impact to the Twistflower habitat
- Continued improvements to site, amenities and appearance

Response to Recent Concerns



- Unauthorized trail mitigation
 - Adding barriers to close or restrict access to trails that might impact the Twistflower
 - Any future training performed by the Austin Fire Department (AFD) will be required to find a new location. We will work with AFD to find a more suitable location for any mountain/cliff ropes training.
 - Staff will be installing signage to encourage visitors to stay on the designed trails.
 - Staff will be providing education of the Twistflower at Mt. Bonnell and on our web-site, in partnership with BCP.
 - Staff is in the final stages of authorizing funds to be used to provide a fence on the upper east side of Bull Creek District Park on the property line and at Mt. Bonnell, with the assistance of BCP.
- Future work
 - BCP has set written procedures for all work that is projected to be performed in BCP lands, using a modified version of their Trail Master Planning (TMP) Process in order to gain BCP approval



BCP Presentation



- **May 7, 2010:** PARD staff met with West Point Society (Mr. Bacon) to hear an overview of the proposed view restoration project.
- **January 28, 2011:** BCP staff (Kelly Nesvacil and Bill Reiner) worked with PARD staff and volunteers to delineate areas where bracted twistflower did not occur within the view restoration project boundaries proposed by volunteers. All observations including those by City staff and historic observations from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Natural Diversity Database (TPWD NDD) were considered.
- **April 3, 2011:** City staff became aware that the view restoration completed in January may have impinged upon a historic location of bracted twistflower through an email by Mary Ruth Holder. Additionally, it was noted that another area where the view restoration project occurred had new social trails that led to an area where the twistflower occurs and was protected from clearing. The Streptanthus Working Group was working on collecting data for the bracted twistflower listing package. BCP staff emailed TPWD NDD to see if their data had changed and it appeared that there were new historic locations for Mount Bonnell. City BCP and PARD staff began working on a mitigation project to close off the new social trails that appeared from the view restoration project as well as the area that impinged upon historic observations that City staff did not know about.



BCP Presentation (cont.)



- **June 29, 2011:** At the *Streptanthus* Working Group meeting COA BCP briefed the group on the view restoration project at Mount Bonnell and the City's planned mitigation measures. City staff also expressed concern to the Working Group over the fact that City did not have all the data from Working Group members to make appropriate management decisions on City land. Moreover, the lack of data sharing among Working Group members is a violation of section G1 of the MOA. We requested that a data sharing process be put in place to ensure that all bracted twistflower data collected each year is shared among members. TPWD NDD staff briefed the Working Group on the status of the data collection effort for the candidate listing and stated that was ready to distribute.
- **July 8, 2011:** COA BCP staff requested all *Streptanthus* data from the TPWD NDD. Upon inspection of the data, the observations that noted impingement of historic bracted twistflower data had shifted 50 feet to the north to an area of twistflower occurrence BCP knew about and delineated during the view restoration work at Mount Bonnell. *City BCP staff is meeting TWPD NDD staff July 21, 2011 to discuss the lack of data for this area and corrective measures.*
- **July 13, 2011:** Dr. Norma Fowler sent an email expressing support for continued protection of bracted twistflower by the City at Mount Bonnell and other City properties.



BCP Presentation (cont.)



- **July 15, 2011:** Willy Conrad responded to Dr. Fowler's letter with a summary of view restoration project at Mount Bonnell and again expressed concern regarding that the lack of data sharing among Working Group members. Mr. Conrad then stated that all bracted twistflower monitoring on COA BCP land will need to be managed through the COA BCP Research Permitting process to ensure that City staff has all data to make appropriate management decisions and the City is doing its part to comply with the MOA.
- City PARD and BCP staff are moving forward with the mitigation plan for the view restoration project at Mount Bonnell. Additionally, City staff is reviewing a proposal by one of the *Streptanthus* Working Group members to augment the twistflower population on Mount Bonnell. Moreover, City staff now requires a proposal (Planning Considerations document) to be submitted to BCP and PARD for all view restoration projects at Mount Bonnell that takes into account bracted twistflower, its locations, and potential mitigation measures. City staff is committed to protecting bracted twistflower and hopes that corrective measures put in place will prevent future issues.



