

**Travis County BCP Activities Report
October 1, 2011 to January 31, 2011**

BCCP Administration and Land Acquisition

1) Public Participation Process:

- **Applications and PC Sales:** 7 BCCP applications were processed and 3 participation certificates were issued for a total value of \$105,400.

2) Land Acquisition:

- **Additions to the BCP:**
 - **Lime Creek Unit:** 31.194 acres in the Cypress Creek Macrosite (closed Oct. 2011)
 - **Lemens:** 29.977 acres in the North Lake Austin Macrosite (closed 12/15/11)
 - **Webb:** 147.348 acres in the North Lake Austin Macrosite (closed 10/3/11)
 - **Mirtsching House:** sold house and Travis County retains ~2.5 ac. conservation easement around the house (sold 12/9/11).
 - **Current acreage total for BCP** = 30,380 acres for ES bird species (as of 2/3/12) plus 45 of the 62 BCP caves have some amount of protection
- **Future Additions to the BCP:** Negotiating 250+ acres of additional BCP land (including bird and cave tracts). Focusing efforts on cave acquisition and cave management agreements.
- **Grant:** Submitted FY12 Section 6 Grant to USFWS for acquisition of a 61 ac. tract in the Cypress Creek macrosite.

3) Reporting: The FY2011 BCCP Annual Report was submitted on January 27th to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The report will be available on Travis County's website soon.

Preserve Management and Monitoring

1) Biological Monitoring

- **Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) and Black-capped Vireo (BCVI)**
 - Staff began planning of locations and staffing for FY12 nesting season surveys
 - Staff began preparation for BCVI habitat restoration which will occur in February on the Ribelin and New Life tracts. Approximately 19 acres of habitat will be enhanced for vireos.
- **Karst**
 - Fall season faunal surveys were performed at 6 BCCP listed caves and in 1 other cave on the BCP containing species of concern.
 - Fall season cricket exit counts were performed at 3 BCCP listed caves.
 - Nineteen Travis County BCP karst features had locations verified, photographed, and tree tagged following standardized methods for improving protection efforts.
 - Travis County BCP staff gave 3 presentations on karst biology to McNeil High School students and faculty, and performed site visits on 2 Endangered Species caves on the school campus.
- **Jollyville Plateau Salamander and Water Quality**
 - JPS surveys were conducted at springs in the New Life, Concordia, Sam Hamilton Memorial Reserve East, Collins, and Bunten tracts and at SAS Canyon.
 - Staff monitored water quality at springs known to have JPS. McDonald Well, which quit flowing in March, and SAS Canyon springs which quit flowing in August, both began flowing again in December. Other springs with JPS also started flowing at the following tracts: New Life, Ribelin/Sam Hamilton East, and Concordia.

3) Plant and Animal Control

- **White-tailed Deer**
 - Orion Research and Management Services harvested 35 deer from the BCP. The meat was donated to Caritas of Austin to feed Austin-area families in need.
- **Feral Hogs**
 - Feral hog sign was observed on several BCP tracts. Staff set a trap on the Concordia tract during October - December, but did not capture any hogs.
 - In December, Commissioner's Court approved License Agreements with 2 volunteer hog trappers. These hog trappers can assist the County with removal of hogs on the BCP and in some Parks.
- **Ants**

- o On January 18th, staff attended a Texas Agrilife meeting discussing the recent detection of Raspberry Crazy Ants in Travis and Williamson counties. This non-native ant could have serious negative impacts to the BCP if it becomes established.
- o Performed Fall season red-imported fire ant (RIFA) surveys at 6 BCP listed caves (with Endangered Species) in October and November. No RIFA mounds were detected during these surveys, most likely due to the drought conditions affecting RIFA activity.
- o Volunteers performed native ant surveys at 4 BCP listed caves in October and December.
- **Invasive Plants**
 - o Conducted invasive plant removal projects on the Concordia, Greenshores and Bunten tracts.
 - o Five BCP staff took Pesticide Applicator's continuing education training on Jan 24th.

4) Land Stewardship Projects

- **Fencing:** A 1,045 linear foot section of boundary fence was completed on Grandview Hills North bordering the Trails at 620 development near RM620.
- **Road Repairs:** In October, Travis County Road and Bridge repaired a small section of service road along a creek crossing on the Grandview Hills North tract. This section of road had been damaged during the heavy September 2010 rains.
- **Utility Line Activity:** In December, Pedernales Electric Co-op (PEC) did some tree trimming under their utility lines which cross through the New Life, Spezia, Volente, and Snowden tracts.
- **Wildfire Preparedness**
 - o On November 12th, BCP staff, the Savannah Point Firewise Committee, and the Steiner Ranch Homeowners Association (HOA) held a volunteer workday to remove dead plant material from the BCP directly behind the Savannah Point residences. This workday was part of a larger community effort to implement Firewise measures.
 - o Staff attended Firewise meetings at the Estates at Grandview Hills HOA and the Dominion at Great Hills HOA, and Steiner Ranch HOA where Firewise practices (Ready-Set-Go) in the communities and the BCP were discussed.
 - o Wildfire Task Force – BCP staff participated in meetings every 2 weeks with interagency fire and emergency management professionals to plan for Wildland Urban Interface protections for the community. Group products will include a Ready-Set-Go brochure specific to the Austin area and are working on a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the Austin area.
 - o Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant – BCP staff worked with county grant staff on a fuels reduction grant due in March for areas on county preserve land in the Wildland Urban Interface.

Volunteer/Education/Outreach Program

- 1) **Volunteers:** During the period, 236 volunteers provided 907 hours of service assisting with wildlife monitoring, brush removal, vegetation surveys, landscaping and clean-up projects, trail maintenance, and GIS analysis.
- 2) **Education/Outreach**
 - o Staff led 71 participants on 6 guided hikes on the BCP.
 - o BCP presentations were given by staff to 152 participants at the following academic institutions: University of Texas, Texas State University, and McNeil High School.
 - o On November 12th, 51 participants attended a Native Plant Lecture at Concordia University as part of the BCP Hike and Lecture Series.
 - o BCP interagency staff planned for the 2012 BCP Hike and Lecture Series.
- 3) **Scientific Research, Education, and Photography Permits:** Staff re-issued 3 scientific research permits that had expired at the end of 2010. The permits were to monitor water quality (City of Austin), survey for JPS (City of Austin), and study arachnids (Independent Researcher).

Law Enforcement

- 1) **Incidents:** Eleven law enforcement incidents occurred on Travis County BCP properties including 7 cases of criminal trespass, 3 cases of criminal mischief, and 1 case of theft (entrance sign).