

TRAVIS COUNTY'S Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan Quarterly Activities: January 1 – March 15, 2014

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	<p>10 BCCP applications were received and processed</p> <p>5 Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$78,149.60.</p> <p>One USFWS-directed payment was received by gbkh LLP for TE-171255-0 (Purcell) for \$97,800.</p> <p>All funds in these categories are evenly divided 50:50 between City of Austin and Travis County. Seeking clarification on Lago Vista municipal PC issuance; may require refund.</p>
Land Acquisition and Protection	Travis County and gbkh LLP completed transfer of 10.4 acres for TE-171255-0 compliance to Travis Co stewardship, including negotiated \$72,350 O&M
	Sunset Valley Managing Partner Agreement was approved by the Coordinating Committee on 5 February 2014, adding 21.5 acres to BCP.
	Current Preserve Totals: 30,548 acres for endangered birds; 47 of the 62 BCCP caves w/some protection.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warbler and Black-capped vireo	Began planning for golden-cheeked warbler monitoring season which begins March 15 th ; Participated in several BCP Partner meetings to coordinate efforts, assure data compatibility, and share research updates.
	Conducted a black-capped vireo habitat enhancement project on 3 acres of Vireo Ridge tract.
Karst Invertebrates	Winter season faunal surveys conducted at 10 BCCP-listed caves; Winter season cricket exit counts performed at 6 BCCP-listed caves.
	Verified locations, photographed, and tree tagged 22 karst features on the Lucas and Ribelin tracts following standardized methods for improving protection efforts.
	Created a Scope of Work and made preparations for installing a cave gate at Stark's North Mine in spring 2014.
Jollyville Plateau salamander (JPS)	Temporarily stopped surveying since September 2013 when JPS was listed; Applied for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Permit amendment to conduct surveys but have not received new permit yet.
	Conducted water quality monitoring at 10 spring sites.
Plant and Animal Control	
White-tailed deer	Contracted with Orion Research and Management Services to harvest deer this winter; 46 deer harvested on the Hamilton Pool, Lake Perspectives, New Life, Spezia, Vireo Ridge, Volente and Webb tracts during October through February.

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Feral hog	Hog damage seen on multiple tracts; trap sites at Ribelin and Canyon Vista tracts currently being baited.
Red imported fire ant (RIFA) and Tawny crazy ant (TCA)	Conducted an assessment and survey of the TCA infestation at Whirlpool Cave.
Invasive plants	Invasive plants (mostly <i>Nandina</i> , <i>Ligustrum</i> , and Chinaberry) removed from the Concordia, Cuevas, Grandview Hills, Lucas, New Life, Origer, Ribelin, Steiner Ranch, and Vireo Ridge tracts.
Land Stewardship	
Wildfire Preparedness	Contracted with Lake Travis Fire and Rescue (LTFR) and completed a shaded fuel break/fuel reduction project on Steiner Ranch preserve, adjacent to Savannah Point neighborhood.
	Joint Wildfire Task Force expects to release Community Wildfire Protection Plan in April.
	CDM was contracted to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) of Travis County's Hazardous Fuel Mitigation grant submitted to FEMA; CDM site visits and information gathering in progress; The EA is the final task required before grant approval.
Infrastructure	Coordinated with the City of Austin and LCRA regarding LCRA's T-160 transmission line upgrade project which will involve pole replacement on a section of transmission line crossing through the BCP. LCRA and their contractors began tree trimming, road maintenance, archeological assessments, drilling pilot holes and soils borings to determine pole placement sites, monitoring any voids encountered with down hole cameras and traps to survey invertebrates, and surface drainage mapping at New Comanche Trail and Geode caves.
	Assessed tree loss on the Karnik and Richards tracts caused by PEC's emergency maintenance and distribution line upgrade work in Fall 2013.
Transportation	LISD is pursuing an individual ESA 10(A) permit for the proposed road project in the infrastructure corridor through TC Ribelin, Sam Hamilton West, and private 10(A) mitigation lands; SWCA is coordinating with Travis Co for access to Travis Co tracts for karst surveys.
	Texas 45 Southwest: County and City Natural Resources and Engineering staffs are participating in technical workgroups to identify issues, scope information needs, and propose solutions for karst and aquifer protection, water quantity and quality, salamanders and invertebrate conservation, and stream protection. 11 March 2014: TC Commissioners' Court postponed a vote to support an Interlocal Agreement among the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA), Travis County and Hays County.

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	Travis County commissioned a feasibility study for the realignment of Steiner Ranch Boulevard/Comanche Trail which is under review.
Adjacent Development	Coordinating with City of Austin and developers on current and future development projects adjacent to the Concordia, Cuevas, Nootsie, and Steiner Ranch tracts.
Law Enforcement	
Trespassing	<p>Park Police arrested a trespasser on Grandview Hills tract and issued a criminal trespass warning to a motorcycle operator on Volente tract</p> <p>Trespass and damage was observed on the following tracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concordia (cut trees, fire ring, makeshift shelter, discarded trash) • Steiner (no trespassing signs removed, fire ring, cut vegetation, discarded trash, graffiti) • Sam Hamilton East (fence torn down at 2 sites along Vandergrift High School), and • Cuevas (cut fence); Horse tracks observed on Vista Point tract but animal not located.
Outreach/Volunteers	
<i>See BCP Partners Education Summary January 1 – March 15, 2014</i>	

Upcoming Dates:

April 22nd: Earth Day

May 2nd: 18th Anniversary of BCCP Permit Issuance

May 3rd: International Wildfire Preparedness Day