

TRAVIS COUNTY'S Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan Quarterly Activities: 16 March 2014 –31 July 2014

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	11 BCCP applications were received and processed; 5 Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$353,275. After receiving clarification on Lago Vista municipal PC issued 2/10/14; refund required of \$30,774.60; All funds in these categories are evenly divided 50:50 between City of Austin and Travis County.
Land Acquisition and Protection	An amendment to the Concordia University Conservation Easement was finalized and approved by the Commissioner's Court on 15 July 2014, adding 1.0 acre to the existing CE.
	Current Preserve Totals: 30,540 acres for endangered birds; 47 of the 62 BCCP caves with some protection.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warbler and Black-capped vireo	7 100-acres plots were intensely monitored on Travis County BCP from March-June; Less intensive territory mapping was conducted on the Jollyville Unit.
	12 Black-capped vireo territories, all located on the Jollyville Unit, are being monitored and at least 20 hatchlings have successfully fledged so far; 5 males were banded this year, and 3 male and 2 female vireos banded in previous years have been re-sighted.
Karst Invertebrates	Conducted spring season faunal surveys at 8 BCCP-listed caves and 2 other endangered species caves; Conducted spring season cricket exit counts at 6 BCCP-listed caves.
	Verified locations, photographed, and tree tagged 5 karst features on the Lucas tract following standardized methods for improving protection efforts.
	A cave gate was installed at Stark's North Mine.
	Zara Environmental conducted a cricket foraging area study at Stark's North Mine to evaluate potential impacts of the North Walnut Creek trail on Stark's North Mine.
Jollyville Plateau salamander (JPS)	Conducted JPS surveys at 5 sites; Conducted monthly water quality monitoring at 12 spring sites.
Plant and Animal Control	
Brown-headed cowbirds	152 cowbirds were trapped and dispatched from Travis County BCP and Parks.
Feral hogs	7 hogs were trapped and dispatched from the Ribelin tract; Trap sites at the Sam Hamilton East and Woody Hollow tracts are currently being baited.
Red imported fire ants (RIFA) and Tawny	Performed spring season RIFA surveys and boiling water treatments at 13 BCCP-listed caves and 3 other endangered species caves.

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Crazy ants (TCA)	Conducted an assessment and survey of the TCA infestation at Whirlpool Cave.
Invasive plants	Removed invasive plants (mostly <i>Nandina</i> , <i>Ligustrum</i> , Tree of Heaven, and Chinaberry) from the Snowden, Concordia, Ribelin, Stratton and Vireo Ridge tracts.
Land Stewardship	
Wildfire Preparedness	Currently marking fuel mitigation areas to be treated this fall/winter; Projects on the Steiner Ranch and Webb tracts are tentatively scheduled.
	The Community Wildfire Protection Plan has been released to the Joint Wildfire Task Force for final review and approval.
	FEMA's contractor is completing an Environmental Assessment (EA) of Travis County's Hazardous Fuel Mitigation grant submitted to FEMA; 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. Negotiating with LCRA on a temporary construction easement on the Lucas tract which will allow LCRA to clear a 0.6 acre area for equipment access to pull cables at a critical junction. Construction work is scheduled to begin September 1.
Transportation	LISD is pursuing an individual ESA 10(A) permit for the proposed road project in the infrastructure corridor through Travis County Ribelin, Sam Hamilton East, and private 10(A) mitigation lands; SWCA has been granted a Travis County Scientific Research Permit for karst, cultural resources, and waters of the US environmental assessment. City of Austin and Travis County are working with SWCA to provide existing JPS data and will review the data with USFWS and LISD to determine if additional survey work is required. If yes, the SRP scope will be amended for additional work.
	Texas 45 Southwest: DEIS was released for public comment on 27 June; public hearing at Bowie High School on 29 July; DEIS documents can be found here: http://www.sh45sw.com/environmental/draft-eis.php
	Written comments on the DEIS may be submitted to TxDOT– Austin District, Attention: Stacey Benningfield, P.O. Drawer 15426, Austin, TX 78761-5426. Comments will be accepted at the project website at www.sh45sw.com . The deadline to submit public comment will be Wednesday, August 13, 2014, which is 15 calendar days after the date of the public hearing.
	Additional schedule: FEIS submittal 28 October 2014; FEIS signed 12 November 2014; and Record of Decision 9 January 2015.
	Travis County commissioned a feasibility study for the realignment of Steiner Ranch Boulevard/Comanche Trail which is under review.

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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	
Trespass and Criminal Mischief	<p>Park Police gave criminal trespass warnings to trespassers visiting a shelter cave on the Grandview Hills tract and to a Steiner Ranch resident who was target shooting and setting off fireworks on the BCP. Trespass and damage was also observed on the following tracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webb (brush piles dumped) • Steiner (numerous cases of trespassing, cutting trees, and yard encroachment) • Volente (numerous cases of trespassing)
Fires	Austin Fire Department extinguished a small (< 1 acre) fire along the transmission line on the Ribelin tract on June 15 th ; Lake Travis Fire and Rescue extinguished a small (< 1 acre) fire on the Steiner Ranch tract on July 4 th ; Fireworks were suspected in both incidents.
Unauthorized Wastewater Discharge	On May 13 th , a failed gasket between pipes at the Austin Water Utilities (AWU) Four Points Lift Station released approximately 161,000 gallons of untreated wastewater onto the Cuevas tract. Travis County worked with AWU to monitor the water quality and develop remediation measures.
Outreach/Volunteers	
<i>See BCP Partners Education Summary March 15 – July 31, 2014</i>	