

Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) Updates for McGregor and Westcave Preserves





Q2 Report
January – March 2018

McGregor Preserve

In the fall of 2017, LCRA Conservation Services met with contractors to review bids for the Shaded Fuel Break Project (see Figure 1 below). This addresses both access and fuel mitigation at strategic points along the urban interface. Work was completed for this project in late January 2018. Fire breaks were created and existing fire breaks along existing roads and perimeter fences maintained. The maximum width of the fire breaks was 16 feet. The fire breaks were created and maintained using tractor/shredder and hand cutting/wood chipping to avoid the build-up of herbaceous litter. These breaks also serve as points of ingress and egress during emergency situations, and for future scheduled maintenance. This work was in accordance with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) guidance titled “Fuel Treatments in Juniper and Oak-Juniper Woodlands throughout the Range of the Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA).”

Figure 1. McGregor Preserve Vegetation Management Map



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|  Property Boundary: 350 acres |  Terrain and/or Infrastructure: 350 acres |
|  Planned Brush Management: 23 acres
Goal: Create and maintain 16' fire breaks along perimeter fences and interior roads |  Endangered Species Habitat: 350 acres |

NOTE: Map symbols may not be to scale and are intended to represent reasonable approximations.

Westcave Preserve Land Management Activities

Spring programming started with a bird hike led by Paul Fushille. A Roundtable Social on groundwater led by Meadows Center and Hill Country Alliance was a success with over 70 people in attendance.

Purple Martin houses, Eastern Blue Bird boxes, and hanging bird boxes were erected. All nesting boxes are positioned on the Uplands portion of the preserve. Chimney Swift tower was also cleaned out and prepared for the season.

A new citizen scientist research program was implemented called FrogWatch USA (<https://www.aza.org/frogwatch>). Westcave now has its own chapter. Besides surveying Westcave proper there are several other volunteer sites on public and private property adjacent to or near Westcave that will contribute to our chapter.

Other management, research and volunteer activities included the following: FeederWatch (<https://feederwatch.org/>) and NestWatch (<https://nestwatch.org/>) monitoring (both citizen-collected science initiatives through Cornell Lab), Golden-cheeked Warbler resighting surveys being led by Dawn Houston, and two volunteer workdays. Water quality testing was conducted in the grotto and Pedernales River. The test results were sent to the Colorado River Watch Network (CRWN) and can be found online at <http://crwn.lcra.org/>. Trail maintenance, repairs and inspections were completed on both canyon and Upland trail systems. Boundary surveys and repairs were completed on the western portion of the Westcave boundary.