



## Water & Wastewater Commission Review and Recommendation

<b>Commission Meeting Date:</b>	June 13, 2018
<b>Council Meeting Date:</b>	June 28, 2018
<b>Department:</b>	Austin Water
<b>Client:</b>	Sherri Kuhl, Nico Hauwert and Daryl Slusher
<b>Agenda Item</b>	
Authorize negotiation and execution of an Interlocal Agreement with University of Texas to conduct a study on the tawny crazy ant expansion and experimental treatment within the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve sites, for a total contract amount of \$25,300.	
<b>Amount and Source of Funding</b>	
Funding in the amount of \$25,300 is available in the 2017-2018 Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Operating Fund.	
<b>Purchasing Language:</b>	Professional Services
<b>Prior Council Action:</b>	N/A
<b>Boards and Commission Action:</b>	June 13, 2018- To be reviewed by the Water and Wastewater Commission.
<b>MBE/WBE:</b>	N/A

Austin Water's Wildland Conservation Division requests authorization to prepare and execute an agreement with the University of Texas to evaluate the expansion of tawny crazy ants across Balcones Canyonlands Preserve sites and apply experimental treatment to limit their expansion. Tawny Crazy Ants were discovered in the Houston area in 2002, likely transported by ship from its native South America. Since that time it has been transported to and around Austin, likely through landscape materials and the invasive ants are now expanding their range on multiple Balcones Canyonlands Preserve macrosite areas including Whirlpool Cave (Convict Hill and Mopac South), McNeil Drive and Palmer Road area, and FM 620 North at Anderson Mill Road. Tawny Crazy Ants swarm in large numbers, asphyxiating wildlife, preying on cave invertebrates, destroying electrical infrastructure, potentially transmitting pathogens to people and agriculture, and destroying vegetation. Both the endangered songbirds, Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo, endangered karst invertebrates, and their habitat is threatened by Tawny Crazy Ant infestation. It has been estimated that Tawny Crazy Ants have already caused hundreds of millions of dollars of damage in the Houston area during its decade of residence.

Dr. Ed LeBrun of University of Texas Brackenridge lab has studied Tawny Crazy Ants on Balcones Canyonland Preserve sites and discovered a microsporidian (fungal) pathogen that may be effective in combatting Tawny Crazy Ants.

The Wildland Conservation Division is made up of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve program and the Water Quality Protection Lands program protecting over 40,000 acres of land from roughly Cedar Park to Kyle. The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve was established as a result of a Federal Permit issued to the City of Austin and Travis County to authorize impacts to eight endangered species. Six cave invertebrate species, the Golden-cheeked Warbler, and Black-capped Vireo are endangered species covered under the Federal permit. This permit requires active management, monitoring, and research to ensure species protections.