



# BCP PARTNER EDUCATION SUMMARY

FY 2019 First Quarter: October 1- December 31, 2018

City of Austin, Travis County, The Nature Conservancy, Travis Audubon, Westcave & Wild Basin

## 1st Quarter: Outreach & Education (All Partners)

Activity	Location	Events	Youth	Adults	Volunteer Hours
Guided Hikes	Onsite	104	345	1,152	168.75
Programs / Presentations	Onsite	38	669	342	8
	Offsite	6	147	127	3
Land Stewardship	Onsite	99	58	428	1,361.25
Ecological Monitoring	Onsite	19	1	52	126.25
Visiting Groups / Educators	Onsite	6	17	98	
Administrative Help	Onsite			2	3
<b>Oct - Dec Total</b>		<b>272</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>2,201</b>	<b>1,670.25</b>
Monetary value of volunteer work (\$24.64/hour): <b>\$41,154.96</b>					

## SELF-GUIDED PUBLIC ACCESS (Estimated Annual Visitation)

*These numbers are not included in the Outreach & Education chart above. They represent a sample of BCP areas with public access – we hope to include more complete visitation numbers in future reports.*

Hamilton Pool (Travis County): 173,136

Wild Basin (St. Edward's Univ. & Travis County): 10,000+

Baker Sanctuary (Travis Audubon): 468

Westcave - BCP portion (LCRA): 6,840



## 1st Quarter Highlights

### CITY OF AUSTIN

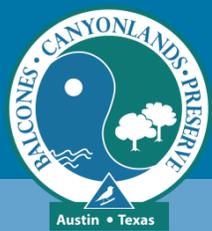
In December, City staff and volunteers gave over 200 native plants to neighbors of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (pictured to the right).

Neighbors learned about challenges that invasive plants pose to healthy ecosystems in the Preserve and were given free native plants as alternatives for their own yards.

These plants require very little water or maintenance and in turn they provide nectar for pollinators, fruit for wildlife, and contribute to a diverse understory in Golden-cheeked warbler habitat.



In the coming months, City staff will train a new set of volunteer hike guides and land stewards to help share the stories and successes of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve with the public. Additionally, a new volunteer cave guide program is under development with partners departments and organizations in the caving community and City government.



## BAKER SANCTUARY (TRAVIS AUDUBON)



- Two Eagle Scout Projects were completed at Baker Sanctuary over the last quarter. Colin Partridge and Troop 513 installed a series of seven box steps in one of the steeper portions of the North Valley Trail (pictured above). No longer will terrified elementary students feel the need to scoot down the hill on their bottom. Thomas Rabago, with help from Troop 202, built and installed two new picnic tables, which will experience a great deal of use with upcoming community events such as the Baker Nature Day and the Great Backyard Bird Count.
- A presentation on Hill Country ecology was given to 115 fourth grade students and their teachers at LISD's Deer Creek Elementary. The audience was regaled with information ranging from golden-cheeked warblers (GCWA) to non-native, invasive plants, to endangered karst invertebrates. Students were most intrigued by the GCWA geolocator project currently being headed up by the folks at Fort Hood.



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## TRAVIS COUNTY



- Boy Scout Saavan Myneni built a chimney swift tower on the preserve this fall with the help of family and friends, which is no small undertaking (shown above left). The new tower can host large numbers of swifts roosting together in summer months, and could also become a nesting site for a pair of swifts each breeding season.
- Pictured above right are volunteers (and Community Liaison Johanna Arendt) after a morning of maintaining the canyon trail at Grandview Hills, getting it ready for a public guided hike the following weekend. Volunteers contributed many hours to the preserve this fall, maintaining trails and gardens, removing invasive plants, monitoring species, patrolling, and planting trees.
- For the second year, the Texas Conservation Corps (TxCC ) held their chainsaw training class at the Preserve, teaching new recruits proper chainsaw etiquette while helping to restore black-capped vireo habitat. In this mutually beneficial partnership, TxCC gets the opportunity to train on a real-world project, while the Preserve receives donated restoration work.



### WILD BASIN WILDERNESS PRESERVE



- Wild Basin had the wonderful opportunity to host 44 students plus chaperones and teachers from the UT Elementary Charter School (pictured above left). Grant funds were used to cover the school's transportation costs. The Preserve was thrilled to be able to reach out to schools that otherwise would not be able to experience Wild Basin. Five trained volunteer trail guides led four groups through the Preserve's Hill Country habitat, teaching students about plants, wildlife, geology, and more.
- Wild Basin's Director, Dr. Barbara Dugelby, gave two public presentations about Wild Basin. The talks were given to the UT-Austin Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and the Balcones Chapter of the Master Naturalist Program. Dugelby's talks provided background on how the preserve was established through the hard work of Austin citizens and how it has evolved over the past four decades. Dugelby also provided an overview of many important research and land management projects, as well as the environmental education outreach that occurs at the preserve.
- Botanist Bill Carr led Wild Basin Trail Guides on a grass walk around Arroyo Vista in November (above right). As Mr. Carr pointed out interesting native plant species, participants spotted lots of little bluestem, seep muhly, and tall grama, along with slim tridens, poverty dropseed, and many others. Wild Basin is an excellent place to observe and learn about native grasses and other Central Texas plants!



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## WESTCAVE PRESERVE



- The Monday-Wednesday leading up to Thanksgiving, Westcave introduced a new program called Thankful for Nature Days. With most public schools being out, we knew that families would be looking for things to do. We provided shorter family-friendly hikes into our canyon, archery (shown above), crafts, and other fun activities. Over the three days, we hosted 225 people, a mix of Austin locals and out of town guests visiting for Thanksgiving. The weather was a factor for one date, but overall the program was a success and positive feedback from guests has made us mark our calendars to provide a similar experience for the 2019 Thanksgiving week.
- Heavy rains in the month of October reduced road access to Westcave Preserve due to the flooding Pedernales River. The low water crossing at Hammett's Crossing was closed for 15 days, which caused all education programs to be canceled and greatly reduced the number of guest that came on the weekends. Once the roadway was open it took Google Maps another month to update their mapping to show the roadway was clear and provide the shortest drive possible. The flooding and then slow updating by Google Maps really impacted our attendance.



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## ACTIVITY DEFINITIONS

### **Guided Hikes**

Hikes on the BCP guided by staff or volunteers; includes education about the BCP, wildlife, and land management practices.

### **Programs / Presentations**

Presentations by staff or volunteers about the BCP and related scientific and land management topics; includes educational events and programs.

### **Land Stewardship**

Volunteer work on the BCP that includes removing invasive species, preparing for prescribed burns, creating fuel breaks, restoring habitat, patrolling, and maintenance of grounds, trails & facilities.

### **Ecological Monitoring**

Includes surveys of endangered species, vegetation, and nuisance species such as cowbirds, hogs and red imported fire ants.

### **Campouts**

Campouts on the BCP, usually organized by outside groups such as the Boy Scouts.

### **Visiting Groups / Educators**

Groups visiting or hosting an event on the BCP that was not organized by BCP staff.

### **Administrative Help**

Volunteer help with administrative work such as office work, research, and event coordination.

### **Training**

Volunteer training & other trainings that support the BCCP's mission. Examples include educating emergency response and infrastructure maintenance staff about protecting sensitive environmental features and complying with clearing restrictions.