

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

**Q2 Report
January - March 2019**

McGregor Preserve

No activities.

Westcave Preserve Land Management Activities

Spring programming began with the preserves first ever wildflower walk led by Bill Carr. Nineteen adults attended. Future programs to be held in April and May include a nature photography workshop, two bird hikes, and a neighborhood round-table focusing on non-native/invasive plants and animals given by U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Biologist, Chris Harper.

Research conducted consisted of FeederWatch (<https://feederwatch.org/>), NestWatch (<https://nestwatch.org/>), Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) resighting, a fish survey, dung beetle research, moss ecology study, and water quality testing in the grotto and at Hammetts Crossing on the Pedernales River. Data was submitted to the appropriate agencies.

Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District installed a weather station on the Uplands that will record rainfall, temperature, relative humidity, soil moisture, wind direction and speed, solar radiation, and barometric pressure. This is the second weather station of its kind in Travis County. Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources donated the unit. To access this data go to this link - <https://dashboard.hobolink.com/public/6567/Westcave%20Preserve-03-29-2019%2021:56:20#/>

Trail maintenance was conducted on both the Uplands and Canyon trails. Maintenance was performed on the existing Murphy bird blind and on the fence at the mouth of Heinz Branch Creek. Bird nesting boxes were prepped for the season and installed at various locations on the Uplands.

Due to an increase in hog activity at the preserve, LCRA assisted with the removal of two hogs via baiting and trapping. Hog trapping remains ongoing.

Brown-headed cowbird removal is on-going during the breeding season for the GCWA. The breeding season is March 1 – August 1.

The much anticipated new bird blind is well underway. Eighteen volunteers, over five workdays have dug holes, cemented posts, built the frame and rafters, constructed the walls and sealed the wood. The bird blind construction is over halfway complete. Future workdays will focus on putting up the roof and gutters, installing a water collection system and drip feature, building benches and installing bird feeders. Two additional conservation workdays were held which involved Lake Travis Middle School and Dripping Springs High School students working on non-native plant removal.