

City of Austin's BCCP Activities
Quarter 2 Update: 1 January – 31 March 2019

BCCP Administration	
Infrastructure Projects	Seven Infrastructure Habitat Assessment Applications were processed, and Determination Letters were issued from January - March 2019.
Land Acquisition /Management Agreements	AW BCP is currently negotiating a management agreement with Texas Cave Management Association for management of two BCP permit caves. AW and Travis County BCP met with owners of Four Points Preserve on February 27 regarding acquisition of four BCP permit caves, and acquisition may be possible within about 3 years. Some incentives were offered for accelerated transfer this fiscal year.
Reports and Events	Submitted annual BCCP report to USFWS https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/bccp/2018-annual-report
Personnel	Currently in the process of hiring two new BCP Land Management Rangers
Administrative	
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) and Black-capped Vireo (BCVI)	Golden-cheeked Warbler Delisting – A February 7, 2019 court ruling upheld USFWS's decision on the 90-day finding, so the GCWA remains on the endangered species list.
	Initiated Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler surveys in March.
	Collaborating with Texas A&M University to assess genetic structure of GCWA populations across its breeding range.
	BCP staff photographed and videotaped a GCWA male on the Kent Butler tract that was banded as a fledgling by Texas A&M University on Camp Bullis in San Antonio last year. This is the longest confirmed dispersal distance within the GCWA's breeding range.
	Following legal reviews and ethical review by the Committee on Publication Ethics, O'Donnell et al. (2015) was published in the hard copy version of the Journal of Field Ornithology in March 2019.
Jollyville Plateau Salamander	AW and Travis County BCP staff met with USFW on March 26 to provide updated information on the Jollyville salamander and offered to produce a short report documenting the subsurface flowpath connections with Jollyville salamander across various BCP preserves. BCP continues to locate and conduct flow measurement, aquatic life surveys, and water-quality sampling of springs across the BCP on a periodic basis in hopes of locating new salamander locations.
Karst invertebrates/ karst work	Blowing Sink Restoration. This project to remove obstructions that prevent access to the lower half of the BCP-permit cave will be pursued in the second half of the fiscal year. Wildland Conservation management will be working on an MOU or potentially a code exemption regarding cave restoration and preserve management with the Watershed Protection Department and Parks and Recreation Department.
	Flint Ridge Cave monitoring. Flow stations for Flint Ridge and paired catchment for HQ Flat Sink were re-activated by BCP on March 14. Auto samplers were reinstalled inside Flint Ridge Cave in April. AW BCP intends to monitor flow continuously and collect stormwater samples over a week interval twice a year.
	Conducted cave faunal surveys and cave cricket exit counts (ongoing)

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Plant and Animal Control	
Mammals	6 white-tailed deer and 27 hogs were removed by contractors and City staff this quarter.
Red-imported fire ants and Tawny crazy ants	Tawny crazy ants continue to be monitored per established protocol from Section 6 grant.
Soft ticks/ Relapsing Fever	AW BCP staff are monitoring caves in the Austin area for soft ticks to improve public safety and study means for discouraging their habitation of caves. A newly acquired BCP preserve cave (Spider Wire) was discovered to contain soft ticks that contain bacteria transmitting relapsing fever, temporarily ceasing cave restoration operations there. AW BCP staff continue to work with Texas State University, Baylor College of Medicine, Austin Health Department, and Center for Disease Control to study factors influencing the expansion of soft ticks in the Austin area. AW BCP staff placed warning signs at both Bullet Cave on Barton Creek and gated Live Oak Cave in the Village of Western Oaks Karst Preserve and Watershed Management Area to alert the public for possible hazards.
Invasive Plants	BCP staff and volunteers are continuing efforts to remove non-native plants on COA BCP tracts.
Land Stewardship	
Habitat Restoration	Staff and volunteers continue to implement demonstration projects at the Vireo Preserve to promote water retention, slope stabilization, soil restoration, and regeneration of native plants on degraded areas that are currently not habitat for either the GCWA or BCVI. Since Vireo Preserve supports many of the habitat types observed throughout the BCP, lessons learned from restoration work at this site are applicable to other areas within the BCP. Staff are also now expanding these efforts to other BCP preserves.
Fencing	Installed 2,400 linear feet of fencing at Long Canyon
Wildfire Preparedness	No current projects during bird season. Planning for projects next fall.
Law Enforcement	
Trespass and Criminal Mischief	Restoration is underway on the Long Canyon preserve where a homeowner previously constructed a sports court on City property. The sports court has been removed and restoration is ongoing.
Outreach/Volunteers	

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See *BCP Partners Education Summary January - March 2019*.

Paintings by Barbara Attwell showing cave life and scenes can be viewed online at <http://barbaraattwell.net/the-cave-project>. The paintings will be made into posters for display and the originals displayed in galleries, including Bergstrom Airport, possibly Austin Central library, and Travis County building.

AW BCP conducted Master Naturalist geology training on Jan 12 (CAMN) Jan 31 (Jollyville), with a cave tour on Feb 2. Explore Austin cave tours were provided Jan 5, Jan 12, and Feb 16. Austin Cave Festival was held Feb 23 at the Wildflower Center.