Land Management Plan for Parks and Recreation Department Natural Areas

Request for Proposals

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Purpose

To receive feedback from the Contracts & Concessions Committee related to the scope of work for the Land Management Plan for Parks and Recreation Department natural areas request for proposals.

Background

- The majority of PARD's lands are protected as *natural areas* in preserves (Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, greenbelts, metro parks, district parks, even along the margins of golf courses).
- A *natural area* is an area that retains or has reestablished its natural character, typically dominated by native plants and animals.

Background

- These natural areas provide critical services, such as:
  - climate regulation
  - water cleansing
  - air cleansing
  - mental health
  - social benefits
- Most have not been managed to maintain ecosystem health.
- Threatened by climate change, invasive species, and loss of biodiversity, all of which make them more susceptible to heat, drought, disease, and wildfire.

Background

- The need for comprehensive planning and management of PARD natural areas has long been recognized by staff, partners, and the community.
- The 2019 Wildfire Preparedness Audit highlighted this need from a public safety standpoint.
  - Recommended that PARD create and implement land management plans.
 - PARD committed to establish a land management team to do this.

PARD Lands Involved

- All Preserves and PARD Balcones Canyonlands Preserves

- Contiguous natural areas > 75-100 ac.

- Excludes high perimeter area (difficult access, expensive mgmt)

- Creates large mgmt. complexes

- 10,000+ ac. included

Included in SOW

PARD properties not in SOW

N

Ecosystems

Oak savanna

Grassland

Oak-juniper woodland

Bottomland forest

Riparian and aquatic

Included in SOW

PARD properties not in SOW

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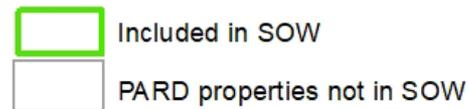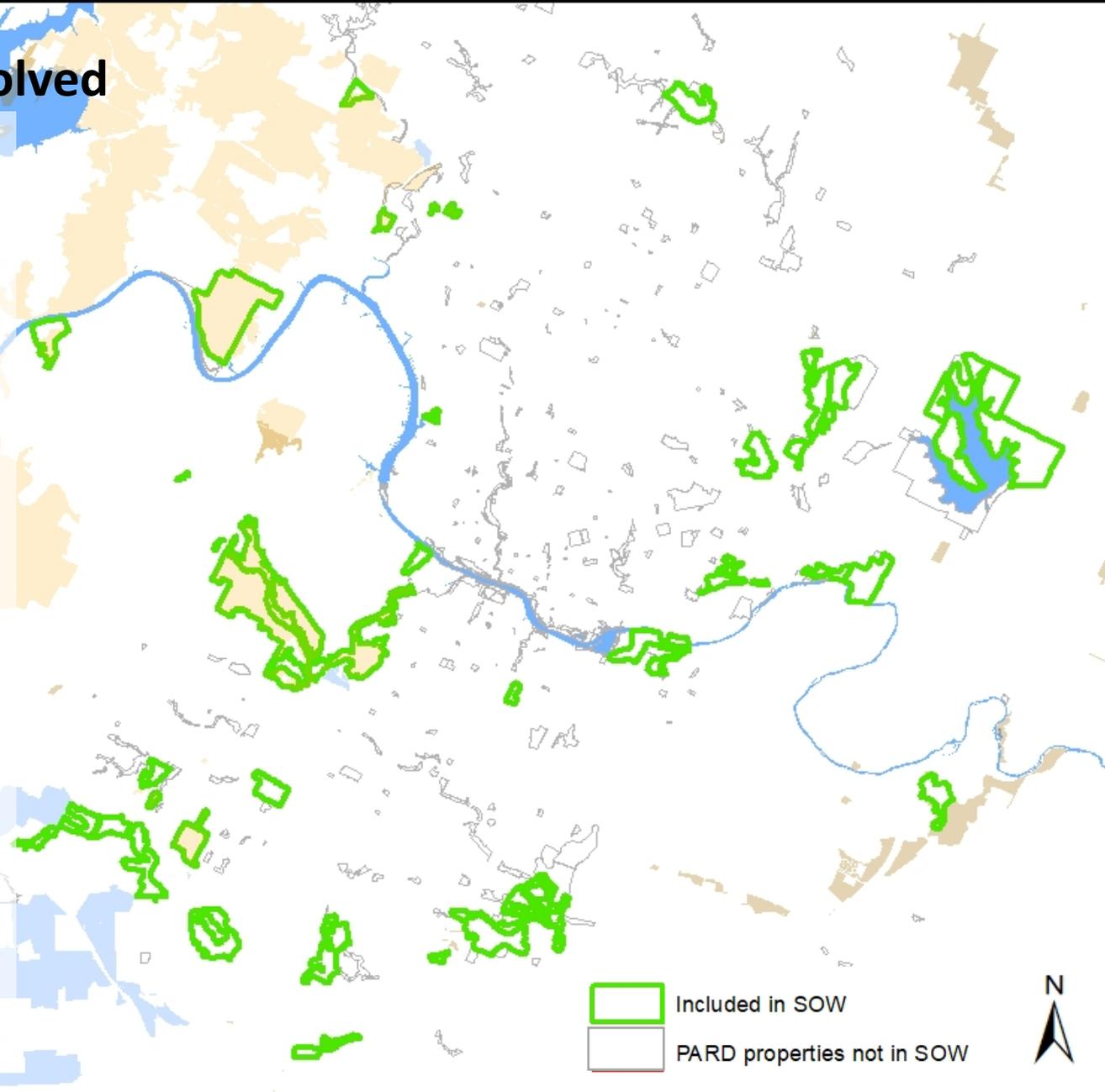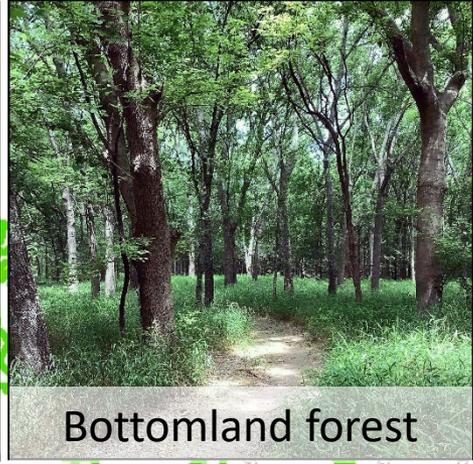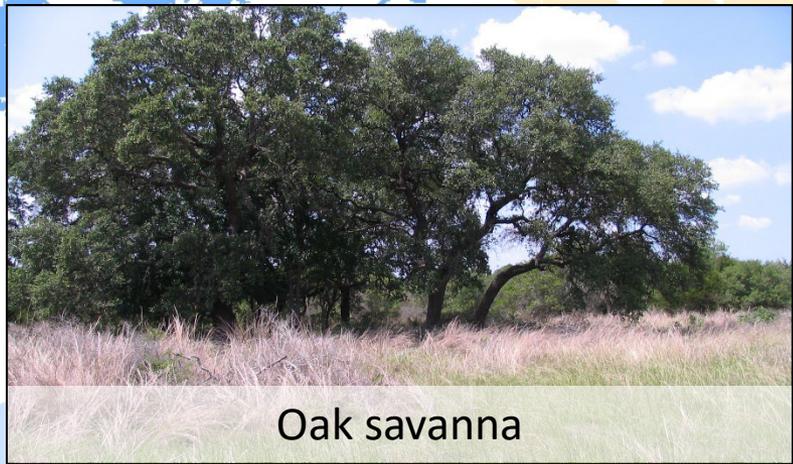
Deliverables & Plan Components

Site analysis
- Soils
- Hydrology
- Existing vegetation communities
- Endangered species habitat
- Trails, authorized and unauthorized
- Other elements

Climate vulnerability analysis
- *Identify* components of ecosystems that affect vulnerability to intense heat, drought, and wildfire
- *Map* these components to indicate where natural resources may be most vulnerable to climate change
- Will help prioritize work
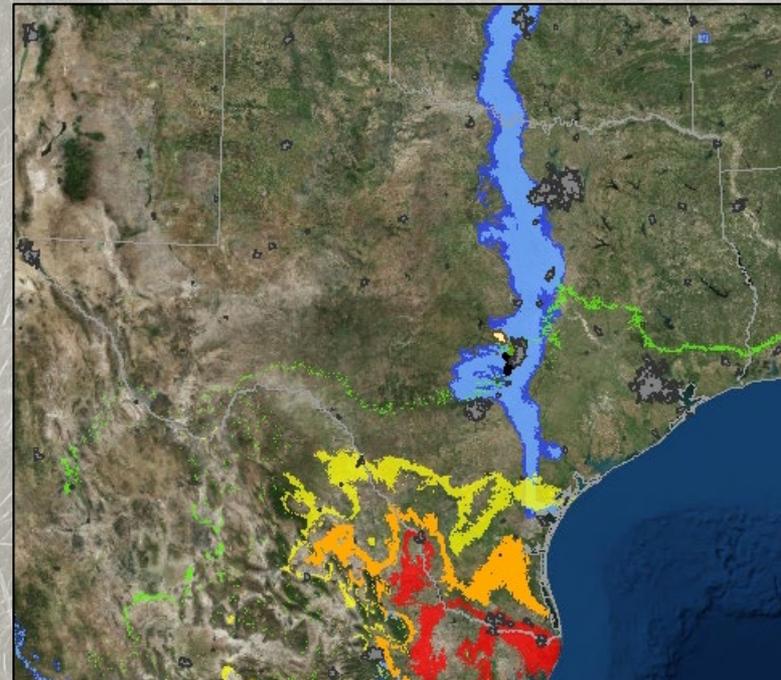
Deliverables & Plan Components

<u>Management goals</u>: vegetation communities that are expected to provide desired ecosystem services most sustainably.

<u>Restoration strategies</u> that may be effective and appropriate for achieving management goals in various contexts.

<u>Monitoring design</u> to evaluate progression toward management goals.

~10-year document; 50-year horizon.

PARD Long-Range Plan Strategies & SD23 Outcomes

Long-Range Plan Strategies:
- Relief from Urban Life
- Urban Public Spaces
- Program Alignment

Strategic Direction 2023 Outcomes:
- Health & Environment
- Safety
- Government that Works for All

Next Steps

Solicitation in Fall 2020.

~12 months for plan completion

PARD will be able to begin initial resource requests and management actions in FY 21 before final plan completion.

PARD will seek City Council adoption of the completed plan.

Questions?

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