



BCP PARTNER EDUCATION SUMMARY

FY 2021 Third Quarter: April 1 – June 30, 2021

City of Austin, Travis County, The Nature Conservancy, Westcave Preserve, Wild Basin Preserve, and Travis Audubon's Baker Sanctuary

3rd Quarter: Outreach & Education (All Partners)

| Activity | Location | Events | Youth* | Adults* | Volunteer Hours |
|--------------------------|----------|------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Guided Hikes | Onsite | 301 | 723 | 1306 | 74 |
| Programs / Presentations | Offsite | 11 | 270 | 258 | |
| | Onsite | 6 | 591 | 44 | 2 |
| Visiting Group/Educators | Onsite | 1 | 0 | 33 | |
| Land Stewardship | Onsite | 110 | 39 | 476 | 1378.75 |
| Ecological Monitoring | Onsite | 106 | 0 | 63 | 316.44 |
| Administration | Onsite | 3 | 0 | 2 | 14 |
| April-June Total | | 538 | 1,623 | 2,182 | 1,873.19 |

Monetary value of volunteer work (\$25.10/hour): \$44,808.27

*Numbers indicate total participation during events not unique individuals

SELF-GUIDED PUBLIC ACCESS

Many of the publicly accessible areas of the preserve closed in March to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. These included Hamilton Pool Preserve and Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve. Both locations have since re-opened, though swimming continues to be closed at Hamilton Pool due to falling rocks.



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CITY OF AUSTIN



- On the City of Austin's Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, staff spent many hours and days at the JJT ("Double J and T") tract (pictured above left), preparing the berm and swale restoration area for the return of regular volunteer groups. With a rainwater catchment system in place, a nascent native plant nursery, and stage-based COVID protocols, the BCP will welcome volunteers to new public workdays at JJT in July. Many thanks to the staff and volunteer corps that, along with the rains, kept hundreds of native trees and plants thriving in the meantime.
- This quarter also saw volunteers conducting bracted twistflower surveys at Mt. Bonnell and the Barton Creek Greenbelt. Austin Cave Day celebrations in June included a citywide proclamation and an exhibition of cave life paintings in the Texas Capitol during the busy legislative session. Online, we saw public interest in the #WarblerWednesday series of posts and the return of Black Birders Week (pictured above right).



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BAKER SANCTUARY (TRAVIS AUDUBON)



- Casey Ryan, with help from family and Troop 271, constructed a new Chimney Swift tower as part of his Eagle Scout project (pictured above left). He was the first to utilize the new and improved guide for eight-foot towers and did a fabulous job. Chimney Swifts were most certainly eyeballing his work as they went about their ceaseless chasing and chittering and it is quite possible that he got it completed in time to potentially host a nest; time will tell. Not to be outdone, Justin McNabb, with help from Troop 202, constructed and delivered two beautiful eight-foot-long picnic tables to Baker as part of his Eagle Scout Project (pictured above right). Assuming the pandemic ends at some point, they will certainly enhance outreach efforts with their beckoning benches and tantalizing tabletops.
- Four Golden-cheeked Warbler and central Texas Ecology presentations were given to various elementary schools in Leander ISD. Students were regaled with the many wonders that can be found in such subjects. Hopefully the upcoming school year will see fewer Zoom versions and more in-person interaction.



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TRAVIS COUNTY



- The Wild Neighbors monthly webinar series continued this quarter in partnership with the City of Austin featuring presentations on Managing Mosquitos, Golden-cheeked Warblers and Black-capped Vireos, and Snakes of Central Texas. Recordings of the talks are available on the County BCP and City Wildlands Facebook pages, YouTube, and the Travis County website (<https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/nr/videos>).
- In April, we participated in the Lake Travis Cleanup-Spring Clean Downstream event. As part of the watershed-wide event, volunteers contributed 62.5 hours at two BCP locations picking up trash and pulling invasive plants.
- Following the heavy rains in late April, we hosted members of the Central Texas Mycological Society (pictured above) for a Mycology Bioblitz in early May. The group found many different species of fungus, and learned a lot about mycology, and got a fun introduction to the preserve.
- Finally, our spring migration bird-strike monitoring at the future BCP headquarters building took place throughout April and May. The volunteers completed over 42 hours of survey time and collected a ton of useful data.



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WILD BASIN



- Stewardship volunteers worked to maintain the preserve with regular Thursday trail workdays and Saturday invasive removal workdays. Volunteers also helped with signage repair, trash cleanups, and creating a new native plant garden at the Visitor Center.
- Wild Basin programs for late spring included a virtual science series for middle grades called *Science Live! at Wild Basin* in partnership with area public and private schools. And a new public webinar program, *Naturalist Neighbors*, encouraged the promotion of sustainable natural landscapes near the preserve.
- Ecological monitoring included continued water quality monitoring, a plant survey project, and a perimeter survey.



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WESTCAVE PRESERVE



We are excited to introduce Lindsay Loftin, Westcave's new Environmental Education Programs Manager (pictured above). Lindsay is preparing to host field trips to the preserve for the first time since the winter of 2020, re-open Westcave's Environmental Learning Center, and create new programs to spark curiosity and passion for conservation. As staff prepare for the annual Celebration of Children in Nature, currently set for October 24, 2021, we are increasingly engaging higher levels of visitation. On average, 600 visitors participate in educational tours at Westcave each week.



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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.