

City of Austin's BCCP Activities
Quarter 3 Update: 1 April – 30 June 2021

BCCP Administration	
Infrastructure Projects	Five Infrastructure Habitat Assessment Applications were processed, and Determination Letters were issued from April through June 2021.
Land Acquisition /Management Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin Water (AW) BCP prepared agreements with legal staff for the acquisition of Bright Leaf Preserves. AW BCP evaluated powerlines on the preserve with the preserve director and Austin Energy contractors. Bright Leaf Preserve is fairly unique among BCP preserves in that its operation directed by a Will and court judgement, its operation is supported by a dedicated endowment, and has a director/resident, all of which support operations according to BCP land-management requirements. • Future expected preserve donations include a 10-acre addition to Parke West at the east end of Milky Way in River Place and Four points preserve adjacent to Sam Hamilton along the west end of Riverplace Blvd. • AW BCP continues working with West Lake Hills neighbors of the 18-acre AW BCP Little Bee Creek Preserve and other land conservation groups to expand the preserve. This preserve currently contains only 1 of 4 caves in a designated protected preserve known to contain the endangered Bee Creek Cave harvestman (<i>Texella reddelli</i>) that is restricted only to this portion of Austin, the increasing rare bracted twistflower, Golden-cheeked Warblers, and aquatic permit species of concern. Preservation of this creek also supports high water quality for the adjacent Ullrich WTP.
Reports and Events	
Dual-managed Properties	AW BCP staff participated in the bid evaluation for conducting the work and no vendors were ultimately awarded, instead the project was re-bid.
Personnel	Colin Strickland and Jim O'Donnell were offered permanent biologist positions after a competitive evaluation of candidates through an interview panel. In the 1990's, Jim O'Donnell served on the BCCP biological advisory panel and has worked extensively of restoring preserve forests. Colin serves the BCP as a cave biologist and has extensive experience with Austin's caves.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) and Black-capped Vireo (BCVI)	Staff continued color-banding GCWAs and BCVIs through the quarter. Staff and volunteers continued GCWA and BCVI surveys through May (volunteers) and June.
	Collected a total of ~280 DNA samples (from 2019-2021) to assess genetic structure of GCWA populations across its breeding range in collaboration with Dr. Giri Athrey/Texas A&M University.
Bracted Twistflower	Staff and volunteers censused known twistflower populations in April and May. Staff coordinated with UT Botanist to collect replacement samples for herbarium. Staff joined PARD rangers to survey for Bracted Twistflowers on PARD property where plants were reported by AFD in 2020.
Jollyville Plateau Salamander	BCP continues to conduct aquatic life surveys of springs across the BCP on a periodic basis in hopes of locating new salamander locations and other rare stygobitic life. Watershed Protection Biologist initiated a new JPS occupancy survey for Kent Butler (West Bull Creek).

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Karst invertebrates/ karst work	AW BCP staff are collecting data for preparation of karst completion status analysis and report expected in FY21 with TC BCP.
	AW BCP staff assisted USFWS genetic study by collecting eyeless <i>Batrachoseps</i> in Travis and Williamson counties.
	AW BCP conducted cave faunal surveys and cave cricket exit counts on all other assigned caves (ongoing). Currently hydrogeological studies continue in the FM 2222 and RM 620 area. Contractors and staff continue to excavate filled caves on AW BCP preserves along FM 2222 with funding provided from Texas Department of Transportation to mitigate the FM 2222 bypass to RM 620. AW BCP is completing a hydrogeological study report of Airmen's Cave and recommends the establishment of an easement for the portion of the underlying cave with applicants of a proposed redevelopment of Brodie Oaks Mall. While it appears the mall redevelopment has little chance of impacting the cave, placing the cave under BCP management is required, will assure that permit terms are continued, and that any impacts discovered can be mitigated.
Plant and Animal Control	
Mammals	14 hogs were removed by contractors and City staff this quarter.
Red-imported fire ants and Tawny crazy ants	Staff used boiling water to treat RIFA at several BCP caves.
Land Stewardship	
Habitat Restoration	Due to Covid-19, a limited number of staff and volunteers maintained restoration projects on the JJ&T and Vireo Preserve tracts to promote water retention, slope stabilization, soil restoration, and reforestation on degraded sites to promote future habitat for GCWA and BCVI.
Fencing	Work was completed on Forest Ridge to install a perimeter fence along the boundary in an area that had been previously fenced but with a major setback deep into the property. New GCWA signs installed on new gates at Carol Lee Preserve.
Oak Wilt	
Wildfire Preparedness	No work during nesting season.
Law Enforcement	
Trespass and Criminal Mischief	Staff replaced a gate post that had been pulled down by vandals on the Cortaña/Steiner Ranch boundary.
	Continued patrols of Preserve boundaries. Biologists patrolled tract interiors that correspond with warbler monitoring.
Outreach/Volunteers	

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June 6 was proclaimed Austin Cave Day by Austin City Council and was read by Councilwoman Leslie Pool ([A Hidden World Beneath our Feet \(arcgis.com\)](https://austinwater.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=80606a4b1a1045548d90b269060e8d33))

<https://austinwater.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=80606a4b1a1045548d90b269060e8d33>

AW BCP is sponsoring the National Karst and Cave Management Symposium in San Marcos Nov 1-7 2021: <https://symposium2021.nckms.org/>. The symposium wants to offer the BCP Coordinating Committee free admittance to attend.

See *BCP Partners Education Summary April–June 2021*.

BCP and AFD staff conducted a 3-day virtual presentation given to AFD staff from multiple Fire Stations in regards to cave rescue training, which included detailed information about our rare karst invertebrates, why they are important, and how they can minimize damage to habitat when performing cave rescues and rescue trainings.