

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

**Q4 Report
July – September 2021**

McGregor Preserve

Plateau Land and Wildlife Management conducted white-tailed deer surveys at McGregor to help determine if deer harvesting is needed this hunting season.

LCRA continues to work with the Comanche Trail Community Association (CTCA) to provide training for the McGregor Good Neighbor Program. Once residents interested in hiking the trails are trained, LCRA can issue new and renewed permits.

Westcave Preserve Land Management Activities

One workday was held during this quarter. Volunteers from Concordia University weeded butterfly gardens, and wheel-chair friendly trails. A bird hike was also offered.

Preserve maintenance is on-going and includes trail inspections, trail work, bird blind maintenance, boundary inspections, and boundary maintenance. Leif's Bird Blind pollinator garden is being prepped for planting in the fall.

Research consisted of the following:

1. Ongoing, monthly Pond (Dragonfly) Watch (Xerxes Society-Citizen Scientist program) surveys were conducted by a core group of volunteers.
2. Volunteers conducted a survey of the Chimney Swift tower as part of the Chimney Swift Conservation Association, "A Swift Night Out"
3. Monthly water sampling was conducted to check water quality at the Grotto and at Hammett's Crossing. Results were reported to LCRA.
4. Funds for the MOTUS wildlife tracking station were secured and the location ground-truthed. The tower was attached to the Westcave Headquarters office. The MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System uses "automated telemetry to simultaneously track hundreds of individuals of numerous species of birds, bats and insects." (Source: <https://motus.org>)
5. Photos were taken throughout the prairie restoration area. Staff established a third 10 square meter 'node' within the prairie to super-seed with native grasses and flowering forbs.

LCRA Transmission Services Corporation (LCRA TSC) Activities

LCRA TSC is planning to storm harden the existing (Marshall Ford to Spicewood to McNeil) 138-kV electric transmission lines in the fall of 2022. These transmission lines run through several BCPs. Geotechnical investigations (soil borings) began in mid-September 2021 in the BCPs after receiving the BCCP Infrastructure Habitat Mitigation Determination and Construction Approval Letter to cover incidental take of endangered species habitat, particularly Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat and karst habitat. LCRA hired an environmental consultant to conduct down-hole camera surveys and presence/absence surveys for endangered karst invertebrates where habitat is found for all borings in karst habitat. Voids are being encountered in the Edward's layer. LCRA TSC worked with Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff and biologists to ensure karst survey requirements and recommendations for drilling in karst habitat are being met. Drilling will continue into late October 2021.