

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

**Q2 Report
January - March 2022**

McGregor Preserve

Deer harvesting was attempted on February 23 and 24, 2022 with no success.

LCRA continues to work with the Comanche Trail Community Association (CTCA) to provide training for the McGregor Good Neighbor Program. Training is scheduled to occur at the CTCA Annual Meeting planned for April 12, 2022. Once residents interested in hiking the trails are trained, LCRA can issue new and renewed permits.

Westcave Preserve Land Management Activities

Staff and volunteer efforts at Leif's Bird Blind have allowed previously planted trees, shrubs, annuals, and perennials to survive the winter and fall and begin to bloom in time for spring.

The summer 2022 prescribed burn is still in progress as staff maintains fire lines along the Uplands.

Preserve maintenance is on-going and includes trail inspections, trail maintenance, bird blind maintenance, boundary inspections, boundary maintenance, butterfly garden upkeep, and building maintenance.

Staff is still collecting data for Night Sky Quality readings as part of the application process to become a Dark Sky Park. The application is nearly complete.

Programs conducted at the preserve included two bird hikes, a nature hike, and a night hike.

Research consisted of the following:

1. Internal Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) surveys involving sighting and resighting started in mid-March 2022. The total number of territories are currently unknown. A GCWA named "Pinky" (banded Red/Silver and Pink/Pink) has officially returned for a third year since banded in 2019.
2. Monthly water sampling was conducted to check water quality at Heinz Branch. Results were reported to LCRA.
3. Feeder Watch (Cornell Lab of Ornithology citizen science program) started in November 2021 and continued into this quarter. A core group of volunteers continues to conduct weekly surveys.
4. Frogwatch (Association of Zoos & Aquariums) started in February 2022. A select few volunteers travel down the grotto canyon to listen and collect data on frog species.
5. Nesting boxes were maintained and installed throughout the property. Weekly to biweekly nest checks were made by staff and interns as part of NestWatch (Cornell Lab of Ornithology Citizen Science Program).

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 that runs through several Balcones Canyonlands Preserves. Construction was originally scheduled for the fall of 2022 but was moved out one year to the fall of

2023. Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) delineations were conducted in January and February 2022 by Blanton & Associates, Inc. to assist in required permitting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). LCRA TSC anticipates Section 7 consultation may be triggered for several of the stream crossings that need to be constructed due to their proximity to protected habitat for GCWA and karst invertebrates.