

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2021 Quarter 4 Update: 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	Eleven BCCP applications were received and processed in the 4 th quarter. Six Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$176,250.00 in mitigation payments. Fees were split 50:50 between Travis County and City of Austin.
Personnel	Environmental Specialist for BCCP Administration, Amanda Wood, resigned in August. Mickey Leland intern, Madison Ebest, completed her summer position in August. Seasonal Natural Resources Tech, Annalily Lopez, completed her temporary position in September.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warblers	Staff entered data from the 2021 Golden-cheeked warbler survey season and began initial data analysis.
Black-capped vireos	Black-capped vireo surveys concluded in August and a record number of 28 territories were documented on Travis County BCP tracts.
Karst invertebrates	Summer season faunal surveys were performed at eight BCCP-listed caves, one other endangered species cave, and two potential substitution caves. Summer season cave cricket exit counts were performed at six BCCP-listed caves and one other endangered species cave. <i>Tayshaneta</i> were collected from Hammett's, Stark's North Mine, Geode, New Comanche Trail, and McDonald caves. These specimens were deposited with Zara Environmental and Joel Ledford for an ongoing genetic analysis.
Salamanders	Staff completed surveys for Jollyville Plateau salamanders on the Upper and Lower Ribelin sites in August. On September 20 th , several environmentalists filed a formal petition with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to list the Pedernales River springs salamander as "endangered" or "threatened" under the federal Endangered Species Act. This salamander has a limited range focused on springs and water-filled, underground spaces near the Hamilton Pool Road crossing of the Pedernales River. This salamander is known to occur on one BCP tract and at two nearby County Park locations.
Rare plants	Staff started conducting Texabama croton surveys at Pace Bend Park in September. Early assessment indicates that the colonies remain in good health, most have expanded in numbers, and at least eight new colonies have been discovered.

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Plant and Animal Control	
Feral hogs	Staff removed four feral hogs from the Sam Hamilton East tract.
White-tailed deer	Eleven trail cameras were stationed on the Jollyville Unit to assess deer population data.
Tawny crazy ants and Red imported fire ants	Dr. Ed LeBrun, with the University of Texas, continued to research tawny crazy ants at the Anderson Mill/Collins tract site and other locations in Travis County.
Invasive Plants	Staff removed more than 6,600 non-native invasive plants from the BCP this quarter. Approximately 2.5 acres of Johnson grass were treated with herbicide at the Snowden, New Life, The Crossings, and Blackmore tracts.
Land Stewardship	
Habitat Restoration	<p>On September 23rd, Natural Resources and Parks staff conducted a prescribed burn on approximately 13 acres of the Nootsie tract that was dominated by King Ranch bluestem, an invasive grass. Native grasses and forbs will be planted in the area to return it to a more natural state.</p> <p>City and County staff coordinated with TreeFolks and collected native seeds from the BCP that will be used for future restoration projects.</p>
Water Quality	<p>Staff monitored water quality at five sites using Environmental Integrity Index methodology.</p> <p>A sewage leak occurred on September 25th when a force main broke and spilled about 100,000 gallons near the Concordia tract. Most of the sewage was contained in a detention pond and pumped into a sewage line, but water samples taken from Tributary 7 of Bull Creek on the Concordia tract did show reduced levels of dissolved oxygen and elevated levels of <i>E. coli</i> briefly after the spill. Levels returned to normal after a few days.</p>
Fence Construction and Repairs	Boundary fence repairs were made at several locations due to damage caused by fallen trees (1 site), vehicle collisions (3 sites), and cutting by trespassers (1 site).
Wildfire Preparedness	<p>Staff completed field assessments of Winter Storm Uri damage to shaded fuel breaks.</p> <p>Staff gave a presentation at the Austin-Travis County Wildfire Coalition meeting in July describing how certain wildfire messaging can cause unintended consequences to the BCP in the form of illegal clearing. Landowners sometimes clear vegetation on the BCP behind their lots thinking it reduces wildfire risk. Often it increases wildfire risk by increasing fine fuels and eliminating shade.</p> <p>Staff reviewed the Austin-Travis County Wildfire Coalition's "Ready, Set, Go!" document which is being updated in an 8th edition.</p>

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Buildings	<p>Four architecture firms submitted responses to a Request for Qualifications issued by the Purchasing Office for architectural, landscape architectural, engineering, and interpretive design services for a Visitor Center at Wilson Parke Ave. The selected design team will work with County architects, Natural Resources staff, and TNR engineers to design the center.</p> <p>Most of the renovations on the Snowden House have been completed. Both the interior and exterior have been painted, a back porch was added, rooms were renovated to be more functional and ADA accessible, and a rainwater collection system was installed (see photos).</p>
Utility Infrastructure Corridors	<p>Austin Energy and the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) conducted inspections on some of their utility lines which traverse the BCP.</p> <p>LCRA conducted an archeological survey that crossed the Karnik and Richards II tracts.</p> <p>In September, LCRA started drilling soil borings for geotechnical investigations along the T197 (Marshall Ford to McNeil) Transmission Line which crosses through the BCP. The drillers hit several voids and bait traps were deployed to check for karst invertebrates. Mitigation measures were taken to cover the voids.</p>
Patrol and Law Enforcement	
Trespass and Property Damage	<p>A settlement agreement was reached on a previous tree cutting case on the Lime Creek Unit.</p> <p>Several incidents of trespass and encroachment occurred this quarter. A trampoline was found on the Steiner Ranch conservation easement. Loose horses were documented on the Lime Creek Unit. One trespasser was encountered on the Webb tract and surveillance cameras documented trespassers on several different tracts.</p>
Outreach/Volunteers	
<i>See BCP Partner Education Summary Fourth Quarter: July 1 – September 30, 2021</i>	

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Before Renovation



After Renovation

Before and after photos of the Snowden House renovation. As shown in the bottom photo, a back deck was added, the building was painted, and a rainwater collection system was installed. In the foreground is a bat-friendly native garden that was recently planted in coordination with Bat Conservation International. This building is used for volunteer and outreach events.