



BCP PARTNER EDUCATION SUMMARY

FY 2022 Fourth Quarter: July 1 – September 30, 2022

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

4th Quarter: Outreach & Education (All Partners)

Activity	Location	Events	Youth*	Adults*	Volunteer Hours
Guided Hikes	Onsite	210	679	2925	220.5
Programs / Presentations	Offsite	6	0	190	0
	Onsite	9	79	90	
Visiting Group/Educators	Onsite	9	0	73	
Land Stewardship	Onsite	104	27	201	1157
Training	Onsite	5	0	38	3
Ecological Monitoring	Onsite	22	8	25	274.25
July-September Total		365	793	3,542	1,654.75

Monetary value of volunteer work (\$28.14/hour): \$46,564.67

*Numbers indicate total participation during events not unique individuals

ANNUAL SUMMARY: Outreach & Education (All Partners)

Activity	Location	Events	Youth*	Adults*	Volunteer Hours
Guided Hikes	Onsite	971	4773	8596	567
Programs / Presentations	Onsite	40	690	260	15
	Offsite	49	400	1030	8
Land Stewardship	Onsite	311	81	888	3422
Ecological Monitoring	Onsite	73	8	111	545
Visiting Groups / Educators	Onsite	28	34	292	
Training	Offsite	6	0	50	19
Administration	Onsite	5	4	4	32.5
Oct 2021 – Sept 2022 Total		1483	5990	11231	4608.5
Monetary value of volunteer work (\$28.14/hour): \$129,683.19 *Numbers indicate total participation during events not unique individuals					

SELF-GUIDED PUBLIC ACCESS

These numbers are not included in the Outreach & Education chart above. They represent a sample of BCP areas with public access – we hope to include more complete visitation numbers in future reports.

Hamilton Pool: 30,000+

Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve: 8,906

Baker Sanctuary: 558



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CITY OF AUSTIN



- We have begun fall tree planting and nursery workdays at the JJ&T tract. With many new berms done, the work to get new native trees in the ground has begun during tree planting season. The goal is to plant hundreds of native trees and shrubs this fall to rebuild healthy soil and sequester carbon, increase biodiversity, support pollinators, and promote habitat for the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler.
- During the last week of September, the first community-based study of mycorrhizal fungi took place on the BCP. Volunteers, alongside Travis County biologists, spent ten days collecting mycorrhizal samples from tree roots to inform habitat restoration and preserve management.



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BAKER SANCTUARY (TRAVIS AUDUBON)



- Never comfortable idle, the Boy Scouts of America were at it again, this time with the installation of a Chimney Swift kiosk, incidentally installed by a tower built by a Boy Scout several years prior, which is next to a picnic table also constructed by the tireless scouts.
- Aside from the sign kiosk, all other volunteer events this quarter were somehow involved with the destruction wrought by that winter tempest known as Ice Storm Uri. The storm ravaged Baker Sanctuary, felling trees every which way, even upon the immaculately tended and groomed trails which are the envy of all land managers in Travis County. While the tireless steward of Baker, in a heroic effort some compare to the cleaning of the Augean Stables, cleared the obstructions in a timely manner so hikers could continue to enjoy the wonder found only in the Hill Country, much work remained. Volunteers spread countless cubic yards of mulch formed from the shredding of the formerly majestic trees and dispersed brush piles hither and yon to discourage snakes from taking up residence and to restore the much-acclaimed Feng Shui of that outdoor space.
- Finally, three guided hikes were undertaken with the highlight being the spotting of a particularly fine specimen of the elusive Bricklebush.



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TRAVIS COUNTY



- Volunteers completed the camera trap project collecting data for a researcher at Texas State University on coyote and fox presence/absence in heavily wooded areas of the BCP near urban development. Data were collected on 14 Travis County BCP tracts with dozens of target animal detections. A unique animal photographed during the project was a pair of North American river otters (*Lontra canadensis*, pictured left).
- A BCP 101 and introduction to volunteering talk was given to the new trainee class of the Balcones Canyonlands Texas Master Naturalist chapter.
- The first ever volunteer MycoBlitz project to collect mycorrhizal samples was undertaken in September and was a great success. Dozens of volunteers and staff collected samples from many different tracts on both Travis County and City of Austin BCP (pictured right). This is a multi-year research project undertaken with our BCP partners at the City of Austin, and we look forward to continuing it in 2023.



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WILD BASIN



- **Trail Guide Training:** In September, Wild Basin Creative Research Center hosted a two-day Trail Guide Training workshop. Seventeen volunteer trail guides were “refreshed” or newly trained in natural science interpretation, Wild Basin protocol and strategies for guiding school groups on trails, as well as learning the basics of the Bee Creek watershed, and the plants, animals and geology of the preserve. The training was facilitated by Interpretive Consultant, Clark Hancock.
- **Guided Hike:** In September, after a more than two-year hiatus, Wild Basin Creative Research Center resumed its guided hike program for school field trips. Seventeen middle school students from City School in Austin, along with three teachers and four parents visited Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve and were led by three volunteer trail guides and our Environmental Education Coordinator, Paul Vickery.
- **Training Collaboration with Texas Conservation Corps:** At the end of September, Wild Basin Creative Research Center hosted the Texas Conservation Corps (TxCC) for their fall new member orientation “Trails Training.” The new Americorps members worked with the Preserve Manager and two San Juan Diego Catholic High School interns. The group helped with deferred maintenance along Ledge and Woodland Trails. Most of the work was focused on water drainage features and stabilization. The crews also constructed three new benches for Wild Basin as part of an “Introduction to Carpentry ” training, led by TxCC staff.



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WESTCAVE PRESERVE



- On Sunday, September 4th, one of our educators, Lacy Smith, captured on film a Texas Red headed Centipede (*Scolopendra Heros*) eating a bat on the ceiling of our cave (most likely either a Cave Myotis (*Myotis velifer*) or Tri-colored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) in our cave system). It was first spotted before gam and was observed by staff and guests almost the entire day hanging from the ceiling and eating this bat. Tropical centipedes in South America have been documented catching bats from the ceiling; however, to our knowledge this has not been documented before from the Texas Red-headed centipede in the United States. Texas Red-headed centipede has been documented to consume include invertebrates, small vertebrates, like snakes, lizards, and toads. Everyone is excited to see and have documentation of this event!
- This last month Westcave welcomed the Fall Equinox with Open Space Yoga, and instructor Jennifer Zavaleta, through a silent guided meditative hike followed by a Sound Bath in our Environmental Learning Center. The program was a complete success with both guests and staff walking away relaxed, refreshed, and repurposed for a new direction of Westcave toward wellness. Stay tuned for more upcoming wellness specialty events.



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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.