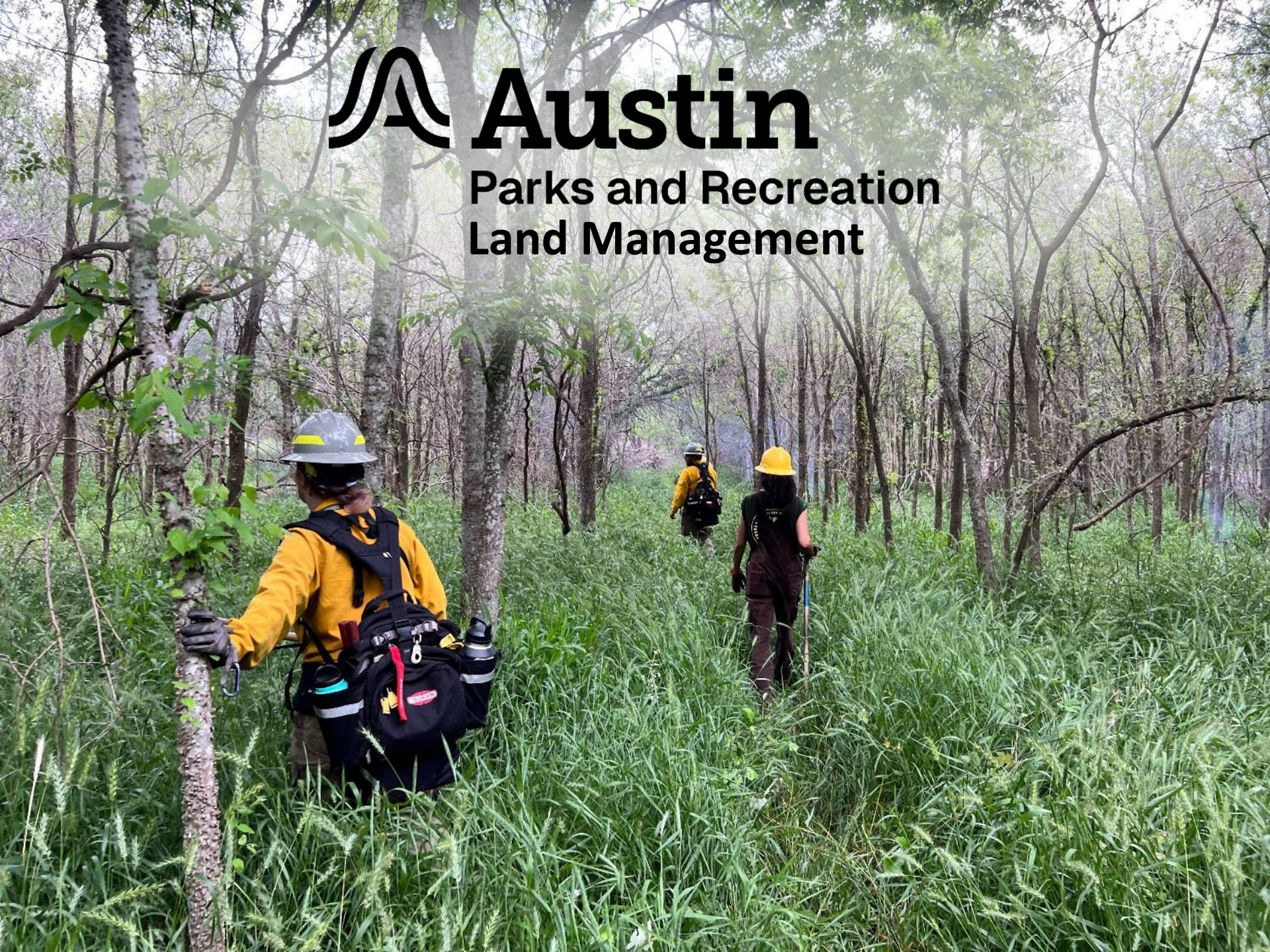




Austin

**Parks and Recreation
Land Management**





DEGRADED LANDS

Most natural areas have been degraded by ~150 years of fragmentation, overgrazing, cultivation, cutting, changes in species composition and hydrology, interruption of natural processes, and general neglect.

Most have not been managed for ecosystem health and are vulnerable to extreme heat, drought, disease, and ultimately intense wildfire.

2019 WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS AUDIT

Found that APR does not have the capacity to manage parkland natural areas and address wildfire risk.

LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AND PLAN

APR developed a land management plan to guide the restoration of natural areas to improve climate resilience and reduce wildfire risk and a program to implement it.

austintexas.gov/LMP



A



B



C



D

Onion Creek Wildlife Sanctuary

LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM MISSION

Restore parkland natural areas to mitigate risk and provide vital ecosystem services to Austin residents in perpetuity.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Veg communities that are resilient to climate stressors
- Primarily “timber” or “grass” fuel models = low prob of crown fire
- High-reliability work groups
- Public-private coordination and cooperation

STRATEGY

- (long-term) Active ecological restoration
- (short term) Hazard fuel reduction

GOALS

- 500-1,000 acres of restoration and fuel mitigation treatments per year
- Take action* on all lands in the land management plan by 2040

*This may mean no action in some places if no action is needed, but that should be an affirmative decision supported by thorough analysis, not a passive default.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

Selective thinning and invasive species removal

Targeted removal of small trees, brush, and invasive species to improve forest health, climate resilience, and park user safety

Fuel mitigation

Removal of hazard fuels to reduce wildfire intensity

Prescribed fire

Important land management and wildfire mitigation tool. austintexas.gov/parkrxfire

Planting and seeding

Improves climate resilience



ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 2020-2025

- Council-approved land management plan for 10,348 acres of natural area
- 1,900+ acres (3 square miles) of restoration and fuel mitigation treatment in 32 parks
- Engaged in a unified fashion to create joint work plans with numerous volunteer groups
- Art + Restoration: Audio Wild, Really Small Museum

Highlight: Restoring **50+ acres** of remnant Blackland Prairie – the only remaining in Travis County. An almost-extirpated vegetation community of global significance.



HOW DO THEY DO IT?

4 FTEs with expertise in ecological restoration, wildland fire, forest ecology, research and monitoring, and project management.

Contractors

Other APR programs: Forestry, Safety, PARKnerships, Communications and Public Engagement, Finance and Contracts, executive staff

Cooperative agreements: Austin Fire Department, Austin Water, The Nature Conservancy, Travis County Parks, US Fish and Wildlife Service, UT Wildflower Center

Other Entities: Watershed Protection Dept, Travis County Fire Marshall's Office, Travis County ESDs, Austin Parks Foundation

Community organizations - too many to name

Highlights: Friends of Red Bluff, Blunn Creek Partnership



HIGHLIGHT: AUSTIN PARKS AND RECREATION PRESCRIBED FIRE CREW

- 12 staff from Land Management, Forestry, Safety, and Watershed Protection
- All qualified through the National Wildfire Coordinating Group
- All have or are working on advanced wildland fire qualifications
- All fill leadership roles on prescribed burns



All are volunteering to do more work - and some of the most difficult work...
For no extra pay.





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