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December 31, 2020

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Austin Ecological Services Field Office
10711 Burnet Road, Suite 303
Austin TX 78758

Debra Scott, Environmental Project Manager
Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources
700 Lavaca, 5th Floor
Austin TX 78701

RE: Schramm Ranch – Fish and Wildlife Service Permit (PRT-812696)
("The 10-A Permit") 2020 Annual Report

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The entire 500 acre permit area for Schramm Ranch is now built out with the exception of five greenbelts that belong to the City of Lakeway. The greenbelts' extremely steep slopes and limited access make them unsuitable for development. (See maps on page 4.) Four of the greenbelts totaling 48 acres share a common boundary with the west side of the preserve and may allow for expansion of the warblers' territories.

Approximately 208 acres of the permit area are golden-cheeked warbler preserve. The City of Lakeway is responsible for 107 acres in three tracts surrounding the Ridge at Alta Vista subdivision. The City of Austin took over a 101 acre tract on the east side of Lakeway's preserve lands.

A total of 370 single family homes were built in the Alta Vista and the Ridge at Alta Vista subdivisions. The Enclave at Alta Vista North houses 46 condominiums. Honey Creek was just completed this year with 22 condominiums.

Honey Creek and the Alta Vista subdivision share no boundaries with the preserve. The Enclave at Alta Vista North and the Ridge at Alta Vista, however, are almost entirely surrounded by the preserve. The Enclave North has 46 condominiums, 36 of which have backyards facing the preserve. One hundred twenty-seven homes in the Ridge at Alta Vista have backyards adjoining the preserve.

Steep slopes have deterred some but not all of the residents from entering the preserve. The absence of lanes or easements between homes as well as very steep slopes along the shared boundary combine to make inspection of the preserve lands very challenging.

An encroachment into the Lakeway preserve was discovered on April 28th by a City of Austin forestry specialist walking the area to prepare for a wildfire fuel break project. Several cedar trees were cut and landscape lighting installed in a clearing behind the home at 101 Vailco in the Ridge at Alta Vista. The specialist also spotted signs of clearing behind two other homes nearby.

Large signs identifying the greenbelt as a golden-cheeked warbler preserve were posted on both sides of Aria Drive, the single road that leads in and out of the subdivision, in fall 2017. This seemed the best way to notify all of the residents, but clearly additional steps will be necessary to protect the habitat.

The timing of the incident coincided with the mid-May resignation of Lakeway's former Director of Building and Development Services (BDS), the department that includes Code Compliance. Conversations with BDS about how to tackle this ordinance violation have been delayed for several months while that department was without leadership. Ordinances addressing protection of the city's parklands are outdated and lack sufficient penalties to pursue the destruction of trees as a code violation. With civil lawsuits ruled out by upper management, and efforts to prosecute Lakeway homeowners for criminal mischief in parklands largely unsuccessful, options that remain are to strengthen city codes and investigate strategies used by other BCP managers. After a city policy has been established, then a campaign can be undertaken to educate the public.

Members of other agencies were queried for their approaches to handling encroachments into their parklands. Advice was generously provided by Debra Scott of Travis County, Rick Hudson of the City of Austin Wildlands Facilities and Maintenance, Game Warden Ben Eckelson of the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife and Lanie Marcotte of the City of Bee Cave.

Ideas and approaches will be vetted at an upcoming meeting with Lakeway's new Assistant City Manager and Director of Building and Development Services. Code Compliance and the Lakeway Police will also be invited. If the city ordinance that relates to protection of parklands can be revised, strengthened, and approved by City Council, then it may be useful as a deterrent in cases where homeowners are resistant to education.

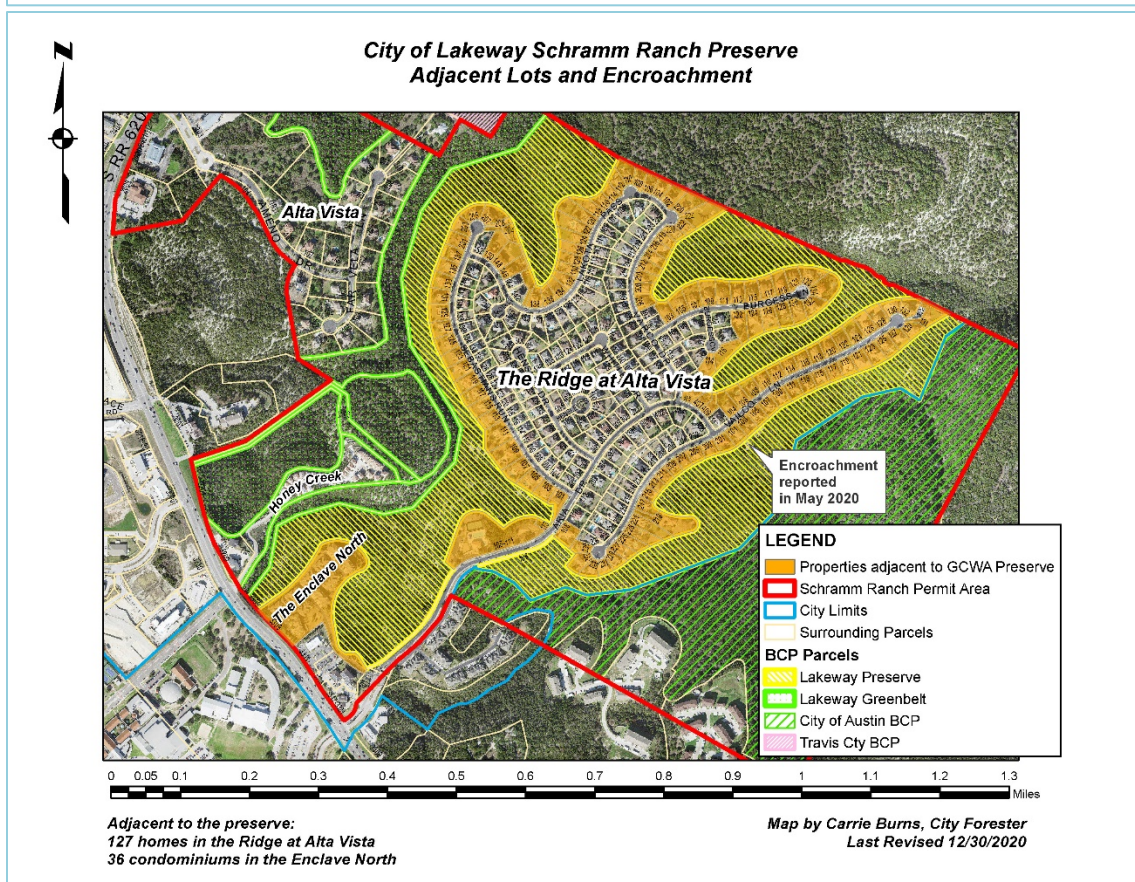
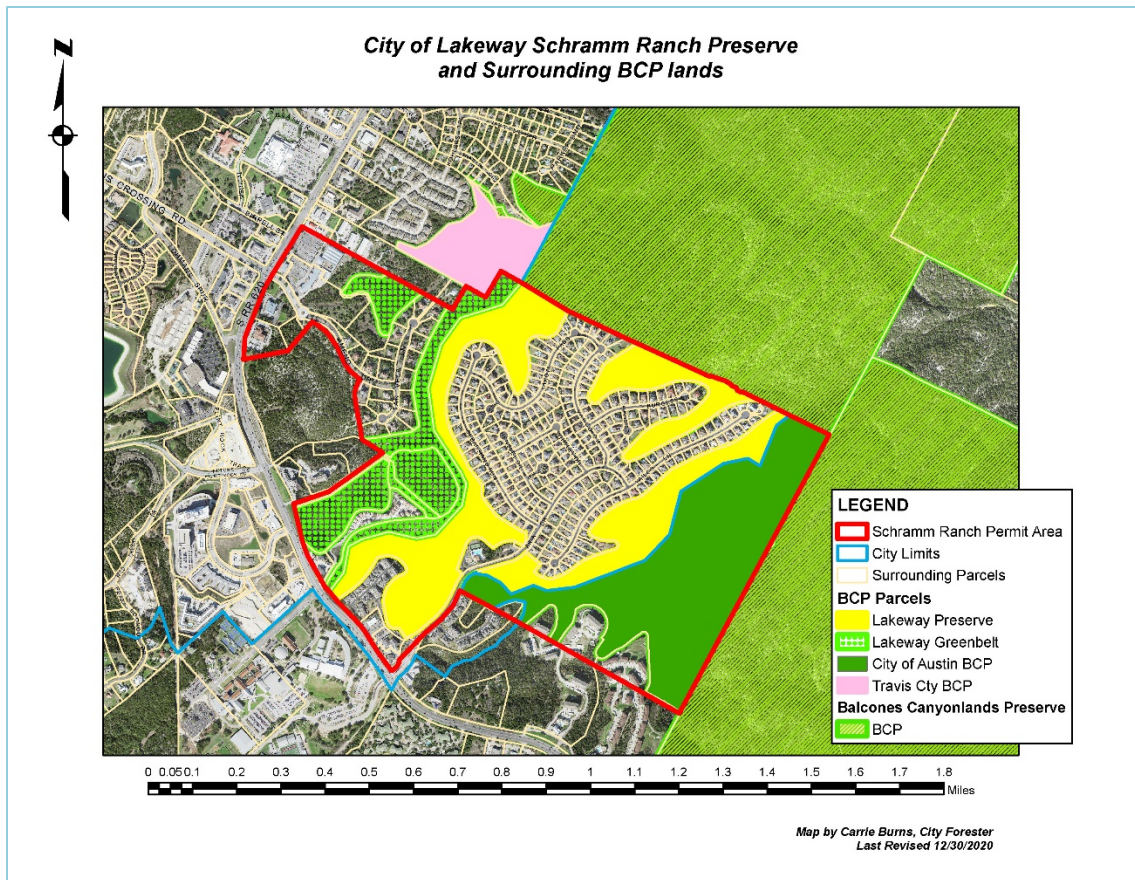
Please don't hesitate to contact me via phone or email if you have any questions about Lakeway's Schramm Ranch golden-cheeked warbler preserve.

Respectfully submitted,

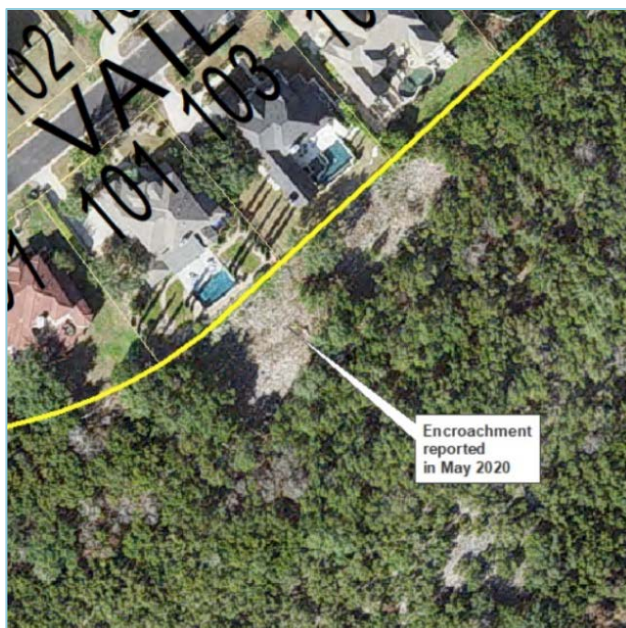
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "CJ Burns".

Carrie Jean Burns, Forester
Lakeway Parks and Recreation Department
1102 Lohmans Crossing Road
Lakeway TX 78734
512-314-7538
forester@lakeway-tx.gov

Enc: Schramm Ranch Preserve map
Photos showing the location of encroachment and signs



Encroachment behind 101 Vailco Drive



The current owner purchased the property in September 2014 according to tax records.

Signs installed in 2017 on the single road leading in and out of the subdivision were designed to alert residents and direct them to the city website.

