BCP Partner Education Summary

FY 2024 First Quarter (Oct-Dec) & Second Quarter (Jan-Mar)

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

1st and 2nd Quarter: Outreach & Education (All Partners)

Activity	Location	Events	Youth*	Adults*	Volunteer Hours
Guided Hikes	Onsite	426	2313	5798	365.5
Programs / Presentations	Offsite	8	2	85	0
	Onsite	31	70	615	1
Visiting Group/Educators	Onsite	25	208	256	0
Land Stewardship	Onsite	224	112	1447	3588
Ecological Monitoring	Onsite	44	1	102	525.5
Administration	Onsite	4	4	22	22.5
Training	Onsite	6	1	200	93
Campouts	Onsite	4	65	29	17
October-March Total		**772**	**2776**	**8554**	**4612.5**

Monetary value of volunteer work ($31.80/hour): $146,677.50

*Numbers indicate total participation during events not unique individuals

SELF-GUIDED PUBLIC ACCESS (Estimated Annual Visitation)

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

- From October through February, volunteers continued their work to remove invasive privet and bring life back to a degraded part of the Long Canyon tract.
- Volunteers conducted forest restoration activities on the JJ&T and Vireo Preserve tracts during weekly workdays. They planted trees and shrubs, built erosion control structures, seeded, and mulched over a mile of bioswales (earthworks built on contour on a slope that slow and sink water), expanded a plant nursery, and built a greenhouse.
- 65 Golden-cheeked Warbler resighting volunteers began their surveys on City of Austin and Travis County properties in March.
- We hosted a training for City of Austin staff who lead educational tours in BCP caves. The training included a trip to Grassy Cove and District Park caves and classroom presentations on cave geology, biology, and safe facilitation. We also facilitated mock cave rescue training for 120+ Special Operations firefighters.
- We issued 180 permits to hike in habitat near Bull Creek during the nesting season.

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BAKER SANCTUARY (TRAVIS AUDUBON)

- Baker Sanctuary was awash in the studious efforts of local Boy Scout troops over the last two quarters. Jackson Kendrick, John Finklea, Jacques Salin, and Maarken Saxer, representing troops 158, 271, and 202 installed a combined total of six lustrous trail benches on which folks can now rest their tired bodies as well as one monumental Chimney Swift tower complete with avant-garde concrete art. In addition to their Eagle Scout projects, Ryan Poulsen, now in his sophomore year at college, returned to install two informative signs in the kiosk he built four years prior as part of his Eagle Scout project. While all their energy and work are much appreciated, no photos of such will be displayed in this report due to editorial restrictions; to add one photo of a scout and omit another is to tempt the fates and possibly incur the Wrath of the Boy Scouts, which shall not be flirted with.

- In addition to the industrious Scouts, many volunteers spent hours carefully guiding hikers through the wild environs of the Texas Hill County, viewing wildlife such as the understated, yet fabulous, Bricklebush and furious butterflies of many sordid species. Volunteers often go above and beyond. Recently Celeste Treadway, a Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) surveyor of many years, discovered a GCWA fledgling ensnared in the sticky embrace of a Lichen Orb Weaver's web, incapacitated as the spider loomed menacingly above. She climbed the tree, fended off the bloated arachnid, and brought down the fledgling, untangling the web from its wings and talons when she was safely on the ground. The warbler was then released and is currently doing fine with parents attending and the frumpy grumpkin seemingly unfazed with its brush with indifferent eternity.

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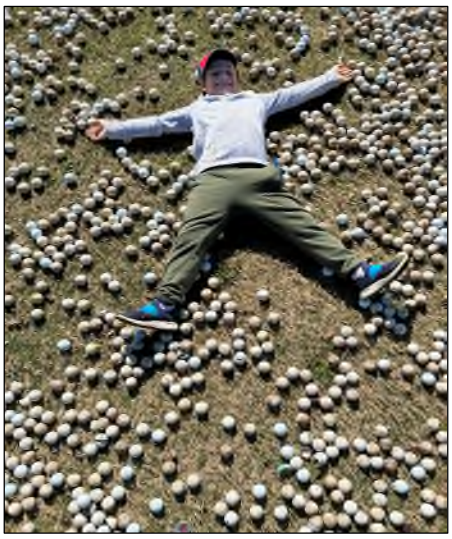
TRAVIS COUNTY



- Our restoration efforts have seen significant progress this year, particularly with the reforestation of newly constructed bioswales at Travis County's Medway Tract. In the first and second quarters, we successfully planted 1,130 plants, representing 33 different species, and dispersed approximately 10 pounds of seeds collected by volunteers at other BCP tracts. Many of these planting activities occurred during our joint Roots & Wings event, in collaboration with the City of Austin BCP, as well as during an It's My Park Day event and other volunteer workdays.

- Over the winter months, we focused on constructing the Snowden Nursery, a vital infrastructure that will enable us to cultivate locally adapted plants specifically tailored for restoration efforts on the BCP. This initiative was undertaken as a project by the Balcones Canyonlands Master Naturalist training class.

- Additionally, we collaborated with Scouts of America and the UT Golf Course and with 42 people, including 22 minors ranging from cub to eagle scouts, we managed to remove 10,000 golf balls from the preserve in an event we called the 'Jackalope Egg Hunt.' We are pleased to acknowledge the generous contribution of $2500 from the UT Golf Course to the Scouts of America, which will be directed towards assisting low-income scouts, thereby removing barriers to their participation in scouting activities.

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WESTCAVE PRESERVE

- Over Q1 and Q2 2024, Westcave Preserve provided interpretive cave tours, field trips, and special events and hikes to over 5200 adults and 2100 children, educating the public about the natural wonders of Westcave and the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve.

- Additionally, volunteers participated in multiple workdays conducting trail maintenance, fence mending, non-native invasive vegetation removal, as well as collected water quality, cave survey and golden-cheeked warbler survey data.

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WILD BASIN

- The Fall Artist in Residence (AIR) was Thomas Cook (Sept-Dec. 2023), with a focus on landscape sketching and oil painting, and the spring AIR was Sonya Berg (March-May 2024), using painting and photography techniques.

- Wild Basin continued the Speaker and Social Series. This monthly in-person speaker and social event allows the public to participate in a relaxed atmosphere learning opportunity. Video recording of the speaker can be found on the Wild Basin Creative Research Center Youtube channel. Topics in Q1 and Q2 included Wild Stories: by previous staff and volunteers, Intro to Forest Bathing, Birds Book and Childhood Memories, and Protection Pollinators in Rapidly Growing Cities.

- During the week of spring break there were program opportunities every weekday. This included collaborations with Travis County Natural Resources, The Paleo Society of Austin, Travis Audubon, The Wildflower Center and Texas Master Naturalists. Several family friendly guided hikes were offered by our wonderful volunteers.

- 24 members of the St Edward's University (SEU) campus community were at Wild Basin for The Big Event 2024. During this annual volunteer workday, the group at the preserve helped clear and move staged juniper logs from the trail edge.

- The Land Management & Monitoring Intern coordinated an SEU student volunteer workday the first Saturday of spring break. The volunteers focused on hand-pulling the non-native invasive Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica) from Bee Creek.

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The Nature Conservancy

- Boy Scouts of America Troop 52 and 72 joined us for campouts.
- Guided hikes were given to Girl Scout Troop 42605, and Texas Parks and Wildlife.
- Volunteers from the Capitol Area Master Naturalist, and Troops 25, and 52 worked on various land stewardship projects.

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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.