Cultural Resources Management
Travis County Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Tracts
2002 Annual Report

Travis County Natural Resources

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Background

The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) was established in accordance with the terms and conditions of a permit (the Permit) issued under Section 10(a)1(b) of the Endangered Species Act jointly issued to Travis County and the City of Austin by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in May 1996. Under the terms of the Permit, individual agencies are responsible for management and maintenance of their respective preserve tracts. Travis County currently manages approximately 3,150 acres of Preserve lands located primarily in western and northwestern portions of the County. Though established for the protection of the endangered golden-cheeked warbler, black-capped vireo and 6 endangered karst invertebrates, the Preserve is also managed to protect all native flora and fauna as well as the cultural resources of the area.

Discussion

A primary cultural resource protection goal in FY2002 involved determination of best management practices to ensure protection of cultural sites located within the Preserve. Literature searches and certification authorizing access to the databases of the Texas Historical Commission for recorded archeological and historical records about the area were initiated in FY2002. Information concerning recorded sites within the BCP was accessed in an effort to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and to guide land management decision making processes.

Current Recorded Sites

Investigations conducted by Espey, Huston and Associates (EH&A) in August, 1985 (EH&A Job # 4675-57) were reported in records obtained through the Texas Historical Commission. This field work was conducted prior to the construction of The Parke development (subsequently renamed Grandview Hills) in areas now comprising portions of Travis County's Jollyville Unit of the BCP. The Jollyville Unit comprises 1620 acres (655.6 ha.) located 13 miles (21 km) northwest of downtown Austin located northwest of the intersection of Ranch Road 620 North and Bullick Hollow Road in western Travis County

The field investigations conducted by EH&A consisted of pedestrian survey and shovel tests that resulted in the documentation of six (6) archaeological sites ranging in size from 5 meters (m) in diameter to a single site measuring 120 x 40 m. Locations 41TV1118 through 41TV1122 are single component prehistoric sites consisting of lithic scatters and a few burned rocks. Location 41TV1123 is a multi-component site. The prehistoric component consists of a light scatter of lithic flakes and chips. The historic component consists of glass bottle fragments and three shards of historic ceramics. All six sites were heavily impacted by erosion and animal activity associated

with ranching practices and human intervention. None were recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Other archaeological investigations in the area revealed three documented prehistoric sites, recorded as 41TV45, 41TV110 and 41TV111. Location 41TV45 is a disturbed prehistoric rock shelter measuring approximately 30 x 15 m. Site 41TV110 is a disturbed burned rock midden measuring approximately 30 m in diameter containing Scallorn dart points and some ground stone artifacts. Location 41TV111 is a disturbed prehistoric site consisting of a burned rock midden estimated to have measured 14 x 21 m and a lithic scatter that yielded diagnostic artifacts including Bulverde, Pedernales, Marshall, Scallorn and Lange dart points.

No additional documented archaeological sites on the Jollyville Unit of the BCP were located through record searches with the Texas Historical Commission.

Recommendations

Additional literature searches and field investigations will be necessary to determine the location and status of described sites on other County managed lands. Previously unrecorded sites discovered on the BCP will be documented, protected, and reported to the Texas Historical Commission. As Travis County continues to acquire and manage endangered species habitat in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Permit, efforts will continue to ensure appropriate management and protection of cultural resources throughout preserve lands.