LOWER COLORADO RIVER AUTHORITY

Annual Status Report for the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan
October 1st, 2024 - September 30th, 2025.

Mitigation Credits Used

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), on behalf of LCRA Transmission Services Corporation (LCRA TSC), debited 0.80 acres from its mitigation bank balance between October 2024 and September 2025 for clearing on the Lakeway to Lakeway Tap Fiber Upgrade Project. LCRA has 205.83 mitigation credits remaining.

Management Highlights

LCRA continued to manage approximately 400 acres of land within the McGregor and Westcave Preserves. Management activities for these lands continued to focus on natural resource research and management, access management, and stewardship promotion.

McGregor Preserve

At McGregor Preserve, LCRA hired a contractor to maintain the approximately 11 acres of fuel breaks. Vegetation management included hand cutting and/or mulching of understory vegetation in those areas within approximately 30 feet from the property's perimeter and roads, while preserving the over story canopy.

LCRA provided McGregor Good Neighbors Program training to the residents of Commanche Trail Neighborhood, located adjacent to McGregor Preserve. Approximately 45 residents attended, with two thirds being new permittees. The training consisted of a PowerPoint presentation discussing the Endangered Species Act, BCCP, BCCP versus BCP, McGregor Preserve, a video by Travis County that introduces the BCP, the Golden-cheeked Warbler, Oak Wilt prevention, and a review of the LCRA permit required to enter and hike on the preserve.

Westcave Preserve

- Preserve maintenance was on-going and included trail inspections, trail maintenance, bird blind maintenance, boundary inspections, boundary maintenance, drainage repairs along fence lines to prevent water backup on property, butterfly garden upkeep, and building maintenance.
- A Night Sky application was submitted to DarkSky International for Westcave. The application remains pending. Westcave also voluntarily collected and

shared night sky data with three organizations: Globe at Night , DarkSky Texas, and DarkSky International.

- Heinz Branch and Pedernales River watershed cleanup activities were conducted along roadsides near the preserve.
- Research programs throughout the year consisted of:
    - Monthly water sampling was conducted to check water quality at Heinz Branch. Results continue to be within a normal range and are reported to LCRA.
    - Biannual karst invertebrate surveys were conducted in Hammetts cave in partnership with Travis County. All species are recorded and monitored.
    - Golden-cheeked warbler (GCWA) surveys were conducted by Westcave Preserve staff. Three territories were identified, with one successfully fledging four babies. Three males were banded by the City of Austin, only one of which was re-sighted. In addition, 17 brown-headed cowbirds (five females and 12 males) were dispatched.
    - Volunteers conducted bi-weekly dragonfly watches as part of the Migratory Dragonfly Partnership Citizen Science Program.
    - Weekly to biweekly nest checks were made by Westcave Preserve staff and interns as part of the Cornell Lab Ornithology Citizen Science Program called NestWatch.
    - Westcave Preserve staff and volunteers monitored each bat house at Westcave as part of a Bat Emergence Count. Emergence counts were a weekly effort, with the most individuals counted being over 600 in the mega bat house. The Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) has been recorded at each bat house. This data was reported to Merlin Tuttle Bat Conservation International.
    - Weekly bird counts were conducted at Leif's Bird Blind and data was submitted to the Feederwatch program through Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Expenditures

LCRA expenditures (10/1/2024 to 9/30/2025): $185,284.99

*Does not include expenditures by Westcave Preserve Corporation