Annual Report for Barton Creek Habitat Preserve 2025
The Nature Conservancy of Texas
October 1st 2024-September 31st 2025

Science / Stewardship

Annual surveys (point count) were completed for the golden-cheeked warblers (GCWA) to determine population densities. The GCWA population remains stable. Black-capped vireo (BCVI) surveys were not completed but they were looked for on several occasions during other surveys and field work, two adult BCVI males a female and 1 fledgling were observed on July 23rd. Brown-headed cowbirds were removed from the property by shooting.

Work to clear fire lines of downed branches from an ice storm in 2022 was continued. A 200 acre prescribed fire was implemented on the Vireo Hill and the Farm House burn units in February.

Preserve staff and TPWD public lands lottery hunters are helping to control the population of white-tailed deer in an effort to reduce browse and increase recruitment of Texas Oaks. Population is estimated through camera surveys and stand counts. Twenty-one deer were harvested by 36 hunters.

Ongoing research projects included “KR Bluestem Effects on Grasslands” (The Nature Conservancy / Global Impact Invader Network – GIIN); “Golden-cheeked Warbler Population Viability and Habitat Suitability within the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve” (City of Austin and Balcones Canyonlands Preserve); “Using Community Assembly Filters to Guide Invasive Species Management and Grassland Restoration” (The Nature Conservancy / University of TX); “A conundrum of conservation” Measuring the impact of European Honey Bee (Apis mellifera) presence on wild bee populations and foaging patterns within the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve)” (University of TX); “Large Mammal Monitoring Project” (Ceasar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute) and “Building Conservation Collections of Prunus spp. and Associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Central Texas” (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center – University of Texas).

Education/Outreach/Volunteers

The preserve hosted approximately 537 visitors, 118 volunteers totaling 339 hours of work, and 274 used the property for educational purposes. Groups included the Scouting America Troop 52, and Troop 70, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Capital Area Master Naturalists, Audubon Society, Austin Community College Astronomy Club, University of TX, and Austin Youth River Watch.

Volunteer projects included removing old fencing, invasive species removal (Johnson grass – *Sorhum halepense*, Malta star-thistle – *Centaurea melitensis,* Chinaberry Tree – *Melia azedarach*, and *Ligustrum sp.*), trash pickup, trail maintenance, fire-line preparation, juniper removal, deer surveys, bird surveys, boundary monitoring, infrastructure repair.

Expense Summary

FY 2025 operations (including salaries) and maintenance budget for the Preserve was $263,175.