

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 Quarter Update: 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	Twenty-four BCCP applications were received and processed in the first quarter. Two Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$189,200.00 in mitigation payments. Fees were split 50:50 between Travis County and City of Austin.
Land Acquisition	Travis County acquired a conservation easement on the 70.41-acre Murfin tract in the North Lake Austin macrosite and purchased the 621.05-acre Flying K tract in the Lake Travis macrosite.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warblers and Black-capped vireos	Travis County staff (staff) completed data analysis on the 2021 golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo survey seasons and completed annual reports summarizing the results.
Karst invertebrates	Fall season faunal surveys were performed at seven BCCP-listed caves. Fall season cave cricket exit counts were performed at five BCCP-listed caves. Travis County and City of Austin staff gave presentations to the BCCP Coordinating Committee and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service highlighting recent karst management activities on the BCP.
Salamanders	A presentation co-authored by City of Austin and Travis County staff, entitled "Occupancy of Jollyville plateau salamanders" was presented at the 2021 Texas Herpetological Society on October 23 rd .
Rare plants	Staff and volunteers conducted a Texabama croton survey at Pace Bend Park in September and October. Colonies were in good health, most had expanded in numbers, and 15 new colonies were discovered.
Plant and Animal Control	
Feral hogs	Staff removed six feral hogs from the Ribelin tract.
White-tailed deer	Staff completed spot-light deer surveys on the Kotrla Unit and Hamilton Pool Preserve, and camera surveys at ten locations on the Jollyville Unit to assess deer population trends.
Tawny crazy ants and Red imported fire ants	Dr. Ed LeBrun, with the University of Texas, continued to research tawny crazy ants at the Anderson Mill/Collins tract site and other locations in Travis County.
Invasive Plants	Staff and volunteers removed more than 2,200 invasive plants from six BCP tracts. Heritage Tree Care was contracted to remove bamboo and wisteria from the Bunten tract using an air spade.

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Land Stewardship	
Habitat Enhancement	In November, native grasses and forbs were planted in a 13-acre area of the Nootsie tract where staff had conducted a prescribed burn two months earlier. The goal of this project is to replace invasive King Ranch bluestem grass with native vegetation. The area will be monitored to track its progress. Seeds and transplants of fifteen native tree, shrub, forb, and grass species were planted on the Bunten tract. Staff conducted black-capped vireo habitat maintenance work on the Vireo Ridge tract; Natural Texas was contracted to perform black-capped vireo habitat management on the Jollyville Unit.
Water Quality	Staff monitored water quality at five sites on or near the BCP using Environmental Integrity Index methodology.
Fence and Road Construction and Repairs	Two gates were repaired and one new gate was installed on the Steiner Ranch conservation easement. Staff coordinated with neighbors on the Lime Creek and Cypress Creek Units to implement road maintenance projects on gravel roads that have shared access by neighbors and BCP staff.
Wildfire Preparedness	Maintenance of the existing fuel mitigation projects were started on the BCP in the Wildlife-Urban Interface of the Steiner Ranch conservation easement and the SAS tract. The work was done by the Texas Conservation Corps. Staff conducted storm damage clean up in the shaded fuel breaks at the Romberg, Canyon Vista, and Webb tracts and the Lime Creek Unit.
Conservation Easements	Staff conducted annual conservation easement monitoring at one privately-owned property managed by Travis County through a conservation easement agreement.
Utility Infrastructure Corridors	The Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) removed seven utility poles from the Stratton tract; PEC completed the installation of new utility poles on the Trails End tract to supply electricity to the Brushy Creek Regional Utility's new water treatment plant. The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) completed drilling soil borings for geotechnical investigations along the T197 (Marshall Ford to McNeil) Transmission Line which crosses through the BCP. The drillers hit several voids and bait traps were deployed to check for karst invertebrates. Mitigation measures were taken to cover the voids. Austin Energy completed vegetation trimming along their utility lines on the Canyon Vista tract.

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Patrol and Law Enforcement	
Trespass and Property Damage	Surveillance cameras documented trespassers on the Grandview Hills, SAS, Sam Hamilton East, and Ribelin tracts. Two trespassers on the SAS tract were issued criminal trespass warnings by Park Police. Two individuals on motorcycles were stopped on the Trails End tract and issued verbal warnings. Two vehicle collisions caused damage to the Lime Creek Unit and Bunten tract boundary fences.
Outreach/Volunteers	
See BCP Partner Education Summary First Quarter: October 1 – December 31, 2021	

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 Quarter Update: 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	Twelve BCCP applications were received and processed in the second quarter. Seven Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$249,575.00 in mitigation payments. Fees were split 50:50 between Travis County and City of Austin.
Personnel	Leigh Stuemke was hired as the Environmental Specialist/BCCP Administrator and started in February. Johanna Arendt was promoted to the position of Environmental Project Manager for Community Resiliency in the Environmental Quality Program of the NREQ Division. Three temporary Natural Resources Techs were hired to help with bird surveys and other management activities. Kylynn Parker started in January and Jacob Olsen and Nick Johns started in February.
BCCP Annual Report	The FY2021 BCCP Annual Report was submitted to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in January. It can be viewed at: https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/tnr/nr/2021-annual-report .
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warblers and Black-capped vireos	The first golden-cheeked warbler to arrive on the Travis County BCP was documented on March 14th. Travis County staff (staff) began intensive plot, enumeration, and presence/absence surveys in mid-March. The first black-capped vireo was observed on the Travis County BCP on March 23rd.
Karst invertebrates	Winter season faunal surveys were performed at seven BCCP-listed caves and one other endangered species cave. Faunal surveys were also performed at four biologically significant caves on the Kotrla Unit and at Hammett's Cave at Westcave Preserve. Winter season cave cricket exit counts were performed at six caves. A contractor, Zara Environmental, conducted karst work on the Kotrla Unit including excavating karst features and using LIDAR data to look for potential karst features.
Plant and Animal Control	
Feral hogs	Staff removed five feral hogs from the Ribelin and Sam Hamilton East tracts.
White-tailed deer	A study conducted by Orion Research and Management Services and the University of Texas – El Paso found that 37% of the deer sampled on the BCP and other areas of Travis County tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies. A paper describing the findings can be found at: https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/vbz.2021.0094.

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 Quarter Update: 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022

Tawny crazy ants and Red imported fire ants	Dr. Ed LeBrun, with the University of Texas, continued to research tawny crazy ants at the Anderson Mill/Collins tract site and other locations in Travis County. Dr. LeBrun's work was recently highlighted on two media sites and can be viewed at: https://www.wired.com/story/a-killer-parasite-is-wiping-out-hordes-of-ants-in-a-good-way/ and https://www.kxan.com/news/local/austin/ut-researchers-find-key-to-stop-invasive-crazy-ants/. Staff conducted canopy arthropod sampling as part of a tawny crazy ant impact study on the golden-cheeked warbler's food supply. Staff conducted fire ant control at three BCCP-listed caves.
Invasive Plants	Staff, volunteers, and the Texas Conservation Corps hand-pulled or treated more than 9,300 invasive plants from eight BCP tracts.
Land Stewardship	
Habitat Enhancement	Staff contracted with Heritage Tree Care to plant 190 native trees on the Woods of Greenshores tract. The trees were planted in the Wildland-Urban Interface to encourage a future tree canopy that will shade out grasses and allow for a shaded fuel break. Natural Texas was contracted to conduct black-capped vireo habitat restoration projects on the Ribelin and Vireo Ridge tracts; Staff conducted black-capped vireo habitat maintenance work on the Vireo Ridge tract; Natural Resources and Parks staff conducted a 15-acre prescribed burn on the Kotrla Unit to improve vireo habitat.
Water Quality	Staff monitored water quality at five sites on or near the BCP using Environmental Integrity Index methodology. Travis County Environmental Quality staff and St. Edwards University staff coordinated to develop a plan to enhance the North Hollow Pond on the Wild Basin Preserve. This pond had become filled in with sediment, debris, and overgrown vegetation. Phase 1 of the restoration was completed this quarter and included removing the vegetation. Phase 2 will take place in the fall and will involve sediment excavation and vegetative restoration on the banks.
Fence and Trail Construction and Repairs	The Texas Conservation Corps built a pedestrian bridge on the Snowden tract along a trail that is used for guided hikes. Repairs were made to a fence on the Lime Creek Unit that had previously been damaged by a vehicle collision. Repairs were also made to the boundary fence on the McNeil High School tract. A new pedestrian gate was installed on the Trails End tract. Boulders to block side trails and signage were also added to direct visitors to stay on designated trails. Undine LLC installed fence around their wastewater treatment plant and associated drip irrigation fields on the Greenshores conservation easement.

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 Quarter Update: 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022

Wildfire Preparedness	Maintenance of the existing fuel mitigation projects was completed on the BCP in the Wildland-Urban Interface at the Woodland Hills Trail, Mira Mesa, Steiner Bell Ranch Apartments, Horseback Hollow East, and Portofino segments of the Steiner Ranch conservation easement, the Wilson Parke Well and Wilson Parke Road segments of the Grandview Hills tract, and on the SAS tract. The work was conducted by the Texas Conservation Corps and Lake Travis Fire and Rescue.
Conservation Easements	Staff conducted annual conservation easement monitoring at 11 privately-owned properties managed by Travis County through conservation easement agreements. Three of the conservation easements had violations but the issues were later rectified.
Buildings	A new septic system was installed at the Snowden House. New HVAC units were installed at the BCP Building at Wilson Parke Avenue; Staff worked with architects in the Travis County Facilities Management Department to develop plans for moving Natural Resources offices to the second floor of the BCP Building. A new public restroom was constructed in the parking lot of Wild Basin Preserve. The restroom uses evaporative technology that does not require water or a septic system.
Utility Infrastructure Corridors	The Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) trimmed vegetation along utility lines on the Nootsie and Wheless tracts.
Patrol and Law Enforcement	
Trespass and Property Damage	Surveillance cameras documented trespassers on the Grandview Hills, SAS, Sam Hamilton East, and Ribelin tracts. A vehicle collision caused damage to the Lucas tract boundary fence. Staff discovered tree cutting areas on multiple BCP tracts that appear to be related. This case is ongoing and Park Police are assisting in the investigation; Two additional cases of tree cutting were documented on the Snowden and Collins tracts. These cases are ongoing; Settlements were reached on two previous tree cutting cases.
Outreach/Volunteers	
See BCP Partner Education Summary Second Quarter: January 1 – March 31, 2022	



The Texas Conservation Corps built this pedestrian bridge on the Snowden tract along a trail that is used for guided hikes. This bridge also provides utility vehicle access between the Natural Resources Field Office and the Snowden House.



Plant cocoons were added to the trees and shrubs planted on the Woods of Greenshores tract. These cocoons leverage condensation and focus the water to create a deeper tap root.

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 Quarter Update: 1 April 2022 – 30 June 2022

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	Twenty BCCP applications were received and processed in the third quarter. Three Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$37,200.00 in mitigation payments. Fees were split 50:50 between Travis County and City of Austin.
Personnel	Mickey Leland intern, Corbyn McEachern, began his summer position in June.
Tour	Travis County and City of Austin staff hosted U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) employees for a tour of the BCP on April 28 th . FWS staff from the Austin Ecological Services Office and the Region 2 Office in Albuquerque attended the event.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warblers and Black-capped vireos	Travis County staff (staff) completed golden-cheeked warbler surveys in mid-June and started data entry and analysis. Black-capped vireo surveys began in April and will continue through the summer.
Karst invertebrates	Spring season faunal surveys were performed at seven BCCP-listed caves. Spring season cave cricket exit counts were performed at five caves.
Salamanders	Travis County and City of Austin staff conducted occupancy surveys for Jollyville Plateau salamanders on Cypress Creek and a tributary. Surveys were planned for Long Hollow Creek but could not be done since the creek was dry.
Plant and Animal Control	
Feral hogs	Staff removed five feral hogs from Hamilton Pool Preserve.
Brown-headed cowbirds	Staff operated five cowbird traps on or near the BCP from April through mid-June. They captured and removed 156 cowbirds.
Tawny crazy ants and Red imported fire ants	Dr. Ed LeBrun, with the University of Texas, continued to research tawny crazy ants at the Anderson Mill/Collins tract site and other locations in Travis County. Staff conducted canopy arthropod sampling as part of a tawny crazy ant impact study on the golden-cheeked warbler's food supply. Staff conducted fire ant control at six BCCP-listed caves.

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 Quarter Update: 1 April 2022 – 30 June 2022

Invasive Plants	Staff, volunteers, and the Texas Conservation Corps hand-pulled or treated more than 1,700 invasive plants from eight BCP tracts. Several community volunteer groups had workdays to hand-pull vinca from the Bunten tract. Approximately 4.2 acres of Johnson grass were treated with herbicide on the Snowden, Blackmore, New Life, Crossings, Volente, and Nootsie tracts.
Land Stewardship	
Water Quality	Staff monitored water quality at four sites on or near the BCP using Environmental Integrity Index methodology.
Vegetation Management	Staff met with a Texas Forest Service Ecologist to assess possible oak wilt centers and discuss treatment options for sites on the Wheless tract, the Jollyville Unit, and near the Wild Basin Preserve.
Conservation Easements	Staff conducted annual conservation easement monitoring at one privately-owned property managed by Travis County through a conservation easement agreement.
Buildings	Staff worked with the Travis County Facilities Management Department to complete plans for remodeling and furnishing new Natural Resources Program offices on the second floor of the BCP Building at Wilson Parke Avenue. Staff participated in a series of meetings with Jackson McElhaney Architects to provide input on the design of the future visitor center.
Utility Infrastructure Corridors	The Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) installed a new gate in the Trails End tract boundary fence to provide access to their new utility line.
Patrol and Law Enforcement	
Trespass, Property Damage, and Emergency Response	Two new cases of tree cutting were documented on the Stratton and Saldivar tracts. These cases are ongoing; Settlements were reached on two previous tree cutting cases. There were several incidents of yard waste dumping and trespassing this quarter. There were two cases where locks were cut from gates to gain access. A guest on a Grandview Hills tract guided hike had a medical issue that required Travis County Star Flight transport to a hospital. Park Police assisted in coordinating the emergency response.
Outreach/Volunteers	
See BCP Partner Education Summary Third Quarter: April 1 – June 30, 2022	

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 4th Quarter Update: 1 July – 30 September 2022

BCCP Administration	
Public Participation	Twenty-three BCCP applications were received and processed in the fourth quarter. Three Participation Certificates were issued for a total of \$20,300.00 in mitigation payments. Fees were split 50:50 between Travis County and City of Austin.
Personnel	Seasonal Natural Resources Techs Kylynn Parker, Nick Johns, and Jake Olson completed their employment term in July (Parker) and August (Johns and Olson). Madison Ebest was hired as a Natural Resources Patrol Tech and started in August. In September, Natural Resources Supervisor, David Morgan, was promoted to the Climate Change Project Manager position, and Volunteer Coordinator, Jeremy Hull, was promoted to the Community Liaison Supervisor position.
Rare and Endangered Resources Management	
Golden-cheeked warblers and Black-capped vireos	Staff entered data from the 2022 Golden-cheeked warbler survey season and began initial data analysis. Black-capped vireo surveys ended in September and staff then started analyzing data.
Karst invertebrates	Staff performed summer season faunal surveys at eight BCCP-listed caves, one endangered species cave, and two potential substitution caves. Spring season cave cricket exit counts were performed at six BCCP-listed caves and one endangered species cave. A contractor, Zara Environmental, continued to analyze and excavate karst features on the Kotrla Unit as part of a project to find substitution caves. Zara also conducted a LIDAR analysis of potential karst features around the BCP building (11920 Wilson Parke Ave) to aid in the visitor center trail and grounds planning. A report was received from Dr. Marshal Hedin regarding genetic determinations of <i>Cicurina</i> specimens collected on the BCP. The most notable finding was that a <i>Cicurina</i> found in Hammett Cave at Westcave Preserve appears to be an undescribed species. Pseudoscorpion specimens collected on the BCP were deposited with Zara Environmental for identification.
Plant and Animal Control	
White-tailed deer	Staff conducted surveys to estimate deer density on portions of the BCP. They performed spotlight surveys on the Kotrla Unit and Hamilton Pool Preserve and camera surveys on the Jollyville Unit.

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 4th Quarter Update: 1 July – 30 September 2022

Tawny crazy ants	Tawny crazy ants were found in high densities in and around No Rent and Weldon Caves. University of Texas researcher, Dr. Ed LeBrun, performed a <i>Microsporidia</i> inoculation in that population in August.
Invasive Plants	Staff removed more than 1,300 non-native invasive plants from three tracts this quarter. Additionally, wisteria vine was treated on approximately ½ acre of the Bunten tract.
Land Stewardship	
Water Quality	Staff monitored water quality at two sites on or near the BCP using Environmental Integrity Index methodology.
Mycorrhizal Study	Staff collaborated with Dr. Lisa Markovchick, a researcher with Northern Arizona University, to identify potential sample locations for a mycorrhizal fungi community study on the BCP. In September, Travis County and COA staff, along with volunteers, conducted the first BCP MycoBlitz to collect mycorrhizal fungi samples at sites across the BCP.
Conservation Easements	Staff conducted annual conservation easement monitoring at one privately-owned property managed by Travis County through a conservation easement agreement.
Buildings	Staff participated in a series of meetings with Jackson McElhaney Architects to provide input on the design of the future visitor center. Contractors began installation of a new roof on the BCP building at Wilson Parke Avenue.
Fence Repairs	Repairs were made to the boundary fence on the Lucas tract, Bunten tract, and Lime Creek Unit.
Wildlife Preparedness	Staff flagged treatment areas in the wildland-urban interface in preparation for fall and winter fuel mitigation work.
Utility Infrastructure Corridors	The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) conducted routine inspections, vegetation clearing, and pilot hole drilling along the T197 (Marshall Ford to McNeil) Transmission Line, which crosses through the BCP.

TRAVIS COUNTY'S BCCP Activities FY2022 4th Quarter Update: 1 July – 30 September 2022

Patrol and Law Enforcement	
Trespass and Property Damage	Three incidents involving firearms were documented this quarter. Multiple BCP signs were shot on the Volente tract and along a shared roadway on the Karnik/Richards/Wendland tracts. In addition, a dead coyote, which had been shot, was found on the Grandview Hills tract. A trespasser on the Ribelin tract stole an SD card from a camera after being photographed by the camera. An abandoned homeless encampment was found on the Lucas tract near a 0.14-acre burned area. Two vehicular collisions caused boundary fence damage on the Lime Creek Unit and the Lucas tract.
Outreach/Volunteers	
<i>See BCP Partner Education Summary Fourth Quarter: 1 July– 30 September, 2022</i>	



Photo by Zach Stark

BCP volunteers, Sam Voltaggio and Julian Yates, photographed a pair of river otters on the Lake Perspectives tract in August (top photo) as part of a volunteer camera trap survey. Several otter photos were also taken during the spring on the Concordia conservation easement (bottom photo). River otters have been expanding their range in recent years and are now occasionally seen in Central Texas.