



SUNSET VALLEY

**Gaines Greenbelt
2022 Annual Report**

**Submitted by the
City of Sunset Valley**

Introduction

The Gaines Greenbelt is owned and managed by the City of Sunset Valley as part of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP). The Gaines Greenbelt provides habitat for the federally endangered Golden-Cheeked Warbler (*Setophaga chrysoparia*, GCWA) and a portion contains a public use hike and bike trail. Sunset Valley has signed a Managing Partner Agreement with the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP), The Sunset Valley – BCCP Managing Partner Agreement adds the Sunset Valley Gaines Greenbelt to the BCP Barton Creek Macrosite. The Managing Partner Agreement was officially filed in 2014.

The Gaines Greenbelt parcel is approximately 21.9 acres located in Travis County, Texas, at the northern edge of the City of Sunset Valley. The parcel's south side borders the back lot lines of residential sites, a hotel, and a Texas Department of Transportation stormwater pollution prevention facility located along US Highway 71/State Highway 290 West; east of the tract lies a larger-lot residential area; and, the remaining parcel borders the City of Austin's Barton Creek Greenbelt trail system (Appendix A).

Golden-cheeked Warbler Surveys

Between May and June of this year presence/absence surveys were conducted in the Gaines Greenbelt consistent with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protocols. One male Golden Cheek Warbler was detected on the western edge of the property on the first survey but was not heard on subsequent visits. Complete results of the presence/absence survey can be found in Appendix A.

Trail Management Activities

Hill Country Conservancy (HCC) oversees the operation and maintenance of the Violet Crown Trail within the Gaines Greenbelt. HCC will generate a separate report that details all trail management activities within the area of the Violet Crown Trail. The City routinely checks the trail for hazards and other concerns.

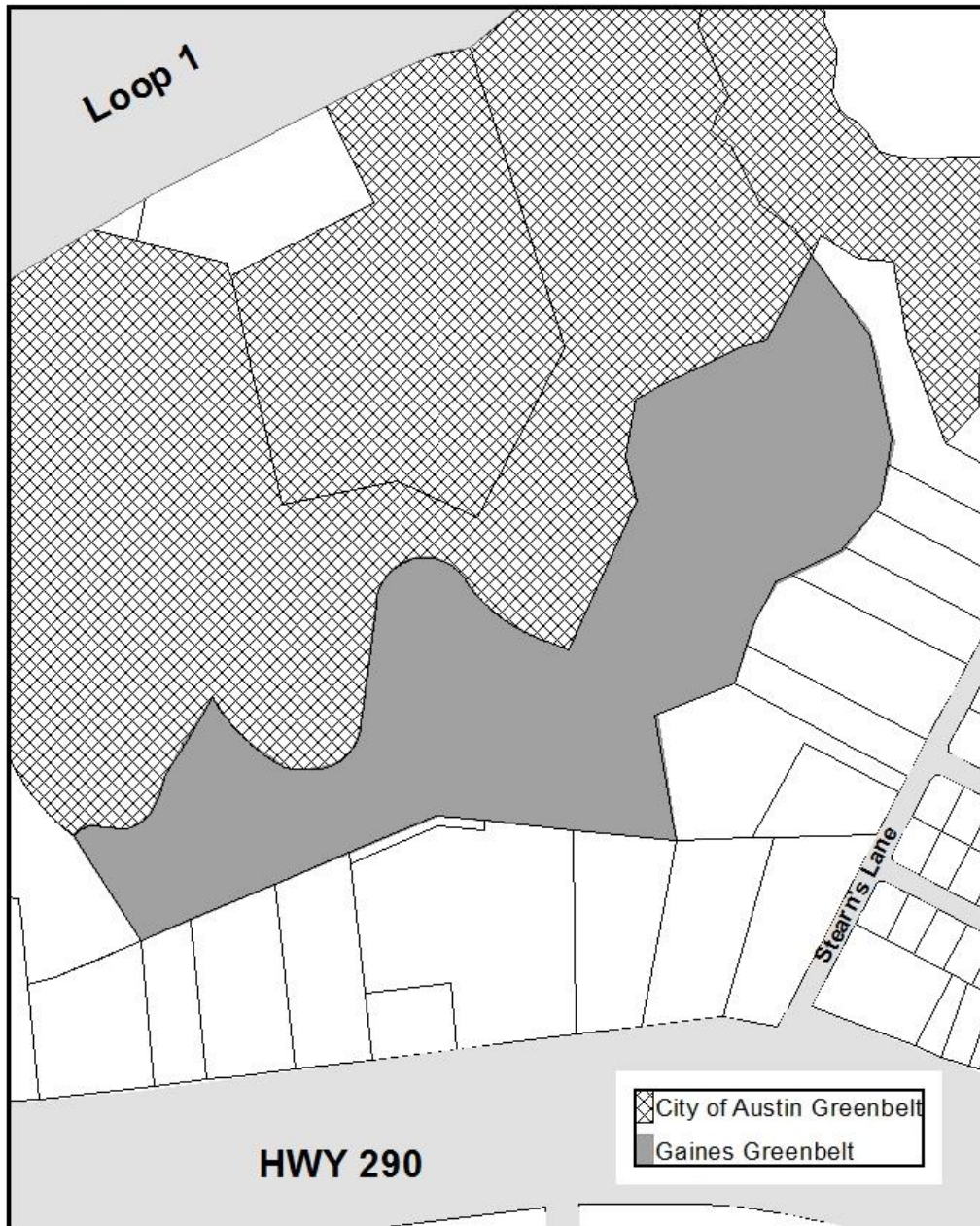
Budget

The budget for the Gaines Greenbelt is attached in Appendix B. Budgetary expenditures only reflect the cost of consultants. The City of Sunset Valley does not track staff time in regard to open space management outside of consultant expenditures.

Appendix A
Map of Gaines Greenbelt



1 inch = 0.06 miles



Appendix B

Project/Program	Cost
Golden Cheek Warbler Survey	\$4,386.81
Total	\$4,386,81



ENDANGERED SPECIES SURVEY SUMMARY

FOR GAINES GREENBELT, IN TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

BOWMAN PROJECT NO. 070560-01-001

JUNE 27, 2022

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

PROJECT NAME: Gaines Greenbelt Golden-cheeked Warbler Survey

COUNTY: Travis County, Texas

LOCATION: Approximately 0.5 miles north of the City of Sunset Valley between Mopac (Loop 1) and U.S. 290

USGS 7.5-QUAD: Oak Hill, Texas

PROPERTY SIZE: Approximately 21 acres

CLIENT: City of Sunset Valley
Public Works Department – Environmental Programs
Attn: Carolyn Meredith
3205 Jones Road
Sunset Valley, Texas 78745

SUBJECT SPECIES: Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA, *Setophaga chrysoparia*)

HABITAT AREA: GCWA – Approx. 21 acres of potential suitable habitat

SURVEY PERSONNEL: Grady Terry

SURVEY DATES: May 6– June 7, 2022 (Table 1)

TOTAL SURVEY TIME: Approximately five hours (Table 1)

NUMBER OF VISITS: 5

2.0 METHODS

This endangered species survey summary report documents the Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA) presence/absence surveys for the above-mentioned project. This summary report covers the approximately 21-acre City of Sunset Valley Gaines Greenbelt in south-central Travis County, Texas (Figure 1). Survey methods were mostly consistent with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) protocol for GCWA presence/absence surveys (USFWS 2022). However, 60% of surveys were not completed by the May 15th deadline due to a late season survey request by the client and a start date of May 6th.

As shown in Table 1 and Appendix I, five visits were made to the survey area, with all visits at least 5 days apart. Survey hours exceeded the minimum requirement of one hour per survey visit for 25 acres of potential habitat required for a complete survey. Weather conditions were acceptable for completing field surveys. Survey visits usually began within 30 minutes of sunrise or within 7 hours after sunrise. A large portion of the survey route (track) followed the Violet Crown Trail, which occasionally meanders out of the project area.

Field observations and track logs (Figure 2) were recorded with Avenza Maps Software. Grady Terry, of Bowman is covered by USFWS permit number ESPER0030551.

3.0 RESULTS

Only one male GCWA was detected during the 2022 presence/absence surveys (See Figure 2). This male was detected during the first survey on the western edge of the site. Three location points were recorded for where the male GCWA was foraging or singing. Eventually, the male stopped frequently singing and moved off site. Mr. Terry was unable to relocate this GCWA after this observation. No GCWA were detected during the following four surveys, this is most likely due to the lateness in the breeding season. During mid and late May, male GCWA spend less time singing and more time attending to nesting duties and thus are more difficult to detect reliably. The 2020 survey resulted in two male GCWAs detected adjacent to the project site while the 2018 survey resulted in zero observations. Prior surveys in 2014 made 13 detections over 5 site visits.

Other bird species observed during the 2022 GCWA survey are listed in Table 2.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

A single male GCWA was detected indicating presence and suitable habitat for the GCWA. It is recommended that continued surveys are conducted in the future to confirm presence/absence, and that future surveys begin earlier in the season.

5.0 REFERENCES

- Campbell, L. 2003. Endangered and threatened animals of Texas – Their life history and management. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Wildlife Division. Austin, Texas. 127 pp.
- USFWS Section 10(a)(1)(A) Scientific Permit Requirements for Conducting Presence/Absence Survey and Habitat Assessments for the Endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler (2022).

6.0 ATTACHMENTS

FIGURE 1.	Gaines Greenbelt Study Area
FIGURE 2.	GCWA detections and Survey tracks.
TABLE 1.	Survey dates, duration, personnel, and weather conditions for the 2018 Gaines Greenbelt GCWA presence/absence survey.
TABLE 2.	Birds observed on Gaines Greenbelt (Spring 2022).
APPENDIX I	Field Notes

7.0 SIGNATURES

This report was prepared by professional biologists at the consulting firm of Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd. in conformance with the methods and limitations described herein. The findings of this submittal are completely and accurately documented in this application package.

PREPARED BY:



SIGNATURE

GRADY TERRY
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST
USFWS PERMITTED GCWA SURVEYOR

PRINTED NAME

JUNE 27, 2022

DATE



Figure 1. Gaines Greenbelt Study Area

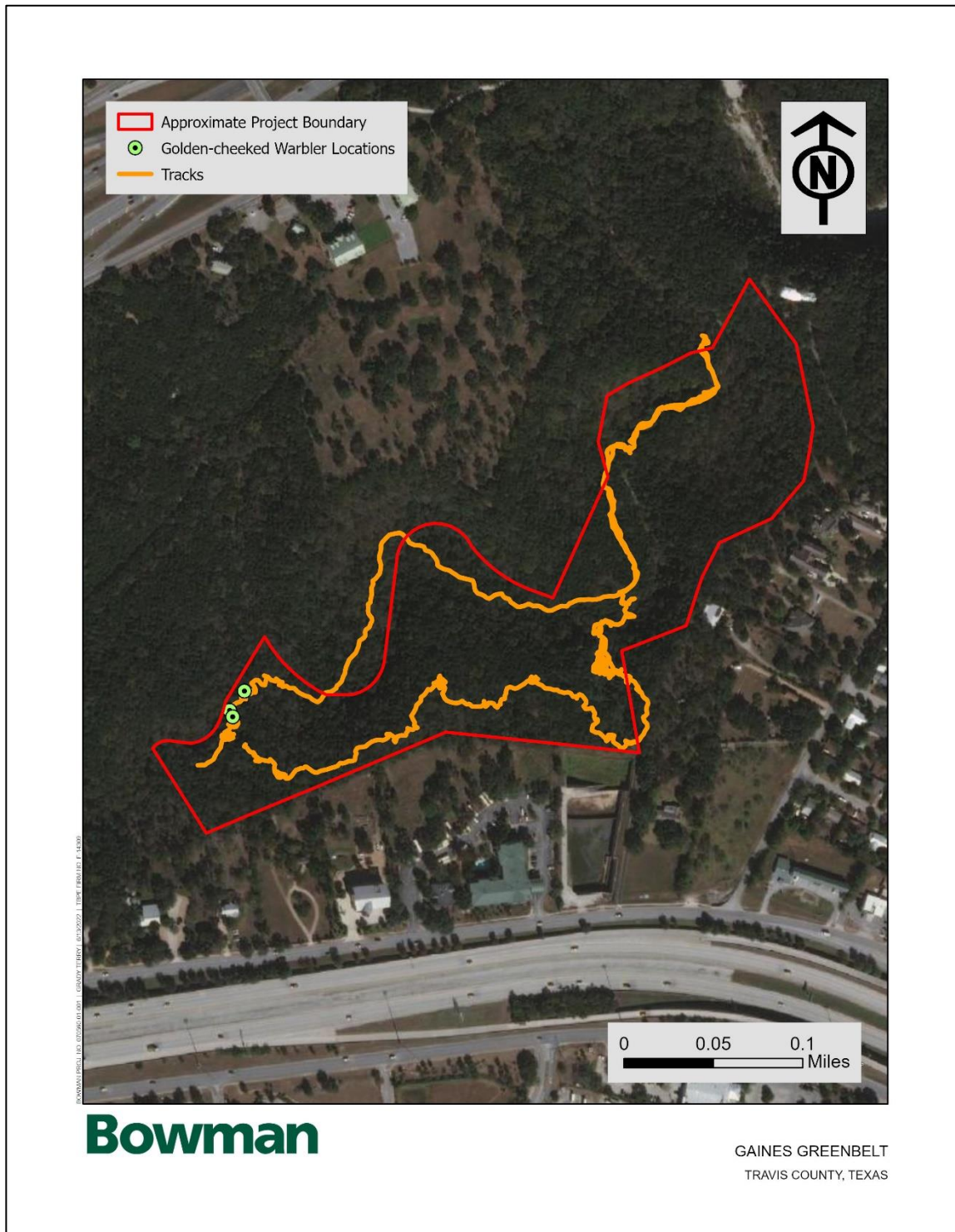


Figure 2. GCWA detections and Survey tracks.

TABLE 1. SURVEY DATES, DURATION, PERSONNEL, & WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR THE 2022 GAINES GREENBELT SURVEY

Date	Time		Temperature (°F)		Wind Direction		Wind Speed (mph)		Cloud Cover (%)		Personnel	Comments
	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End		
5/6/2022	9:27	10:50	70	79	S	S	3	5	20	15	G. TERRY	1 MALE GCWA DETECTED
5/11/2022	6:14	7:14	70	90	S	SSE	2	7	25	15	G. TERRY	
5/18/2022	8:48	9:48	74	79	W	SW	4	7	10	10	G. TERRY	
5/25/2022	7:26	8:26	62	64	SE	S	2	5	33	33	G. TERRY	
6/7/2022	7:31	8:31	80	85	SE	SE	3	3	33	25	G. TERRY	

TABLE 2. BIRDS OBSERVED ON GAINES GREENBELT (SPRING 2022).

Common Name	Scientific Name
Birds	
Bewick's wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
Black vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Black-bellied whistling duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>
Black-chinned hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>
Black-crested titmouse	<i>Baeolophus atricristatus</i>
Blue jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
Blue-gray gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>
Carolina chickadee	<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>
Carolina wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>
Eastern phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>
Golden-cheeked warbler	<i>Setophaga chrysoparia</i>
Ladder-backed woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>
Lesser goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>
Northern Cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>
Painted bunting	<i>Passerina ciris</i>
Red-shouldered hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
Summer tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
White-eyed vireo	<i>Vireo griseus</i>

APPENDIX I. FIELD NOTES

Gaines Greenbelt Survey 1
May 6, 2022
Start: 09:27 End 10:10
Start loc: 70' E, 0.3 mi S. 201 CC
End loc: 79' E, 2.5 S 1 tr.
BLWR GGBN MCA
LEGO WEUI BCTI
FAPY BLJA CACH
PABM RSHA CARW
@ 10:15 GCWA heard, point labeled
"Gaines MIP25622" male
infrequently singing partial to full B songs
in Juniper bottomland
flew up hillside to point ~~MIP25622~~ →
"Gaines MIP25622" top of juniper
Si B song.
Further up, found juniper bark lined
nest 10 ft up juniper off trail. Watched
for 30 min but no activity
Could not confirm GCWA use
or origin.

18 Gaines Greenbelt Sunday 2
5/11/22
Start: 06:17 End: 7:17
Start cond: 75° Calm, 65%
End cond: 75° Calm, 65%
BBND NQA BCTZ HUVI
WEVI LFOD LBND CARL
CAOH BCUH BLJA BGM

20 Gaines Greenbelt Survey 3
5/18/22
Start 08:48 End 04:48
Start Weather 174 0-4 mph 102
End Weather 79 3-7 mph 102
BGGN NUA BCTI CACH
SUTA LEGD LBLWD BELN
VFUE BCHY

Gaines Overholt Sunday 4²¹
5/27/22
Start: 07:26 End: 08:26
Start Mark - 620 F 0-2 mph, 37E
End Mark - 64 2-5 mph
WIDA B60N BEND BRWD
RSTIA BCTJ CACH LE60

6/7/21 228

Guines

Grady Terry

Start: 07:31 End: 08:32

Start cond: 80 2-3mm SE 33%

End cond: 85 2-3mm SE 25%

AK24 WELI B66N

CACH BEWR SUDA

PABY BCHU BLUH

BCTI