



Gaines Greenbelt 2014 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 March of this year.

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 April and May of this year presence/absence surveys were conducted in the Gaines Greenbelt consistent with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protocols. A total of 13 GCWA detections were made during the surveys. All of the detections were of male birds. Approximately 39% of the detections occurred within the Gaines Greenbelt. The remaining 61% of detections were on the adjacent City of Austin Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (COA BCP). Based on the data collected one territory was mapped encompassing the Gaines Greenbelt and adjacent COA BCP land. All other bird species encountered during the survey were also recorded.

In addition to the presence/absent survey construction monitoring was also conducted beginning March 3 until April 2, 2014. This monitoring was done by the Hill Country Conservancy within the Gaines Greenbelt for construction of sections of the Violet Crown Trail. The first recoding of a GCWA was on March 31st and 11 observations were made in total. Complete results of the presence/absence survey can be found in Appendix B.

Trail Management Activities

In cooperation with the Hill Country Conservancy and Texas Conservation Corp several sections of trail were rehabilitated or developed to facilitate the Violet Crown Trail. This work was approved as part of the Violet Crown Trail Master Plan by the BCP Coordination Committee. The final section of Phase 1 of that project is still under construction with completion estimated in 2015.

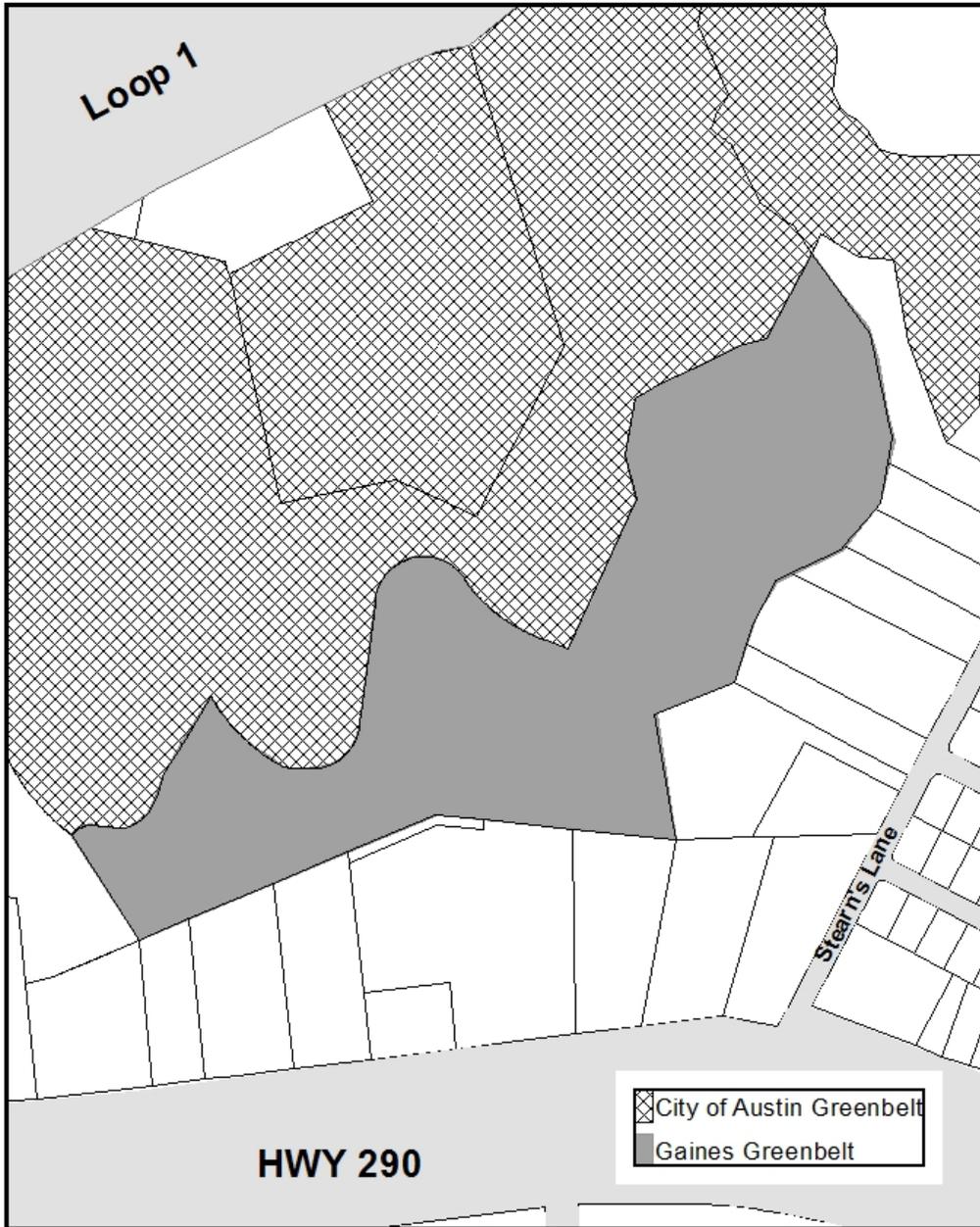
Boundary Survey

A boundary survey of the southern boundary between the Gaines Greenbelt and development along Highway 290 was also completed. A temporary fence-line was delineated and will be replaced with a permanent fence in 2015.

Appendix A Map of Gaines Greenbelt



1 inch = 0.06 miles



Appendix B

ENDANGERED SPECIES SURVEY SUMMARY FOR GAINES GREENBELT, IN TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

BOWMAN PROJECT NO. 009935-01-001

JUNE 26, 2014

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

PROJECT NAME: Gaines Greenbelt Golden-cheeked Warbler Survey

COUNTY: Travis County, Texas

LOCATION: Approximately 0.5 mile 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 (GCW, *Setophaga chrysoparia*)

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

SURVEY PERSONNEL: Laura Zebehazy

SURVEY DATES: April 18 – May 23, 2014 (Table 1)

TOTAL SURVEY TIME: Approximately six hours and 20 minutes (Table 1)

NUMBER OF VISITS: 5

2.0 METHODS

This endangered species survey summary covers the approximately 21-acre City of Sunset Valley Gaines Greenbelt in south-central Travis County, Texas. Survey methods used spot-mapping techniques and were consistent with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) protocol for GCW presence/absence surveys (January 13, 2010 version). The compiled track-logs from the GPS receivers are shown in Figure 2, and represent the routes walked by survey personnel during the 2014 survey visits.

As shown in Table 1, five visits were made to each 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 began within 30 minutes of sunrise or within 7 hours after sunrise.

Field observations were recorded with Garmin GPS Map 76CSx receivers capable of 3-meter accuracy. No audio tapes were used during this survey. Laura Zebehazy was covered by USFWS permit TE-841353-1.

3.0 HABITAT ASSESSMENT

The entire approximately 21-acre Gaines Greenbelt contains potentially suitable habitat for the GCW. Ashe juniper woodlands occurred along the slopes and riparian hardwood woodlands occurred within and adjacent to the tributaries to Barton Creek. Field observations of habitat in the study area were generally consistent with the descriptions of suitable GCW habitat provided in Campbell (2003).

4.0 RESULTS

The results of the GCW presence/absence survey are shown in Figures 3 and 4. A total of 13 GCW detections were made during the surveys, all of male birds. Of the total number of GCW observations, 5 were precisely located, and all of the precise locations were recorded with GPS units in the field. Approximately 39% of the total GCW observations (five observations) were recorded within the boundary of the Gaines Greenbelt property, and 61% (eight observations) occurred on the adjacent City of Austin Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (COA BCP) to the north of the study area.

For Hill Country Conservancy, Bowman biologists also completed construction monitoring from March 3 to April 2, 2014 of the Violet Crown Trail that travels through portions of the Gaines Greenbelt. Beginning March 31, 2014, a total of 11 GCW detections were made during the construction monitoring within and adjacent to the Gaines Greenbelt study area (Figure 3 and 4).

Based on the observations mapped in Figure 4, one GCW territory was mapped within and adjacent to the study area. Overall, we estimate that one male was utilizing the entire study area and the adjacent COA BCP land.

Other bird species observed during the 2014 GCW survey are listed in Table 2.

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.

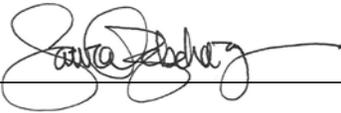
6.0 ATTACHMENTS

- FIGURE 1. Bracken Bat Cave study area.
FIGURE 2. Routes walked during the 2014 GCW survey.
FIGURE 3. Results of the 2014 endangered species survey (USGS Topographic Map).
FIGURE 4. Results of the 2014 endangered species survey (2012 Aerial Imagery).
- TABLE 1. Survey dates, duration, personnel, and weather conditions for the 2014 Gaines Greenbelt GCW P/A survey.
TABLE 2. Birds observed on Gaines Greenbelt (Spring 2014).

7.1 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:



LAURA ZEBHAZY, C.W.B.
STAFF BIOLOGIST
PRINTED NAME

JUNE 26, 2014
DATE

REVIEWED BY:



CRIAG HIATT, M.S.
ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT MANAGER
PRINTED NAME

JUNE 26, 2014
DATE

BOWMAN PROJ. NO. 080935-01-001 | P. 00935 - GAINES GREENBELT\00935-01-001\ENV\VIEW\IRONMENTAL\GAINES GREENBELT ES SURVEY SUMMARY FIG 1 LOCATION.MXD | L. ZEBEHAZY | JUNE 25, 2014 | TBP FIRM NO. F-44308 | TBELS FIRM NO. 101206-00

 PORTION OF THE VIOLET CROWN TRAIL
 COSV GAINES GREENBELT BOUNDARY & SURVEY AREA
 COA BCP
 BASE MAP: 2012 USDA NAIP AERIAL IMAGE

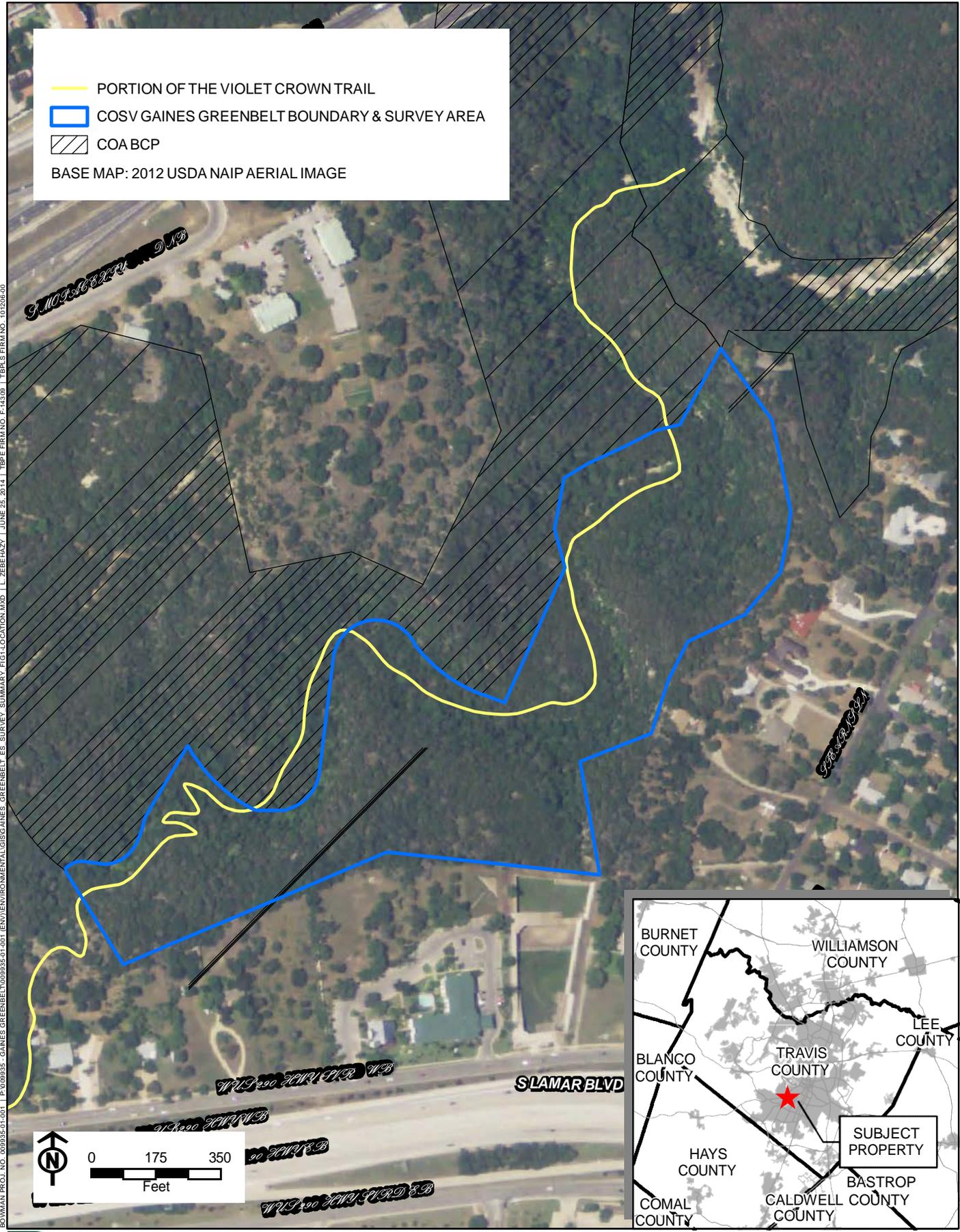


FIGURE 1
 STUDY AREA
 CITY OF SUNSET VALLEY GAINES GREENBELT, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

BOWMAN PROJ. NO. 002925-01-001 | P:002925 - GAINES GREENBELT\002925-01-001\ENV\VIEW\IRONMENTAL\GIGAINES_GREENBELT_ES_SURVEY_SUMMARY_FIG2-ROUTES.MXD | L. ZEBEHAZY | JUNE 26, 2014 | TBP/E FIRM NO. F-14209 | TBP/LS FIRM NO. 1012306-00

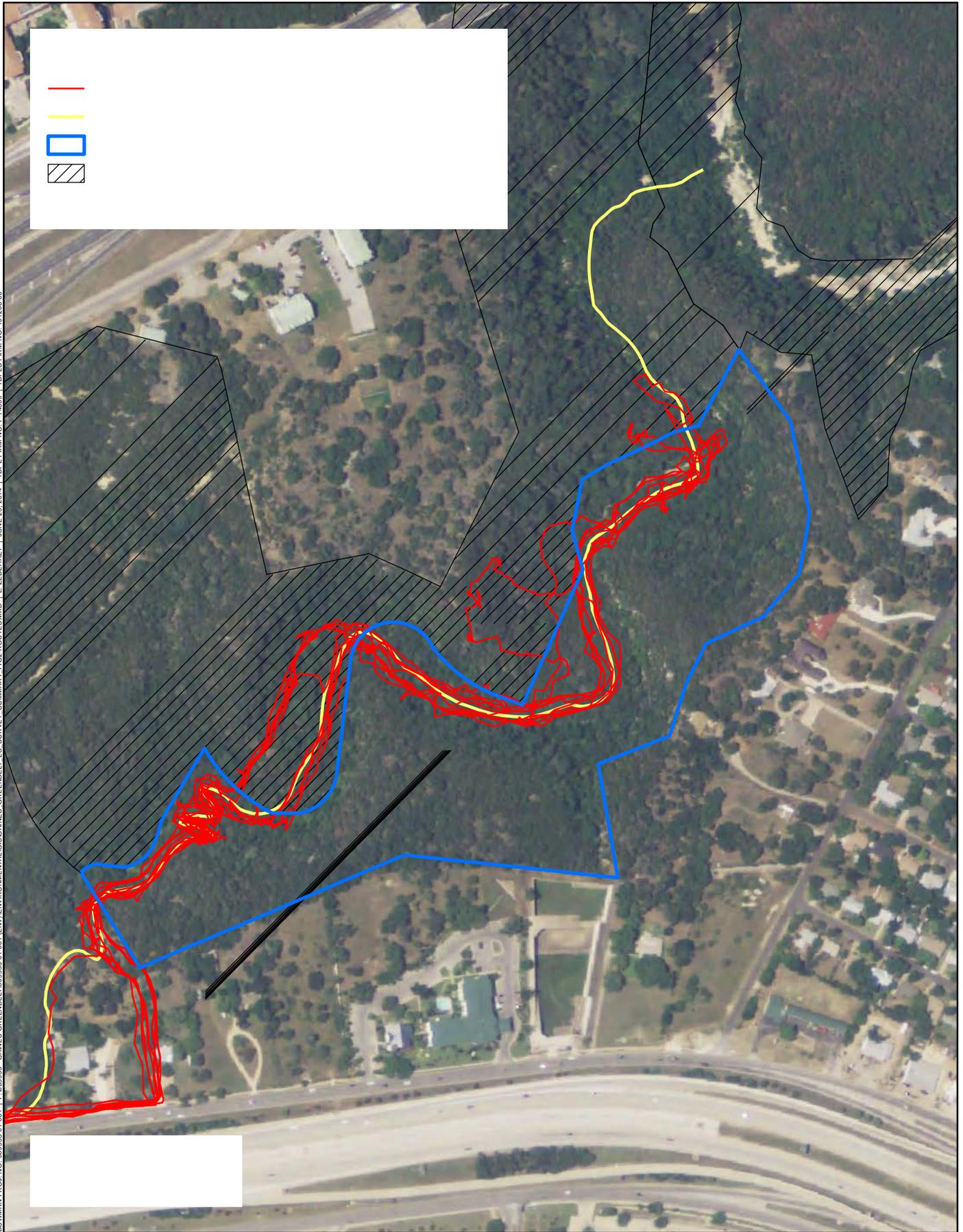


FIGURE 2
ROUTES WALKED DURING THE 2014 GCW SURVEY
CITY OF SUNSET VALLEY GAINES GREENBELT, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

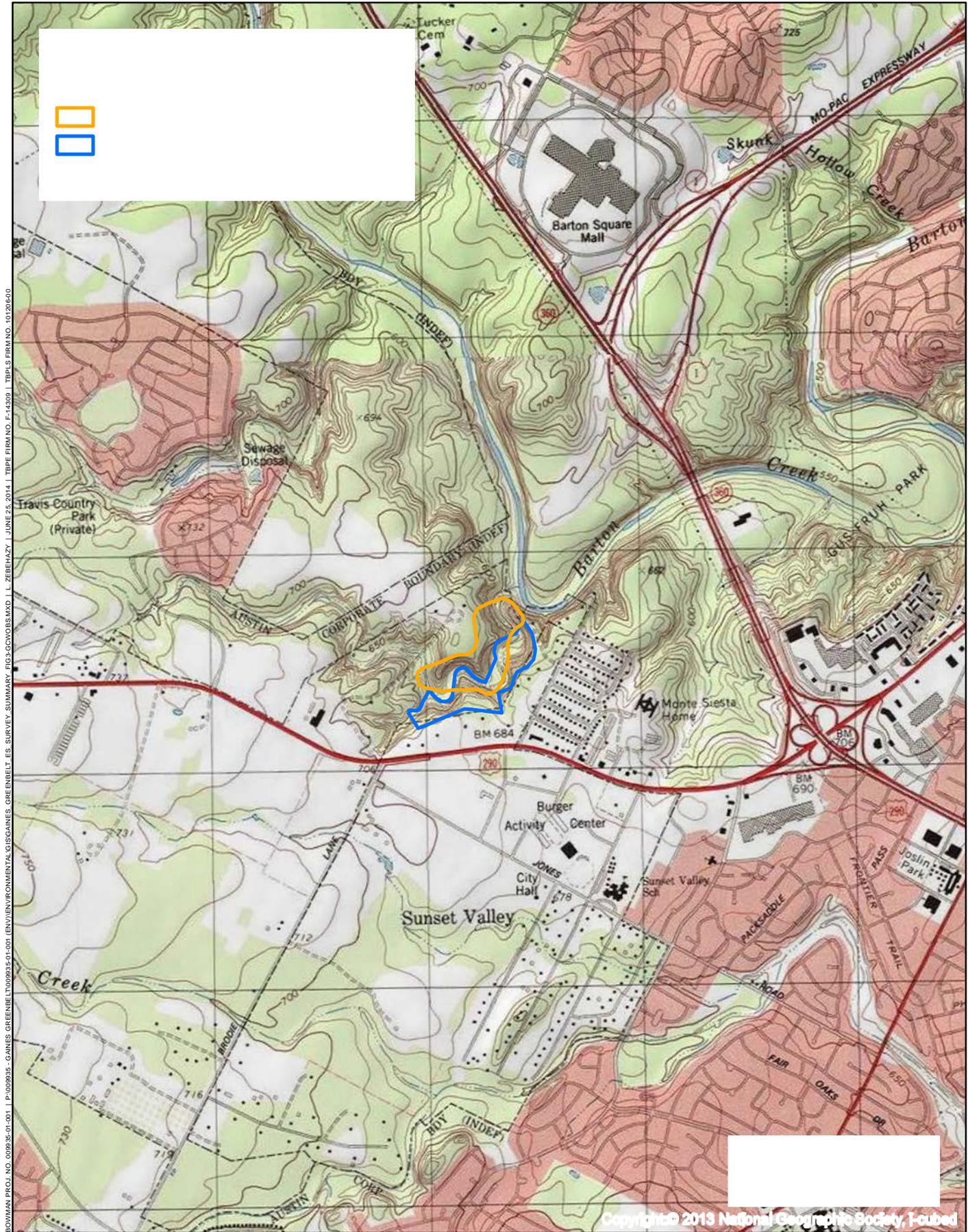


FIGURE 3
GCW OBSERVATIONS IN THE STUDY AREA
CITY OF SUNSET VALLEY GAINES GREENBELT, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

BOYMAN PROJ. NO. 002926-01-001 | P. 002926 - GAINES GREENBELT 002926-01-001 ENVIRONMENTAL GIS/CANES GREENBELT ES SURVEY SUMMARY FIG. 4 RESULTS MVD, J. L. ZEBEHAZKY | JUNE 25, 2014 | TEPF FIRM NO. F-14209 | TEPBS FIRM NO. 107206-00

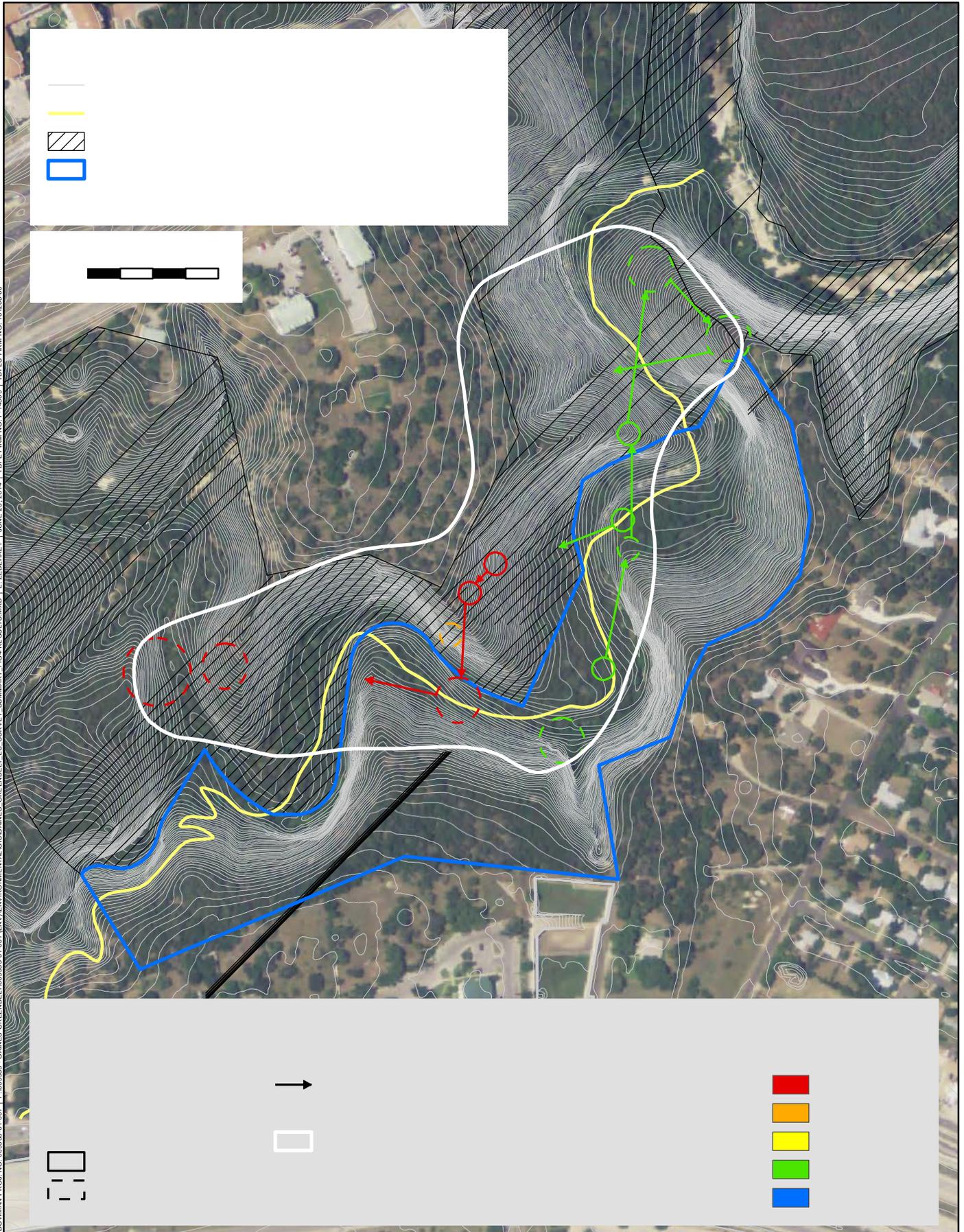


FIGURE 4
RESULTS OF THE 2014 ENDANGERED SPECIES SURVEY
CITY OF SUNSET VALLEY GAINES GREENBELT, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

TABLE 1. SURVEY DATES, DURATION, PERSONNEL, & WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR THE 2014 GAINES GREENBELT GCW P/A SURVEY.

Date	Time			Temperature (°F)		Wind Direction		Wind Speed (mph)		Cloud Cover (percent)		Personnel	Comments
	Start	End	Total Hrs	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	Start	End		
4/18/2014	7:20	8:45	1:25	61	64	NE	NW	0-5	0-5	100	100	L. Zebehazy	Mist at the start of the survey; humid
4/25/2014	7:50	9:00	1:10	61	68	E	E	0-5	0-5	0	0	L. Zebehazy	
5/2/2014	12:05	13:15	1:10	74	81	W	W	5-10	0-5	30	40	L. Zebehazy	
5/9/2014	7:15	8:35	1:20	76	77	SSW		0-5	CALM	100	50	L. Zebehazy	Humid; hazy at end of survey
5/23/2014	7:45	9:00	1:15	72	72	SE	SE	0-5	0-5	100	100	L. Zebehazy	Humid
Total Survey Time:			6:20:00										

TABLE 2. BIRDS OBSERVED ON GAINES GREENBELT (SPRING 2014).

Common Name	Scientific Name
White-winged dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>
Mourning dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
Yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>
Chimney swift	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>
Black-chinned hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>
Ladder-backed woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>
Eastern phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>
White-eyed vireo	<i>Vireo griseus</i>
Blue jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
Carolina chickadee	<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>
Black-crested titmouse	<i>Baeolophus atricristatus</i>
Canyon wren	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>
Carolina wren	<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>
Bewick's wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
Blue-gray gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>
Ruby-crowned kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
Hermit thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>
Cedar waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
Nashville warbler	<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>
Black-and-white warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>
Golden-cheeked warbler	<i>Setophaga chrysoparia</i>
Clay-colored sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>
Summer tanager	<i>Piranga rubra</i>
Northern cardinal	<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>
Rose-breasted grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>
Painted bunting	<i>Passerina ciris</i>
Great-tailed grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Brown-headed cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>
House finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
Lesser goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>