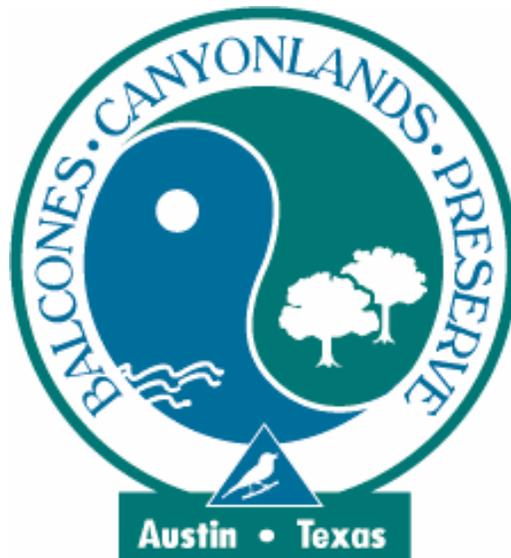


**BALCONES CANYONLANDS PRESERVE  
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**TIER II-C**

**BARTON CREEK MACROSITE**



**August 2007**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Of the 10 macrosites in the regional permit area (Figure 1), the Barton Creek macrosite is one of the seven macrosites that contain Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) land established under the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP), a regional permit issued to Travis County and the City of Austin in 1996 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 1996).

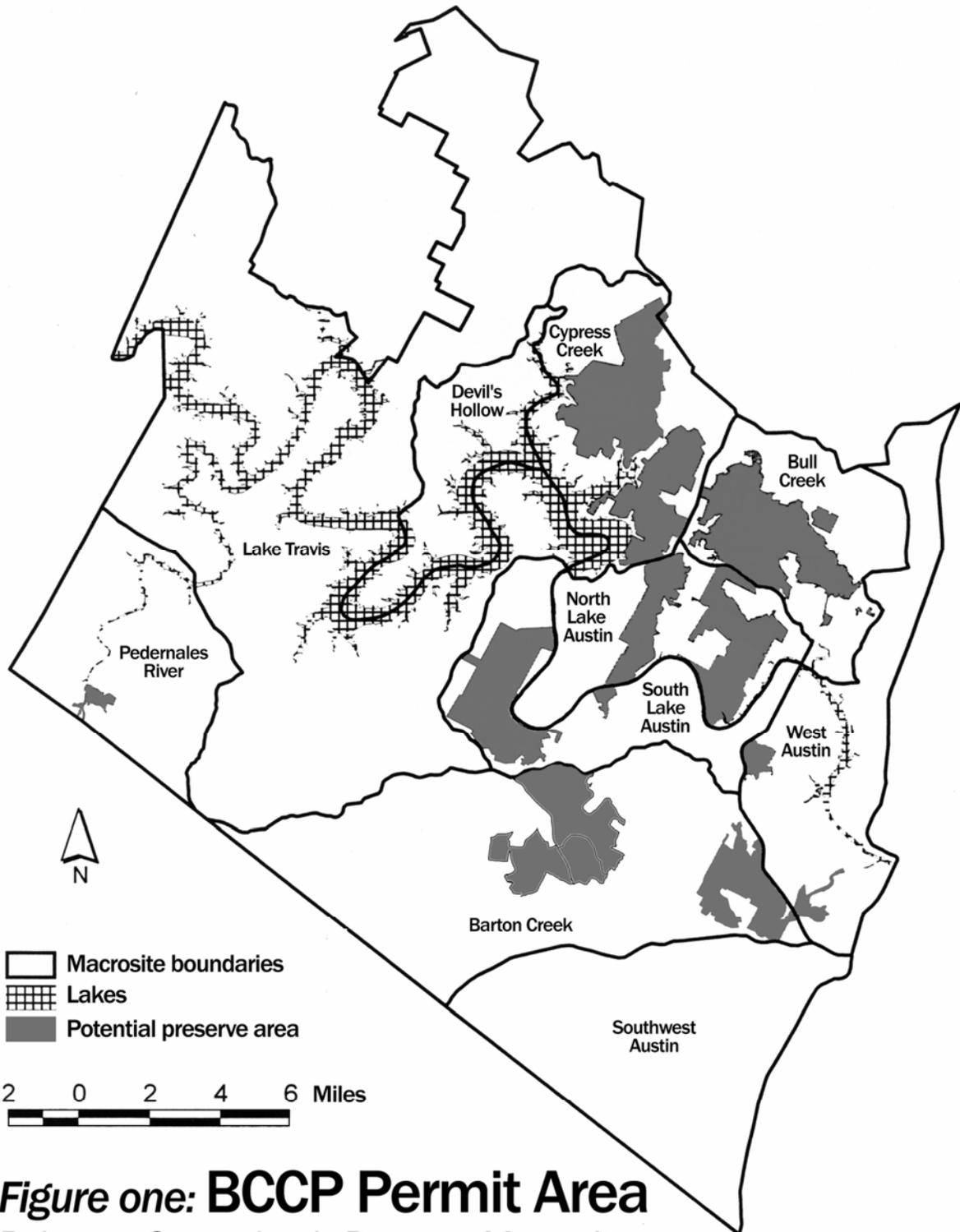
### **1.1 Macrosite Description**

The Barton Creek macrosite is the second largest macrosite within the BCCP permit area, having a total area of approximately 44,744 acres, 6,330 acres of which are proposed to be protected as part of the BCP. The macrosite encompasses the majority of the Barton Creek Watershed, between SH 71 to the east, RR 3238 to the North, and US 29 to the south. The preserve area in this macrosite includes approximately 9,631 acres; it encompasses approximately 3,682 acres of potential golden-cheeked warbler habitat, 1,775 acres of potential karst habitat that include one cave with listed species, potential management areas for the black-capped vireo and the rare plants (USFWS 1996).

### **1.2 Current Preserve Land**

The currently protected land is located in eastern and western preserve blocks and is listed in Figure 1. The eastern preserve block consists of 1,872 acres of City of Austin (COA) land in the Barton Creek Wilderness Park and Barton Creek Greenbelt preserve units. The western preserve block consists of 4,119 acres of The Nature Conservancy and City of Austin land. Though the eastern part of the Barton Creek Greenbelt is located geographically in the West Austin macrosite, because both units are administered by the City of Austin together in the Tier II reports, they will be listed in the Barton Creek macrosite report for text and shown on the Barton Creek and West Austin maps (USFWS 1996).

The eastern block protects habitat for the golden-cheeked warbler, karst species, Barton Springs salamander, and the bracted twistflower. The eastern preserve block, in the proximity of Loop 1 and the Travis Country and Lost Creek subdivisions, is impacted by intensive development pressures. This area also includes part of the Barton Creek Greenbelt.



**Figure one: BCCP Permit Area**  
Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Macrosites

The western block includes relatively large tracts of land that could be configured to minimize external impacts. Impacts from the construction and operation of State Highway 71 and Southwest Parkway affect this preserve unit; however, commercial and residential development does not occur along those roadways within the recommended preserve unit. Although much of the area within the preserve is affected by past ranching activities, a significant amount of land is present that is being managed for the vireo and warbler.

**Table 1.** BCP Land in the Barton Creek Macrosite

<b>Tract</b>	<b>Land Manager</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Barton Creek Greenbelt	COA	813
Barton Creek Habitat Preserve	Nature Conservancy of Texas	4,084
Barton Creek Ventures (Wilderness Park)	COA	44
Barton Creek Wilderness Park	COA	955
Friesenhann	COA	62
Senna Hills	COA	35
	<b>Barton Creek Macrosite total acreage</b>	<b>5,993</b>
	<i>Target preserve size</i>	6,330
	<i>Remaining acres to manage</i>	337

## **2.0 MACROSITE GOALS**

### **2.1 Minimum Specifications for Preserve Acquisition/Protection**

The recommended preserve unit in the western portion of the Barton Creek macrosite is a high priority. Excluding existing roadway intrusions, minimum preserve design standards recommended for a preserve in this area apply to a block of no less than 4,000 acres, having a minimum width of 8,000 feet or greater (Figure 1). The configuration of the minimum recommended preserve would have no more than 20 percent of the total area occurring within 330 feet of the preserve edge. Such a preserve unit should be situated no greater than 0.5 mile from the South Lake Austin preserve unit and 4.7 miles from the North Lake Austin preserves. The preserve area recommended for the eastern portion of the Barton Creek macrosite is proposed primarily to protect water quality and aquifer recharge, and no minimum preserve design specifications for warbler or vireo protection are provided (Butler/EH&A Team 1992, USFWS 1996).

### **2.2 Justification for Preserve Location**

The preserve design recommended for the Barton Creek macrosite was influenced by the extent of existing and proposed development within the area and the expense that would be involved to acquire property supporting habitat for the species of concern. The large, recommended preserve area in the western portion of this macrosite is considered important to the overall preserve system design, due to the occurrence of occupied warbler habitat and

the potential for habitat management for the warbler and black-capped vireo. Although the eastern portion of the Barton Creek macrosite is seriously impacted by existing development, the preserve area recommended for this portion of the macrosite is considered important for the protection of existing golden-cheeked warbler populations, populations of bracted twistflower, Barton Creek salamander habitat, and water quality associated with these habitats. Notwithstanding the water quality benefits of protecting the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone of Barton Creek, the preserve area recommended in the eastern portion is not considered as important to the overall preserve system as the area in the western portion of the macrosite, due to its proximity to existing development and distance from other preserve areas (Butler/EH&A Team 1992, USFWS 1996).

**2.3 Acquisition/Protection Goals**

Acres currently protected	5,993
Remaining acres to be protected	<u>337</u>
Total needed in this macrosite	6,330

The 337 acres remaining to be protected will be protected through purchase, conservation easements, mitigation agreements, land swaps or other protection measures. Potential preserve land will be protected/purchased, based on highest biological significance and availability, and will be protected/purchased as soon as possible. Money to purchase this land will come from the sale of BCCP Participation Certificates, mitigation fees paid through USFWS to the BCCP, grants and/or other funding sources.

### **3.0 LITERATURE CITED**

Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan Annual Report 2003

Butler/EH&A Team. 1992. Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan, Final Draft EH&A Doc. No. 920043. Prepared for the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan Executive Committee.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1996. Final Environmental Impact Statement/Habitat Conservation Plan for Proposed Issuance of a Permit to Allow Incidental Take of the Golden-cheeked Warbler, Black-capped Vireo, and Six Karst Invertebrates in Travis County, Texas. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, N. M.

Travis County Natural Resource Program, Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan: GIS permit area and habitat map, 1996.