

**BALCONES CANYONLANDS PRESERVE
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

TIER III

**CITY OF AUSTIN
CORTAÑA TRACT
NORTH LAKE AUSTIN MACROSITE**



Prepared by Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Staff

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1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

All previous background information for the Cortaña tract can be found in the first five-year set of three volumes entitled Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) Land Management Plans (August 5, 1999). Any new information secured since this publication date will be included below.

2.0 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

2.1 Plan Administration

See Tier II-B Plan Administration for the description of City of Austin (COA) Water Utility, Wildland Conservation Division as a managing entity, staffing levels, equipment inventory, budget and annual reports as they pertain to the COA's management of the BCP.

2.2 Management Goal (1,752 ACRES)

2.2.1 Primary Management Goals

- Protect, maintain and improve 1,552 acres of habitat for golden-cheeked warblers (GCWA).
- Create and maintain 100 additional acres of habitat for Black-capped Vireos (BCVI).
- Protect and improve the watershed's water quality and quantity characteristics.
- Limit access to the preserve unit.
- Control white-tailed deer population with culling program.
- Work with adjacent property owners.
- Education outreach and volunteer programs.
- Control problems such as wildfire, oak wilt, brown-headed cowbirds (BHCO), feral hogs and other feral animals, and non-native species, including red imported fire ants.

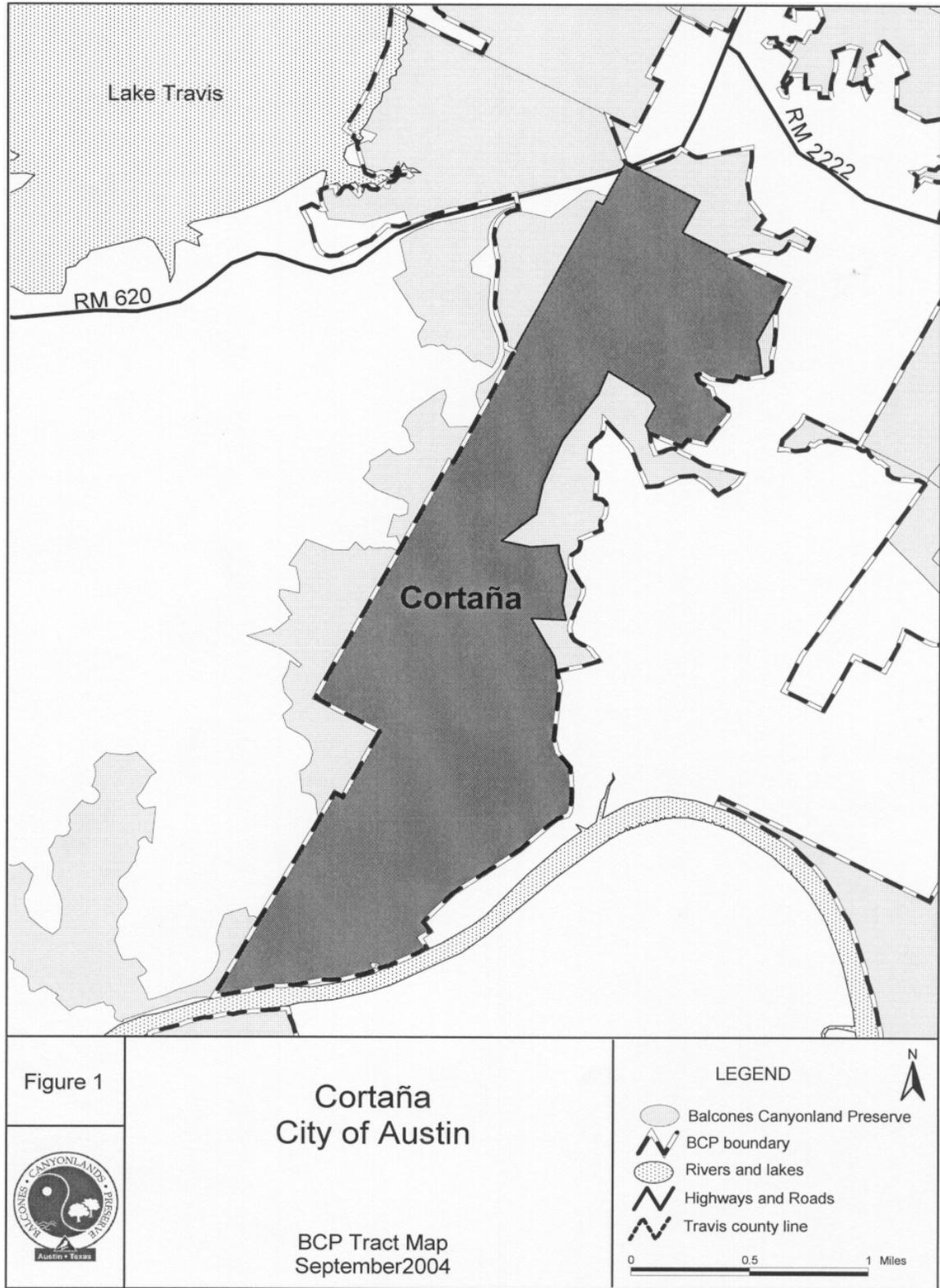
2.2.1.1 GCWA

- Monitor GCWA populations.
- Manage 1,52 acres of habitat for the GCWA per BCP protocols.

2.2.1.2 BCVI

- Burn, hydro-ax, or hand-cut 100 acres.
- Work with adjacent BCP managers to encourage management of additional acres for BCVI.
- Monitor BCVI populations which are using this newly created habitat.

Figure 1. Location Map



2.2.1.3 Federally Listed Karst Species

Not applicable

2.2.2 Secondary Management Goals

Cooperate with other entities and individuals managing acreage nearby by participating in agreements and memoranda of understanding, sharing pertinent information and cooperating in accomplishing management plan objectives.

2.3 Issues

The areas to be managed for BCVI habitat will require shearing, hydro-axing, or prescription burning. Burns will require additional planning and land preparation in order to gain a high degree of confidence in the safety of such projects.

Unauthorized activities have escalated on Cortaña with the continued build-out of developments on Steiner Ranch (to the west) and Cortaña Shores Development (to the southeast).

2.4 Management Objectives

Tier II objectives for the North Lake Austin Macrosite include protection of endangered species, and species of concern and their habitats. This will be accomplished by: (1) enforcing regulations and securing boundaries; (2) management of habitat by managing public access and vegetation and through water quality protection; (3) monitoring; (4) enhancement of habitat; and (5) public education and outreach. The goals and objectives of the Macrosite and this tract will be implemented through the objectives and activities listed below.

- Protect resources from direct human impacts.
 - Restrict public access to staff-guided educational and service activities.
 - Secure the boundaries as needed with game fencing and signs.
 - Patrol the perimeter and interior of the unit routinely.
 - Provide educational programs and materials to preserve neighbors with information on how to reduce impacts on the preserve.
- Monitor endangered species and species of concern per established protocols.
- Obtain baseline vegetation data and monitor vegetation changes.
 - Map plant communities and monitor changes.
 - Conduct “before and after” baseline vegetation monitoring per BCP protocols in areas designated for BCVI habitat creation/management.

- Establish baseline vegetation monitoring using modified Land Condition Trend Analysis methodology.
- Annually monitor populations of wildlife and plant species of concern to measure responses to land management techniques per BCP protocols.
- Map springs and major seeps each year and monitor per established BCP protocols.
- Control problematic conditions
 - Annually survey for oak wilt and remove or otherwise contain diseased trees.
 - Control BHCO, feral hogs, and other nuisance animals as needed.
 - Survey annually for aggressive non-native plant species and remove as needed.
 - At least once every autumn, survey for imported red fire ants and control them as needed, following BCP protocols.
- Manage various plant/wildlife communities appropriately.
 - Determine priority areas for GCWA habitat increase and improvement and select 100 acres for BCVI habitat creation/ management.
 - Using the most humane and cost-effective means available, limit numbers of white-tailed deer in order to control over-browse of vegetation, so that recruitment of *Quercus buckleyi* increases significantly.
 - Create and manage at least 100 acres of potential BCVI habitat, using, fire, hydro-axing, or hand-cutting, and maintain as needed.
 - Increase and improve GCWA habitat per BCP protocols.

These objectives and activities are summarized in the following five-year timeline, and grouped into four categories (vegetation, animal, physical and visitor-related) with assigned action dates:

Table 1. Objectives

Activities	04	05	06	07	08
<i>Vegetation Management</i>					
Improve/increase GCWA and BCVI habitat	X	X	X	X	X
Control non-native plant species	X	X	X	X	X
Survey for and suppress oak wilt	X	X	X	X	X
Monitor vegetation	X	X	X	X	X
Increase <i>Q. buckleyi</i> recruitment	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement hydro-axing, hand-cutting, or	X	X	X	X	X

Activities	04	05	06	07	08
prescription burning for BCVI habitat					
<i>Animal Management</i>					
Control red imported fire ants	X	X	X	X	X
Monitor GCWA, BCVI, and other species of concern	X	X	X	X	X
Control BCHO and feral animals	X	X	X	X	X
Control white-tailed deer populations	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Physical and Cultural Management Procedures</i>					
Monitor springs	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement wildfire control plan	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Visitor Management/Education</i>					
Secure/maintain boundaries with fences, signs and patrols	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement educational, research and service activities	X	X	X	X	X

2.5 Implementation Strategies

All implementation will follow BCP guidelines and other accepted procedures in use by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Structural Pest Control Board of Texas, and the COA's AWU. All pesticide applications are performed under the direction of a licensed noncommercial pesticide applicator.

Authorized staff may enter the preserve by the most appropriate method, including on foot, motorized vehicle, or bicycle. Non-emergency vehicles are restricted to existing roads unless specifically authorized by the land manager. Springs and spring runs are restricted to foot access only.

3.0 MONITORING

The COA will monitor and evaluate habitat management in accordance with procedures as defined in Tier II-A Management Handbook. Evaluation and reporting procedures will comply with applicable portions of the Tier II-B Plan Administration.