

**Tier III Land Management Plan  
BALCONES CANYONLANDS PRESERVE  
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**TIER III**

**CITY OF AUSTIN  
SOUTH LAKE AUSTIN TRACTS  
(REICHER RANCH, DOUBLE J&T, BOHLS)  
SOUTH LAKE AUSTIN MACROSITE**



**August 2007**

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

All previous background information for the South Lake Austin Tracts can be found in the first five-year set of three volumes entitled *Balcones Canyonlands Preserve 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 Water Utility as a managing entity, staffing levels, equipment inventory, budget and annual reports as they pertain to the City of Austin's management of the BCP.

### 2.2 Management Goal (3,011 acres)

#### 2.2.1 Primary Management Goals

- Protect, maintain and improve 2,436 acres of habitat for GCWA.
- Create and maintain 100 additional acres of habitat for BCVI
- Protect and improve the watershed's water quality and quantity characteristics.
- Control white-tailed deer population. Work with adjacent property owners. Control problems such as wildfire, oak wilt, brown-headed cowbirds, feral hogs and other feral animals, and non-native species, including red imported fire ants. Education outreach and volunteer programs
- Limit access to the preserve tracts.

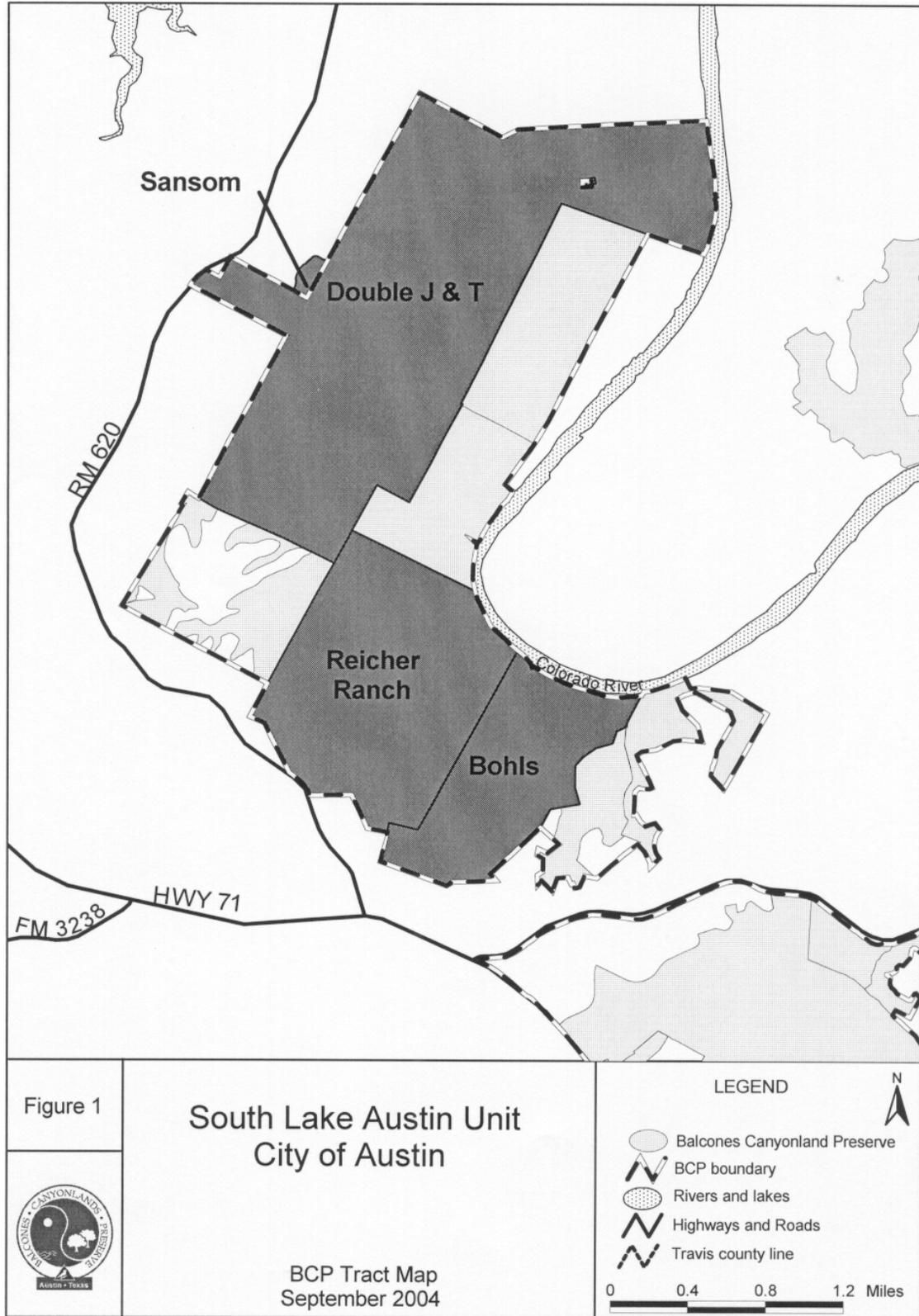
##### 2.2.1.1 Golden-cheeked Warbler

- Monitor GCWA populations
- Manage 2,436 acres of habitat for the GCWA per BCP protocols

##### 2.2.1.2 Black-capped Vireo

- Control white-tailed deer population.
- Burn, hydro-ax, or hand-cut 100 acres.
- Work with adjacent BCP managers to encourage management of additional acres for BCVI.

Figure 1: Location Map



- Monitor BCVI populations which may ultimately use this newly created habitat.
- Control problems such as wildfire, oak wilt, brown-headed cowbirds, feral hogs and other feral animals, and non-native species, including red imported fire ants.

### 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 mechanical manipulation of vegetation 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.

As the adjacent properties continue to urbanize, especially to the west of Double J&T, an increase in non-authorized activities and in numbers of predators is anticipated.

## 2.4 Management Objectives

Tier II objectives for the South 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 through managing public access and vegetation and through water quality protection; (3) monitoring; (4) habitat enhancement; and (5) public education and outreach. The goals and objectives of the Macrosite and these tracts will be implemented through the objectives and activities listed.

1. Protect resources from direct human impacts.
  - a. Outside of the Reicher Ranch structures and immediate areas, restrict public access to staff-guided educational and service activities compatible with the goals of this plan.
  - b. Secure the boundaries as needed with game fencing and signs as funds are available.
  - c. Patrol the perimeter and interior of the unit routinely.
  - d. Provide educational programs and materials to preserve neighbors with information on how to reduce impacts on the preserve.

- e. During the nesting season require reservation use only of the Reicher buildings by those who have rented the facilities. The existing hiking trails shall be accessible only during the non-breeding and nesting season.
2. Monitor endangered species and species of concern per established protocols.
3. Obtain baseline vegetation data and monitor vegetation changes.
  - a. Conduct “before and after” baseline vegetation monitoring per BCP protocols in areas designated for BCVI habitat creation/management.
  - b. Establish baseline vegetation monitoring using modified Land Condition Trend Analysis methodology.
  - c. Annually monitor populations of wildlife and plant species of concern to measure responses to land management techniques per BCP protocols.
  - d. Map springs and major seeps each year and monitor per established protocols.
4. Control problematic conditions.
  - a. Annually survey for and suppress oak wilt.
  - b. Control brown-headed cowbirds, feral hogs, and other nuisance animals as needed.
  - c. Survey annually for aggressive non-native plant species and remove as needed.
  - d. At least once every autumn survey for imported fire ants and control them as needed, per BCP protocols.
5. Manage various plant/wildlife communities appropriately.
  - a. Determine priority areas for GCWA habitat increase and improvement and select 100 acres for BCVI habitat creation/ management
  - b. Using the most humane and cost-effective means available, limit numbers of white-tailed deer in order to control over-browse of vegetation, such that recruitment of *Quercus buckleyi* increases significantly.
  - c. Create and manage at least 100 acres of potential BCVI habitat, using fire, hydro-axing, or hand-cutting, and maintain as needed.
  - d. 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**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Vegetation Management</b>					
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 Q. buckleyi recruitment	X	X	X	X	X
Develop & implement hydro-axing, hand-cutting, or prescription burning for BCVI habitat	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Animal Management</b>					
Control white-tailed deer populations	X	X	X	X	X
Control red imported fire ants	X	X	X	X	X
Monitor GCWA, karst species, any BCVI and other species of concern	X	X	X	X	X
Control brown-headed cowbirds and feral animals	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Physical and Cultural Management Procedures</b>					
Develop contact list of adjacent residents	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement a fire control plan	X	X	X	X	X
Remove trash	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Visitor Management/Education</b>					
Secure boundaries with fences, signs and patrols	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement educational, research and service activities for adjacent neighbors and nearby schools	X	X	X	X	X

## 2.5 Implementation Strategies

All implementation will follow applicable BCP guidelines and other accepted procedures in use by USFWS, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Structural Pest Control Board of Texas, and the City of Austin's Austin Water Utility. All pesticide applications are performed under the direction of a licensed non-commercial pesticide applicator.

Authorized staff may enter the preserve by the most appropriate method, including on foot, motorized vehicle, horseback 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 City of Austin will monitor and evaluate habitat management in accordance with applicable biological monitoring 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.