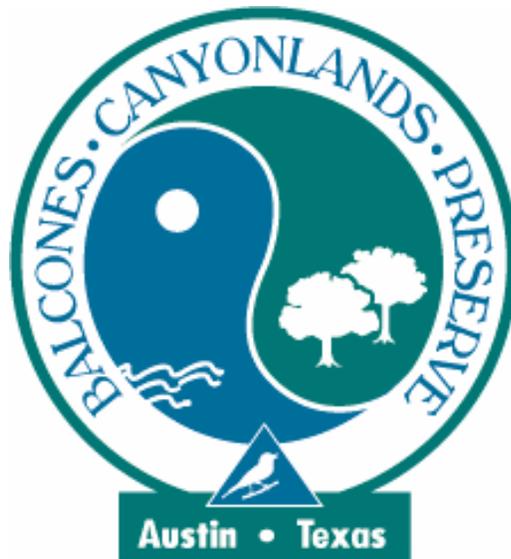


**BALCONES CANYONLANDS PRESERVE
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

TIER III

**TRAVIS COUNTY
ROMBERG PRESERVE
CYPRESS CREEK MACROSITE**



August 2007

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1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Description of Tract

1.1.1 Location of Tract

The Romberg Tract is approximately 40 acres of Bob Wentz Park, which is located near the north shore of Lake Travis, adjacent to Windy Point (see Figure 1). It is in the point of land south of the Cypress Creek Arm and north of Mansfield Dam. The Romberg Tract, as referred to in this land management plan, constitutes the entire portion of Bob Wentz Park uphill from Comanche Trail.

1.1.2 Tract Features

Human-made features include a boundary fence (barb wire in various states of repair, and chain link) and a septic system drain field in the southeast corner of the property. The drain field serves the facilities in the developed portion of Bob Wentz Park across Comanche Trail from the preserve. At this time, no other human-made features are known to occur on this tract.

1.1.3 Land Status

1.1.3.1 Rights-of-Way and Easements

Travis County maintains a complete list of rights-of-way and easements on Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) preserve property and established a file entitled Romberg Tract Deed Records, maintained by the Transportation and Natural Resources Department. The only easement known to exist at this time is the County road easement for Comanche Trail.

1.1.3.2 In-Holdings

There are no in-holdings within the preserve.

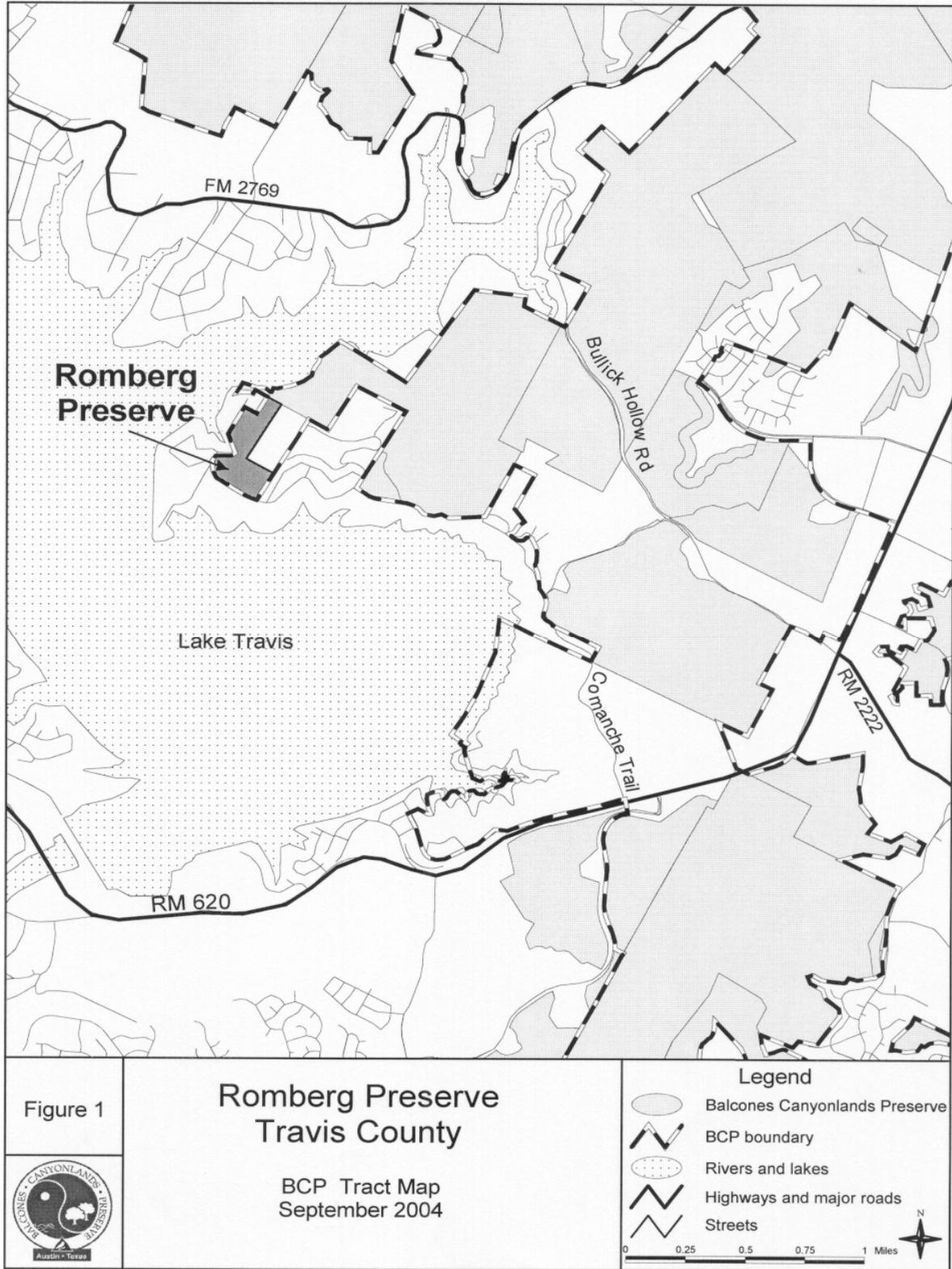
1.1.3.3 Boundary Disputes

There are no known boundary disputes.

1.1.3.4 Regulatory Requirements

Travis County Parks and Preserves rules and regulations apply. Regulatory requirements of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) are covered in Tier II-B.

Figure 1. Travis County's Romberg Tract Location Map.



1.1.3.5 Deed Restrictions

There are no known deed restrictions that directly affect this tract.

1.1.3.6 Special Agreements

There are no known special agreements that directly affect this preserve.

1.1.3.7 Mineral Rights

There are no known mineral rights that directly affect this tract.

1.1.3.8 Legal Issues

Other than those issues associated with participation in the BCCP, no tract-specific legal issues remain. BCCP requirements are treated elsewhere in this document; see Regulatory Requirements section, above.

1.1.3.9 Financial Issues

There are no debts or other outstanding financial obligations associated with this property.

1.2 Physical Characteristics

Elevation ranges from about 725 feet where Comanche Trail skirts a cove on the west side of the tract, to 960 feet, around a point where the Glen Rose and Walnut formations meet. The land is relatively flat in the southern portion, with steep north-, west-, and south-facing slopes in the northern section of the property. Two small canyons form intermittent creek beds, which join about halfway down the west-facing slope; this creek bed then continues to the lake. Another small canyon lies near the eastern boundary of the tract (Carr 1996). The Romberg Tract is covered by the Mansfield Dam quadrangle map (U.S. Geological Survey 7.5 minute topographic map).

1.2.1 Geology

The tract is underlain by Glen Rose limestone, with outcrops of the Walnut formation in the higher elevations. The alternating layers of harder limestone and softer marl in the Glen Rose Formation erode to the “stair step topography” of the southeastern area of the preserve (Carr 1996).

1.2.2 Hydrology

1.2.2.1 Surface water

There is no permanent surface water on this preserve. Two small, intermittent streams flow west and south to Lake Travis following rainfall (Carr 1996).

1.2.2.2 Water quality

Because the land throughout most of the preserve has only a thin cover of vegetation, overland run-off can easily carry sediments and pollutants toward Lake Travis.

1.2.2.3 Sub-surface water

A well drilled just west of the Bob Wentz Park entrance gate, across Comanche Trail from the preserve, yielded static water at 80 feet.

1.2.3 Soils

Soils of the preserve are mapped on sheet 22 of the Travis County Soil Survey (Soil Conservation Service 1974). Most of the area is covered in steep Brackett soils and rock outcrop, with some rolling Tarrant soils in the lower elevations. Brackett soils are typical of limestone uplands: shallow, well-drained, calcareous, and moderately alkaline Typic Ustochrepts, assigned to the Step Adobe range site. The surface layer is light brownish-gray gravelly clay loam or gravelly loam, and is generally about 4 inches deep. The next layer is pale-brown clay loam, and is about 10 inches deep. Tarrant soils are also typical of limestone uplands: they are shallow to very shallow stony clays, well drained, calcareous, and moderately alkaline Lithic Haplustolls, assigned to the Rocky Upland range site. The surface layer is dark grayish-brown stony clay, and is about 8 inches deep; it is underlain by limestone (Soil Conservation Service 1974).

1.2.4 Caves and subsurface features

No caves or subsurface features are known to occur on this tract. The lower elevations, including most of the preserve, do not contain endangered cave species (Zone 4, as defined by Veni 1991). The higher elevations of the preserve are areas that probably do not contain endangered cave species (Zone 3), with possibly a very small area having a high probability of suitable habitat for endangered cave species or other endemic invertebrate cave fauna (Zone 2) at the tract boundaries (Veni 1991).

1.3 Biological characteristics

1.3.1 *Vegetation currently on tract*

The evergreen woodland which covers most of the tract is dominated by Ashe juniper. Along with the juniper, plateau live oak occurs in the lower elevations, and Texas oak in the ravines and on north-facing slopes. There are also a few cedar elm and hackberry. In these moister areas there are also a number of species of shrubs, ferns, and sages. In the drier, rockier areas grassy openings occur between clumps of juniper. These areas are dominated by seep muhly, tall grama, and little bluestem (Carr 1996).

1.3.2 *Animal species currently on tract*

During censuses for golden-cheeked warblers (GCWA) (*Dendroica chrysoparia*), birds common to the area were sighted, including: red-tailed hawk, turkey vulture, Inca dove, mourning dove, chimney swift, purple martin, cliff swallow, barn swallow, northern mockingbird, scrub jay, ash-throated flycatcher, blue-gray gnatcatcher, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, Bewick's wren, canyon wren, white-eyed vireo, northern cardinal, yellow-rumped warbler, yellow-billed cuckoo, painted bunting, Rufus-crowned sparrow, common grackle, great-tailed grackle, common raven, and house finch.

Mammals seen on the tract include: white-tailed deer, raccoon, opossum, grey fox, and rock squirrel.

No other species lists have been compiled. In general, the fauna is probably typical of dry hills of the eastern edge of the Edwards Plateau.

1.3.3 *Endangered species and species of concern*

1.3.3.1 *Golden-cheeked Warbler*

This tract has a small area (approximately 2.5 acres) of GCWA habitat, which is contiguous with habitat on the adjacent private property to the east. This and other areas on Romberg Tract are used for foraging, and included a portion of a GCWA territory with the remainder on adjacent land. It is hoped that the tract's vegetation will grow into habitat suitable for GCWA.

1.3.3.2 *Black-capped Vireo*

No black-capped vireos are known to occur on this tract and no suitable habitat is known to occur.

1.3.3.3 Karst species

No karst species covered under the regional permit (BCCP) are known to occur on this tract.

1.3.3.4 Plant species

Texas amorphia (*Amorpha roemerana*) occur mostly along the drainage on the western side of the property (Carr 1996) and Heller's marbleseed (*Onosmodium helleri*) occur in several locations. None of the plant species under the permit are known to occur on this tract.

1.3.3.5 Other species of concern

None are known to occur on this tract.

1.4 Land Uses

1.4.1 Pre-historic

No evidence of pre-historic land use has been found on the preserve. Further research and/or archeological studies of the area may reveal indications of pre-historic land use.

Travis County is committed to conserving archeological sites within the preserve. Should the necessity arise for land management activities potentially harmful to cultural resources, Travis County will make every effort to locate and avoid destruction of any such resources and will consult with the Texas Historical Commission.

1.4.2 Historic

None known, but the history of the area and the open, rocky slopes found on the preserve both indicate that it was probably cleared and used for grazing at some time in the past.

1.4.3 Current

1.4.3.1 On-site land use

Currently the Romberg Tract is not open for public access, however, other portions of Bob Wentz Park (downhill from Comanche Trail) are developed for public recreational use. Some of the facilities within the developed park are supported by the septic field that is located on this tract. Park staff periodically monitors the septic field and conduct security patrols as needed.

1.4.3.2 Adjacent land use

As per the Travis Central Appraisal District (TCAD) map #01-5947 and #01-6048, the tract boundaries abut the following properties:

- (a) To the north are the LCRA's McGregor Tract, and a residence. A short distance beyond the LCRA land is the Cypress Creek arm of Lake Travis.
- (b) To the east is the remaining Romberg family tract as well as residential lots.
- (c) To the south is Comanche Trail. South of Comanche Trail is the rest of Bob Wentz Park along Lake Travis.
- (d) To the west is Comanche Trail ending in a cul-de-sac. On the other side of Comanche Trail are residential lots.

2.0 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

2.1 Plan Administration

See Tier II-B for the description of Travis County as a managing entity, County staffing levels, equipment inventory, budget and annual reports as they pertain to the County's management of BCP lands.

2.2 Management Goals

2.2.1 Primary Management Goals

Maintain or improve vegetation quality and coverage to provide habitat area for the GCWA. Participate in the development and implementation of the BCP long-term biological monitoring program in conjunction with other preserves within the macrosite and with other BCP agencies. Manage the preserve in accordance with applicable BCP Land Management Plan sections, including the Tier II-A Management Handbook.

2.2.1.1 Golden-cheeked Warbler

Management for GCWA will include limiting human disturbance of potential habitat areas and maintaining or improving existing habitat. The preserve will be surveyed for GCWA to measure the success of management activities.

2.2.1.2 Black-capped Vireo

None are known to occur on this tract and no habitat creation is planned.

2.2.1.3 Federally listed karst species

No habitat is known to occur on the tract.

2.2.1.4 *Species of concern*

None are known to occur on this tract. The preserve will continue to be monitored for possible occurrence in the future.

2.2.2 *Secondary Management Goals*

Secondary management goals include habitat restoration, erosion controls where needed, and control of invasive species.

2.4 **Management Objectives**

The main objectives for this macrosite (Cypress Creek Macrosite) are, in the order of priority:

1. Protection of endangered species and species of concern, the land and water;
2. Management of endangered species and species of concern and their habitats;
3. Enhancement of the habitats for endangered species and species of concern;
4. Monitoring of the habitats for endangered species and species of concern; and
5. Public education and outreach about endangered species and species of concern and their habitats.

The macrosite land management plan provides more detail as to how activities are grouped under the above priority objectives. Management activities on this tract will include:

Vegetation Management:

- a) Monitor oaks for oak wilt and regeneration to assess action needed.
- b) Maintain and enhance GCWA habitat to the extent possible.
- c) Monitor encroachment of invasive and/or non-native species throughout the preserve and control as needed.
- d) Continue inventorying plants in the preserve.
- e) Map vegetation zones and significant occurrences.
- f) Monitor changes in vegetation over time to the extent possible.

Animal Management:

- a) Continue to monitor GCWA habitat use within the preserve.
- b) Monitor other species' impacts on GCWA to assess action needed.
- c) Inventory animals in the preserve to the extent possible.

Physical and Cultural Management:

- a) Monitor erosion and sedimentation sources and stabilize/restore as needed.
- b) Conduct archeological assessments as needed.

Visitor Management and Education:

- a) Monitor the boundary at least quarterly for signs of fence damage or trespass, and take appropriate action.
- b) Develop access plan that defines all types of access. Modify plan as needed.
- c) Monitor trespass impacts to the preserve.
- d) Increase public awareness of BCP and endangered species protection through use of brochures, kiosk displays and signs at Bob Wentz and Hippie Hollow Parks.
- e) Advertise events regularly with other BCP managers to increase public awareness of BCP and inform of BCP access opportunities.
- f) Join with macrosite BCP neighbor (the Lower Colorado River Authority) to conduct joint tours, workshops, etc. when possible.

2.5 Specific Implementation Strategies

2.5.1 *Vegetation management procedures*

2.5.1.1 *Control methods*

Invasive and non-native vegetation will normally be controlled with hand tools, digging, or, in rare cases, occasional herbicide applications. Other methods such as mowing, prescribed fire and drill seeding may be incorporated to boost native species' competitive edge against non-native and/or invasive species.

2.5.1.2 *Oak wilt*

The County will continue to monitor the preserve's oaks and take appropriate action should oak wilt be discovered.

2.5.1.3 *Prescribed fire and wildfires*

Prescribed fire has not been used on the Romberg Tract and there are no such plans at this time. To reduce the chances of uncontrolled fire in the Comanche Trail area, Bob Wentz Park visitors are only permitted to have cooking fires on Windy Point and only in elevated grills.

2.5.1.4 Restoration and protection efforts

Areas within the preserve found to have erosion problems will be stabilized, revegetated and/or restored to the extent possible.

2.5.1.5 Protection efforts for species of concern

No species of concern are known to occur on the preserve.

2.5.2 Animal Management Procedures

2.5.2.1 Golden-cheeked Warbler

Bird surveys for GCWA will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines provided in Tier IIA Chapter 7. Mixed hardwood juniper forests will be managed to maintain/enhance closed-canopy woodland.

2.5.2.2 Animal control methods

(a) Browsing animals

Deer populations and regeneration of woody species will be monitored. Management of deer populations will be implemented in accordance with Tier II-A Chapter 10 and with Travis County's "Wildlife and Vegetation Management Guidelines" as approved by Commissioners Court on 17 December 2002.

(b) Feral animals

Presence of feral animals will be monitored and feral animals will be removed from the preserve whenever possible and in accordance with Travis County's "Wildlife and Vegetation Management Guidelines" as approved by Commissioners Court on 17 December 2002. See Tier II-A Chapter 10 for information concerning management of feral animals.

(c) Predation and parasitism

The Brown-headed cowbird population will be monitored and any GCWA feeding cowbirds will be noted. Cowbird trapping will be conducted when necessary. Red imported fire ants will be monitored and controlled with approved methods. Tier II-A Chapter 10 provides guidance concerning management of predaceous and parasitic organisms.

2.5.3 Physical and Cultural Management Procedures

2.5.3.1 Hydrology and water quality

Contamination of water both via run-off and via groundwater sources will be minimized to the greatest extent possible through cooperative efforts with neighboring landowners.

2.5.3.2 Soils

Areas of soil loss will be stabilized/restored to the extent possible.

2.5.3.3 Cultural resource protection

Cultural resources will be protected through careful management and any new project planning and monitoring. The Texas Historical Commission will be consulted prior to taking any action which might impact archeological or historical resources.

2.5.4 Visitor Management Procedures

2.5.4.1 Access Control

The public is neither accommodated nor encouraged to access the Romberg Tract. The only access allowed is for staff to conduct research, maintenance, and enforcement as needed.

2.5.4.2 Individual or independent group use

(a) Non-commercial use

There is no non-commercial use anticipated.

(b) Commercial use

There is no commercial use anticipated.

3.0 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM MONITORING

The County 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.

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