



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Homegrown Success: Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan Turns 15

May 2011 marks the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan (BCCP) by the City of Austin, Travis County and other BCCP partners. It is the first regional multispecies, federally protected habitat conservation plan of its kind in the nation.

A formal ceremony and open house to celebrate the signing of the BCCP will take place May 13 from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. at City of Austin's Reicher Ranch located at 3621 RR620. The event is open to the public and will feature distinguished speakers Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell and Travis County Commissioner Karen Huber, guided hikes through golden-cheeked warbler habitat and refreshments.

"Austin has many success stories, but none are as majestic as Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. It is a shining example of what can be achieved when people work together in the spirit of cooperation," said Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell.

The BCCP is a regional partnership between the City of Austin, Travis County, the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Nature Conservancy, Travis Audubon Society, St. Edwards University, and several private landowners.

Travis County Commissioner Karen Huber said, "I am proud of the joint effort of this past 15 years between Travis County, the City of Austin, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This partnership has delivered notable benefits to our taxpayers and our community, and I look forward to the continued efforts for the future. The BCCP is an excellent example of how multi-jurisdictions can work together effectively."

The signing of the federal permit in 1996 allowed for local management of the mitigation process, and in exchange, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service required that 30,428 acres of habitat be set aside and managed as the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP). The preserve contains a cross section of flora and fauna along the Balcones Escarpment of the Edward's Plateau that protects eight

federally listed endangered species, including the golden-cheeked warbler and the black capped vireo as well as 27 species of concern throughout seven watersheds in western Travis County. The BCP provides important air quality, water quality and open space benefits to communities of Central Texas.

The plan and the preserve it created is a homegrown success story of partnership and compromise. Just 15 years after its signing the City of Austin and Travis County have acquired approximately 96 percent of the acres required for the benefit the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo. Additionally, 45 of the 62 karst features listed in the preserve have some form of protection.

Additional details are available at:

<http://austinwater.org/wildland/15thanniversarycelebration.htm>

