

WILDFIRE MITIGATION ON AUSTIN PARKLAND

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austintexas.gov/LMP

Austintexas.gov/parkRXfire



BACKGROUND

DEGRADED LANDS

Most parkland natural areas have not been managed for ecosystem health and are degraded. As a result, they are threatened by heat, drought, disease, and wildfire and present safety risks to both park users and neighbors.

2019 WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS AUDIT

Found that PARD does not have the capacity to manage parkland natural areas and address wildfire risk.

AUSTIN PARKS LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

PARD developed a land management plan to guide the restoration of natural areas to improve climate resilience and reduce wildfire risk.

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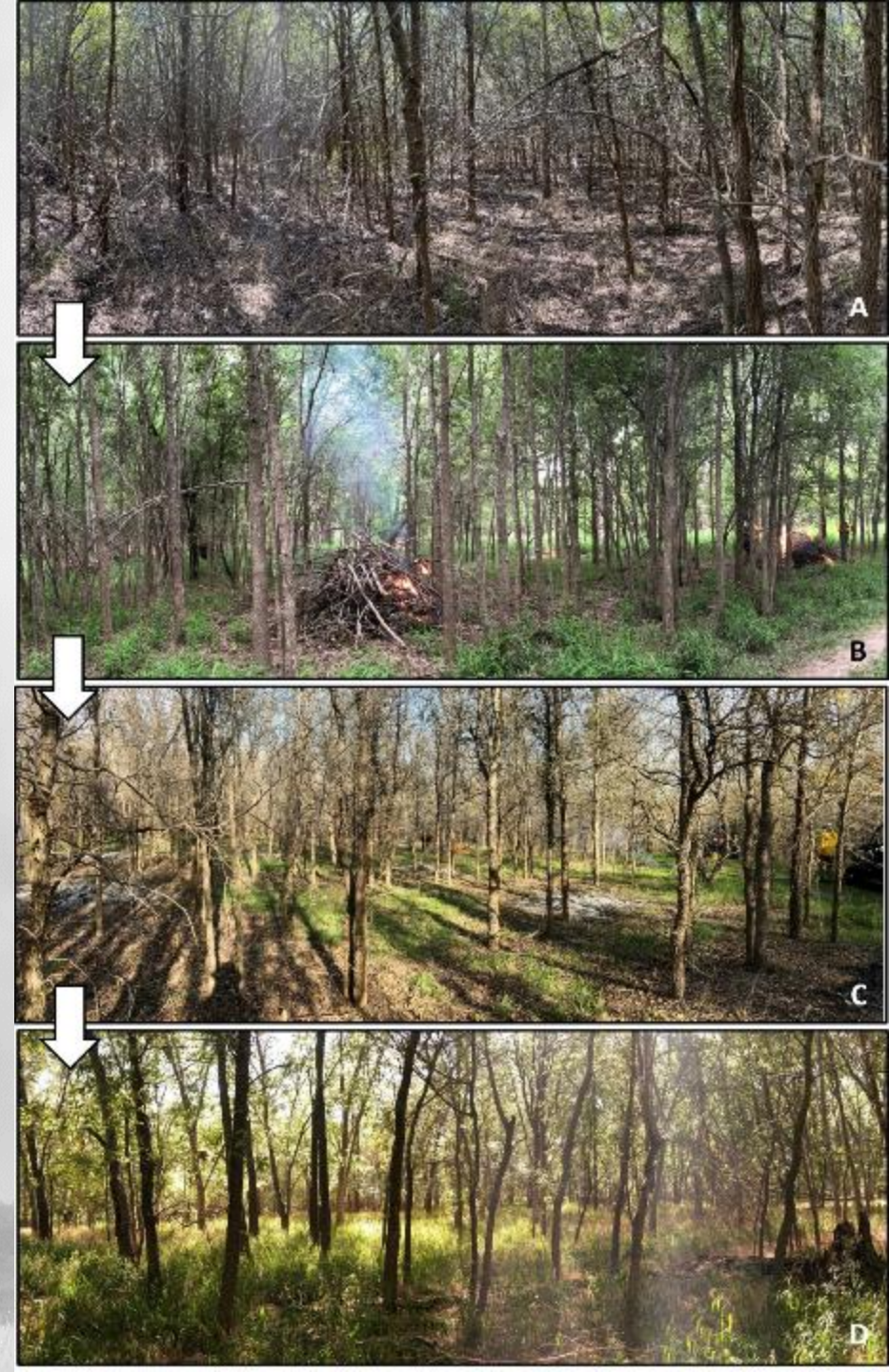


PROGRAM STRATEGY

1. Active restoration of ecosystem health
 2. Targeted fuel mitigation
- Why? Elevated wildfire risk is a symptom of a *dysfunctional system*.
 - Wildfire risk is related to species and structural diversity, fuel type and arrangement, and natural processes which affect resilience to heat, drought, and disease.
 - We have to use multiple strategies in all parts of the WUI.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

- Invasive species removal: Improves climate resilience and park user safety
- Fuel reduction and selective thinning: Targeted removal of small trees and brush to improve forest health
- Prescribed fire: Important land management and wildfire mitigation tool. austintexas.gov/parkrxfire
- Planting and seeding: Improves climate resilience



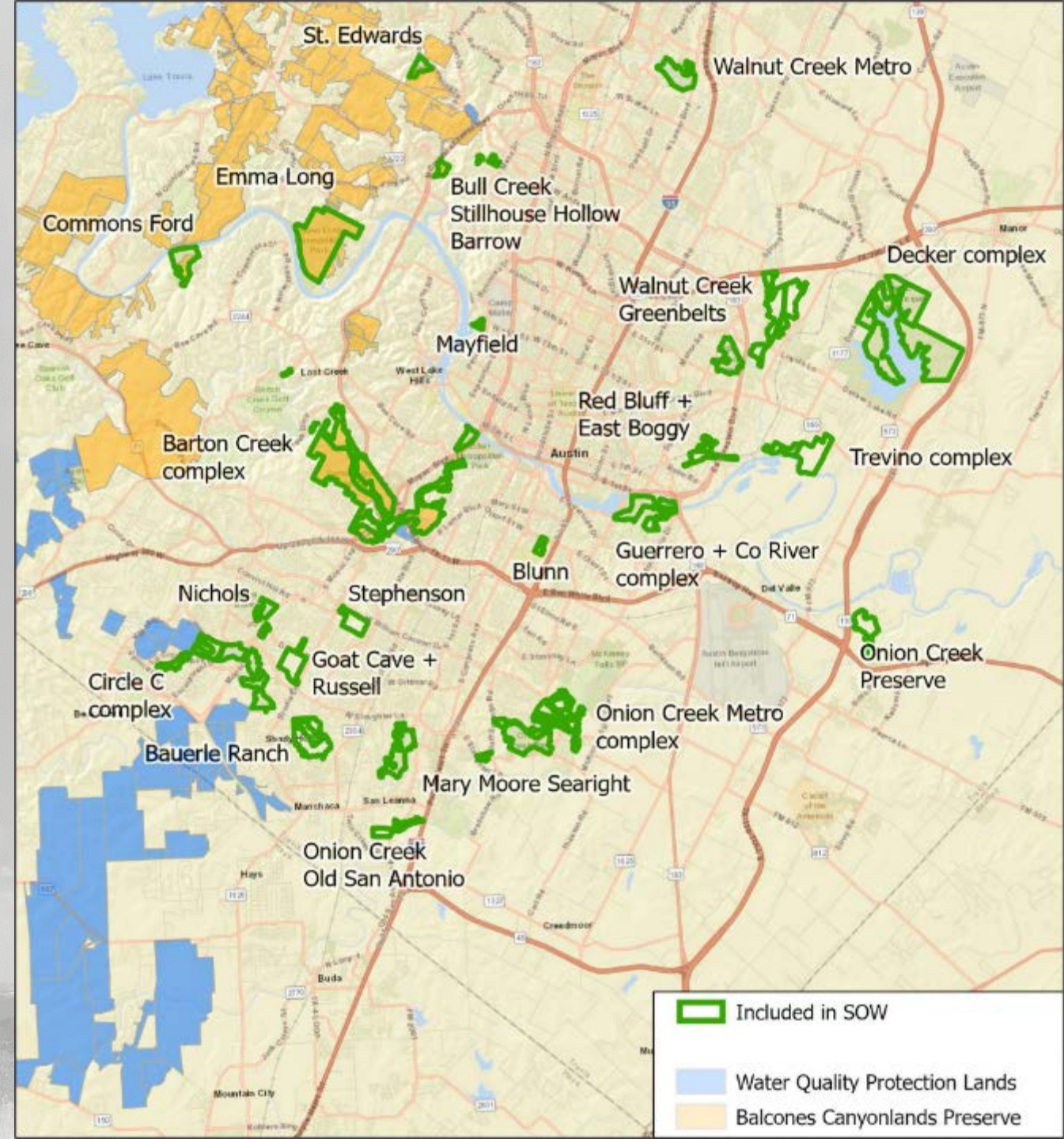
PRIORITIZATION

PREREQUISITES

- Staffing
- Access for equipment and personnel
- Contracts
- Funding

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Vulnerability (social and environmental)
- Restoration potential of the site
 - Adjacent land uses, current and future
- Cost or resource input (e.g. time), per acre
 - Project complexity
 - Public access (trails) management
 - Codependence of multiple of strategies
 - Community support or resistance
- Partnerships and community support
- Permitting (E.g. T&E species, fire)
 - Restricted timelines for implementation
- Density and proximity of neighboring structures
- More details on p. 113 Volume 1 PARD land management plan: austintexas.gov/LMP



NEW CONTRACTS FOR RESTORATION AND FUEL MITIGATION ACTIVITIES

- “Natural Areas Vegetation Management”
- “Vegetation Management for Wildland Fire Fuel Mitigation”
- City Council sets the “spending authority.”
- This is the spending cap. Different than budget.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Firewise strategies
- Firewise communities
- Dead and down removal?
 - We’re working on improved processes
 - For now:
 - Community Activated Park Projects (CAPP)
 - PARD Urban Forestry Tree Care Permit



QUESTIONS?

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