

Healing Our Preserves and Natural Areas Through Land Management



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**Theme: We are embarking
upon a grand effort to
heal our nature preserves
and natural areas.**



Healing Our Preserves and Natural Areas

- The Problem
- The Plan
- The Partnerships



A person with short brown hair, wearing a grey hoodie, is seen from behind, looking out over a scenic landscape. In the foreground, a river flows with white water rapids, reflecting the sunlight. The middle ground shows a grassy bank with some trees and shrubs. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains under a clear sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

**I go to nature to be soothed and healed
and to have my senses put in tune once again.
- John Burroughs**

Benefits:

- Mental
- Physical
- Social

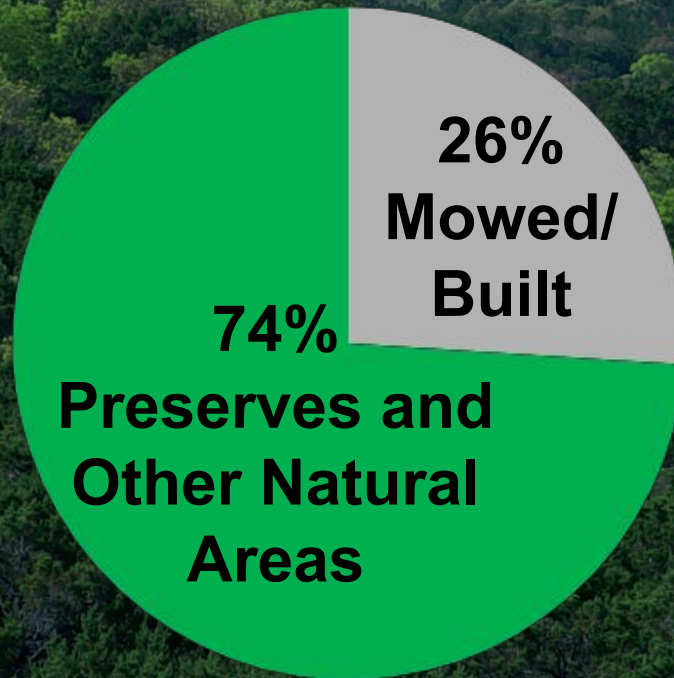
Ecosystem Services



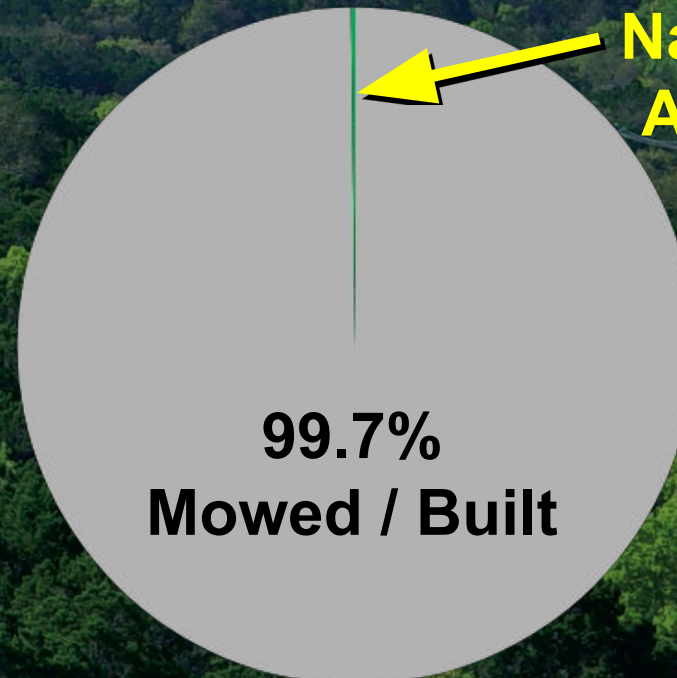
- Clean Air
- Clean Water
- Climate Regulation
- Habitat / Biodiversity

We need healthy nature preserves!

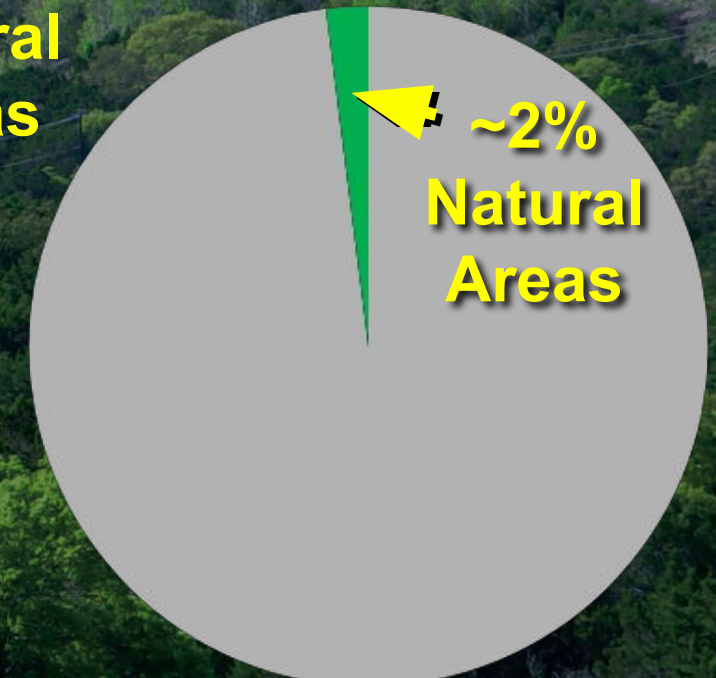
Projected Budget Need



Acres



Current Budget



Projected Budget Need

Preserves are Degraded

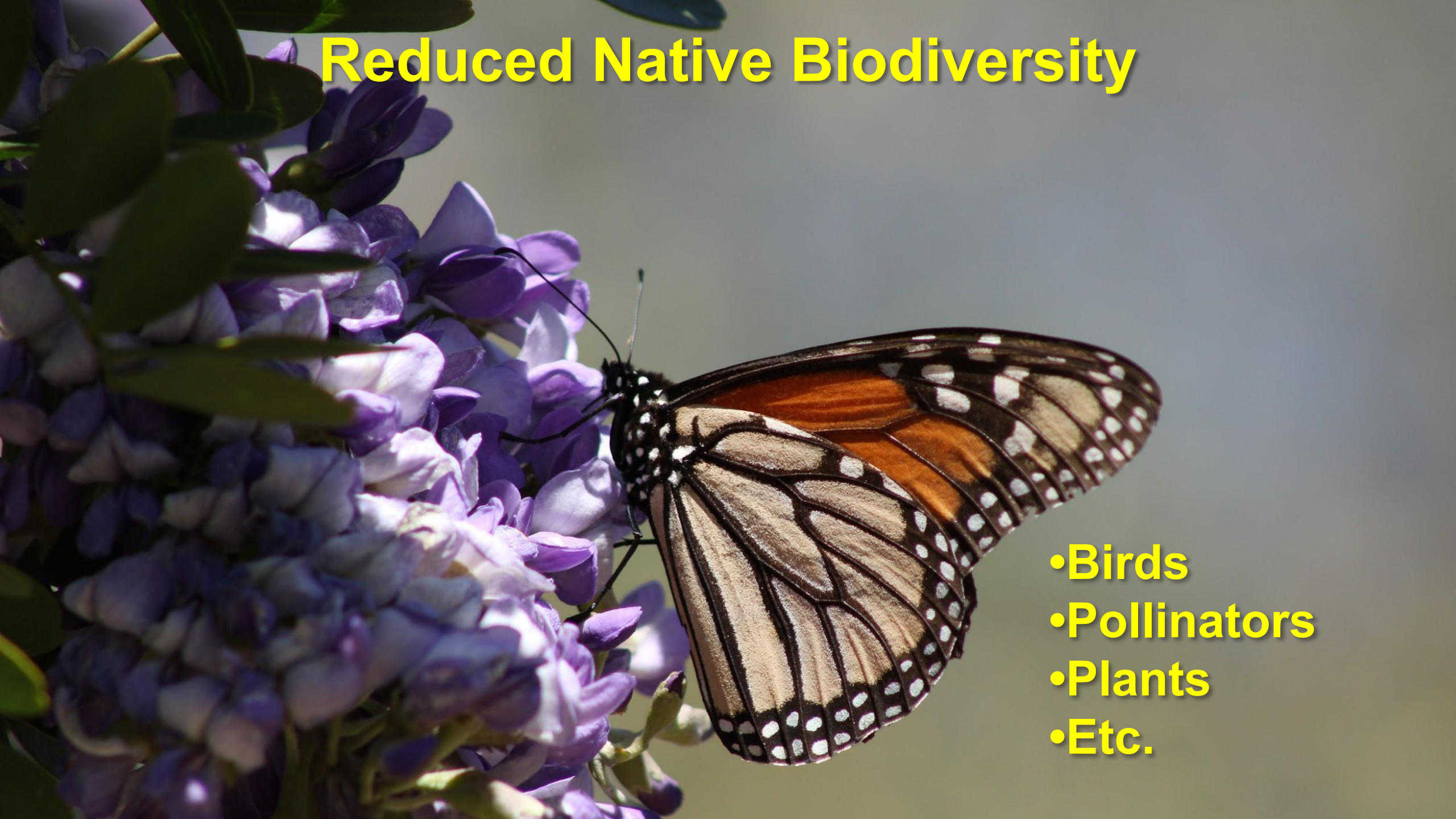


Abundance of Exotics

A photograph of a forest path with a dark overlay at the top and bottom right containing text. The path is dirt and covered with fallen leaves, leading into a dense forest of thin trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating dappled light on the ground.

- **Ligustrum**
- **Nandina**
- **Johnsongrass**
- **KR Bluestem**
- **Etc.**

Reduced Native Biodiversity



- Birds
- Pollinators
- Plants
- Etc.



Societal Stressors

Community Scale – Wildfire Preparedness Audit



2019 Findings and Result:

- Insufficient capacity to address risk
- Establish Land Management Program
- Need to create land management plan

Community Scale – Climate Equity Plan

Applicable Goals by 2030:

- Manage all natural areas for resilience
- Manage lands to reduce carbon emissions and maximize community benefits

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Consulting Team

Ecosystem Design Group/Blackland Collaborative - Local and statewide ecology and restoration expertise

Subconsultants:

- **Biohabitats - National ecological restoration and climate change resiliency expertise**
- **Resource Environmental Solutions (RES) - Large-scale ecological restoration with expertise in forest restoration and management**

What this plan *is*:

- Guiding document based in science and practice
- Clear goals and long-term strategies
- Prioritization map
- Deliverable - Wildfire Audit and Climate Equity Plan
- Long-term direction for Land Management Program
- Justification for:
 1. Requesting resources
 2. Directing resources (land management decisions)
 3. Doing work that some will question

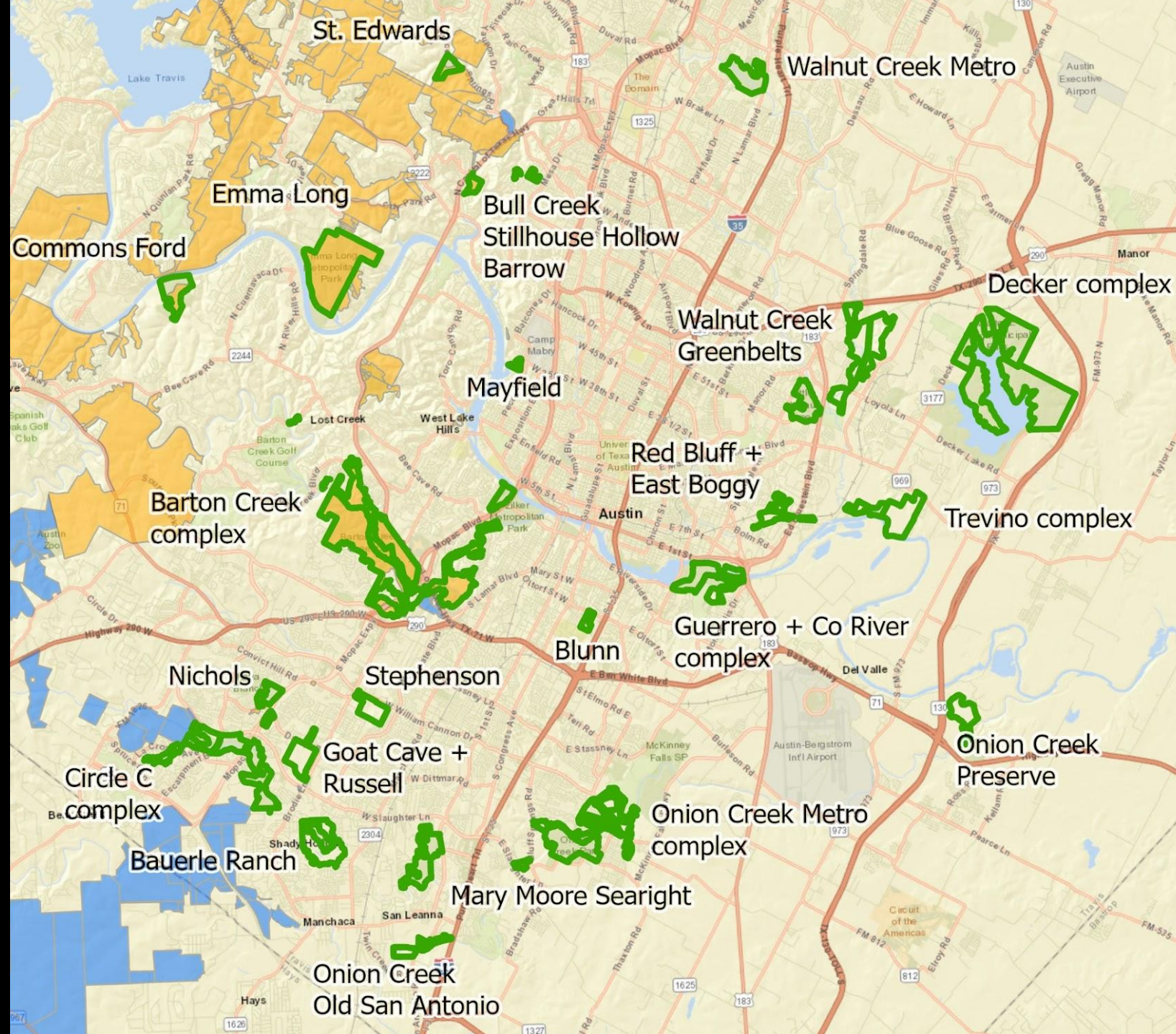
What this plan is *not*:

- A master plan / vision plan
- An implementation plan
- A public engagement process



Scope of Work

- 10,000+ ac. included
- All Preserves and PARD Balcones Canyonlands Preserves
- Contiguous natural areas > 75-100 ac.
- Excludes high perimeter area (difficult access, expensive mgmt)
- Creates large mgmt. complexes



**Size Comparison:
10,000 acres**



Deliverables & Plan Components

Site analysis

- Soils
- Hydrology
- Existing vegetation communities
- Endangered species habitat
- Trails, authorized and unauthorized
- Other elements



Deliverables & Plan Components

Climate vulnerability analysis:

- **Identify ecosystem components affecting vulnerability**
- **Map components to indicate vulnerable areas**
- **Create framework to prioritize work**





Deliverables & Plan Components

Management goals:

Plant communities expected to provide desired ecosystem services most sustainably

Restoration strategies:

Effective and appropriate for achieving management goals in various contexts

Deliverables & Plan Components

Monitoring design:
Evaluate progression toward
management goals

~10-year document
50-year horizon



Land Management Plan Timeline

- February 2022 – Kickoff meeting
- Summer 2022 – Briefing partners
- Fall 2022 – Preliminary draft(s)
- December 2022 – Final plan
- Early 2023 – Council approval
- 2023 and beyond – Secure resources and begin utilizing plan



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Success Requires Partnerships



Partnership Roles



- Surveys / Inventory
- Seed Collection

- Planting / Seeding
- Removing Exotics

- Monitoring
- Voicing Public Support

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Together...

**we can make
the future
better than
the past...**

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