

## **Austin Parks Foundation**

### **Barton Creek Greenbelt Restoration**

#### **Project Description**

Austin Parks Foundation shall use SEP Funds to remove invasive woody plants from at least 35 acres of the Barton Creek Greenbelt ("Greenbelt"), a City of Austin-owned parkland preserve. Invasive species removal will allow the opportunity for restoring native hill country/canyon land flora and habitat to the Greenbelt. Removal of sun-blocking invasive species will allow native understory and grass restoration, reducing soil erosion and water pollution of the sensitive karst system. Invasive species to be removed include Ligustrum, Chinaberry, Nandina, Photinia, Chinese Tallow, and Chinese Pistache. Austin Parks Foundation shall also create a relational database, interactive website, and interactive GIS map to assist with invasive species removal.

The Project will be completed in four phases. During Phase 1, contractors will remove large trees (trees with a trunk diameter of 2 inches or more) using chainsaws. Stumps will be treated with herbicides. Contractors will also establish erosion-resistant windrows and revegetate the areas with native plants. In Phase 2, contractors and volunteers will remove smaller plants using hand tools. Phase 3 will involve a contractor creating a relational geo-database linked to a publicly accessible interactive website. The database will include data on the locations of invasive plants, plot infestation areas and management zones throughout the Greenbelt, tracking restoration status, and produce web-based interactive GIS maps and reports to assist with restoration efforts. After the database is created, it will be hosted and maintained at Austin Park Foundation's expense. Phase 4 will involve using an ATV with a chipper to chip brush windrows. Austin Parks Foundation will obtain, at its own expense, any necessary approvals for work under this Project from the City of Austin.

#### **Environmental Benefit**

The Barton Creek Greenbelt contains a Hill Country ecosystem in an urban area. The park offers recreational opportunities and is an ecological resource for protecting the underlying karst aquifer system, which provides spring flow to support the endangered Barton Springs salamander. Encroachment of dense stands of exotic shrubs and small trees has the potential to overcome the native riparian and canyon forest canopy supporting endangered songbirds. The health of this natural system has become threatened by the dense coverage of invasive Ligustrum and other non-native plant species. Invasives cause erosion by shading out native understory plants and ground cover that hold the soil in place. Ground cover also serves as food sources and habitat for native fauna. This Project will combat the ecological degradation caused by invasive species.

**Eligible Areas and Counties**

Bexar, Comal, Hays, Kinney, Medina, Travis, Uvalde, and Williamson Counties

**Minimum Contribution Amount**

\$100