

Press Release

For immediate release

2 April 2012

Lost Pines Recovery Team Set to Begin Restoration Efforts for Private Property

The effects of the Bastrop Complex Fire are now becoming more apparent: without human assistance the forest will not be able to regenerate within our lifetime. When the forest does finally heal, intrusion by invasive species would make it look very different from the unique association of loblolly pine and oak that preceded it.

However, citizens of Bastrop county will soon begin to see men and women, staff and volunteers, working hard together to begin the process of large-scale restoration of our beautiful pine forest. These efforts represent the fruits of a refreshingly collaborative process by the dedicated members of the Lost Pines Recovery Team. The Team, coordinated and led by Bastrop County's Roxanne Hernandez, worked even as the fire still burned to develop best management practices, coordinate with local and national professionals, private corporations, and federal agencies, plan deployment priorities, and develop reasonable and defensible budgets that would help our community restore our beautiful and healthful habitat.

The Team has been fiscally conservative and driven by priorities established early on by the group. Among donations already received, the Team will soon be deploying a variety of grants to provide native grass and wildflower seed and native loblolly pine seedlings to private landowners for large-scale restoration. These resources are being targeted to high-priority areas as identified in the Bastrop County Lost Pines Recovery Plan, but require local matching funds.

Unfortunately, the amount of money already received will only fund the absolute highest priority areas, and many citizens could be disappointed that more land could not be restored through this unified effort. The Recovery Plan conservatively estimates that restoration of private land (excluding Bastrop State Park) will cost \$17.2 million. We can all help, though. Any amount or service that can be donated through the Lost Pines Recovery effort, coordinated by Bastrop County, will go directly to benefit land restoration and will help bring Bastrop County back as a unique destination for tourists, families, and businesses.

"Bastrop County has always been a resourceful community. Our forest has been providing us with financial and aesthetic benefits throughout our history. It's time we leveraged our contacts and resources to complete our newly built homes and businesses by restoring our valuable forest too," said Clara Beckett, Precinct 2 County Commissioner.

For Lost Pines Recovery Team resources, best management practices, and recovery plan:
<http://www.co.bastrop.tx.us/bcdisaster/index.php/protecting-natural-resources1>

To donate to Bastrop County's and Bastrop State Park's recovery efforts, please visit www.bastroprecovery.org. Monetary donations may be sent to Bastrop County Lost Pines Recovery, c/o Lost Pines Habitat Conservation, 901 Pecan Street, Bastrop, TX 78602. Donations for Bastrop State Park recovery should be sent to Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Memo Line – Bastrop State Park Recovery; Attn: Cashiers, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744.

For more information, contact Roxanne Hernandez at 512-332-7284.