

Restoration of Pollinator Habitat on the Martindale Army Airfield

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South Texas Natives Project (STNP) personnel in collaboration with the Texas Military Department have been working to restore pollinator habitat to 100 acres of fallow land surrounding the Martindale Army Airfield in San Antonio. The goal of this project is to create low maintenance, permanent native vegetation cover that would provide habitat for pollinators and reduce maintenance and bird strike issues at the airfield.

The initial phase of the project involved several herbicide applications to control the remnant weeds resulting from previous agricultural use. This phase occurred between spring 2017 and spring 2018. After the residual seed bank was controlled, STNP personnel seeded the site in autumn 2018 with a 37-species mix of commercially-produced, locally-adapted grasses and forbs.

Sampling a year after planting has shown that several grasses and forbs developed by STNP are performing well at this Blackland Prairie site and seeded plant density is approaching the accepted threshold for success. In particular, a number of the late successional grass species such as big bluestem, little bluestem, and sideoats grama are performing very well. Flowering species that have performed well from the seed mix include Texas bluebonnet, pink evening primrose, and mealy blue sage.

We will monitor the site for the next 2 years to document the performance of the restoration effort, and to track any increase in the late successional species over time. Results from this project will help guide future seed mix recommendations that benefit pollinators at other Blackland Prairie sites near San Antonio.

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