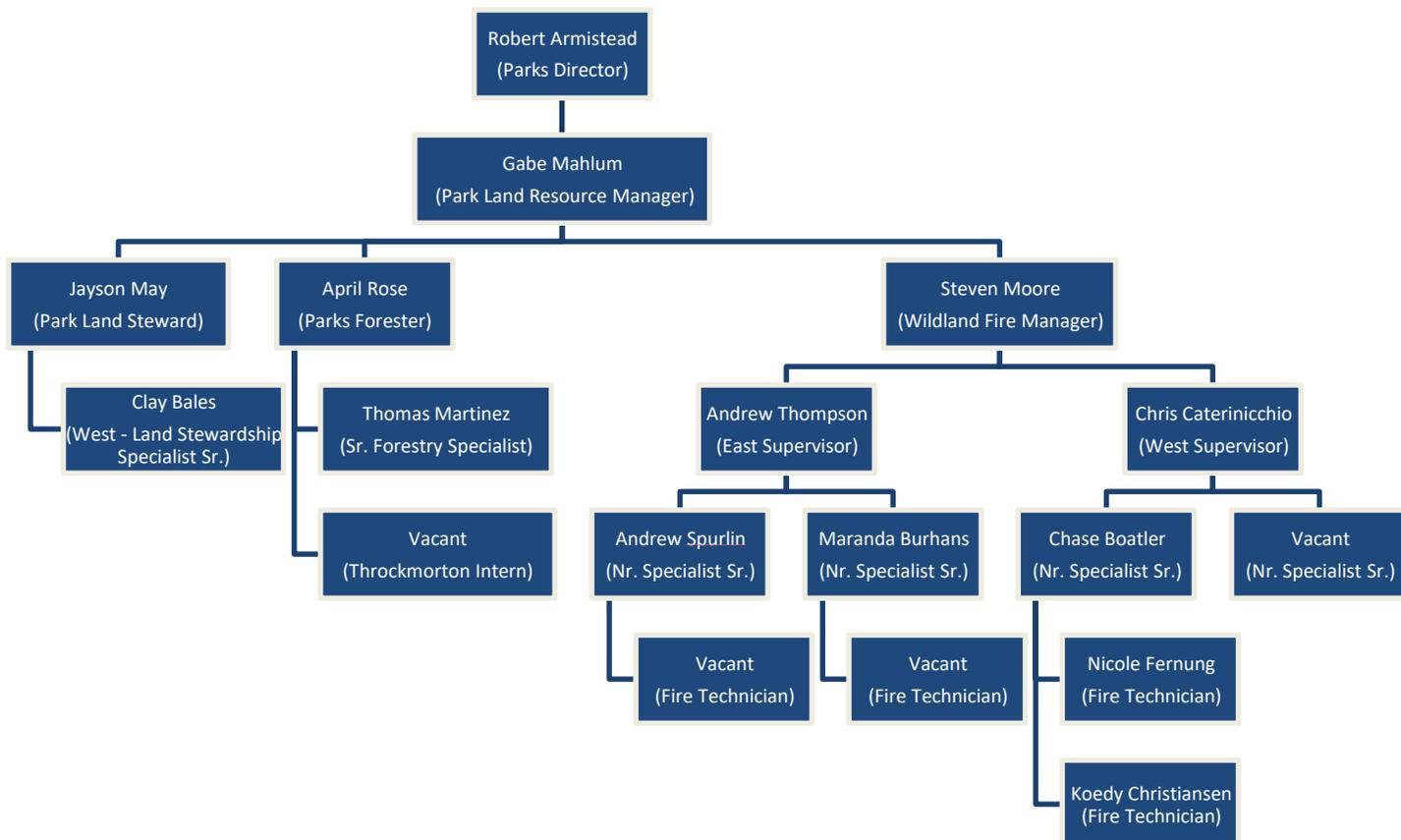


# TC Parks' Land Management Achievements 2024

## Enhanced Staffing and Program Capacity

Thanks to the support from the Commissioner's Court during the FY 2025 Budget Cycle, the Land Management Section of Parks expanded its operational capabilities. The Land Management team is expected to be fully staffed by early March 2025.

- Approval of **5 new positions** will strengthen our ability to manage over 36,000 acres of parkland properties.
- The addition of **4 Natural Resource Specialist Sr.** positions will enable focused quadrant-based management, enhanced project oversight, and facilitate staff development, including critical partnerships like Austin YouthWorks.
- An intern will be assigned to the **Travis County School Lands in Throckmorton County** to ensure on-site support and management of this remote property located 250 miles north of Travis County.



## **Advancing Fire Management through Prescribed Burns**

Proactive fire management efforts contributed to reducing wildfire risks and improving ecosystem health across the county and adjoining counties:

- Conducted **1 pile burn** at Blue Bluff Parkland and assisted with **5 broadcast burn assists** with local agencies.
- Completed preparatory work for **7 fire management units** on park land property units, setting the stage for increased prescribed burn activity in 2025.



*Prescribed Fire Assist @ Decker Lake*

## **Fuels Reduction and Hazard Mitigation**

Focused efforts on high-priority areas to improve public safety and environmental resilience:

- **Fuels management and fireline maintenance** completed across multiple properties, including East Metro, Pruitt, and Castletop properties.
- Ongoing **hazard mitigation projects** at high-use areas such as **Pace Bend** and **Allen Park** has improved public safety and accessibility.

## **Forest Health and Public Safety Enhancements**

Invested substantial effort in tree care and hazard mitigation:

- Conducted **comprehensive assessments** of tree health across parklands.
- Pruned **500+ trees** and removed another **500 hazardous trees** to minimize risks and enhance forest health.
- Collaborated on **Oak Wilt mitigation projects** to safeguard native oak populations.



*Laurel Wilt Monitoring @ Hamilton Pool*



*Oak Wilt Mitigation @ Arkansas Bend*

## **Staff Training and Workforce Development**

Training initiatives elevated team readiness and strengthened local, state, and federal interagency collaboration:

- Led and participated in over **50 specialized training sessions**, including NWCG courses (e.g., Firing Operations, Heavy Equipment Boss, and Basic Air Operations).
- Advanced certifications achieved in **Incident Command Systems (ICS 700-400)**, expanding interagency coordination capabilities.
- Enhanced forestry and fire management skills through **Arborist Training, Tree Climbing, and Basic Saw Operations Workshops** for park staff.



*S-270 Basic Air Operations Course*



*American Youthworks Saw Class*

### **Infrastructure Upgrades and Facility Maintenance**

Enhanced infrastructure to support operational efficiency and upkeep of county assets:

- **Fencing repairs and upgrades** completed at Castletop, RGK, LaFleur, and Owens properties.
- **Major construction projects achieved at Owens**, with continued maintenance ensuring long-term functionality.



*New property and building acquisition on the Westside*

## Research and Monitoring

Key research and monitoring projects advanced data-driven land management initiatives:

- **Bi-weekly live fuel moisture sampling** informs prescribed burn planning and wildfire risk assessments.
- Developed the **Travis County School Lands Monitoring Report** to ensure sustainable practices at Throckmorton.
- Launched a **Quarterly Monitoring Protocol** for proactive treatments within park system management, to be implemented Q1 of 2025.

## Community & Stakeholder Engagement

Strengthened public relations to foster stakeholder and community involvement:

- Began discussions with community stakeholders regarding **Blackland Prairie restoration project at NE Metro**.
- Hosted **donor and commissioner events** at RGK.
- Engaged with local audiences through **PBS Kids Job Fair** presentations and features in **Texas Monthly**.



*TC Parks & Fire Marshal's Office at PBS Kids Job Fair*



*Grassland Collective @ NE Metro*

## **Policy and Planning Advancements**

Focused efforts on forward-looking policy development:

- Finalized **TIFMAS Deployment Pay Policies** to support firefighter/responder reimbursement and deployments.
- Collaborated with stakeholders to develop a **TC Parks' Fire Management Plan**.
- Plan to implement a **Land Management Treatment Dashboard** for greater visibility of projects for internal and external stakeholders.

## **Looking Ahead & Building on Success in 2025**

The Land Management Section is poised for continued success with targeted goals:

- **Enhance sustainability, safety, and resilience** of TC Parklands through strategic, proactive vegetation management, project planning and coordination, and stakeholder engagement.
- **Focus on improving climate resiliency, equity, water quality**, and reducing hazards such as wildfire risks.
- **Leverage internal expertise and partnerships** to streamline project execution through staff, contractors, and workforce programs like AYW.
- **Support initiatives with data-driven decision-making** and interdepartmental collaboration.