

RARE PLANT SURVEY AND GENERAL PLANT INVENTORY
OF DINK PEARSON COUNTY PARK, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS,
SUMMER 1996

23 September 1996 Draft

During the summer of 1996, botanical surveys were conducted on all Travis County parks west of the Balcones Escarpment. The goals of these surveys were to locate populations of rare, unusual, or management sensitive plant species and, at each park, to conduct a general inventory resulting in an annotated checklist of all plant species observed. Dink Pearson Park was visited for approximately one hour on 11 July 1996.

Location/Physical Setting

Dink Pearson Park occupies 3.6 acres on moderate to gentle slopes along the northern shoreline of Lake Travis on the Anderson Bend peninsula. Access is via Lohman Ford Road south from R. M. 1431 at Lago Vista. Development consists of a boat ramp, several picnic tables and portable toilets.

Like most county parks on the shoreline of Lake Travis, Dink Pearson Park is underlain by Cretaceous limestone and marl of the Glen Rose Formation (Garner et al., 1980; Proctor et al., 1981). Some of this bedrock is exposed at the surface along the western edge of the park. No springs, significant seeps, or drainages or any kind are present. Elevation ranges from a little over 731 feet down to 681 feet, the normal pool level of Lake Travis.

On sheet 31 in the Travis County soil survey (Werchan et al., 1974), one soil unit is mapped from the Dink Pearson area: Tarrant soils, rolling. Tarrant soils are shallow to very shallow stony clays of limestone uplands. The surface layer is dark grayish-brown stony clay about 8 inches thick; the underlying layer is limestone. These soils are well drained, calcareous, moderately alkaline Lithic Haplustolls and are assigned to the Rocky Upland range site.

Vegetation

The vegetation of the park consists of mostly evergreen woodland punctuated with short- to midgrass grassland openings. Plateau live oak (*Quercus fusiformis*) and Ashe juniper (*Juniperus ashei*) are probably the dominant tree species. Except in cleared areas near picnic tables, the understory is generally dense with immature Ashe juniper and, particularly along margins of mottes, a few shrubs and small trees such as agarito (*Berberis trifoliolata*) and Texas persimmon (*Diospyros texana*). The composition and cover in grassland openings is variable, with some areas supporting fairly high cover of perennial midgrasses such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and others, particularly in scraped areas or where bedrock is otherwise very close to the surface, supporting scant cover of shorter grasses such as purple threeawn (*Aristida purpurea*), Texas grama (*Bouteloua rigidisetata*), and red grama (*Bouteloua trifida*).

This woodland mosaic extends downslope to the high water line of Lake Travis, where it is replaced by a broken line of buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) and bare gravel. During extended periods of low lake levels, an association of annual and short-lived perennial grasses, sedges and forbs appears on dry silt, sand and gravel exposed in the lake bed.

Target Rare Plant Species

Six rare plant species were sought in appropriate habitat at all of the sixteen parks included for survey during this project: Texas amorpha (*Amorpha roemerana*), Texabama croton (*Croton alabamensis* var. *texensis*), Glass Mountains coral-root (*Hexalectris nitida*), Heller marbleseed (*Onosmodium helleri*), canyon mock-orange (*Philadelphus ernestii*), and Buckley tridens (*Tridens buckleyanus*). A seventh rare plant species, bracted twistflower (*Streptanthus bracteatus*), cannot be detected during summer of a drought year and was essentially omitted from this project. Information about the relative rarity, distribution, habitat, etc., of each of these species will be provided in a separate appendix at the end of the set of park reports.

Results of Rare Plant Surveys

None of the targeted rare plant species was encountered at Dink Pearson Park during the one hour survey on 11 July 1996. Virtually all of this tiny park was examined to a greater or lesser degree, and such a search should have been sufficient to reveal any freak occurrences of shrub targets such as Texabama croton. Timing of the search was appropriate for detection of Glass Mountains coral-root and Heller's marbleseed, but the presence of the two other herbaceous targets (bracted twistflower and Buckley tridens) will only be determined during other seasons. It seems unlikely that any rare plant species will be found at Dink Pearson Park.

Results of General Plant Inventory

Approximately 113 plant species were observed within the park on 24 July 1996. Information about the status of all of these species is provided in the preliminary checklist attached to this report. A more complete inventory of the herbaceous flora will require additional visits during spring and fall of a year with typical rainfall.

The flora of Dink Pearson Park includes four species that are endemic to (found only in) Texas: hairy least-daisy (*Chaetopappa bellidifolia*), blackfoot spurge (*Chamaesyce angusta*), mountain grape (*Vitis monticola*), and twistleaf yucca (*Yucca rupicola*). Although endemic, none of these species is of particular management concern. Information about the occurrence of these species within the park can be gleaned from the attached park plant list; general information about these endemics will be presented in a separate appendix at the end of the set of park reports.