

Austin Urban Forestry Board Strategic Plan

Mission Statement:

To ensure that Austin's "Urban Forest" as part of the city's infrastructure is properly managed, maintained, and nurtured in recognition of its importance to our community economically, environmentally, socially, aesthetically, and historically. To build collaborative working relationships to properly preserve and protect this essential and fragile part of Austin's ecosystem.

Goals identified by the Board

- Species diversification
- Habitat conservation
- Wildlife corridors
- Removal of invasive exotic species
- Planting native understory trees, shrubs, and grasses under power lines
- Public outreach about urban forestry (brochure, PowerPoint)
- Tree care advice (proper pruning, mulching, habitat management, species diversity, frequently asked questions, etc)
- Citizen Forester
- Native Plants/diverse ecosystems
- Public education about tree care
- Protecting trees on construction sites
- Disposal of brush/debris produced by tree removal/tree work/biochar
- Board Development

These goals were incorporated into four objectives to be accomplished in 2008. Each objective is described in a similar format and has activities assigned to it. Activities within each objective will be documented and utilized to prepare the annual report.

Objective 1: Habitat Conservation

The Urban Forest is a conglomerate of trees and plants growing on or adjacent to natural land and water features. It provides habitat for a multitude of species of animals, insects, fish, and crustaceans. Conservation of this habitat through wise management and protection is a primary objective of the Austin Urban Forestry Board. Goals included in this objective include species diversification, creation and management of wildlife corridors, removal of invasive exotic species, disposal of brush/debris produced by tree removal/tree work, including biochar and enhancing/expanding native ecosystems with their associated trees, plants, and wildlife.

Team Leader: Damon Waitt

Team Members:

Potential partners: Denis Delaney with Grow Green, Rene Barrera with PARD Preserves, Master Naturalists, National Wildlife Federation, Native Plant Society, Audubon Society,

Wildlands Conservation, Texas Forest Service, the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, realtors and builders

Activity A: Draft a guidance document regarding invasive exotic species and forward it to City Council. The document will include at a minimum; a list of species to target for removal, treatment options, policy recommendations, evaluation of current control mechanisms, and potential solutions to identified issues.

- a) To be completed by September 30, 2008
- b) Target Audience is City Council
- c) Budget needs and source of funding are none to develop the document, however recommendations may include future funding
- d) Partners to develop the document will include the Urban Forestry Board and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- e) City staff from the Parks and Recreation Department, Watershed Protection and Development Review Department, Water Department, and Austin Energy will review the document and provide feedback.
- f) Updates will be provided at each meeting of the Urban Forestry Board
- g) Priority of this activity is high

The final document was presented to Board and passed at February 18, 2009 meeting

Activity B: Work with Keep Austin Wild on long range planning regarding wildlife habitat

Team Leader: Ryan Fleming

Team Members:

Objective 2: Public Outreach

Describing the benefits and assets of the urban forest to the community is a key mission of the Urban Forestry Board. Through public outreach activities, the Board hopes to encourage action by the citizens of Austin to better manage, maintain, and nurture their own trees and property, as well as encourage strong partnerships to care for public trees and property. Goals of this objective include creation of public presentation tools such as PowerPoint and brochures, dispensing tree care advice, and citizen forester education.

Team Leader: Nevic

Team Members:

Potential Partners: TreeFolks, PARD

Activity A: Create a PowerPoint slide show regarding the benefits of trees and values of the Austin urban forest. The presentation will include some tree care information and provide sources of expertise to answer questions or concerns.

- a) To be completed by July 1, 2008

- b) Target audience is citizen groups such as neighborhood associations, schools, scouts church groups, garden clubs, master naturalists and master gardeners
- c) Budget needs and source of funding are none
- d) Partners to develop the presentation will include members of the Urban Forestry Board and other interested non-profit groups
- e) City staff from the Parks and Recreation Department, Watershed Protection and Development Review Department, and Austin Energy will assist in providing facts and figures, diagrams, illustrations, and other support materials for the document, as well as and provide feedback.
- f) Updates will be provided at each meeting of the Urban Forestry Board
- g) Priority of this activity is high

Nevic is collecting pictures for a power point presentation

Activity B: Create and host a citizen forester class to train volunteers to be highly qualified with the ability to serve as leaders and organizers of projects to better manage the urban forest.

- a) Curriculum and all planning are to be completed by July 1, 2008. The first class series is to be completed by December 31, 2008.
- b) Target audience is citizen groups such as neighborhood associations and citizens involved with non-profit groups who conduct projects affecting the urban forest.
- c) Budget needs may be approximately \$75 per student not to exceed 30 students per session. The source of funding will be identified during the planning process.
- d) Partners to develop the presentation will include members of the Urban Forestry Board and staff of the Parks and Recreation Department
- e) City staff from the Parks and Recreation Department, Watershed Protection and Development Review Department, and Austin Energy will provide instructors and administrative support for the course.
- f) Updates will be provided at each meeting of the Urban Forestry Board starting in July 2008.
- g) Priority of this activity is high

Classes have started –

The first Urban Steward Class graduated in April 2009

Objective 3: Protecting Trees

Rapid population growth and property development is a significant challenge to effective management of the urban forest in Austin. The Urban Forestry Board will be actively involved in monitoring and participating in dialog regarding this issue.

Team Leader: Keith

Team Members:

Activity A: Solicit and review a detailed, city-wide summary of all development related tree impacts from the Watershed Protection and Development Review Department (WPDR).

- a) A request letter to the Director or appropriate designee of WPDR will be drafted and sent by April 30, 2008.
- b) The target audience is the Urban Forestry Board.
- c) Budget needs and source of funding are none.
- d) Partners involved will be the Urban Forestry Board and WPDR.
- e) City staff from WPDR will support this activity.
- f) Updates will be provided at each meeting of the Urban Forestry Board.
- g) Priority of this activity is high.

Activity B: Review and comment on changes to the Austin Tree Ordinance. This activity may also include review of the environmental criteria manual.

- a) Review the current ordinance and suggest any changes at the April meeting of the Board?
- b) The target audience is the Urban Forestry Board.
- c) Budget needs and source of funding are none.
- d) Partners involved will be the Urban Forestry Board and WPDR.
- e) City staff from WPDR will support this activity.
- f) Updates will be provided at each meeting of the Urban Forestry Board until the review process has been completed, any changes have been submitted to City Council, and City Council has decided on the proposal.
- g) Priority of this activity is high.

Ongoing discussions on an oak wilt ordinance – education is key not an ordinance

Objective 4: Board Development

To be effective Board members must clearly understand their roles, responsibilities, and authorities, as well as processes for requesting desired action from the City.

Team Leader:

Team Members:

Activity A: