



Nature Trails in Parks and Greenbelts

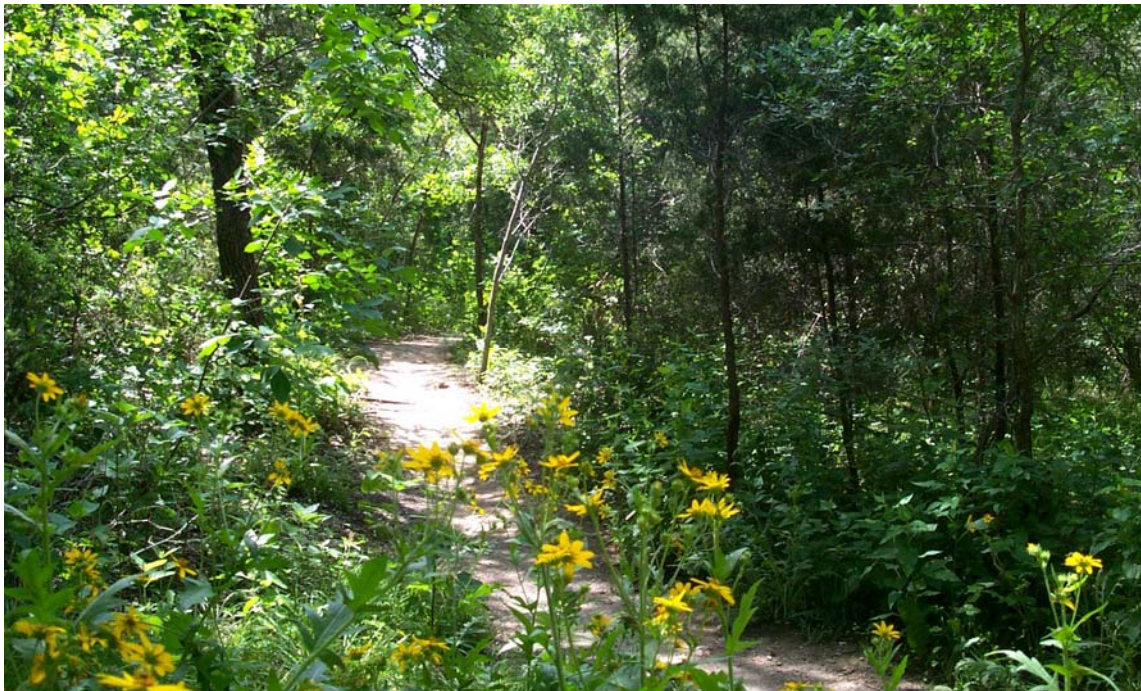
Environmental Commission/Urban Forestry Committee
Parks and Recreation Department
D'Anne Williams, Project Manager, Trails Coordinator
July 24, 2019





Parks Department Mission

Inspire Austin to learn, play, protect and connect by creating diverse programs and experiences in sustainable natural spaces and public places.



Park Assets

- 280 Parks
- 17,000 Acres dedicated, 19,000 Maintained
- 48 Greenbelts
- 4400 Acres of greenbelt
- 244 Miles of trails
- 84 Miles of nature trail
- Average 47% tree canopy (2017 data)

Trails are consistently the #1 recreation feature requested in surveys and master plans.

Trail benefits: Promote habitat conservation, Public support for wildlife conservation, Improves overall physical and mental health and learning abilities

Trail impacts: Trampling of habitat, noise, introduction of non-natives, discarded food/trash, wildlife displacement/avoidance generally limited to lineal disturbance



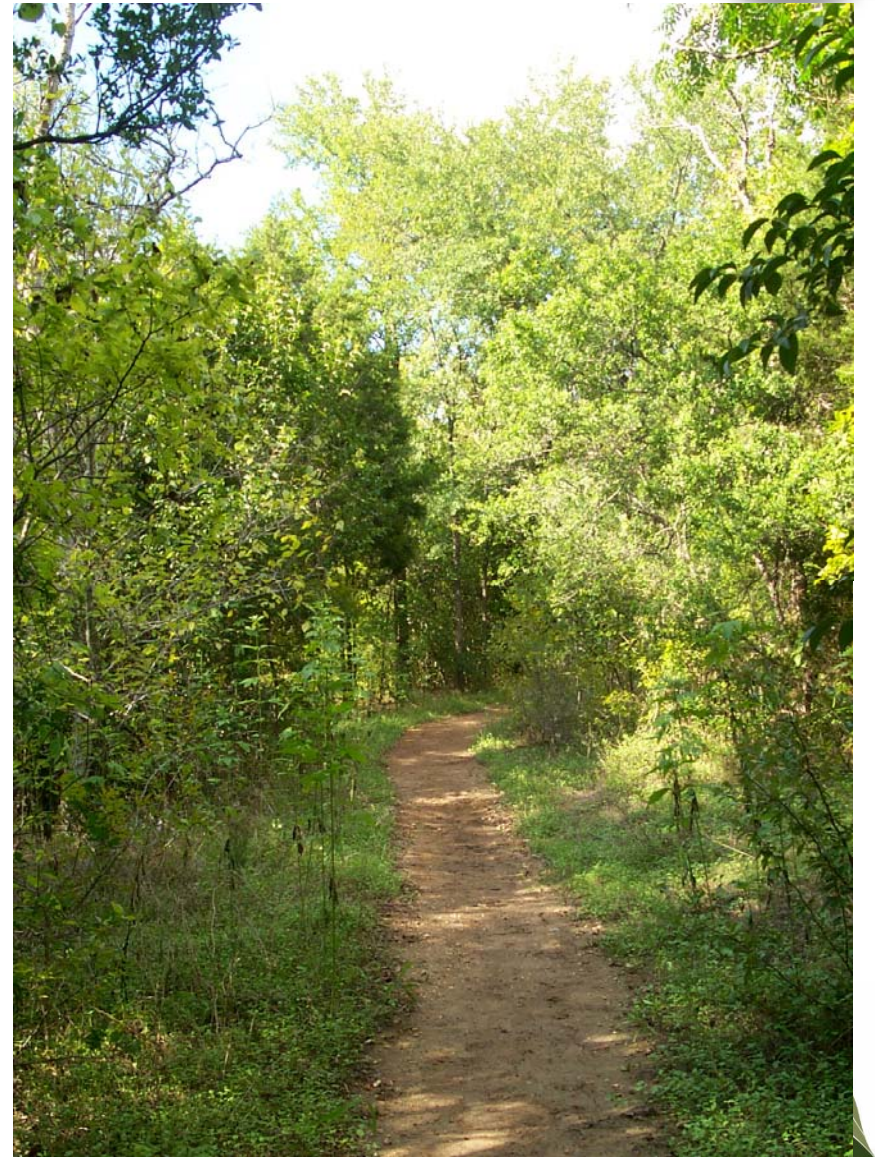
What is a nature trail?

Parks defines natural surface trails as:

A trail located mainly in greenbelts, district and metropolitan parks with a typical width of 2' to 10' depending on the specific uses. The trail tread is existing, natural soil that has been cleared, grubbed of vegetation, rocks and roots, leveled and compacted.

Natural Surface Trail Types include:

- Equestrian Trail – 10' wide (multi-use)
- Motorcycle Trail – 4' wide min. (single use and one way use)
- Mountain Bike Trail – 2'-3' single use, 6' min. multiuse
- Pedestrian Nature Trail – 4-6' width





Community Activated Park Projects

Program Process:

- Goal: To streamline the proposal process for our nonprofit partners and community member's seeking to initiate improvements on parkland. CAPP proposals are reviewed on a quarterly basis by the PARD Review Committee.

The review committee includes as appropriate:

CAAP Program Manager – Christine Chute Canul, *Park Development Coordinator* – Charles Mabry, *PARD Forestry* – Kirsten Schneider, *Playscape Program* – Sonny Chandler, *Ornamental Planting* – Sonny Chandler, *Pool/Splash Pads* – Jody Jay, *Trails Coordinator* – D'Anne Williams, *Park Grounds Maintenance Manager*: North District – Kerri Thompson, South District – Jimmy Cone

- Once a proposed project is approved in concept, the applicant works with PARD staff on design drawings, permitting if required, proposals from contractors and oversight of installation.
- For trail projects, a site walk is required to review the intended layout to note slopes, natural features, significant trees, environmental constraint and/or potential user conflicts. Forestry and grounds managers participate in the site review.
- Once a route has been approved, the layout is marked and approved by PARD before work can begin.





Nature Trail Building Standards

Rules of Thumb:

- Align with existing desire paths or disturbance
- No Fall Line Trails
- Keep a buffer from known sensitive species or critical habitats
- Route around or at edges of significant habitat areas, meadows and wet areas
- Design for proper drainage and sustainable grades (max. 10% grade)
- Avoid or limit access to critical environmental features
- Provide diverse trail experiences so users are less likely to create their own trails
- Provide access/egress points at established trailheads
- Minimize stream crossings
- Trees
 - Removals of 2" cal. and greater require PARD Forestry review and approval
 - Trimming of roots or branches 2" and greater require PARD Forestry approval
 - Heritage tree impacts follow City code requirement



Park Nature Trails

