

HABITAT HERALD

Wildlife Austin's monthly Newsletter



November 2013



Wildlife Austin

City of Austin
Parks and Recreation
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 2nd: Rainwater Revival, 10A-4P,
Boerne Civic Ctr, 820 Adler Ctr, Boerne
TX 78006,
<http://rainwaterrevival.com/>

Nov. 2nd: Citizen Climate Lobby, 11A-
6:45P, 1015 Norwood Park Blvd,
[https://docs.google.com/forms/
d/1g3NLua1WhEO130wPLpLqBOP6Ac
F4gYj-tRVTU8IDrOs/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1g3NLua1WhEO130wPLpLqBOP6AcF4gYj-tRVTU8IDrOs/viewform)

Nov. 3rd: Citizen Climate Lobby, 9A-
12:30P, 1015 Norwood Park Blvd,
[https://docs.google.com/forms/
d/1g3NLua1WhEO130wPLpLqBOP6Ac
F4gYj-tRVTU8IDrOs/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1g3NLua1WhEO130wPLpLqBOP6AcF4gYj-tRVTU8IDrOs/viewform)

Nov. 7th: Movies in the Park-Hunger
Games, 7:30P-9:30P, Republic Square
Park 422 Guadalupe Blvd,
<http://austinparks.org>

Nov. 11th-13th: Defense Energy Sum-
mit, 8A-12P,
<http://www.defenseenergy.com/>

Nov. 13th: Zero Waste Advisory Com-
mission Meeting, 6:30P, City Hall

Nov. 16th: Free Composting Class,
2-3P, Yarborough Branch Library,
[https://www.eventbrite.com/
event/8285966549](https://www.eventbrite.com/event/8285966549)

Nov. 16th: Conservation Quest-
Recycling, 10A-12P, Austin Nature and
Science Center

Hello Everyone!

I hope that you are all enjoying the cooler weather and recent rain we've been getting. In celebration of this wetter season, we decided to include some information about your local watersheds and rebate programs. Did you know that the Watershed Protection Department has an interactive map that can help you locate what watershed you are in? Just check out page 7 to get details.

Curious about how much water you use or how much sun you have in your yard? Austin Water has partnered with the Public Library as well as Grow Green to offer you free hose and sun meters that you can check out. If you would like to take it a step further they also offer rebate programs to those of you who are installing rainwater harvest systems. Check out the newsletter for further details!

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Would you like
to receive the
newsletter?

E-mail us at
wildlife@austintexas.gov

Garden of the Month

Our Lady of the Rosary Walk of the Beatitudes Nature

In many European countries cemeteries are a reflection of the natural environment and an integral part of their culture and family life. In 2002, after spending several years in Austria, Nick and Ellen Brumder founded Our Lady of the Rosary Cemetery in Georgetown., Tx. The Brumders vision has been to create the cemetery as a place of artistic merit, reverence, and natural beauty. It has been their passion to create the most inspirational, consoling and hope filled cemetery possible.



The cemetery is approximately 20 acres, with a pond and nature trail. The pond area, nature trail and short grass prairie area have been managed as a joint project for recent graduates of the Habitat Stewards class with NPSOT- Williamson County and Texas Master Naturalists Goodwater chapter since the fall of 2012. The area under this program is approximately 7 acres.

The goals for this area are to:

- * Create a native plant wildscape along the nature trail.
- * Promote a healthy pond management program which will benefit wildlife and the enjoyment of visitors.
- * Formulate a soil erosion program to prevent and reverse erosion in the areas that feeds the pond.
- * Identify and suggest dead tree removal along the nature trail and around the pond.
- * Establish a plant information database.
- * Establish a plant, bird, amphibian, and insect count/observation plan.
- * Manage the short grass prairie, native plant area.

Would you like to share your yard with other gardeners? If so please write to wildlife@austintexas.gov for more details!

Garden of the Month

This is a three year plan, with the first year priorities to:

- * Clear the area along the nature trail of invasive and non-native plants.
- * Stabilize the pond area and do a survey of the water depth for future work.
- * Establish a native plant population along the nature trail
- * Re-establish the short grass prairie area where premature mowing has taken place.
- * With the first year goals in mind, most of the nature trail has been cleared of non-native plants and invasives, plant surveys have taken place to identify key natives, and a vigorous replanting plan has been implemented. Over 80 species of native plants and trees have been catalogued and planted.
- * The nature trail has been certified as a NWF Wildlife Habitat, a Monarch Way Station and has been asked to submit an application for a TPWD demonstration garden.



Thank you so much to one of our Habitat Stewards, Lori Merlino, for taking the time to write up this information. I hope you all can gain some good ideas for how to organize the planning of your own projects.

Would you like to share your yard with other gardeners? If so please write to wildlife@austintexas.gov for more details!



Schoolyard Habitat Update



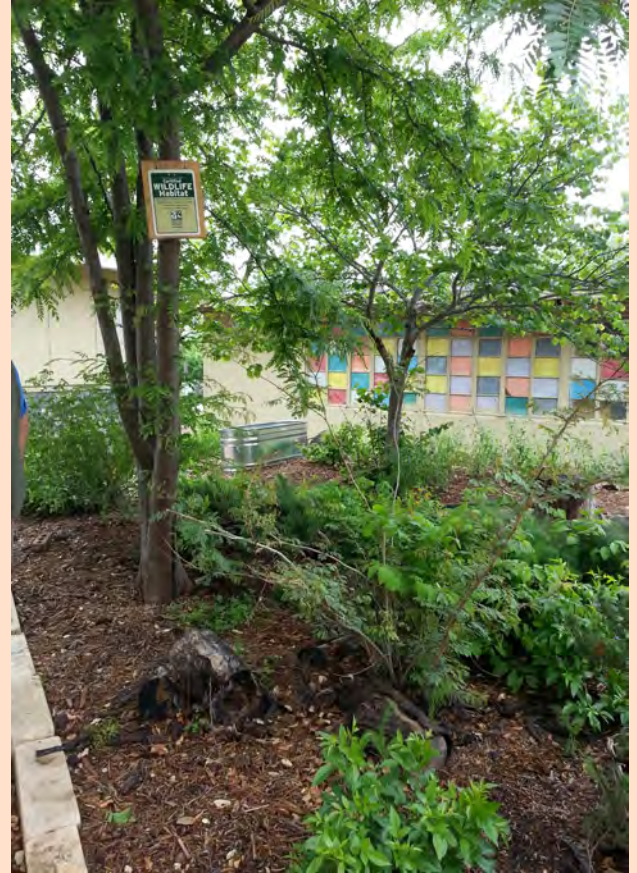
Fulmore Middle School Gardens

Fulmore Middle school sits in the heart of South Congress, in downtown Austin. If you were to walk the campus, you would see habitat gardens, rainwater collection, native trees, and vegetable gardens. Students buzz past pushing wheel barrows or watering cans for daily maintenance of the gardens. Sean Hopkins, the PALS teacher at Fulmore has a dream that you will be able to see a garden space no matter where you are on campus. They are truly on their way to transforming their school grounds into a sustainable and green learning opportunity for their students. Fulmore was awarded the City of Austin's Bright Green Future award in 2013. They are currently installing a system to collect the AC condensate off campus portables which will in turn be used to water native plants and habitat gardens.





Schoolyard Habitat Update



Donations Needed!

Campuses are looking for donations of the following materials for fall work-days:

- Compost and/or soil
- Native seeds, plants, shrubs and trees
- Tools
- 4 inch pots
- Limestone blocks
- Cedar logs
- Decomposed Granite
- Bird Feeders and/or bird seed

Schoolyard Habitat Success Depends on Volunteers Like You!

Contact Anne Muller AISD Outdoor Learning Specialist amuller@austinisd.org
or 841-5070 an up to date list of work days and volunteer opportunities

UnCommon Conservation Tips



I know you've all heard the common water conservation tips— turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth, use a low-flow shower head and incorporate xeriscaping into your gardening practices, etc. While those are great easy ways to help reduce your water usage, I wanted to cover some different methods that you may not be taking currently.

1. Only order water at a restaurant if you actually plan on drinking it-I know this sounds too simple but if you think about all the times a waiter brings you a giant glass of water that you never end up drinking you can see how it adds up.
2. Use dehumidifier water to water your plants-we often forget about all the appliances that use water in our home, that water can be reused
3. Soak fruits and vegetables instead of washing them under running water
4. Check hoses, faucets and sprinklers for leaks
5. Keep the same glass-I know many people, myself included, have the habit of getting a new glass each time we get a drink, stop the "glass-a-quarter-full" syndrome and only refill from the same glass
6. Reuse cooking water-when you steam veggies or other foods you have perfectly good water that can be reused to water plants
7. Become an educated consumer-learn how much water it takes to produce the foods you enjoy eating. Remember beef requires more than chicken, chicken requires more than wheat, wheat more than fruit, etc. The lower you eat on the food chain the less water you generally are using to produce those foods. There are many water calculators on the internet that can tell you how much that pound of peaches is or how much that chocolate bar is costing you in our most precious resource.

This and many other conservation tips can always be found at Austin Water's website, <http://austintexas.gov/department/water-conservation>



LIVING IN A WUI WITHOUT ALL THE HOOEY

What's My Watershed?

This October, Austin experienced heavy rains and enough flooding to shut down roads, necessitate rescue efforts, and cancel the final day of Austin City Limits festival. As you watched the city's waterways swell, did you wonder where all that water was headed? Austin's surface water all flows into the Colorado River, which eventually drains into the Gulf of Mexico at Matagorda Bay. The city's surface water flows through one of 66 recognized stream watersheds on its way to the Colorado River, and each watershed has its own unique physical features, aquatic habitat types, and conservation challenges. If you're curious which stream drainage you live within, you can find out through the City of Austin's website, which provides an interactive map of watershed boundaries. The map is clickable and searchable by address, and can be found here

(only put in the street address, do not include Austin, TX in the search bar): [http://](http://www.austintexas.gov/GIS/FindYourWatershed/)

www.austintexas.gov/GIS/FindYourWatershed/

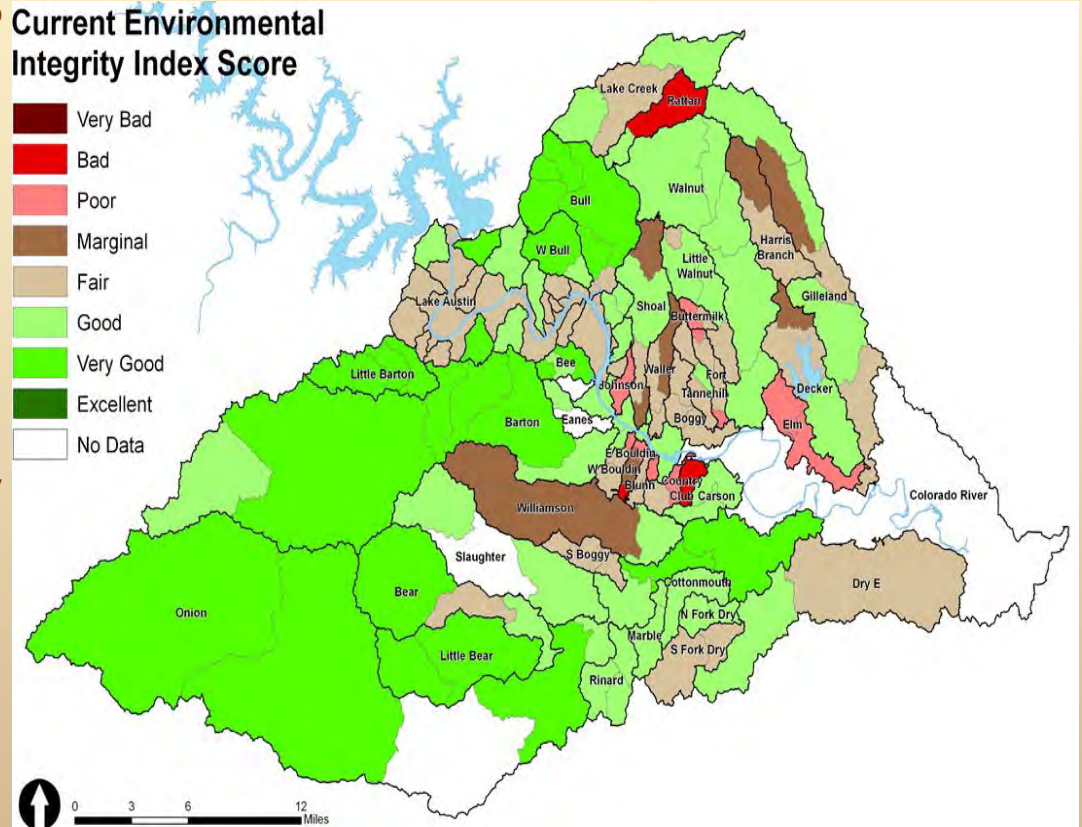
If you are more scientifically inclined, the data collected to assess water quality conditions can be found here: <https://data.austintexas.gov/Environmental/Water-Quality-Sampling-Data/5tye-7ray>

Stream quality can be affected by any number of factors within the watershed, including accelerated runoff from impervious surfaces (such as roads, sidewalks, parking lots, and buildings), increased sedimentation from soil erosion, pathogens introduced by pet waste, and household or automotive chemical runoff. If you're interested in

doing your part to boost the integrity score of your local watershed, you can help in the following ways:

- * Pick up after your pet. Pet feces can introduce dangerous pathogens to waterways and alter water quality.
- * Make sure your outdoor trash receptacles do not leak, and keep your property litter-free.
- * Limit your use of outdoor pesticides, or use non-chemical methods to remove weeds from your yard.
- * Keep your car well-maintained so fluids do not leak from it on to the ground.
- * Avoid washing your car on the street, where detergents can drain into waterways.
- * Dispose of household and automotive chemicals properly, recycling them when possible. The City of Austin's Household Hazardous Waste Facility is open to Austin and Travis County residents. Further information can be found here: <http://austintexas.gov/hhw>.

Current Environmental Integrity Index Score



Park Ranger Julie Webber





REBATES AND FREE RESOURCES

RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEMS

Following the trend of this month's water theme, I wanted to remind everyone of some of the great rebate programs and the City of Austin is offering to residents who would like to install rainwater catchment systems.

Pressurized and non-pressurized rainwater harvesting systems are covered under the rebate as long as they are new and not homemade or second-hand systems. You can receive \$0.50 per gallon on a non-pressurized unit and \$1.00 per gallon for a pressurized unit. Please check out the webpage <http://austintexas.gov/departments/rainwater-harvesting-rebates> for more details and an application.

HOSE METERS

If you are not quite ready to install a rainwater harvesting system there are also some great free resources available to any Austin Library card holder.

Austin Water has partnered with the Austin Public Library and Grow Green to offer digital garden hose water meters and sunlight calculators to Austin Public Library customers through the library check-out system.

By attaching the digital hose meter to standard outdoor hoses, spray-nozzles, and outdoor faucets, you can monitor and control water use while irrigating your lawn, garden, and trees, washing your car, and more. The LCD screen shows you how much water you're using, allowing you to save water by adjusting your habits.

SUNLIGHT CALCULATORS

Use the sunlight calculator to measure the amount of light each area of your yard receives. Then use the included plant guide (also available at www.GrowGreen.org) to select plants that best fit the light conditions of a particular area. Plants in partial shade and full shade may require less water than those in full sun and partial sun so adjust irrigation to those areas accordingly making sure to follow the current watering restrictions.

For hose meter and sunlight calculator availability, search for "hose meter" and "sunlight calculator" in the Austin Public Library catalog at <http://library.austintexas.gov/>.



Lectures and Hikes

Balcones Canyonland Preserve Hikes

November 16th: 9A-11A, Warblers, Wildlands, and Water-The 2 ½ hour hike will wind through habitat utilized by the golden-cheeked warbler for breeding in spring and early summer. The hike has over a 400' change in elevation with steep inclines and is partially in shaded canopy. It will proceed at a moderate pace. Due to the terrain and pace, this hike is intended for audiences 12 and up.

Reicher Ranch Tract near intersection of RR620 and Bee Caves Parkway.

November 30th: 9A-12P, Phoenix Rising-Out of the ashes of an intense prescribed burn, come the beginnings of black-capped vireo habitat. The hike will move through habitat under active management for black-capped vireos before descending into a rich wooded canyon that is annually occupied by our endangered golden-cheeked warbler. **Bohls Tract near Bee Caves Road and RR 620.**

Water Quality Protection Land Hikes

November 2nd: 9A-3P, Onion Creek Exploration-This 4-hour guided hike will explore the highs and the lows of Onion Creek, with a focus on the riparian areas and karst features. **Near intersection of FM 967 and FM 1626.**

November 16th: 9A-11A, Bugs & Blooms Family Hike-Out of the ashes of an intense prescribed burn, come the beginnings of black-capped vireo habitat. The hike will move through habitat under active management for black-capped vireos before descending into a rich wooded canyon that is annually occupied by our endangered golden-cheeked warbler. **Bohls Tract near Bee Caves Road and RR 620.**

Hornsby Bend Events

Monthly Bird Survey, Nov. 9, 2013 at 7:00 am and 4:00pm Starting in 1999, the monthly Bird Survey has taken place at 7am and 4pm on the 2nd Saturday of the month. We meet at Hornsby Bend in the Center for Environmental Research at 7am for the morning survey [Coffee and donuts at 6:30am] and 4pm for the afternoon survey. All levels of birders are welcome - the survey is a great way to improve your skills since we form teams matching experienced and novice birders.

Birding Field Trip, Nov 16, 2013 from 7:30am to 12pm Interested in birds? Join other birders at Hornsby Bend at 7:30am for a fieldtrip around the center. You are guaranteed to see at least 50 species. For more information contact Kevin Anderson at coordinator@hornsbybend.org or call 512-972-1960.

Ecological Literacy Days, Nov. 23, 2013 from 9 am to 1 pm

Combining volunteer work with learning about local ecology, the Ecological Literacy Day at Hornsby Bend begins with several hours of outdoor work and ends with at least an hour of learning about local ecology. Wear boots and work clothing, and be sure to bring your binoculars. For more information contact Kevin Anderson at coordinator@hornsbybend.org or 512-972-1960



If you have suggestions on what you would like to see in the newsletter please contact wildlife@austintexas.gov, we'd love to hear from you!
"Like"

[Austin Parks and Recreation-Parks in Nature](#)



The City of Austin is proud to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require assistance for participation in our programs or use of our facilities, please call (512) 974-6700.