



# Eastside Environmental News

A City of Austin Newsletter from the East Austin Environmental Initiative

Spring/Summer 2014

## Community Supports Student-Designed Campus Projects

Submitted by Nicole Welling, Eastside Memorial High School at Johnston Campus, and Carolyn M. Appleton, EcoRise Youth Innovations

Thanks to a \$3,000 grant from the City of Austin's "Bright Green Future" program, English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher Nicole Welling and six students from Eastside Memorial High School at the Johnston Campus (EMHS) are revitalizing a campus courtyard with raised garden beds, a rainwater catchment system, and a new outdoor classroom.

The City grant aims to help Austin-area students, teachers, and parents envision a "bright green future" through a variety of hands-on learning projects. Welling asked her students to design an outdoor learning space that utilizes sustainable building practices, adds value to their campus, and positively impacts the community.

Students' engagement and leadership in the project reflects the increased academic performance of EMHS students in recent years. Their design for the gardens and outdoor structure creates a place for students to learn in an outdoor environment and for community members to interact.

The project is a collaborative effort. Mentoring support has been shared, and will continue to be provided, by the Austin Permaculture Guild, Upcycle Organics, Keep Austin Beautiful, Austin Community College's Building and Construction Department, and EcoRise Youth Innovations. Parents and members of the community will share their knowledge of gardening, building techniques, and more.

This campus project is a work in process. Please contact Nicole Welling at 512-569-0595 or [writetonicole@gmail.com](mailto:writetonicole@gmail.com) if you have questions or would like to support the project by donating supplies or volunteering.

Visit [www.austintexas.gov/brightgreenfuture](http://www.austintexas.gov/brightgreenfuture) to learn more about the City's Bright Green Future grants program and [www.austintexas.gov/raingardens](http://www.austintexas.gov/raingardens) to learn about sustainable stormwater solutions.



Students take charge of revitalizing their campus courtyard



Oscar Garza

## Field Notes...

### 20 Years of Environmental Service

The number of changes in East Austin can be a bit overwhelming - new houses, roads, and businesses seem to be popping up everywhere! During this time of urban growth, it's important for community members to help protect and improve the health and vitality of their neighborhoods and the environment. Want to get involved?

- **Volunteer** to help with a project or event led by community groups, schools, or City programs ([www.austintexas.gov/volunteer](http://www.austintexas.gov/volunteer)).
- **Plan** an activity to improve your neighborhood and recruit your neighbors to help!
- **Join forces with the City** by reporting spills or pollution concerns, identifying abandoned or underused properties for potential cleanup and reuse, or participating in City incentive programs, such as recycling old refrigerator/freezers.

Residents new to the area might not be familiar with the East Austin community's long history of activism - including removing polluting tank farms or replacing the decommissioned Holly Power Plant with green spaces. For years, East Austin has been an exemplary model of community participation and improvement. We look forward to engaging with an increasing number of residents and businesses to continue this tradition.

**Oscar Garza**

512-974-1893

[Oscar.Garza@austintexas.gov](mailto:Oscar.Garza@austintexas.gov)

If you would like to receive this information electronically twice each year, please visit [www.austintexas.gov/PollutionPrevention](http://www.austintexas.gov/PollutionPrevention) - in the Public Awareness Programs section (middle of page), click the "Subscribe to the biannual newsletter" tab.

**24-Hour Pollution Hotline 512-974-2550**  
**Linea de la contaminación, atiende 24 horas al día**

# EASTSIDE ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS



## Austin Enviro Mechanics Program

The Austin Enviro Mechanics program (formerly known as the Austin Clean Water Partners Program), a cooperative effort between the City of Austin Watershed Protection Department and local auto repair businesses, promotes businesses' efforts to prevent pollution and help protect good water quality in Austin's creeks and river.

Local consumers prefer to support businesses that help protect our community's beauty and natural resources. For more information or to become a participant in the program and an environmental leader in your industry, call Chris Miller at 512-974-2550, or visit the website [www.austintexas.gov/AustinEnviroMechanics](http://www.austintexas.gov/AustinEnviroMechanics).

### Current Austin Enviro Mechanics:

Zip	Company	Address	Phone
78702	Capital Metro	2910 E. 5th St.	512-389-7411
78702	East First Grocery	1811 E. Cesar Chavez St.	512-477-0988
78702	Travis Engine Center	2406 Hidalgo St.	512-476-6837
78702	Crushproof Kustom Auto Repair	421 Tillery Street	512-386-9889
78702	Friendly's Auto Repair	419 Tillery Street	512-385-4466
78703	Ben's Workshop	410 Pressler Street	512-472-5555
78704	Brake Check # 17	205 E. Ben White Blvd.	512-448-1221
78704	Zimmer's Auto Shop	2313 Thorton Rd. #C	512-445-6731
78704	B&B Muffler and Automotive Service Center	3000 S. Lamar Blvd	512-447-5581
78705	Flamingo Automotive	3512 Guadalupe St.	512-459-9917
78723	Marks American Car Care	6303 Cameron Rd.	512-459-1486
78729	Arboretum Auto Service	12108 Roxie Dr	512-343-8393
78731	Charlie and Ann's Exxon	5400 Balcones Dr.	512-452-5422
78731	Lamb's Tire & Automotive Center #4	3564 Far West Blvd.	512-345-6600
78745	Auto Gate Austin	435 Industrial Blvd.	512-444-4283
78745	Leonard Johnson's Garage & Muffler Center	4401 S. 1st St.	512-445-2892
78745	Bridgestone Firestone # 43E3	6412 S. I35 Svc. Rd. Sb.	512-442-9388
78745	Capital V Connection	4201 S. Congress Ave.	512-441-1334
78745	Champion Toyota	4800 S. I35 Svc. Rd. Sb.	512-440-4500
78745	Ellis & Salazar Garage & Body Shop	4501 S. Congress Ave.	512-444-5555

Zip	Company	Address	Phone
78745	E-Z Food Store #5	6400 S. 1st St.	512-447-5825
78745	Joe Angell Automotive Service	4222 S. 1st St.	512-444-6721
78745	Maxwell Ford	5000 S. I35 Svc. Rd. Sb.	512-443-5000
78745	Mazda South	4506 S. I35 Svc. Rd. Sb.	512-462-3131
78745	Capitol Chevrolet	6200 S. I35 Svc. Rd. Sb.	512-444-8888
78745	Caliber Collision Centers	6222 Manchaca Rd.	512-443-2244
78745	Redline Automotive & Marine	4705 Weidemar Ln.	512-441-0416
78749	Kwik Kar Southwest	3416 W William Cannon	512-891-7800
78751	Goodyear Auto Service Center	907 E. 41st St.	512-459-6554
78752	Mercedes Benz of Austin	6757 Airport Blvd	512-406-3321
78753	Swedish Auto Service	11008 N. Lamar Blvd.	512-836-0022
78753	Caliber Collision Centers	8735 N. Lamar Blvd	512-836-0000
78757	Advanced Automotive & Tire	7528 Burnet Road	512-454-3454
78757	Rising Sun Japanese Auto Service	2714 Foster Ln.	512-453-6292
78757	Infiniti of Austin	8140 Burnet Rd.	512-453-0660
78758	Bridgestone Firestone # 43E2	2500 W. Palmer Ln.	512-388-6060
78759	Lexus of Austin	9910 Stonelake Blvd.	512-343-3400
78759	Mopac Auto Service Inc.	3500 Hyridge Dr.	512-346-0438
78759	Arbor Car Wash & Lube	10401 Jollyville Rd.	512-346-8050
78759	Great Hills Automotive	5346 Thunder Creek Rd.	512-795-2995
78759	Jiffy Lube #2926	3704 Spicewood Springs Rd.	512-345-1274

## Reclaiming East Austin

It's no easy task to bring vacant, run-down, potentially contaminated properties back to productive use. Just ask Christine Whitney with the City of Austin's Brownfields Division. Although she just stepped into the role in October, Whitney is no stranger to the legal and environmental challenges that come with the job. Before joining the City of Austin, Whitney spent more than a decade with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) overseeing similar responsibilities.

Brownfields are underused or abandoned properties that might be contaminated. These properties are often run-down "eyesores" that negatively impact communities by decreasing property values, increasing crime, creating safety hazards, and restricting economic opportunity. Redevelopment of these sites can improve public health and the environment, as well as attract investment to provide housing, jobs, recreational opportunities, open



space, and public facilities. As the Brownfields Program manager, Whitney orchestrates environmental assessments and cleanups on brownfields to encourage property reuse and neighborhood revitalization. "This position is a natural fit," Whitney said. "I get to combine my love of helping people with my passion for improving the community we live in."

In 2013, the City of Austin assisted in the reclamation process of three brownfields in East Austin:

- Plaza Saltillo: The City partnered with the TCEQ and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assess a four-block area adjacent to the Plaza Saltillo Metro stop between 4th and 5th Streets. The transit-oriented development will include residential and commercial space.
- Guadalupe-Saldaña Subdivision: The City partnered with TCEQ to complete the assessment and cleanup of two properties, which enabled the construction of 90 affordable housing units at the intersection of Tillery Street and Goodwin Avenue.
- Festival Beach Food Forest: The City started the assessment of Holly Shores, located east of I-35 and north of Lady Bird Lake, as part of the Holly Shores Master Plan. The City's Parks and Recreation Department Urban Forestry Program, as well as Sustainable Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens Program, are working together with the Festival Beach Food Forest team to determine if the area just south of the existing Festival Beach Community Garden is suitable for a "food forest" of fruit and nut trees.



Whitney looks forward to finding ways to preserve the character of East Austin, while expanding opportunities for its residents. As the sole employee overseeing the program, Whitney depends largely on feedback from area residents. If you are interested in learning more about the program, visit [www.austintexas.gov/brownfields](http://www.austintexas.gov/brownfields); if you would like to contact Whitney about a particular brownfield site, call 512-974-6085 or email [Christine.Whitney@austintexas.gov](mailto:Christine.Whitney@austintexas.gov).



Are you familiar with the full impact of trees on our community? Most of us are grateful for the shade they provide during our long, hot summers, but trees also provide many environmental and economic benefits, such as cleaning the air, holding soil in place, cooling streets and buildings, providing food, beautifying neighborhoods, and much, much more!

Austin's drought has taken a significant toll on our beloved trees, and the population of urban trees continues to decline. Additionally, the tree population is under increasing pressure from drought, disease, and urban development spurred by Austin's rapid growth.

The City and the community have taken steps to protect trees and the valuable services they provide. The City's Urban Forestry Program and Watershed Protection Department partnered with local organization, TreeFolks, Inc., to create the Ready, Set, Plant! program to support the planting of thousands of seedling (young) trees and shrubs.

We've recently emerged from an exciting season of growing Austin's urban forest. Central Texas' tree



**Volunteers plant trees around Boggy Creek**

planting season runs from October 1 – March 31, the best time for new trees to become established before being subjected to the stress of Texas' high summer temperatures.

Ready, Set, Plant! engaged the help of more than 400 volunteers to plant more than 11,000 tree seedlings during the recent planting season.

Visit the Austin Forest Portal at [www.austintexas.gov/treeportal](http://www.austintexas.gov/treeportal) for all your tree-related questions.

# EASTSIDE ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS



## Where to Call for Pollution Information & Assistance

### CITY OF AUSTIN NUMBERS

General Non-Emergency  
311

Health & Human Services Department  
512-972-5600

Austin Enviro Mechanics Program  
512-974-2550

East Austin Environmental Initiative  
512-974-1893

Pollution Hotline (24 Hr.)  
512-974-2550

Household Hazardous Waste program  
512-974-4343

Public Information Office  
512-974-2220

Austin Resource Recovery Customer Service  
512-494-9400

Stormwater Drainage/Erosion Complaints  
512-974-3355

Austin Water  
(Sewage complaints 24 Hr.)  
512-972-1000

Zoning and Building Use Complaints  
512-974-2875

Austin Brownfield Revitalization Office  
512-974-6085

### OTHER NUMBERS

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
512-339-2929

Lower Colorado River Authority  
512-473-3307

### CITY OF AUSTIN ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Lee Leffingwell 512-974-2250  
Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole 512-974-2266

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mike Martinez 512-974-2264  
Laura Morrison 512-974-2258  
Chris Riley 512-974-2260  
Bill Spelman 512-974-2256  
Kathie Tovo 512-974-2255

## Get PAID to Recycle Your Old Refrigerator/Freezer - FREE Appliance Pick-up Included!

Your old, inefficient refrigerator or freezer is costing you extra money and should be put permanently in the deep freeze!

Older refrigerators and freezers use two to three times more energy than a newer, Energy Star® model. An older unit in the garage during the summer has a significant impact on your electric bill! By recycling your old refrigerator/freezer, you can receive \$50 per appliance (for up to two appliances) from Austin Energy, plus save \$100 - \$200 a year on your electric bill!

The Austin Energy Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling Program provides FREE pick-up of older, working refrigerators and freezers for Austin Energy customers. Austin Energy's contractor recycles 98% of the materials in the appliances and safely disposes the ozone-depleting refrigerants.

To participate:

- You must be an Austin Energy electric utility customer.
- Your refrigerator or freezer must be an older unit, in working condition (cooling), and between 14–27 cubic feet in size.

Austin Energy residential customers will receive \$50 per appliance (paid by check, within four-six weeks of pick-up), for up to two refrigerators, freezers, or a combination of the two appliances. To schedule the pick-up of your refrigerator or freezer, call (toll-free) 1-800-452-8685, or visit [www.austinenergy.com](http://www.austinenergy.com).

When you buy a new refrigerator or freezer, look for the ENERGY STAR® label for the greatest energy savings.



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