



OUTCOMES REPORT

SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019



*Recognizing and supporting
innovative projects that inspire K-12 students
to become lifelong environmental stewards.*



Message from Lucia Athens, Chief Sustainability Officer

For the last seven years, the Office of Sustainability has provided small sustainability grants to area K-12 schools with the support of many City of Austin departments. This year, the Bright Green Future Grants program achieved a major milestone by funding its 300th project. This Outcomes Report celebrates the remarkable growth and impact of this program.

As Austin continues to seek innovative solutions that address climate change and preserve nature in the city, fostering sustainability thinking and practices in the next generation of Austinites is critical. These are the leaders of tomorrow. The large number of highly creative projects proposed by teachers and parents this year should give us all hope for a resilient future.



Message from Mary K. Priddy, Program Manager

In 2012, we launched the Bright Green Future Grants program by funding three projects at a local elementary school, middle school, and a high school. This year the City of Austin funded more than 100 projects that included bicycle clubs, rain gardens, outdoor learning spaces, community gardens, wildlife habitats, and waste reduction efforts. There were also creative approaches to addressing light pollution, producing energy, caring for trees, and reducing the risk of wildfire. I continue to be amazed and inspired by the passion teachers and students bring to protecting and preserving the Earth. I hope you will be too as you learn about their accomplishments in this report.



BACKGROUND

Launched in 2012 by the City of Austin's Office of Sustainability, the Bright Green Future Grants program is designed to recognize and support innovative projects that will inspire K-12 students to become lifelong environmental stewards. Through a competitive selection process, school-based sustainability projects can be awarded up to \$3,000 for implementation. Grant recipients are selected each year by a panel of judges composed of Office of Sustainability staff, representatives from other City of Austin departments, and community members who serve on the City's Environmental Commission, Electric Utility Commission, Food Policy Board, Water and Wastewater Commission, and Zero Waste Advisory Commission.

Initially, the program funded three projects at Austin-area elementary, middle, and high schools that offered tangible environmental benefits, provided hands-on educational opportunities for students, and created positive benefits for the broader community. Based on the success of these first projects, the Bright Green Future Grants program was expanded in subsequent years with additional funding by the following City of Austin departments: Austin Resource Recovery, Watershed Protection, Public Works, Austin Transportation, the Urban Forestry division of Development Services, and Austin Water. In 2014 the program was expanded again through a partnership with nonprofit EcoRise Youth Innovations, this time to fund projects identified through student-led campus Eco-Audits.

“We’re pulling these weeds so they won’t steal your water and nutrients. Don’t worry, we won’t put any poison on you.”

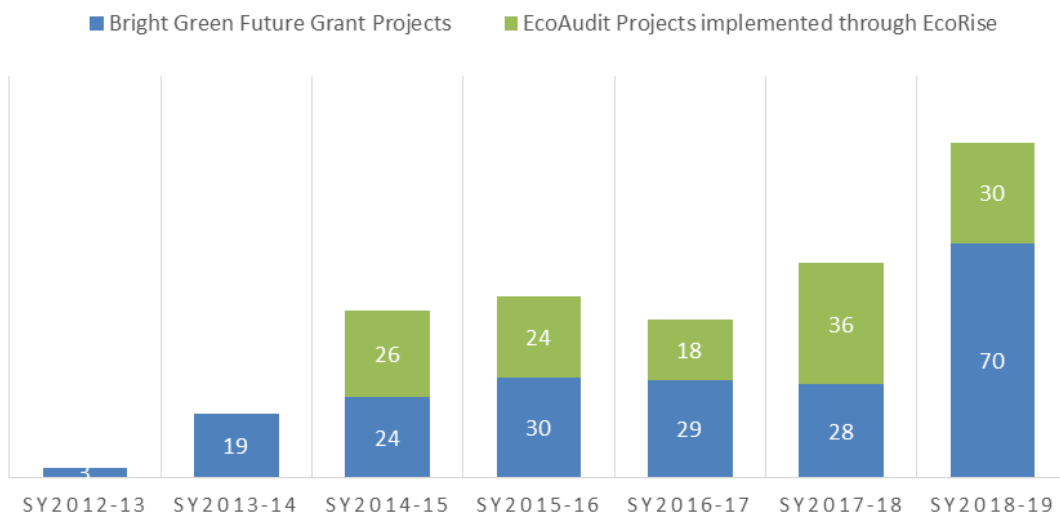
– Metz Elementary student “carrot whisperer”

Composting systems, rainwater harvesting, organic gardens, rain gardens, bike club and rodeos, tree planting, chicken coops, bee keeping, and wildlife habitat projects have received Bright Green Future Grant funding. From those three initial projects in 2012, the number has grown to 337 funded to date.

It is estimated that more than 100,000 students have participated in creating and implementing Bright Green Future Grant projects. Grant funded projects are located in every Austin City Council District, and cover Austin, Round Rock, Georgetown, Leander, and Del Valle Independent School Districts, as well as several private schools, the Travis County Juvenile Justice Center, and the Texas School for the Deaf. To date, 71 projects have been funded at 33 Title 1 schools in the Austin Independent School District, which represents nearly half of the Bright Green Future Grant-funded projects awarded directly by the City of Austin.



BRIGHT GREEN FUTURE GRANT PROJECTS





CONSERVING WATER AND PROTECTING WATER QUALITY

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: SUNSET VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RAINWATER COLLECTION AND GARDEN

Sunset Valley Elementary students know that for much of the year, Austin doesn't get enough water—and then suddenly, we may get too much. They wanted to use their Bright Green Future Grant to capture excess rainwater to use during the driest times. Working with Partners for Education Agriculture and Sustainability (PEAS), students, faculty, and volunteers installed a rainwater collection system and rain garden that provides irrigation for the school's garden.

Students identified a prime location for the collection system that uses an existing gutter in an area prone to runoff during storms. By capturing rainwater that would have otherwise been lost and using a rain garden for filtration, Sunset Valley now has plenty of water for its organic garden. The location is also highly visible for everyone on campus. The students plan to add signage for the project to increase awareness about water conservation and watershed protection.

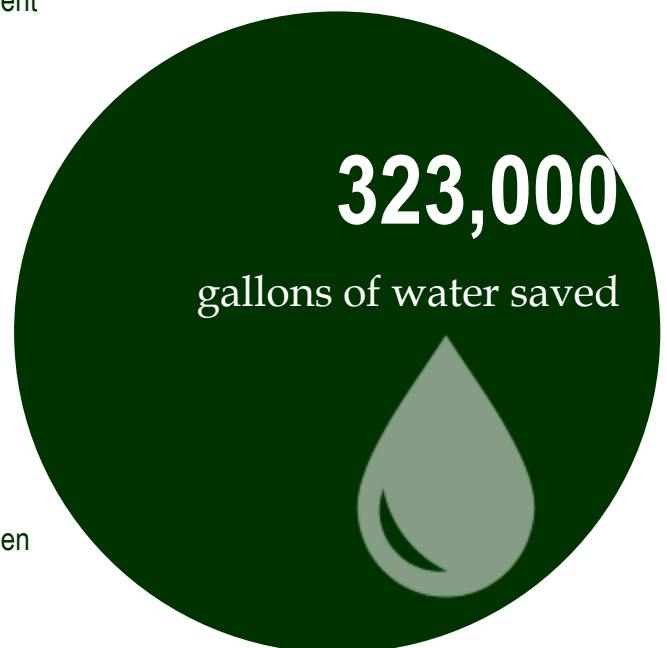


“It’s cool we can use this water for our garden instead of running it into the parking lot. We don’t need to water the parking lot.”

– David, 5th grade student, Sunset Valley Elementary

SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019 WATER CONSERVATION PROJECTS:

- Barrington Elementary School Campus Trails and Meadow
- Forbes Child Development Center Outdoor Learning Environment
- Lively (formerly Fulmore) Middle School Vision Garden
- Harris Early College Prep Peace Path
- Kiker Elementary School Rainwater Collection
- Kiker Elementary School Main Playground Erosion Prevention
- Magnolia Montessori For All Rain Garden
- Mathews Elementary School Rainwater Cistern Collection
- Mathews Elementary School Rain Garden Runoff Capture
- Perez Elementary School Eco Sustainability Project
- River Place Elementary School Rainwater Irrigation System
- St. Elmo Elementary School Campus Smart Water Plan
- Sunset Valley Elementary School Rainwater Collection & Garden
- Wieland Elementary School Rainwater Harvesting System
- Williams Elementary School Rainwater Harvesting
- Wooldridge Elementary School Green School Park
- Zilker Elementary School Rain Garden for the Northeast Garden Area





CARING FOR TREES AND PRESERVING HABITAT

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: THE PARK AT ST. ANDREWS EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Last year, Greg Mele became the new Director of Outdoor Education at St. Andrew's, tasked with improving the school's outdoor engagement program, fostering student environmental awareness, and creating, enhancing, and maintaining the new campus. "At St. Andrew's, we intend to develop individuals that have a deep understanding and love of nature, and a life-long desire to advocate for the protection of natural areas. We realize that young people have a narrow window of time in their development to make a lasting connection with the outdoors," Greg said.

Greg came up with a plan for the space that would include an arboretum, a botanical garden, a trail network, and a production garden. He wanted to preserve and enhance the environmental features and species on the school's campus, while also allowing young learners to safely explore and interact with nature. This year's Bright Green Future Grant has helped the school pay for equipment like shovels, chainsaws, work gloves, and loppers. Using these supplies, Greg, the students, and their teachers were able to create the park's trail system.

*“The disappearance of butterflies is serious,
and we need to inspire children to
protect these special creatures.”*

— Lisl Friday, Athena Montessori Principal



SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019 GREEN SPACE AND HABITAT PROJECTS:

- Anderson Mill Elementary School School Garden & Outdoor Learning Space
- Andrews Elementary School Shade, Benches & Butterflies for our Playground
- Athena Montessori Academy Butterfly Garden
- Austin Montessori Academy Families in Nature Expansion
- Boone Elementary School Campus Campout
- Caraway Elementary School Outdoor Teaching to Inspire
- Chaparral Star Academy Digital Tree Monitoring
- The Headwaters School Campus Nature Community
- Kocurek Elementary School Discovery Garden
- Liberal Arts & Science Academy Light Pollution Survey
- Maplewood Elementary School Courtyard Pollinator Garden
- Mathews Elementary School Wishing Tree & American Natives
- Ridgetop Elementary School Monarch Migration Learning Station
- Round Rock Opportunity Center Wind Turbine Irrigation System
- Small Middle School Firewise Demonstration Garden
- Spicewood Elementary School Shade Tree for Gaga Pit
- St. Andrews Episcopal School The PARK
- Summit Elementary School Wildlife Garden
- Texas School for the Deaf Early Childhood Natural Outdoor Learning Space
- Travis County Juvenile Justice Center Jaguar Urban Garden & Learning Center

15,000

bees saved or relocated





BICYCLE CLUBS AND RODEOS

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: GHISALLO CYCLING INITIATIVE

Since 2013, Bright Green Future Grants have funded 47 Bicycle Clubs and Rodeo events at area schools through the Ghisallo Cycling Initiative. Ghisallo is an Austin-based non-profit organization that provides youth with supervised access to outdoor physical activity, while also helping them develop into self-sufficient bicycle riders. The goal is to teach kids the skills and knowledge to use their bicycles for transportation without depending on adults. In addition, Ghisallo Cycling Initiative works with a variety of underserved populations to create an immediate quality of life improvement by enabling self-directed mobility and access to new opportunities.



“Learning to get around by bike safely doesn’t just build experiences. It also creates endless opportunities and immediately expands one’s horizons.”

– Christopher Stanton, Ghisallo Cycling Initiative



SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019 BICYCLE CLUBS AND RODEO EVENTS:

- Brooke Elementary School
- Eastside Memorial High School
- Harris Elementary School
- Hart Elementary School
- Houston Elementary School
- Kealing Middle School
- Langford Elementary School
- Perez Elementary School
- Rodriguez Elementary School
- Sanchez Elementary School
- Zavala Elementary School

36,038

miles traveled by bike





GROWING HEALTHY FOOD

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: SCI-TECH HIGH COMMUNITY GARDEN

At Sci-Tech High, many students do not have access to proper nutrition. This Title 1 school recently relocated to a site with plenty of land, and students used their Bright Green Future Grant to cultivate a lush, fertile garden that provides healthy produce and educational opportunities. As they developed plans for the garden, students considered runoff issues and planted trees to help protect the site.

With the garden in place, students get to learn basic gardening skills, as well as how to prepare the food they grow—information that they can take home to share with their families. More than that, the new garden offers green space on campus and areas for the students to thrive in.



*“We’re growing our own figs.
I always thought figs were only in a cookie.”*

– Desiree, Sci-Tech High School student



SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019 GARDEN PROJECTS:

- Austin Achieve Urban Farming
- Barrington Elementary School PEAS Gardening & Outdoor Science
- Blackshear Elementary School PEAS Gardening & Outdoor Science
- Boone Elementary School PEAS Gardening & Outdoor Science
- Brooke Elementary School PEAS Gardening & Outdoor Science
- Caraway Elementary School Organic School Garden
- Del Valle Opportunity Center Garden
- Hernandez Middle School Operation Restoration
- Metz Elementary School PEAS Gardening & Outdoor Science
- Ortega Elementary School Campus Garden
- Pease Elementary School PEAS Gardening & Outdoor Science
- River Oaks Elementary School PEAS Gardening & Outdoor Science
- Sci-Tech High School Community Garden
- Valor Public Schools Organic Raised Garden Beds
- Whole Life Learning Center Aquaponic Propagation System
- Winn Elementary School PEAS Gardening & Outdoor Science





REDUCING WASTE

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: BOONE ELEMENTARY WATER BOTTLE STATION

Boone students completed a National Wildlife Federation Eco-Audit on water use at their school and decided to apply for a Bright Green Future Grant to install two water bottle filling stations near the gym and cafeteria. The entire Boone community was so excited about the water bottle filling stations that the campus Facebook page exploded with Likes and Loves! The filling stations also encouraged students to drink more water and less soda.

Students used some of their funding to create a campus campaign against single-use water bottles. The shift to reusable bottles and reducing plastic waste has led to increased awareness throughout the school. Waste reduction has become a campus priority.

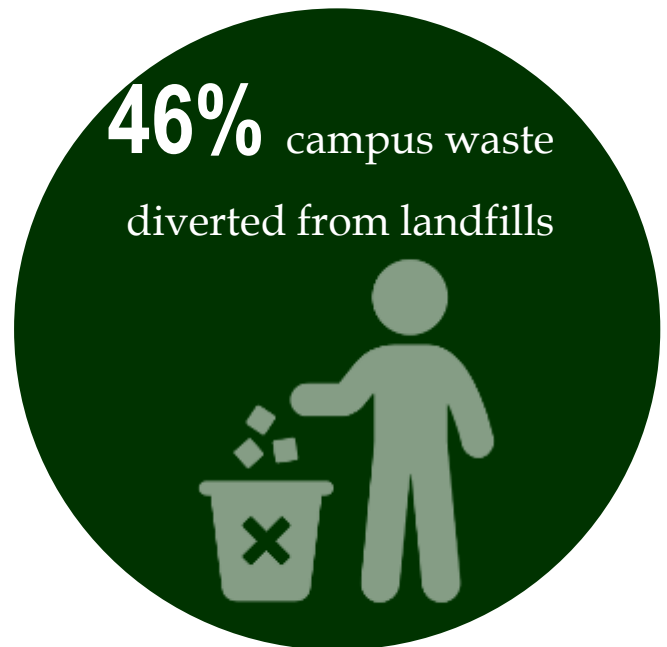


*“I think that this
will save the world,
because then there’s
not plastic trash
everywhere.”*

*– Khalil, 5th grade student
at Boone Elementary*

SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019 WASTE REDUCTION PROJECTS:

Boone Elementary School Water Bottle Station
Boone Elementary Water Use Campaign
Lee Elementary School Roadrunners for Resources
Redeemer Lutheran Elementary School Growing Up Green



*“It’s fun to watch the number of how many
bottles it’s saved us.”*

– Brody, 1st grade student at Boone Elementary



FUNDING DEPARTMENTS:

Austin Resource Recovery
Austin Transportation
Development Services Urban Forestry Program
Office of Sustainability
Watershed Protection





ECO-AUDIT PROJECTS

Since 2014, the Office of Sustainability has partnered with EcoRise to fund the Eco-Audit Grant Program in Austin. This year, 33 student-designed projects were selected for microgrant funding. To receive grant funds, students must complete a campus environmental audit in one or more areas of sustainability (e.g. water, waste, energy, food) and design a project to address an issue identified during the audit. The student-designed projects must either reduce the campus environmental footprint or create public awareness around environmental issues.

On May 3, 2019, the Fifth Annual Student Innovation Showcase was held at Austin City Hall. Twenty student teams from across Central Texas presented their innovative sustainability Eco-Audit Grant projects to a crowd of over 200 community members. Mayor Adler was also on hand to celebrate the enthusiasm, ingenuity, and commitment of the Eco-Audit teams, and pose for a selfie or two with students.



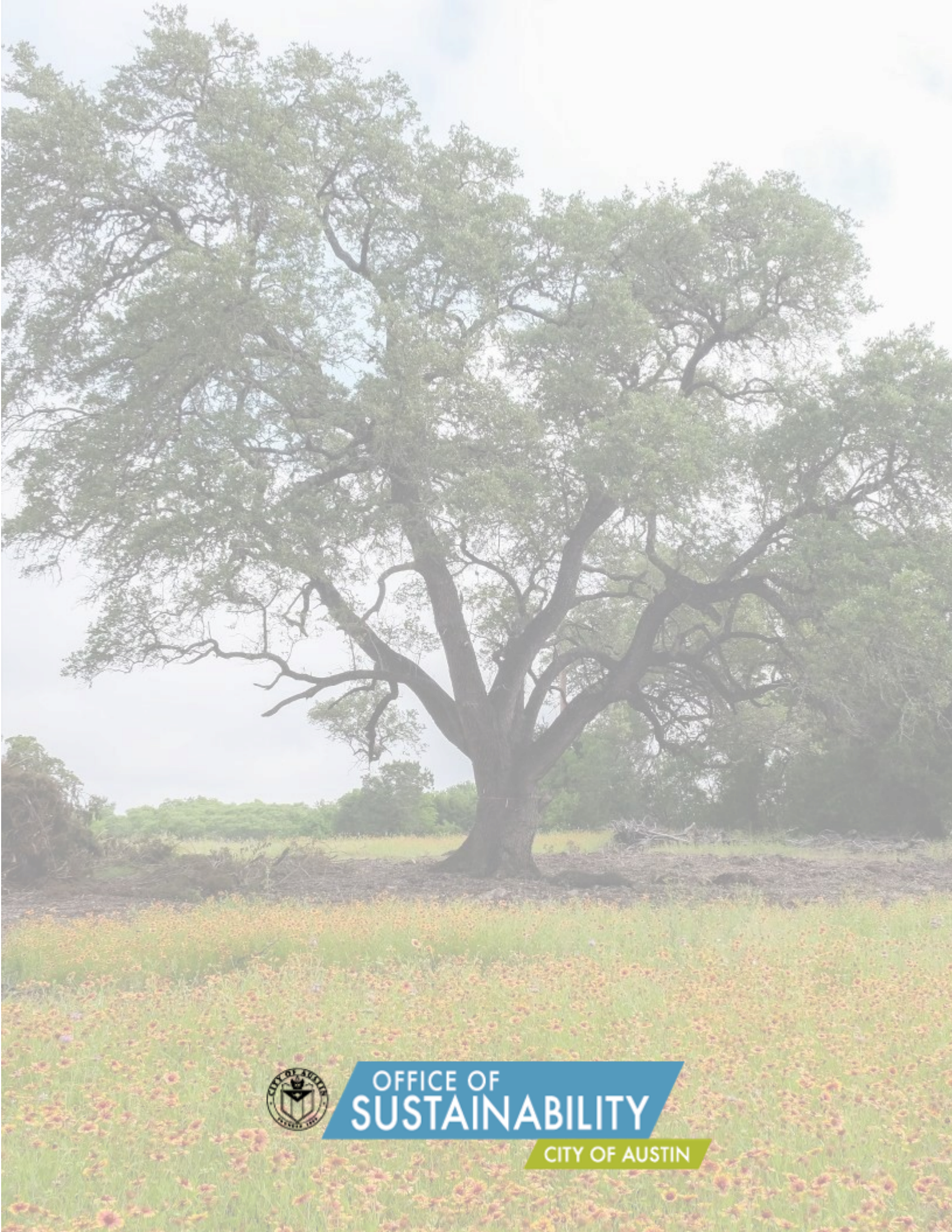
*“Eco-Audits are truly motivating for students
and your community will thank you.”*

– Rachel Briles, Hill Elementary School

SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019 ECO-AUDIT PROJECTS:

- Anderson High School Gold Goes Green
- Becker Elementary School Green Classroom
- Boone Elementary School Save Energy!
- Brooke Elementary School Planting a Rainbow, Green Math Garden & Bringing Berries to Brooke
- Galindo Elementary School Thirsty Bees
- Highland Park Elementary School Water Conservation
- Hill Elementary School Native Plants Garden & Habitat for Insects
- Inside Outside School Bird Habitat Blitz, Magnificent Mud Makeover, Greenhouse & Tool Storage
- Joe Lee Johnson Elementary School Chicken Coop, Compostable Cutlery & Water Wizards
- Maplewood Elementary School Gold Goes Green
- McBee Elementary School We Want a Garden!
- Reilly Elementary School Dumpster Beautification and Bird & Pollinator Garden
- St. Louis Catholic School Snack Time Waste Tree & No More Paper Towels!
- TA Brown Elementary School Weather Station, Urban Farm & Chicken Life Cycle
- Voight Elementary School Garden & Pergola
- Whole Life Learning Center Community Food & Native Forest Garden
- Zavala Elementary School Pollinator Meadow





OFFICE OF
SUSTAINABILITY

CITY OF AUSTIN