



## Wildlife Austin

City of Austin  
Parks and Recreation  
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Austin, TX 78705  
(512) 978-2606  
wildlife@austintexas.gov  
[www.keeptaustinwild.com](http://www.keeptaustinwild.com)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Feb 2nd** - Invasive plant removal workday at Blunn Creek

[www.austinparks.org/eventinfo.html?eventkey=572](http://www.austinparks.org/eventinfo.html?eventkey=572)

**Feb 2nd** - Beginners birds walk with Travis Audubon

[travisaudubon.org/get-outdoors/field-trips/beginners-bird-walk-at-northeast-metropolitan-park-and-lake-pflugerville](http://travisaudubon.org/get-outdoors/field-trips/beginners-bird-walk-at-northeast-metropolitan-park-and-lake-pflugerville)

**Feb 3rd** - The Basics of Rainwater Harvesting

[www.austineconetwork.com/event/basics-rainwater-harvesting](http://www.austineconetwork.com/event/basics-rainwater-harvesting)

**Feb 7th** - Tree planting at Lady Bird Lake

[www.austinparks.org/eventinfo.html?eventkey=585](http://www.austinparks.org/eventinfo.html?eventkey=585)

**Feb 9th** - Sapling planting with TreeFolks

[treefolks.org/volunteer-opportunities/](http://treefolks.org/volunteer-opportunities/)

**Feb 9th** - Clean up Lady Bird Lake with KAB!

[www.keeptaustinbeautiful.org/BLFeb2013](http://www.keeptaustinbeautiful.org/BLFeb2013)

**Feb 9th** - Monthly Bird Count at Hornsby Bend

[travisaudubon.org/get-outdoors/field-trips/hornsby-bend-monthly-bird-count](http://travisaudubon.org/get-outdoors/field-trips/hornsby-bend-monthly-bird-count)

**Feb 9th** - Invasive removal workday at West Bouldin Creek

[www.austinparks.org/eventinfo.html?eventkey=564](http://www.austinparks.org/eventinfo.html?eventkey=564)

# February 2013

## A GREEN VALENTINE'S DAY?

Whether you love it or hate it, Valentine's day is just around the corner. It's easy to fall into the trap of consumerism and go overboard buying lots of gifts for your special someone. I thought it would be nice to write about a few "green" Valentine's ideas to make your day extra-special and eco-friendly.

- I found this AMAZING recipe for Mexican chocolate fondue. You can make it completely organic and it's pretty darn tasty...  
[www.treehugger.com/green-food/mexican-dark-chocolate-fondue.html](http://www.treehugger.com/green-food/mexican-dark-chocolate-fondue.html)
- Give them flowers... wildflowers! Why not give them flowers that last and add some wildlife habitat in the process. Stores like Native American Seed ([www.seedsource.com](http://www.seedsource.com)) are a great place to find all sorts of seed mixes that work for any garden situation.
- The Sierra Club suggests planning an "eco-friendly date night." Why not ride your bikes to a restaurant that uses local organic ingredients! Here is a list of the top 15 Austin restaurants that source locally:  
[30days2011.wordpress.com/2011/07/19/top-15-austin-restaurants-that-source-locally/](http://30days2011.wordpress.com/2011/07/19/top-15-austin-restaurants-that-source-locally/)
- Give gifts that last! Plan a hike, take a romantic (farmer's market supplied) picnic, or buy your special someone a membership to a local CSA ([www.edibleaustin.com/content/csas-resources-108](http://www.edibleaustin.com/content/csas-resources-108)). There are lots of things you can buy that won't eventually end up in a landfill-you just have to be creative!
- Alone for Valentines Day? Don't fret! Adopt a dog or cat from your local animal shelter and you will have unconditional love for years to come. Visit [www.austinpetsalive.org](http://www.austinpetsalive.org) for more details.

For more green Valentine's Day tips visit [www.greenlivingtips.com/articles/a-green-valentines-day.html](http://www.greenlivingtips.com/articles/a-green-valentines-day.html)



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## Notes from Erin

Join Austin at the **Celebrate Urban Birds** event on February 16th from 10am to 2pm at the Austin Nature and Science Center. The event will be family-friendly and have lots of great activities for kids!

There will also be a bird count and art activities on **February 23rd** from 10-2 at the Splash exhibit in Zilker Park. Also on the 23rd, Zilker Botanical Gardens will be featuring a talk by Habitat Steward Meredith O'Reilly on "Gardening for Backyard Birds." For a complete list of Celebrate Urban Birds events around the city visit our website [www.keeptaustinwild.com](http://www.keeptaustinwild.com) to see the poster. Don't miss out on this great event! You might learn a thing or two and have some fun in the process!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Feb 10th** - Native Plants for Texas Landscapes

[www.austineconetwork.com/  
event/native-plants-texas-  
landscapes](http://www.austineconetwork.com/event/native-plants-texas-landscapes)

**Feb 16th** - Celebrate Urban Birds!

[www.keeapaustinwild.com](http://www.keeapaustinwild.com)

**Feb 16th** - Wild Basin Workday with KAB

[www.keeapaustinbeautiful.org/  
node/2031](http://www.keeapaustinbeautiful.org/node/2031)

**Feb 16th** - Hornsby Bend monthly bird trip

[travisaudubon.org/get-  
outdoors/field-trips/hornsby-  
bend-monthly-bird-walk](http://travisaudubon.org/get-outdoors/field-trips/hornsby-bend-monthly-bird-walk)

**Feb 16th** - Lower Bull Creek Greenbelt workday with KAB

[www.keeapaustinbeautiful.org/  
node/2027](http://www.keeapaustinbeautiful.org/node/2027)

**Feb 23rd** - Ecological Literacy Day at Hornsby Bend

[www.keeapaustinbeautiful.org/  
node/2034](http://www.keeapaustinbeautiful.org/node/2034)

**Feb 23rd** - CenTex Survival Fair at McKinney Falls

[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/)

## Go Native U!

Every year the Wildflower Center puts on Go Native U. They offer a variety of classes throughout the Spring on everything from wild-life to landscape design. Registration is now open! These classes fill up fast so don't delay!

[www.wildflower.org/  
gonativeu](http://www.wildflower.org/gonativeu)

A few examples of classes offered:

- \* Native Plants of Central Texas
- \* Landscape Design
- \* Integrated Pest Management
- \* Plant Maintenance
- \* Art in Nature Classes (including photography, guitar, sketching, and more!)

# Celebration of Urban Birds

Austin Nature & Science Center

301 Nature Center Drive

Saturday, February 16, 2013

10:00am - 2:00pm

FREE EVENT



Come celebrate the amazing birds you see around you everyday. Learn why we want to celebrate their presence in our city! Activities for the entire family include live bird demonstrations, expert lectures, kids' bird drawing, hands-on crafts and activities, a bird scavenger hunt and more

### Scheduled Activities

10:15am and 11:15am

10:30am, 11:30am and 12:30pm

11:00am - 1:00pm

12:00am - 2:00pm

12:00am and 1:00pm

Beginner Bird Walk & Tour at Nature Center Entrance

Live Bird Comparison Demonstration

Live Bird of Prey Demonstration

Kid Bird Drawing Activity

Bird of Prey Exhibit Tour

### Ongoing Activities

- Making a Bird Feast
- Great Migration Challenge
- 10 minute Cornell Lab of Ornithology Bird Count
- Urban Bird Scavenger Hunt Activity - Win Rewards!
- Eat Like a Bird Activity

Visit [www.keeapaustinwild.com](http://www.keeapaustinwild.com)  
or call 512-974-3888

## Additional Activities Celebrating Urban Birds

### February 15<sup>th</sup>

O. Henry Museum, 1:00pm

"The Merry Month of May"

409 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 78701

### February 16<sup>th</sup>

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, 2:30pm - 3:30pm

"Birds of Lady Bird Lake" - Cindy Sperry, Travis Audubon

Bird Count and Art Activity

600 River Street, 78701

### February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Beverly S. Sheffield Education Center, 10:00am - 2:00pm

Bird Count and Art Activities

2201 Andrew Zilker Drive, 78746

Zilker Botanical Gardens, 2:00pm - 3:00pm

"Gardening for Backyard Birds" - Meredith O'Reilly,

Habitat Steward, Travis Audubon

2220 Barton Springs Road, 78746



The City of Austin is proud to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require special assistance for participation in our programs or use of our facilities, please call (512)974-3888. (2)



# Garden of the Month

This month we feature the lovely and certified landscape of the Lamar Senior Activity Center. The primary purpose of the center is to provide meaningful activity within the widest range of civic, cultural and recreational activities for seniors. The garden is a special place where visitors can connect with nature. It was installed in 2008 and has grown more lush and beautiful over the years.

The Senior Activity Center is looking for volunteers to help maintain the garden. If you are interested contact Jerilyn Rainosek at:

[Jerilyn.Rainosek@austintexas.gov](mailto:Jerilyn.Rainosek@austintexas.gov)



# Volunteer for a City of Austin Grow Zone

By Thryn Murray

The City of Austin's Watershed Protection Department has launched a program in collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department and community groups to improve the health of our creeks by creating "Grow Zones". In these creekside areas, mowing is prohibited in order to allow native fauna and flora to thrive, safe from the mower's blades and compaction.

Volunteers are needed to educate and organize neighbors and friends in the active appreciation of our native riparian communities. Activities include working with Watershed Protection Biologists and local non-profits to remove invasive plants and trash, seed native grasses, build earthworks, plant and water native tree seedlings, and to collect data. You can Adopt-a-Creek at [www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/adopt-a-creek](http://www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/adopt-a-creek) or find out about pre-organized projects by signing up at <http://eepurl.com/sb0iL>. Our gratitude goes out to all the dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers who provide the citizen leadership that will make this vision a reality and insure a beautiful and sustainable future for the Austin's creeks and beyond.



## Benefits of Grow Zones

This more passive management style will help the City lower fuel costs and reduce its carbon footprint, but that is just the beginning of the advantages of our new approach. As vegetation grows, it provides shade to reduce air and water temperatures, thus creating a more hospitable environment for wildlife, like turtles, fish, pollinators and song-birds.

The transition area between the aquatic environment in the creek channel and the surrounding terrestrial environment is known as the **riparian zone**, and when fully vegetated, it provides many important functions. A healthy riparian zone:



Mowed

First Year Growth

- Improves floodplain function
- Prevents stream bank erosion
- Filters pollutants from storm runoff,
- Provides habitat and food for a diverse group of animals
- Provides shade that cools air and water temperatures
- Creates a greenbelt forest w/ diverse tree & plant communities
- Reduces the City's carbon footprint
- Reduces maintenance

Just as if you may call the City's 24-Hour Environmental Hotline (512-974-2550) to report pollution problems, you should call 311 if you witness the mismanagement of these spaces, i.e. mowing along the creek corridors. Let's all keep an eye out and to allow our creeks to grow. The result is a beautiful place, with ample opportunities for outdoor recreation and nature education.

You can learn more about "Grow Zones" at [www.austintexas.gov/watershed/creekside](http://www.austintexas.gov/watershed/creekside) and you can fill out the Adopt-a-Creek application at [www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/adopt-a-creek](http://www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/adopt-a-creek)



Thryn Murray is the GIS Analyst for  
COA Watershed Protection and a  
Master Naturalist





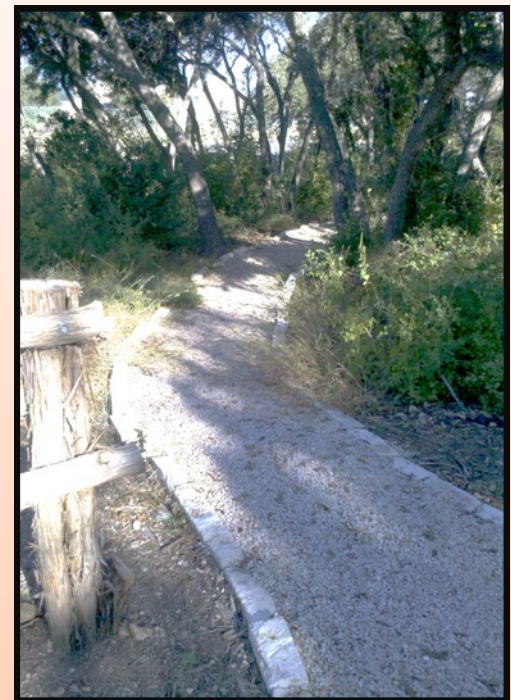
# Schoolyard Habitat Update



The Austin Independent School District is proud to partner with the National Wildlife Federation in the green schools movement. Together, AISD schools have installed over 30 certified Schoolyard Habitats. Schoolyard habitats offer space for students to engage in the natural world around them and allow for interdisciplinary learning that is hands on and inexpensive. They provide increased resources and opportunities for creative instruction and act as a living laboratory for our campuses.

## Spotlight Campus: Gorzycki MS

Gorzycki embraces the true meaning of outdoor classroom and habitat. A team of teachers and students have built a full classroom of benches in their native garden. Native plants fill the beds and the pond, and line the nature trail that weaves its way from the classroom into the woods.



### Donations Needed!

Campuses are looking for donations of the following materials for spring workdays:

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

## Schoolyard Habitat Success Depends on Volunteers Like You!

Contact Anne Muller AISD Outdoor Learning Specialist  
amuller@austinisd.org or 841-5070

For an up to date list of work days and volunteer opportunities



# Adopt a Creek Today!

Involve your group, large or small, in an ongoing service project. Become an Adopt-a-Creek partner by committing to maintain a segment of an Austin creek. Keep Austin Beautiful and Watershed Protection Department will provide everything you need, and assist you at every step.



[www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/adopt-a-creek](http://www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/adopt-a-creek)

Would YOU like to receive the the Wildlife Austin newsletter electronically?

E-mail us at [wildlife@austintexas.gov](mailto:wildlife@austintexas.gov)

# It's My Park Day!

It's My Park Day 2013 is just around the corner and Austin Parks Foundation is thrilled to bring you another great year of volunteer opportunities. Last year, over 2,000 Austinites volunteered for 70 park-improvement projects all over the city. We want to make an even bigger impact this year!

All volunteers will receive a 2013 IMPD t-shirt - and Austin Parks Foundation has lots of ways for you to get involved!



## Volunteer for an IMPD project on March 2

We need everyone - of all ages! - to come out, grab a shovel or a weed-wrench, and help out with the many volunteer projects on March 2nd. Pre-registration is required, as it helps the project hosts plan accordingly. Please sign up for a project at the Austin Parks Foundation calendar page ([austinparks.org/calendar.html](http://austinparks.org/calendar.html)). All projects, which take place in parks all over the city, are listed under the March 2 event.



“Like”

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

on Facebook and look for the Wildlife Austin posts!



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