



Texas News



- NPS Unit
- ★ State Capital



Wildflowers in Dahlstrom Ranch
Photo credit: Cheyenne Johnson

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2011

CURRENT PROJECTS

- 1. Alpine Regional Trails**
City of Alpine, Parks Advisory Board
- 2. Cypress Creek Watershed Protection**
River Systems Institute
- 3. Corpus Christi Trails**
Coastal Bend Bays Foundation
- 4. Greens Bayou Corridor**
Green Bayou Corridor Coalition
- 5. Montopolis Tributary Trail Network**
Montopolis Tributary Trail Association
- 6. Northeast Texas Trail**
Friends of the Trail
- 7. Poteet Trail**
El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association
- 8. San Antonio Headwaters Preservation**
Headwaters Coalition, Inc.
- 9. Somervell County Trails**
City of Glen Rose, Somervell County, Somervell County Water District

Find out more about each project starting on page 3

Recent Successes

Dahlstrom Ranch Provides Public Access to Protected Natural Area

Hays County, the City of Austin, and the Hill Country Conservancy came together to purchase a conservation easement on the historic 2,254-acre Dahlstrom Ranch located near Buda, Texas. The partners requested assistance from RTCA to support stakeholders in planning for public access to a 384-acre portion of the ranch to be leased by Hays County. The ranch contains critical aquifer recharge features, a creek corridor, caves, and scenic Hill Country wildlife habitat.

This project may be the first time in which a privately owned ranch in Texas will combine public use with a conservation easement. The planning process resulted in recommendations for recreational and educational facilities to support sustainable public use, primarily self-guided hiking and educational tours. The access plan knits together the wishes of the family with the desires of the community, and the capacity of Hays County to manage the site in collaboration with the Dahlstrom family. It balances recreation needs and protection of natural and cultural resources.

RTCA also helped Hays County and its partners secure \$100,000 from the Texas Recreation Trail Funds to implement trails and related facilities. Hays County has budgeted \$350,000 toward additional site improvements.

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ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.

We're Here For You.

Could your project benefit from RTCA Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.

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2010 Nationwide Partnership Success

1,251 Miles of Trail Developed

1,694 Miles of River Conserved

25,370 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

94 Percentage of Community Partners Satisfied

Find more information online at
www.nps.gov/rtca



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Recent Successes cont.

Over 100 Miles of Trails Planned for West Houston

With RTCA support, the Energy Corridor District – a West Houston improvement district - recently approved the release of a visionary trail master plan for a 113,000-acre area bisected by I 10, at Houston's western edge. The plan is a result of a collaborative effort organized by the National Park Service and the Energy Corridor District partnership -- a variety of public agencies came together and shared data to develop an understanding of the value of creating connecting trails between the existing and proposed employment centers, residential communities, and the vast parks and public open spaces in West Houston.



Existing Terry Hershey Trail exemplifies a bayou spine trail. Photo credit: Robert Rayburn

RTCA assisted the project partners by designing a community workshop, interactive maps, and other mechanisms for stakeholder and public input on recommendations. Anticipated on-the-ground trail improvements include alternative transportation routes, outdoor recreation opportunities, safe routes to schools, and innovative storm water management and habitat restoration practices adjacent to the trails. The proposed trail network would add 100+ miles for users in West Houston.

High School and College Youth Engage in Planning and Design of 13-mile Trail Corridor



Student David Perez designed the McCANALenBurg Challenge logo, a token of the off-road bike race and community ride between McAllen and Edinburg.

In south Texas, along the border with Mexico, RTCA has been partnering with Los Caminos del Rio, Inc. (LCdR), a local advocacy organization, to develop a vision and plan for a 13 mile hike and bike trail following a drainage canal and linking the communities of McAllen and Edinburg. The lead organization on the project, LCdR, is committed to involving youth in events, art contests, and trail planning and

design. McAllen High School student, David Perez, worked hand-in-hand with the City of McAllen's Drainage Engineer to develop conceptual designs for future bicycle underpasses and overpasses along the drainage canal.

RTCA also worked with LCdR to engage the University of Texas Pan American (UTPA) in completing a Trail Feasibility Study. A student team collected and analyzed data, prepared engineering reports, designs and cost estimates, and mapped out feasible trail routes. The study process fostered youth engagement in community planning and natural and cultural resource preservation, and increased opportunities for disadvantaged youth. The students presented their findings and recommendations to the city leaders of McAllen and Edinburg, who were impressed with the students' passion for trail development.

"The McCANALenBurg Challenge was a priceless experience for me since I was able to work with a professional team to make my design picture perfect" said David. "I was also able to meet and interact with state representatives in regards to the bicycle trails."

Current Projects



Runner in Alpine

1. Alpine Regional Trails

Project Partner: City of Alpine, Parks Advisory Board

RTCA Contact: Hugh Osborne

Location: City of Alpine, West Texas

Project Goal & RTCA Role

Provide planning assistance for an interconnected system of trails that link Alpine's recreation and transportation facilities. The trail system will provide alternative routes from the city to outlying residential & recreational areas.

2. Cypress Creek Watershed Protection

Project Partner: River Systems Institute

RTCA Contact: Krista Sherwood

Location: Wimberly and Hays County

Project Goal

Ensure long-term integrity and sustainability of the Cypress Creek Watershed and preserve water quality standards for present and future generations by keeping the river clean, clear, and flowing. Improve and protect over 15 miles of Cypress Creek, including two popular swimming holes on the river, the Blue Hole and Jacob's Well.

RTCA Role

Facilitate stakeholder meetings for Phase 2 of the project, which includes a series of public forums and meetings to present the findings of the Watershed Characterization Report, rank best management practices, and develop a strategy for implementation of a Watershed Protection Plan.

3. Corpus Christi Trails

Project Partner: Coastal Bend Bays Foundation

RTCA Contact: Marta Newkirk

Location: Corpus Christi and Robstown

Project Goal

Create a network of trails from Corpus Christi to the proposed Padre Island National Seashore paddling trail on Oso Bay (Gulf of Mexico), beginning with a 12-mile paddle trail along Oso Creek. The Oso Greenway Trails Plan proposes a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities, including kayaking, hiking, walking, biking, and horseback riding.

RTCA Role

Assist project partners with the development of a Paddle Trail Plan for Oso Creek.



Oso Bay, Corpus Christi

4. Greens Bayou Corridor

Project Partner: Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition

RTCA Contact: Kathryn Nichols

Location: Harris County and cities of Houston, Jersey Village, Jacinto City, Galena Park, and Humble

Project Goal

Improve a 45-mile bayou corridor including parkland and easement acquisition, develop a 9-mile paddle trail, initiate bayou clean up programs, and corridor landscaping. Develop parks in cooperation with Harris County Flood Control District, construct an outdoor classroom, develop trails on a 1,500-acre tract of land, and remove invasive species in the South Reach.

RTCA Role

Organize community workshop and other opportunities for plan input, help engage all stakeholders and partners, assist with mapping goals and analysis of input, and participate in strategic corridor plan development and funding strategies.

Current Projects cont.

5. Montopolis Tributary Trail Network

Project Partners: Montopolis Tributary Trail Association

RTCA Contact: Kathryn Nichols

Location: Austin, TX

Project Goal

Complete a 2-mile network of multimodal and recreational trails that will link this neighborhood with Austin's larger hike and bike trail system. Restore a highly degraded urban creek corridor.

RTCA Role

Assist with trail design, site assessment, and identification of additional partners who can offer resources. Assist with community-level discussions about watershed protection and restoration, especially with regard to runoff from planned upstream development. Design and deliver a community-expert workshop for strategy development.

6. Northeast Texas Trail

Project Partner: Friends of the Trail

RTCA Contact: Kathryn Nichols

Location: 130-mile corridor between Texarkana and Farmersville, near Dallas

Project Goal

Create a continuous, well-marked 130-mile non-motorized trail with improved surfacing along an abandoned rail corridor, protected by Interim Trail Use Agreement. Establish an organization to collaboratively develop and maintain the trail and promote it for tourism.

RTCA Role

Provide guidance in convening stakeholder meetings and workshops to develop a suitable organizational structure and strategies for trail development, maintenance, operation, and marketing. Identify funding sources and partnership opportunities.

7. Poteet Trail

Project Partner: El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association

RTCA Contact: Krista Sherwood

Location: Poteet

Project Goal

Develop a 2-mile bike and pedestrian trail connecting neighborhoods and places in downtown Poteet. Connect to the historic El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail, which will be promoted through informational signs placed along the path.

RTCA Role

Provide technical expertise in the facilitation of trail planning and provide information on funding sources and trail design options. Assist in bringing partners, communities, and stakeholders together in the planning process.

8. San Antonio Headwaters Preservation

Project Partner: Headwaters Coalition, Inc.

RTCA Contact: Krista Sherwood

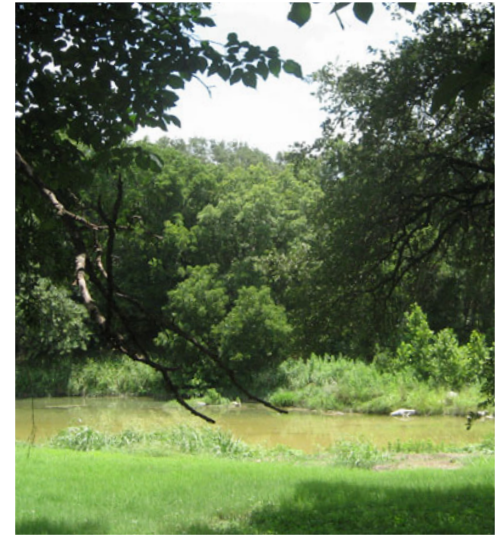
Location: San Antonio

Project Goal

Ensure the long-term integrity and sustainability of the 53-acre Headwaters Sanctuary, which includes



Youth marathon on an existing section of the NE Texas Trail. Photo credit: Friends of the Trail



Paluxy River - Glen Rose

the confluence of Olmos Creek and the headwaters of the San Antonio River (the "Blue Hole").

RTCA Role

Assist with the development of a plan to enhance the natural and cultural resources, as well as develop interpretation and educational opportunities within the sanctuary.

9. Somervell County Trails

Project Partner: City of Glen Rose, Somervell County, Somervell County Water District

RTCA Contact: Kathryn Nichols

Location: Glen Rose and Somervell County

Project Goal

25+ miles of trail linking downtown with the area's natural resources, including Paluxy River, Wheeler Branch Reservoir, and other city and area park sites.

RTCA Role

Recommend a decision-making strategy to involve three governmental partners, develop input opportunities to assess the community's trail priorities, advise on developing feasibility plans for high priority trails including trail design, funding sources, and partnership opportunities.