

Adopt-a-Creek Funding Overview

The efforts reduce the amount of trash entering creeks, improve water quality, restore habitats, and educate the public about the importance of creeks while fostering a sense of ownership and pride of place.

Ten years ago, Keep Austin Beautiful and the City of Austin Watershed Protection Department created the Adopt-a-Creek program to protect the health of Austin’s streams. Adopt-A-Creek provides training and resources to encourage citizens in making a lasting commitment to protect creeks by adopting a ¼ mile stretch of creek for two years. With University of Texas funds, Keep Austin Beautiful was able to implement Adopt-a-Creek programming with an emphasis on reducing fecal contamination in urban streams in the following targeted watersheds: Walnut Creek, Waller Creek, Taylor Slough South and the Spicewood Tributary of Shoal Creek. Goals for the funded initiative included recruiting four new adopters, scheduling and supporting six riparian restoration volunteer workdays that engage 120 volunteer in 240 hours in the restoration of creeks in the targeted area. All deliverables for the funding period were met or exceeded.

Results – Adopters

Four new creek segments were adopted in the targeted TMDL: Westminster Presbyterian Church adopted Waller Creek at Shipe Park and the Elisabet Ney Museum, Walnut Creek Avengers adopted Walnut Creek in Walnut Creek Metro Park, Gas Pedal adopted Walnut Creek from Springdale Road to Sprinkle Road, and Atlassian CA’s adopted Waller Creek from 9th Street to MLK Boulevard. Onboarding for new groups including site visits to identify local flora and fauna and opportunities for restoration projects. Throughout the year, adopters will be provided cleanup supplies, tools, native seed mixes, riparian-friendly seedling, seed ball kits, and more to support their volunteer efforts.

Reporting Metric	Goal	Results	Group	Creek
# of Adopters	4	4	Westminster Presbyterian Church Walnut Creek Avengers Gas Pedal Atlassian CA’s	Waller Creek Walnut Creek Walnut Creek Waller Creek

Results – Service Projects

Adopters went beyond creek cleanups, completing nine restoration projects in the targeted areas. Service projects ranged from invasive species removal to pruning invasives and making and distributing seedballs. A total of 128 volunteers were engaged who contributed 301 hours of service focused around Walnut and Waller Creeks.

# of Projects	Date	Group	Creek	# of Volunteers	# of Volunteer Hours
1	6/2	Gracywoods Neighborhood Association and Accruent team members	Walnut Creek	25	75
2	6/6	Friends of Copperfield Nature Trail	Walnut Creek	20	60
3	7/11	TCEQ Workday	Walnut Creek	11	22
4	7/18	KAB individual volunteers	Walnut Creek	10	20
5	7/18	Hancock Neighborhood Association	Waller Creek	3	6

6	7/18	Gracywoods	Walnut Creek	10	20
7	7/25	Westminster Presbyterian	Waller Creek	12	24
8	8/7	Dell team members	Walnut Creek	15	30
9	8/29	Friends of Copperfield Nature Trail	Walnut Creek	22	44
			Total	128	301
			Goal	120	240

Results – Service Project Highlights

A behind-the-scenes resource that cannot be underestimated is our ability to match volunteer groups with areas in need and very dedicated volunteer leaders. Gracywoods Neighborhood Association was looking to complete a volunteer workday at the Northstar Greenbelt along Walnut Creek. Keep Austin Beautiful paired Gracywoods with team members from Accruent and Dell who were each seeking projects. “The group was great,” commented Adopt-a-Creek leader Bill Glass in reference to Accruent’s assistance in removing invasive species in the Walnut Creek Grow Zone. A few weeks later, the Dell group removed Johnson grass and ragweed to try to improve the look of the Grow Zone without compromising its restorative value. The grasses were clipped low and now pulled out at the roots to ensure the stability of the bank. Bill’s commitment is unprecedented. He combined a restoration workday with his grandson’s birthday! The kids made seedballs at the party and then he distributed them along the greenbelt. Bill’s commitment didn’t stop there.



Creek leadership was coupled with government leadership. Adopt-a-Creek group TCEQ Commissioners Office made and distributed seedballs in conjunction with their regular cleanup. Leader Vic McWherter said it was the first time they had done any sort of restoration in their creek segment and all the volunteers really enjoyed the seedball activity. The group’s accomplishments were celebrated as they placed their Adopt-a-Creek tile during the service project.

On July 18th, a cleanup and restoration workday was hosted at Walnut Creek Park as part of our larger flood recovery efforts. Ten volunteers joined Keep Austin Beautiful to clean up trash and debris deposited during the Memorial Day Floods. Seedballs were also distributed in areas along the creek where erosion was visible. Distribution of the seedballs is part of a bigger plan to stabilize the creek bank and encourage native species along the shoreline. This service project was featured on KEYE television.

Westminster Presbyterian Church hosted its first Adopt-a-Creek workday along Waller Creek near Shipe Park and the Elisabet Ney Museum. Over 200 seedballs were planted along the creek to try to re-vegetate the area and prevent future erosion. Many of the volunteers had never heard of seedballs before and they were very intrigued and excited about the process.

Keep Austin Beautiful paired KeyStaff volunteer with the Friends of Copperfield Nature Trail to complete several restoration projects along the trail. Twenty-two volunteers helped dig a trench across the trail to prevent future flooding and improve drainage, made and distributed seedballs along erosion-prone areas, spread gravel along the trail to better define the trail (and keep people off sensitive creek areas), and removed invasive ligustrum. It was KeyStaff's first time to visit Copperfield, and they were very excited to explore this hidden gem of Austin. They also expressed interest in volunteering with the group and at the site again.



Big Picture

Cleanup and restoration in the targeted TMDL is complimented with ongoing Adopt-a-Creek initiatives. The programming is fostering a sense of ownership – 71 groups have adopted more than 17 miles of creeks. Annually, 750 citizens are showing their #creeklove to improve the water quality of area creeks.

Thank you for your support in growing the program!