

# North Central Texas Watershed Stakeholders Online Meeting

March 24, 2021

Elena Berg, Planner  
[eberg@nctcog.org](mailto:eberg@nctcog.org)

*Prepared in cooperation with the  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*



[www.nctcog.org/WaterResources](http://www.nctcog.org/WaterResources)

# Procedures for Virtual Meeting

- ▶ All registrants and attendees will receive an email with the presentation slides.
- ▶ Please keep your microphone on mute during the presentations to prevent feedback.
- ▶ Thank you!

# Dr. Becky Bowling

Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist for  
Urban Water

Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, The  
Dallas Center

Texas A&M University, Texas A&M AgriLife

# Different Words, Same Message: the Importance of Tailoring Outreach to Change Urban Landscape Management Behaviors

Dr. Becky Bowling  
Texas A&M AgriLife  
The Dallas Center





# Outreach and Education on Natural Resource Conservation and Protection in the Urban Landscape



Appeals to  
Environmentalism



Appeals to Cost  
Savings

What's *really* driving landscape management decisions and behaviors?

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*Different Words, Same Message*



# A STUDY IN GEORGIA



- Athens, GA (North Georgia)
- 14 Participant Households
- 2 Walking Interviews
- Weekly survey option for 20 weeks

**WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY OF  
SPENDING TIME ON A LAWN?**

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*Different Words, Same Message*

## Aesthetics and Functionality

- "Full, Green. No Weeds." - George, M, 37
- "Manicured sod. Usable space. Somewhere that my kids can play" - Lauren, F, 35
- "Sustainable. Low-maintenance. You don't have to cut it with a tremendous amount of regularity. Drought tolerant. Something tough." - Andrea, F, 58
- "Green and lush." James, M, 35
- "More shrubbery and grass that actually grows and fills in. Grass that is healthy." - Frank, M, 37
- "A yard that doesn't have a bunch of weeds in it." - Robert, M, 42
- "Green, healthy, and growing. Not a lot of weeds like my neighbors." - Jake, M, 59
- "Green. Easily maintained." - Samantha, F, 39
- "I don't really mind the weeds so much as long as everything is green." Michael, M, 59
- "No weeds. I don't like the weeds. It destroys the continuity of your lawn." - Beth, F, 59
- "Green and mowed in lines. Lush." – Michael, M, 56
- "Flatter so that there is plenty of room to run and play. I like having lots of trees so that we have shade. But mostly a big space to just run and play. More than having it pretty, I want it to be functional." - Lisa, F, 38

# THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

## Landscape Management Drivers

Aesthetics and Functionality  
Environmental Responsibility

“Most of my neighbors cut their grass once a week. Honestly, I just feel like that's a lot of pollution with those lawn mowers. They're not like cars. Lawn mowers pollute very heavily. So, I would rather have my lawn look bad and a little messy for two weeks, and cut it every two or three weeks, because I care more about the environment than about how it looks.” – Andrea, F, 58



# THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

## Landscape Management Drivers

Aesthetics and Functionality

Environmental Responsibility

Budget/Cost

"I thought about going to the expense of commercially having a lawn put in, but reducing it. Having bigger beds, and just a smaller [lawn] – so it would look really pretty. But then what happens if you have really stringent restrictions? Are you going to lose that? Can it just completely burn up if we have a really bad drought? I don't know. It's complicated."  
– Andrea, F, 58

"I wish I could afford for someone to do it for me. That's what a lawn means to me. It's a status symbol, and I have not hit the place where I want to be."  
– Robert, M, 42



# THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

## Landscape Management Drivers

Aesthetics and Functionality

Environmental Responsibility

Budget/Cost

Family/Children

### Contrasting Views:

"I want my grass green. That sounds awful, but you **paid a lot of money** to get it in here to have the lawn for them to play with. We're not trying to do anything bad to the environment, but I realize I am putting chemicals out there." – Lauren, F, 35

Conversely, another mother (Samatha, F, 39) is "**not willing to use pesticides or herbicides**" because she wants neighborhood kids to feel "welcome." From Samantha's perspective, the use of pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers would make the yard unsafe for children and pets by exposing them to chemicals that are "**not organic and that could be potentially harmful to animals or people.**"



Photo: Tiffany Dowell  
Texas A&M AgriLife



# The Urban Landscape: Examples of Different Priorities

## Landscape Management Drivers

Aesthetics and Functionality

Environmental Responsibility

Budget/Cost

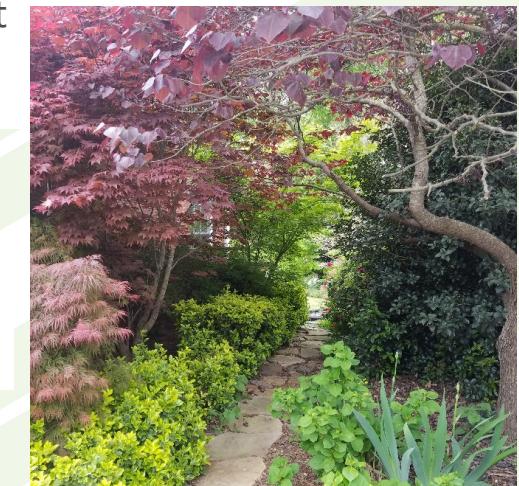
Family/Children

Inclusion,  
Belonging,  
Acceptance

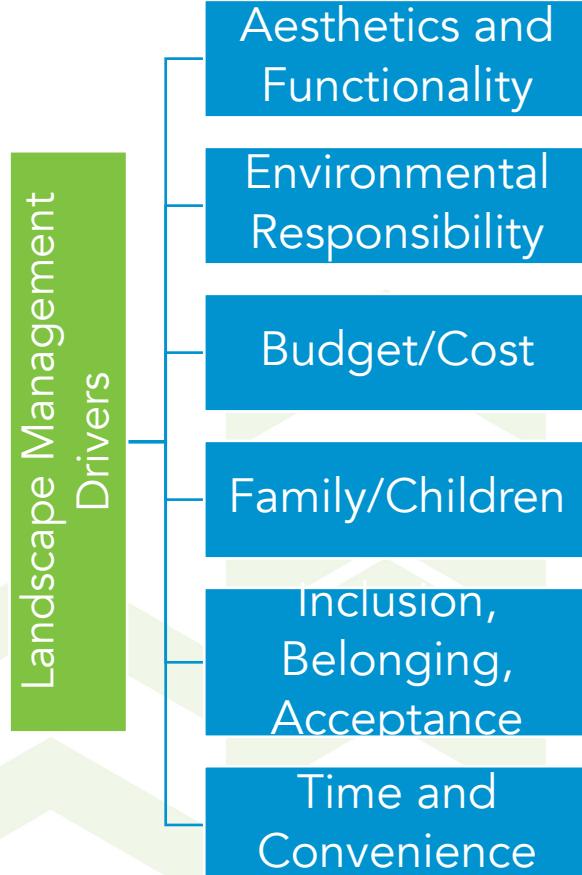
"Most of our neighbors that have young children do not have grass. They are always welcome to come and play in our yard, and they do which is really nice. There's a little girl across the street that she and her friends will come and play in the yard. They'll set up a picnic blanket and have a pretend picnic. We have other friends on the other side that come and play croquet on Sundays. We might not even be here, but they'll use the lawn." Samantha, F, 39

"Maybe if I lived on a deserted island or something, I wouldn't keep it (the lawn) the way I did. But I don't want it to be unkempt for appearances. That's my main motivation. It's not like I'm thinking about how it looks all of the time, but I want it to look good for the neighbors." Lawrence, M, 56

"I live in a neighborhood where there are not many African Americans, and if you see somebody at a distance, I've got to represent my race."



# THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT PRIORITIES



"Well, I liked to be outside doing the lawn, but as the boys have gotten older - just the time that was required in it, we were having to call people every now and again to let us catch up. Somebody comes to mow the lawn, and then we get it treated for weeds and what not." – Lauren, F, 35

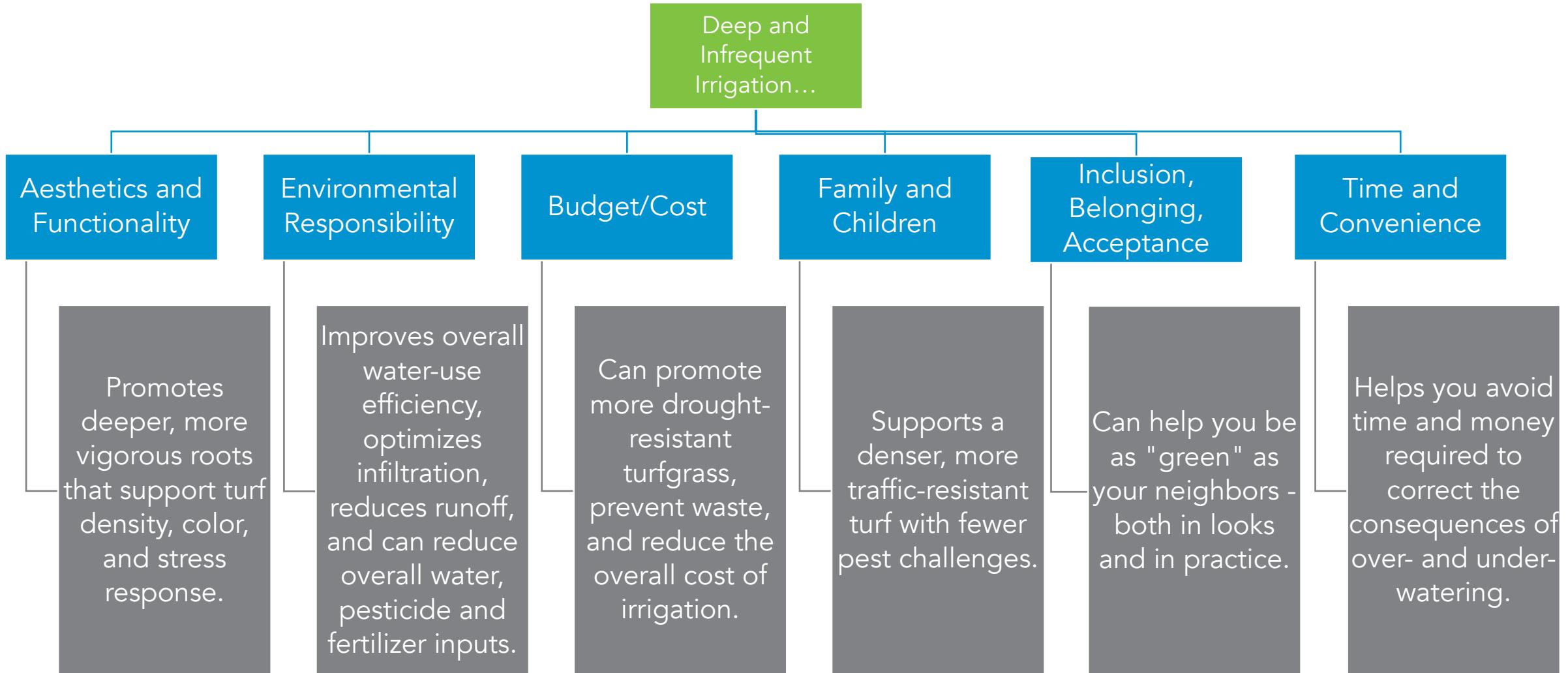
"A few years ago, I had a blueberry garden that I actually finished and it looked nice. But then I had to neglect it to come back here to start cleaning this up again. So, you know, unless you have – it's difficult, or would be extremely costly I think – to have lawn care assistance that does anything aside from just cutting your grass....

...So, I feel like I need to do that myself and it's a lot of work and I don't have time to do it all."

**How can we tailor outreach to meet  
our target audiences *where they are?***

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*Different Words, Same Message*



# Thanks!



Dr. Becky Bowling  
Assistant Professor  
& Extension Specialist for Urban Water

bgrubbs@tamu.edu |  @TXWaterWoman

# Ward Ling

Program Specialist IV  
Texas Water Resources Institute

# EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS IN WATERSHED-BASED PROJECTS



Ward Ling  
Texas Water Resources Institute  
March 24, 2021

# ENGAGEMENT CAN BE COMPLICATED

- ✖ Successes
  - ✖ Setbacks
  - ✖ Lessons learned



# SEPTIC SYSTEM DECOMMISSIONING

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- ✖ City of Seguin needed to extend sewer service to a neighborhood on septic systems
- ✖ We convinced the City to agree to apply for grant funding

# FIRST BIG SUCCESS!

- + Developed a grant proposal to cover septic decommissioning costs AND install green storm water drainage components
- + Put the right people together at the right time
  - ✖ The river authority, Extension, and the City Manager
- + Showed them the financial benefit and public image benefit that went with it



# BUT....

- ✖ The day before grant proposal submission, the City pulled out all the green infrastructure part
- ✖ But, they were still awarded the grant, so....
  - + 158 homes pulled off of septic—Success!
  - + Loss of green drainage portion—not a success...
  - + But we got a “do over” a few years later!



# A BOUNTY-FULL SUCCESS

- ✖ Have not had a formal feral hog program
  - + Feral hog meetings and workshops scattered throughout implementation
- ✖ April 2018, partnered with The Meadows Center, County Commissioners, and AgriLife Extension in a grant application for a Feral Hog Program
  - + Workshop, bounty program, webinar, trap supplies



# THE RESULT



- ✖ Grant was awarded
  - + Bounty program, webinar, workshop
- ✖ So what is the real success?
  - + When the grant ended, the County Commissioners voted to continue with the bounty program
  - + Appears the grant was the “push” needed to get the County to begin self-funding a feral hog program—Yeah!
  - + People are getting involved!

# DIFFERENT TYPE OF PROBLEM

- ✖ Partnered with Texas Water Resources Institute to conduct a creek side revegetation project
  - + Remove invasive vegetation
  - + Replant with native vegetation
  - + First planting was in March 2018—success!

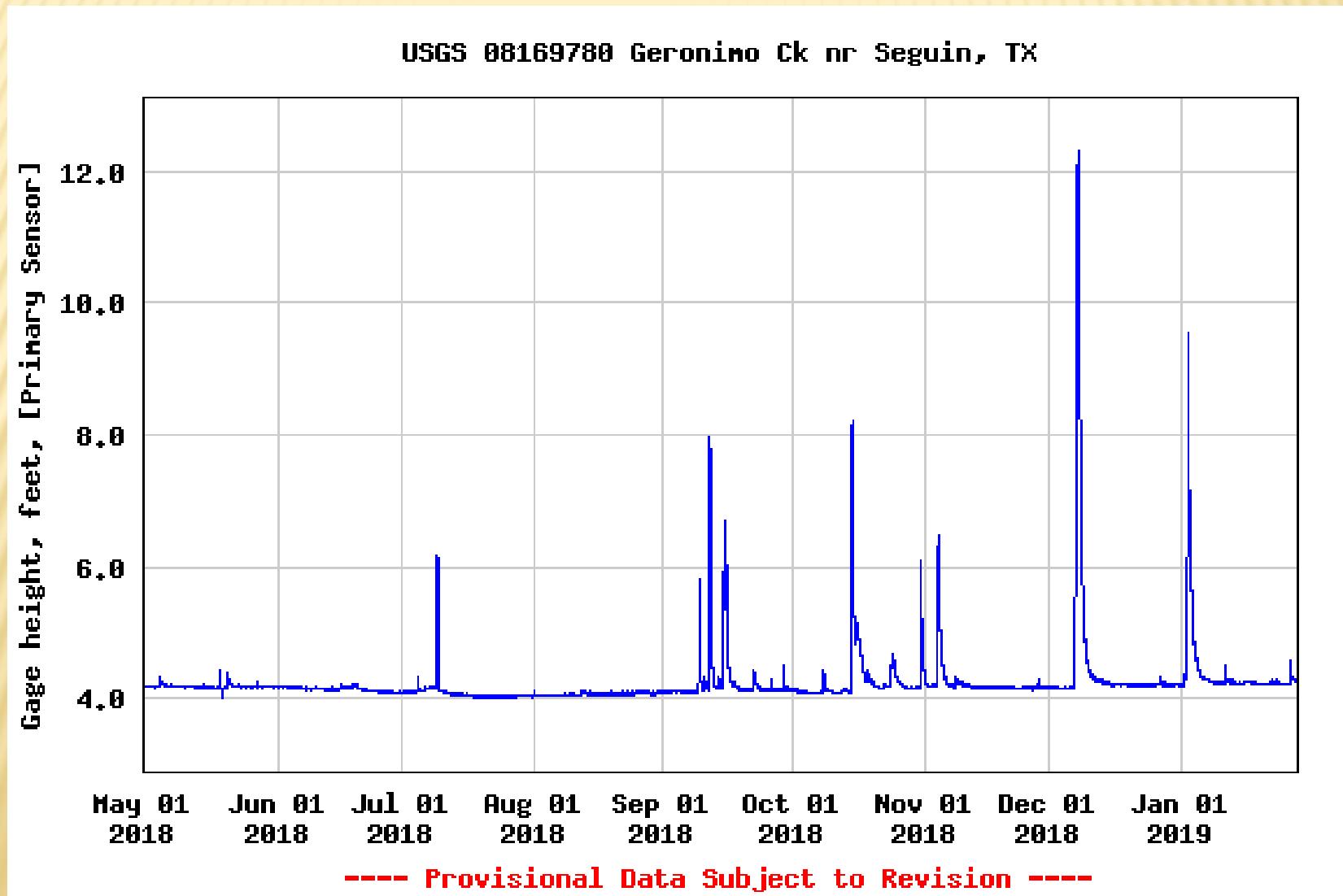


# FOLLOWED BY A SHORT DROUGHT...

✖ And then a big rain...



# FOLLOWED BY MORE RAIN...



# LET'S TALK MORE ABOUT....ENGAGEMENT

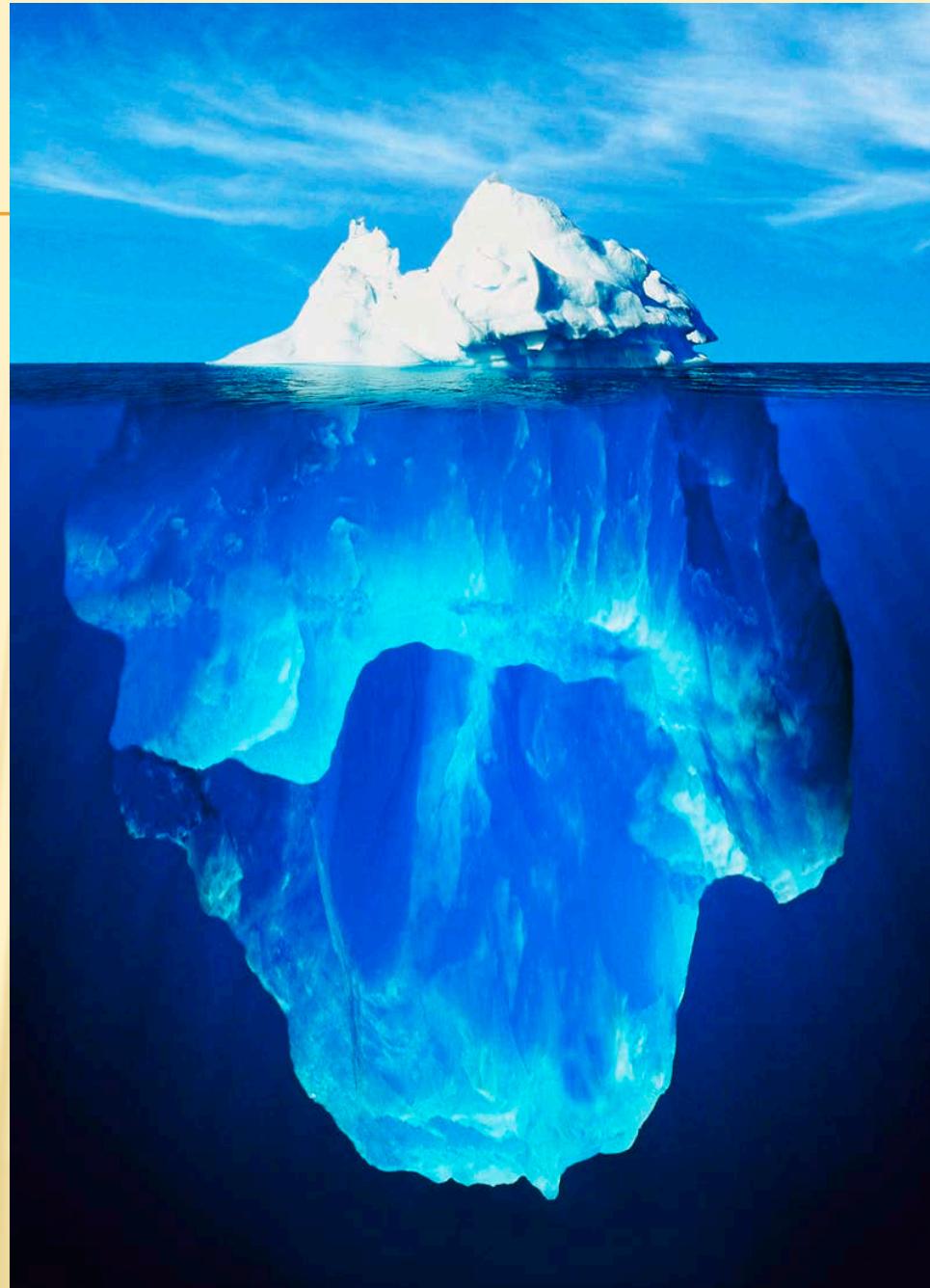
- ✖ Audience engagement...
  - + We have all these great workshops, programs, information
  - + Remember the part about involving people?



## ✖ Day of the Program

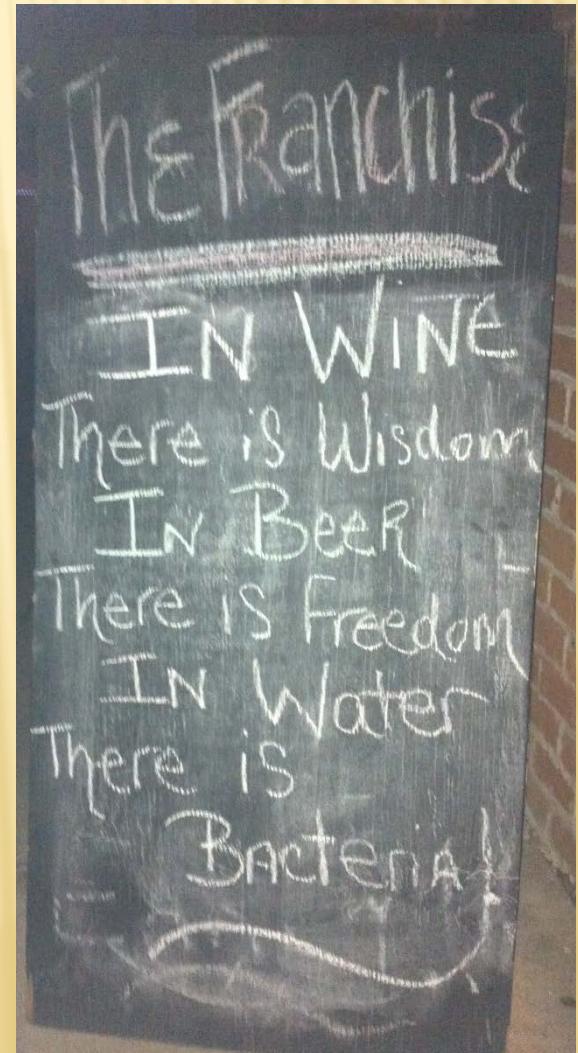
## ✖ Before the Program

- + Travel arrangements
- + Venue
- + Zoom/Teams Tech
- + Speakers
- + Workshop materials
- + Advertising
- + Refreshments



# TYPICAL ADVERTISING METHODS

- ✖ Press release
- ✖ Email groups
- ✖ Newsletter
- ✖ Posting fliers in public places
- ✖ Phone calls
- ✖ Post cards/mailings



# RAMPING UP OUR EFFORTS

- ✖ Newspaper ad
- ✖ Radio
- ✖ Social media
- ✖ Street banner or roadside signs/banners
- ✖ Posting fliers in not so typical places
- ✖ CEU provider targeted marketing



Rainwater Harvesting *for* Healthy Lawns *and* Healthy Waters

Chance to win 50 gal. rain barrel - No Cost - Free Lunch - Free Soil Test Analysis

Irma Lewis Seguin Outdoor Learning Center - Tuesday, Aug. 29 from 11a-4p - GeronimoCreek.org

# MARKETING TO THE CEU

- ✖ Approximately 2wks prior to a Lone Star Healthy Streams program, I had only 10 registrations
- ✖ What do I do?
  - + Cancel?
  - + Postpone?
  - + Ramp up advertising?
  - + Go on vacation and forget about it all?



# SOLUTION

- ✖ Texas Department of Agriculture has available online a listing of all licensees with addresses and phone numbers (sortable by county, city, etc)
- ✖ Began calling to advertise the program
  - + Got my spiel down to under 15 seconds
    - ✖ Spiel, (noun) - a long or fast speech or story, typically one intended as a means of persuasion or as an excuse but regarded with skepticism or contempt by those who hear it.
  - + Contacted 88 license holders by phone

# RESULT

- ✖ Started with 10 registrations 2wks before event
- ✖ Day of event
  - + 49 total attendees
  - + 10 original registrants
  - + 17 attendees from **direct phone calls**
  - + 20+ attendees from **word-of-mouth** from people who received phone calls





# RADIO AND NEWSPAPER CASE STUDY

- ✖ Planning for the annual creek clean up event, I set up a newspaper ad and radio ad
  - + By monitoring the online registration, during the time the ads ran, 8 people registered
  - + Most effective means for registering the other 142 volunteers
    - ✖ Direct emails
    - ✖ Phone calls
    - ✖ FTF visits



# STAKEHOLDERS...KEEPING THEM ENGAGED

- ✖ Communicate with them

- + Newsletter
- + Social media
- + Project website

- ✖ Value them

- + Recognize them and name them in press releases
- + Identify them on your website
- + Put them on a Tshirt
- + Thank you notes, visits



# FEED THEM

- ✖ Have sponsors provide drinks and light refreshments
- ✖ Break times around food encourages people to talk, visit—and connect



# DOOR PRIZES

- ✖ Try to fit the prize to the workshop
  - + Rain water harvesting and LID workshops
    - ✖ Rain gauges, rain barrels
  - + Septic System Workshop
    - ✖ Tools, rubber gloves



# A FEW CLOSING THOUGHTS



(979) 845-1851

TWRI@TAMU.EDU



ABOUT OUR TEAM OUR WORK NEWS OUR EVENTS PUBLICATIONS RESOURCES CONTACT



## February 2021 Conservation Matters



Ogallala Aquifer Virtual Summit asks stakeholders to tackle tough questions, Mills Scholarships awarded to five TAMU students, Texas Water Journal publishes Volume 12 and more.



# PROGRAMS TO ASSIST YOU

- ✖ Texas Well Owner Network
- ✖ Texas Watershed Stewards
- ✖ Lone Star Healthy Streams
- ✖ Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters
- ✖ Homeowner Maintenance of Septic Systems
- ✖ Riparian Workshops
- ✖ Watershed Tours
- ✖ Trash Pickup Events



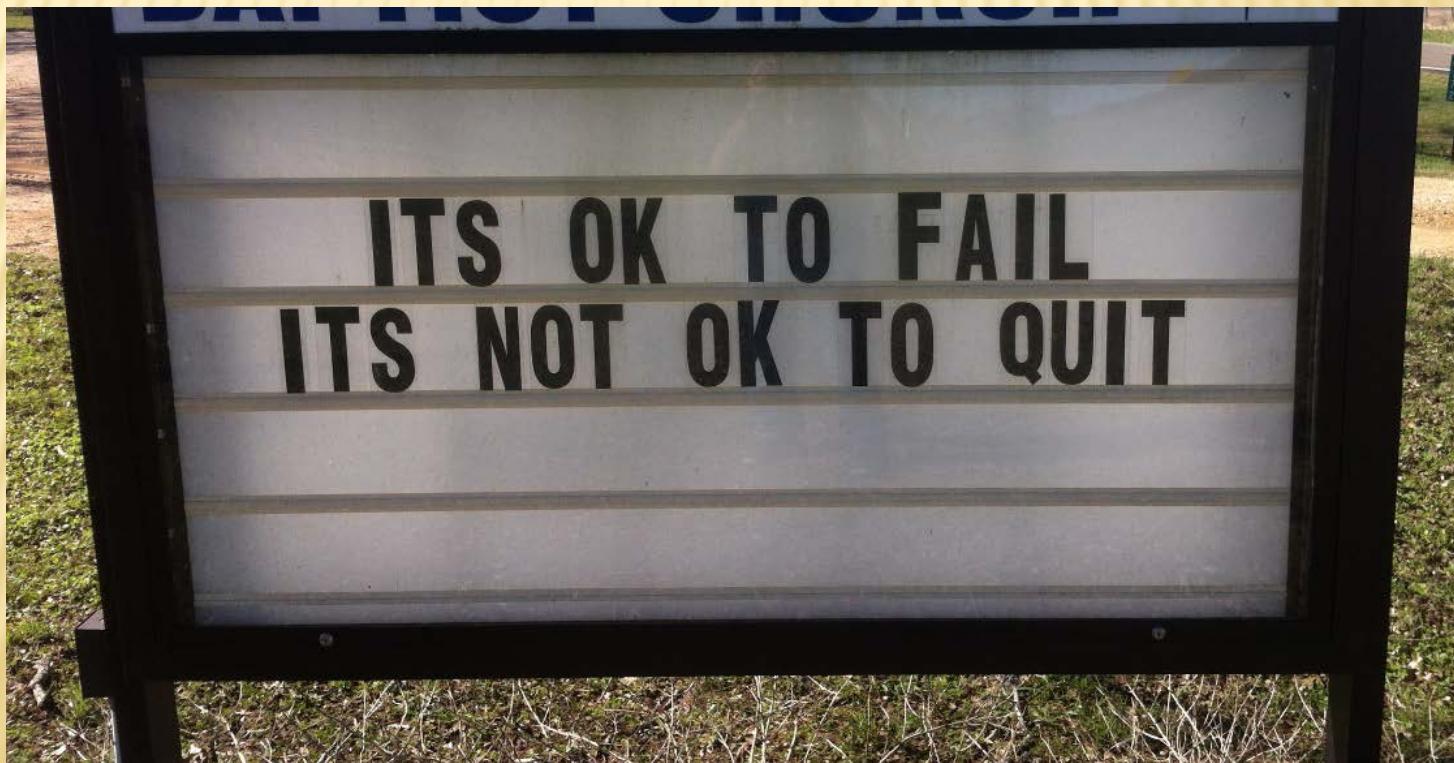
# QUESTIONS?

Ward Ling

Texas Water Resources Institute

[Ward.ling@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Ward.ling@ag.tamu.edu)

979-255-1819



# Roundtable

# • Trash Free Waters Project: Expanding Community Engagement

*Connecting volunteers to litter cleanup opportunities*

[TrashFreeTexas.org](http://TrashFreeTexas.org)

Elena Berg, NCTCOG



**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**

# Presentation Agenda

- Background
- Overview of Trash Free Waters Project



- Next Steps



Photo Source: Galveston Bay, Courtesy of the River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash.

# Background: The Litter Problem



Elm Fork of the Trinity River near Frasier Dam Recreational Area

*Photo Source:* Teresa Patterson, Trinity Coalition



Dickinson Bayou

*Photo source:* Courtesy of the River, Lakes, Bays 'N Bayous Trash Bash.

# Background: The Litter Problem



Photo Source: Tamara Cook



Photo Source: Adobe Stock

\$50 Million  
Annually to  
Prevent, Educate,  
Abate, Enforce  
Litter and Illegal  
Dumping Efforts\*



Photo Source: Tamara Cook



#342829964

Photo Source: Adobe Stock

\*Source: Texans for Clean Water. Study of nine cities in Texas, representing 25% of the state's population, documented expenditures of more than \$50 million annually on prevention, education, abatement, and enforcement efforts to address litter and illegal dumping in their communities and waterways (Burns & McDonnell, 2017).

# Background: The Litter Problem



**Approximately 80 percent of the litter found in our waterways originates from land-based sources.**

Source: *The State of Marine Environment*. United Nations Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMP), 1991. Blackwell Scientific Publications, London.

Photo Source: Tamara Cook

[TrashFreeTexas.org](http://TrashFreeTexas.org)

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**



# Trash Free Waters Project

## 4 Goals:

- 1) Increase Adopt-A-Spot locations and promote the statewide Trash Collection Database.
- 2) Support regional cleanup events through partnerships with local governments, recreational clubs, and Keep Texas Beautiful affiliates.
- 3) Partner with Texas-based restaurants to reduce the single-use of plastic.
- 4) Share project successes with other councils of government and replicate this work across the state.

# Goal 1 - Trash Free Texas Website

[www.trashfreetexas.org](http://www.trashfreetexas.org)

- Deployed in 2018
- Encourages the adoption of litter hot spots through a web map that displays adoptable locations
- Adopt-a-
  - School
  - Park
  - Waterway
  - Highway
  - Bayou
  - Shoreline
  - Anything that needs clean-up!



PROTECTING OUR WATERS BY CONNECTING VOLUNTEERS  
TO LITTER CLEANUP OPPORTUNITIES IN TEXAS

In Texas, over 435 million pieces of visible litter accumulate on roadways each year. It is in our community, the sides of our roads, in our rivers, and along our beaches. Litter control efforts cost the American taxpayers over \$11 billion each year.

The Trash Free Texas "Adopt-a-Spot" site and Online Mapping Tool was created to foster a litter-free environment in Texas watersheds and track trash removal activities. Adopt a site to do your part to keep litter out of our waterways.

*Photo Source:* [Trash Free Texas Website](http://www.trashfreetexas.org)

# Goal 1 cont. - Trash Free Texas Website

[www.trashfreetexas.org](http://www.trashfreetexas.org)

**Vision for Trash Free Texas website:** A full-service website that provides:

- Litter cleanup locations
- Convenient adoption of sites
- Single platform using uniform metrics for trash data
- Downloadable tools and resources

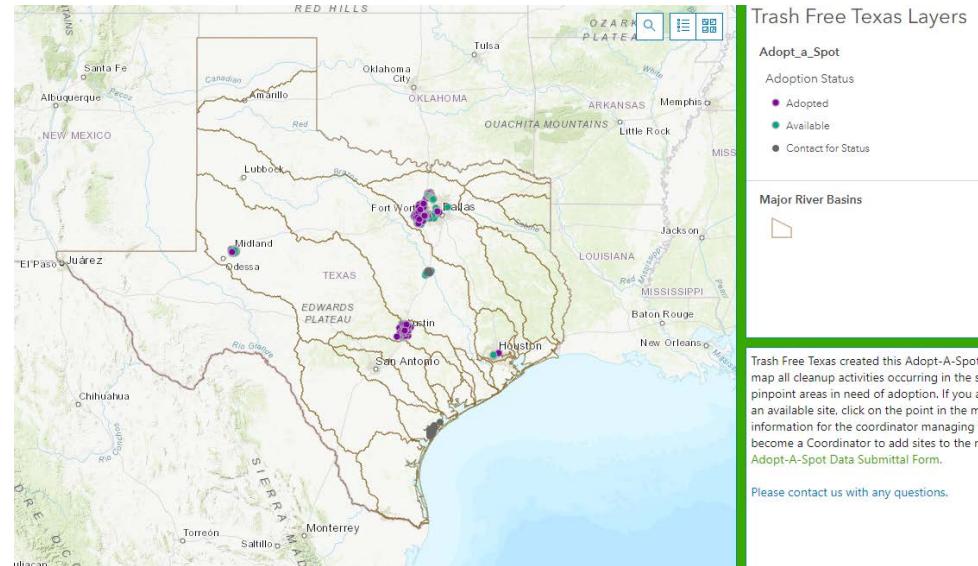
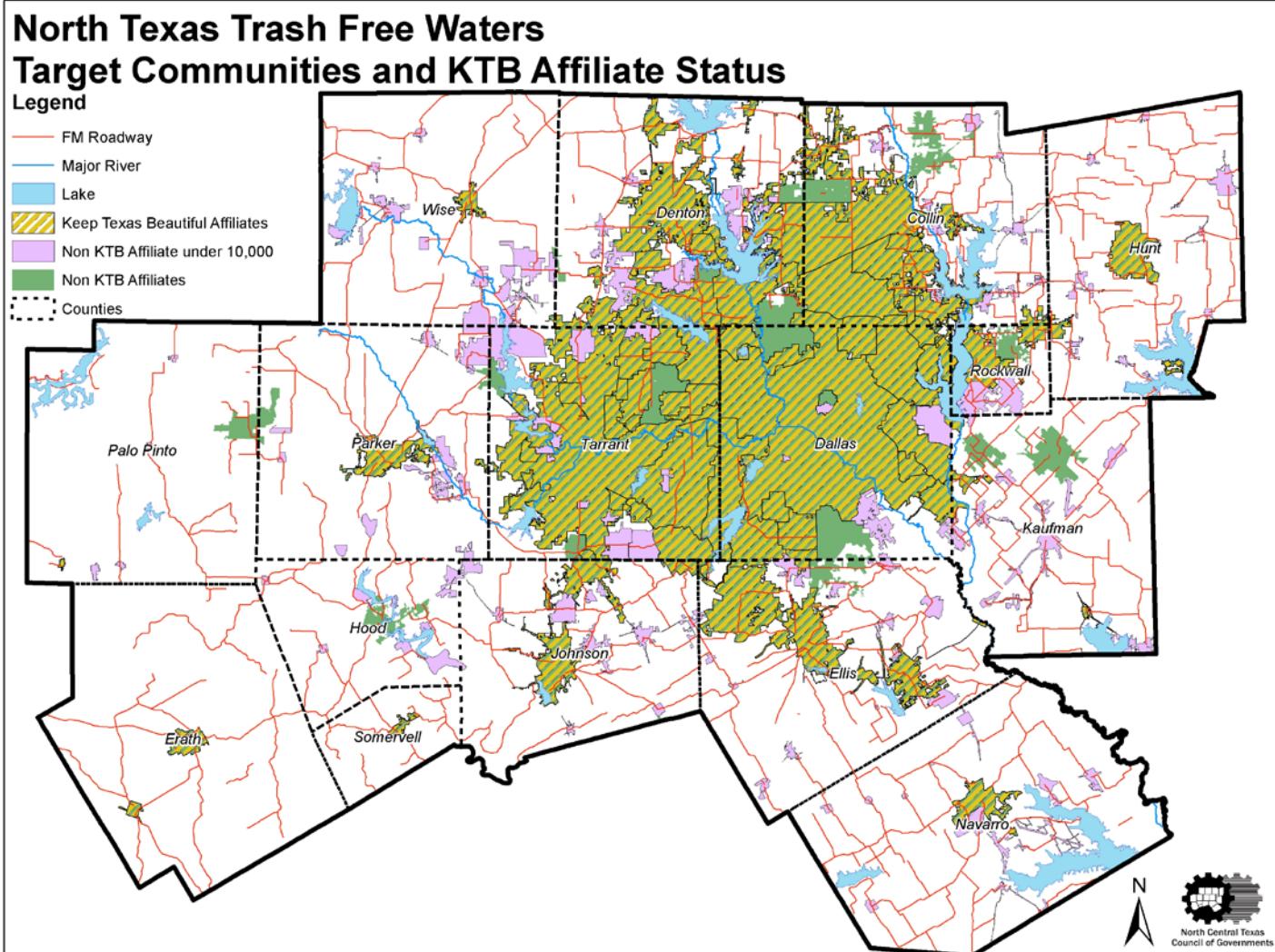


Photo source: Adopt-a-Spot map, [Trash Free Texas Website](http://Trash Free Texas Website).

# Target Communities – Small, Non-KTB Affiliates



# Goal 2- Partner on Regional Cleanup Events

- Pilot regional cleanup events:
  - 1) Mayor's Challenges; and
  - 2) Cleanup Events that include recreational groups



*Photo Source: [North Texas Community Cleanup Challenge Website](#), NCTCOG.*

## Goal 3 – Litter Prevention

- Partner with Texas-based restaurants to reduce the use of single-use plastic through a voluntary program



# Goal 4 – Share Project Successes with Fellow COGs

- Promote:
  - Trash Free Texas Website
  - Toolkits developed for project
  - Statewide litter database

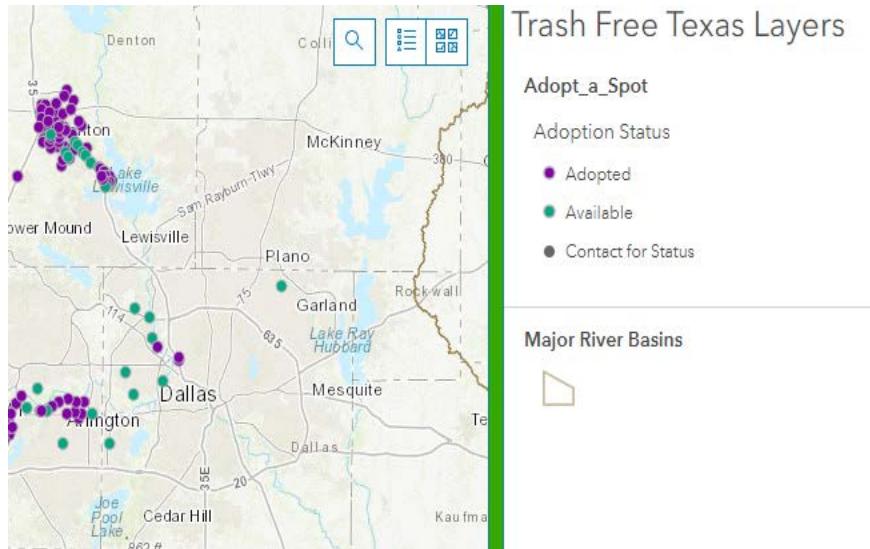


Photo Sources: [Trash Free Texas Website](#) (left) and Adobe Stock (right).

# Resources

## Resources

- H-GAC Webinar, *Trash Free Texas: Adopt-a-Spot Training*
  - February 25, 2021
  - [Recording of webinar](#)
- Past NCTCOG Webinar, "*Trash Free Texas: Connecting Volunteers with Litter Cleanup Locations*"
  - January 19, 2021
  - [Recording of webinar](#)



## Next Steps

- Promote and encourage use of Trash Free Texas website and the upcoming statewide litter database to local governments
- Develop resources to assist with replicating efforts and post to Trash Free Texas website
- Cleanup Events
- Engagement of restaurants and restaurant patrons



## Contact

### NCTCOG Trash Free Waters Team

#### **Tamara Cook**

Senior Program Manager

[TCook@nctcog.org](mailto:TCook@nctcog.org)

#### **Cassidy Campbell**

Sr. Environment and Development Planner

[CCampbell@nctcog.org](mailto:CCampbell@nctcog.org)

#### **Crysta Guzman**

Environment & Development Planner II

[CGuzman@nctcog.org](mailto:CGuzman@nctcog.org)

#### **Elena Berg**

Environment & Development Planner II

[EBerg@nctcog.org](mailto:EBerg@nctcog.org)

## Connect

www [nctcog.org/trashfreewaters](http://nctcog.org/trashfreewaters)

www [h-gac.com/TrashFreeTexas](http://h-gac.com/TrashFreeTexas)

#### **Trash Free Texas**

www <https://www.trashfreetexas.org/>



<https://www.instagram.com/trashfreetexas/>

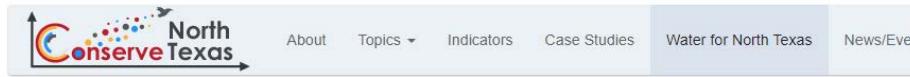


<https://twitter.com/TrashFreeTexas>



<https://www.facebook.com/TrashFreeTexas>

# Water for North Texas Online Library



## Water for North Texas Online Library

Welcome to the Water for North Texas Online Library! Here you will find a compilation of existing resources on water topics in five main categories: Water Supply/Conservation, Water Management, Water Quality, Seasonal, and Other. These resources, which include explainer videos, brochures, webinars, and social media toolkits, are intended to be used by member governments to educate residents about the value of water across the growing NCTCOG region, which is projected to add approximately 3.5 million more people between 2020 and 2045. New resources, created in coordination with the Water for North Texas Advisory Group, will also be included here as they are developed. Browse the menu below to get started!

### Topics

#### Water Supply / Conservation



Lake Levels



Tx SmartScape



Rainwater Harvesting



Water Efficiency at Home

#### Water Management



<http://conservenorthtexas.org/water-north-texas-online-library>

# Upcoming NCTCOG Webinar

*Healthy Creeks and Waterways:  
Vegetation and the Flow of Healthy  
Waterways*

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

[Register and Add to Calendar](#)

# Thank you!

# Staff Contacts:

- ▶ Elena Berg
  - ▶ Environment and Development Planner
  - ▶ [eberg@nctcog.org](mailto:eberg@nctcog.org)
  - ▶ 817-608-2363
- ▶ Tamara Cook
  - ▶ Senior Program Manager of Environment and Development
  - ▶ [tcook@nctcog.org](mailto:tcook@nctcog.org)
  - ▶ 817-695-9221
- ▶ Cassidy Campbell
  - ▶ Senior Environment and Development Planner
  - ▶ [ccampbell@nctcog.org](mailto:ccampbell@nctcog.org)
  - ▶ 817-608-2368
- ▶ Edith Marvin
  - ▶ Director of Environment and Development
  - ▶ [Emarvin@nctcog.org](mailto:Emarvin@nctcog.org)
  - ▶ 817-695-9211