

North Central Texas Council of Governments

SUMMARY

Recreation and Litter Cleanup Advisory Group

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Microsoft Teams

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Crysta Guzman, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), kicked off the welcome and introductions of all the Advisory Group participants.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Trash Free Waters project background and introduction to project goals.

Crysta Guzman provided a background on the Trash Free Waters grant project that is a joint effort between the NCTCOG, the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), and The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University. More information about the project, goals, and activities can be found on the project websites for [NCTCOG](#) and [H-GAC](#). The Meadows Center hosts the [Trash Free Texas](#) website which houses an interactive map of Adopt-A-Spot locations throughout the state and will soon host additional educational content and resources for trash and litter removal activities.

Encouraging a cleanup culture in Texas is one of the Trash Free Waters project goals, which led to the formation of this Recreation and Litter Cleanup Advisory Group. The Advisory Group is comprised of members of local governments, recreational groups, and non-profits from both regions. The Advisory Group will tackle questions on topics such as plogging, engaging the public in activities such as plogging, and how local governments and recreation groups can work together to support these types of activities. The goal is to develop best practices, guides or toolkits that can be used to help encourage more people to get out and plog, plalk, or plik.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Discussion and facilitated questions for recreation groups.

- a) **Question: Can you help us identify safety measures and best practices for engaging in plogging, plalking, pliking and “pladdling”?**

No responses given. Suggestions can be emailed to Crysta Guzman (cguzman@nctcog.org).

- b) **Question: What resources or location attributes would encourage these activities (i.e. frequent access to trash cans along a trail/in a park)?**

- For local parks, better availability of bags and containers to dispose of trash stations, like dog waste stations, would be helpful.
- Keep bag sizes smaller so that people don't dump large items.
- If encouraging people to use the dog waste stations, need to consider 1) that they will fill up faster and 2) who will be responsible for emptying them. If city staff, for example the Parks Depts., are educated

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on the concept they can buy into the program when it is illustrated that their workload are reduced when residents are picking up loose trash and depositing it in cans or waste stations.

c) Question: What tools or resources would be beneficial to you that a local government could offer to encourage these types of activities? For example: ability to get supplies such as bags, litter grabbers and gloves to use; convenient supply pick-up locations like a library or community center; or signage with information.

- Bags, litter grabbers, gloves.
- Mesh nets on a pole are very helpful for micro-litter and small Styrofoam pieces.
- KTB has supplies which volunteers can request and use.
- The Trinity Coalition also provides tools for corporate event holders who are interested, including providing the boats.
- Most pluggers use only a grocery sack not larger bags or gloves. Most do not want to carry litter grabbers. It is a matter of education and planting the idea that this is even an activity to do.
- Having supplies available on location and ready to go is most helpful. If located at a library, it would involve too much planning for the average person.

d) Question: Are there best practices or guides for plogging et al. that can be shared, communicated, or needed?

- No medical waste should be picked up.
- Check Keep America Beautiful for information on plogging and European groups that promote these activities.
- Guidance on picking up PPE, which is a new type of litter everyone is having to deal with, would be helpful. Keep America Beautiful should have this information already prepared to share.

e) Discussion and Comments:

- Mesh bags are great for some applications and cleanups:
 - For on-water cleanups they often get too dirty and heavy to attempt to reuse.
 - For beach cleanups they are great. Many of the coastal and waterway areas have mesh bag stations at the launch and recreation areas with educational info. For example, Port Aransas and Port Arthur just built several stations.
 - The mesh bags can be used with regular volunteers who bring them back each time, have the cleanup date written on the bag, and then eventually turned in for a volunteer recognition prize.
 - San Marcos has a program through the Trash Free Waters grant that Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) received where tourists are given a mesh bag at the Visitors Center and when they're returned full or litter the visitors are issued a token or coupon to redeem at local restaurants.
- A lot of trash collects in areas that are NOT parks. Most joggers don't want to stop to pick up trash.

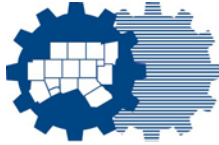
4. Discussion and facilitated questions for local governments.

a) Question: If you were going to start a program or campaign to encourage these activities, how would you envision that program? For example: an actual program at parks; an activity for which people can check out supplies; just as an outreach campaign; as an outreach campaign combined with making participation easier by increasing trash cans or providing supplies; or other options.

- See responses above. Can continue this conversation again at the next meeting.

b) Question: How do we engage people beyond events and grow the idea of plogging et al. on their own?

- i) Promoting plogging et al. through special events is key. People want to do it with a group of other people and their friends.



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- ii) The first step is promoting plogging et al. through special events and then education on how to continue these activities on own after an event.
 - iii) Clever marketing campaign using social media and promoting it.
 - iv) As a competition or providing a medal for achieving certain mileage.
 - v) Making sure that participants have plenty of places (i.e. cans) to put collected trash.
 - vi) A social media contest to post trash picked up regularly on a site and a prize for the most collected or most interesting item picked up.
- c) **Question: What type of support could you provide? Examples: supplies, locations that need to be addressed or cleaned, roll offs for larger cleanup efforts (what lead time would be needed to facilitate a request of this type?).**
- i) The City of Mansfield already provides supplies mentioned through Environmental Services, but Code Compliance also runs lots of events.
- d) **Question: Can you identify which departments or person(s) would be the best point of contact for either an outreach program/suggested cleanup locations or submitting supply requests?**
- i) This is a new spin on cleanups Parks and Rec departments seem like the best fit since people will be doing these activities while recreating.
- e) **Question: What resources would you need help with to get these efforts started?**
- i) No responses given. Can continue this conversation at the next meeting.

OTHER ITEMS

5. North Texas Community Cleanup Challenge.

- NCTCOG staff gave a quick overview of the [North Texas Community Cleanup Challenge](#) (NTCCC) and encouraged those not already signed up to get involved. The NTCCC is a regional cleanup challenge that runs from September 1st through October 31st. Local governments and members of the community are encouraged to go out and cleanup as much litter as possible during the challenge timeframe and report it on the NTCCC website. The community with the highest score at the end of the challenge timeframe wins the competition but the region as a whole wins when everyone is engaging in litter removal. To learn more, please view the presentation and recording of a recent informational webinar or visit the website <http://www.communitycleanupchallenge.com/>.

6. Resources and Contacts.

- The Trash Free Waters project newsletters for the [North Central Texas](#) region and the [Houston-Galveston](#) region are a great way to stay plugged in with what is happening in both areas. Advisory Group participants are encouraged to sign-up.

7. Action Items and Adjournment.

- Look into cleanup guidance for PPE. Please see Keep Texas Beautiful' s [PPE Litter Cleanup Guidance](#).

NEXT MEETING

8. Next Meeting.

Please join us for the next meeting of the Recreation and Litter Cleanup Advisory Group on **Thursday, October 21st at 11:30 am** via [Microsoft Teams](#) to keep this conversation going. If there is someone you feel should be at the Advisory Group and part of this conversation, please feel free to invite them to our next meeting. We will further discuss and work on the following list of items that were identified through our discussions at the September 9th meeting.

- Educational signage for plogging waste stations.
- Increasing locations for proper disposal of litter and trash in public parks.
- Starting programs or campaigns to encourage plogging, plalking and pliking activities.
- A plogging, plalking, and pliking marketing campaign along with PSAs and social media.
- A social media contest to post collected trash picked up including prizes for most interesting item or largest quantity cleaned up.
- Contests or medals for ploggers et al who achieve certain mileage or milestones.
- Use of virtual races to promote plogging et al.

If you have any questions regarding the Advisory Group, please contact Crysta Guzman at (817) 695-9107 or cguzman@nctcog.org. Thank you!