

# Protecting Texas Watersheds: Engaging Communities for a Trash Free Texas

*Connecting volunteers to litter cleanup opportunities*

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

Urban Riparian Symposium  
February 9, 2023



**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**

# Today's Agenda



1. Project Overview – Why are regional councils involved in litter?



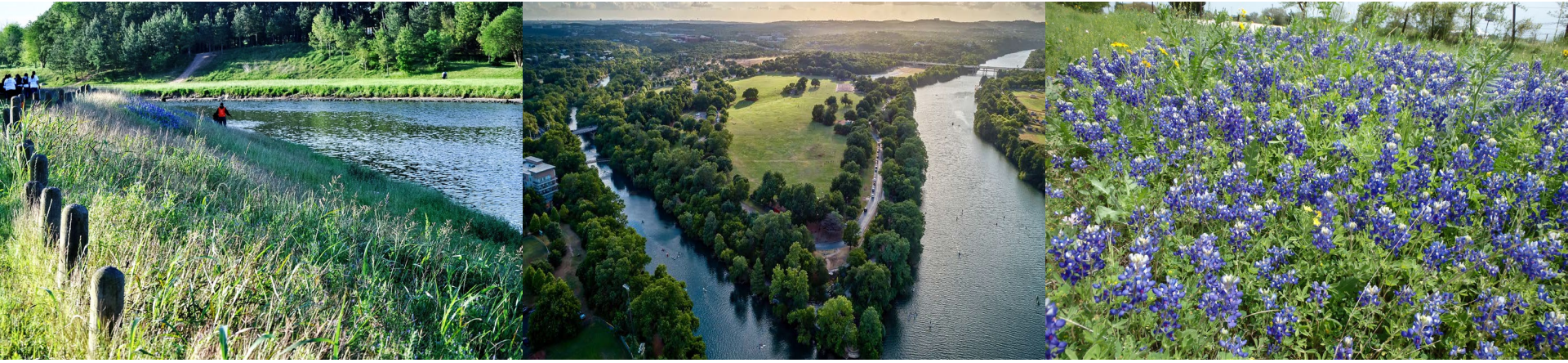
2. Project Tasks and Outcomes So Far



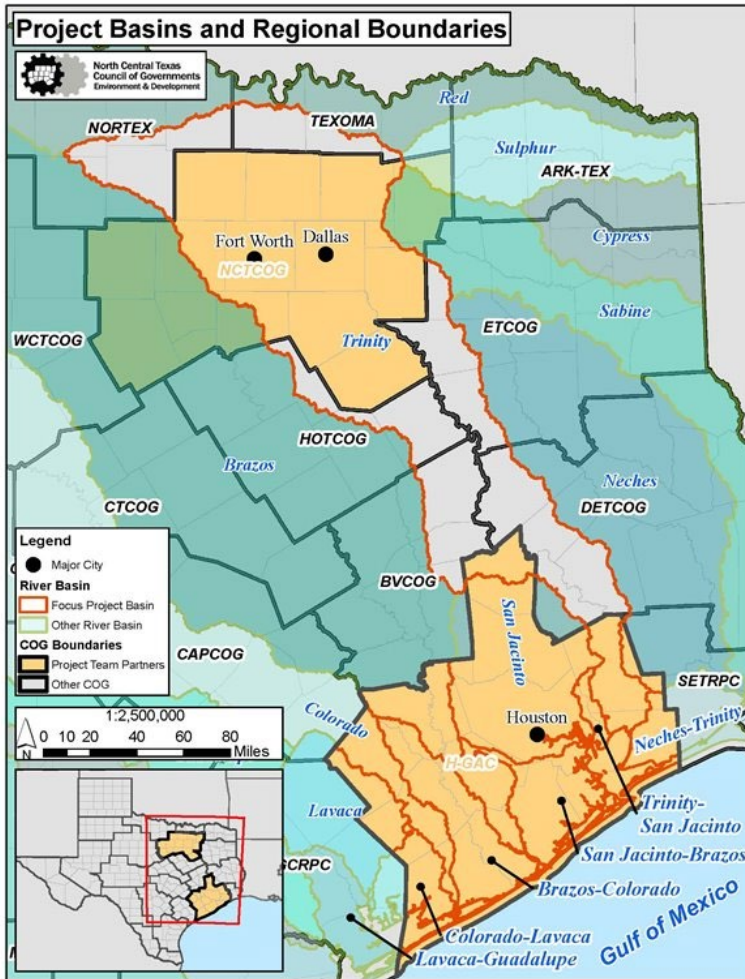
3. Next Steps: Piloting and Leveraging



# Project Overview



# Project Overview



A collaborative effort between NCTCOG, H-GAC and The Meadows Center



Funded by the U.S. EPA's Trash Free Waters Grant Program



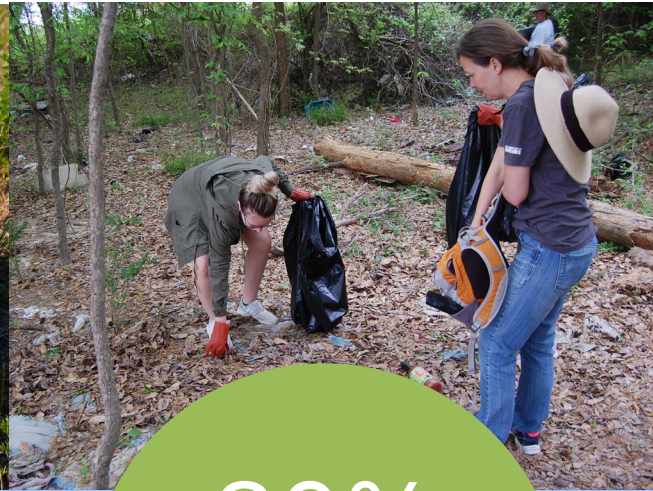
Project area includes more than 50% of Texas' total population



Project to be completed over a three-year period.



# Project Overview



362

Million Pieces  
of Visible Litter

\$50M

Annual cost to  
Texas taxpayers

80%

Waterway  
trash comes  
from land



# Litter in Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston Regions



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.

# Litter in the Gulf of Mexico

- Litter on the Texas coastline accumulates at a rate 10x higher than other Gulf of Mexico coastlines.\*
- Microplastic concentrations in the Gulf of Mexico among the highest reported globally.\*\*

- Why?

1. Surrounded by land
2. Currents
3. Litter inputs

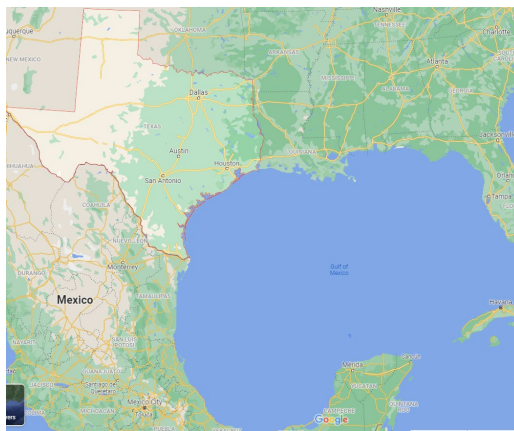


Photo Source: Google Maps.



Photo Source: Image from YouTube video, "All the Cups" by Jack, May 10, 2014:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhIBSOITYdQ>.

\* C. Wessel, K. Swanson, T. Weatherall, J. Cebrian. (2019) *Accumulation and distribution of marine debris on barrier islands across the northern Gulf of Mexico*. NOAA

\*\* Rosana DiMauro, Matthew J. Kupchik, and Mark C. Benfield. (November 2017). *Abundant plankton-sized microplastic particles in shelf waters of the northern Gulf of Mexico*. Environmental Pollution, Volume 230, p. 798.



# Project Overview

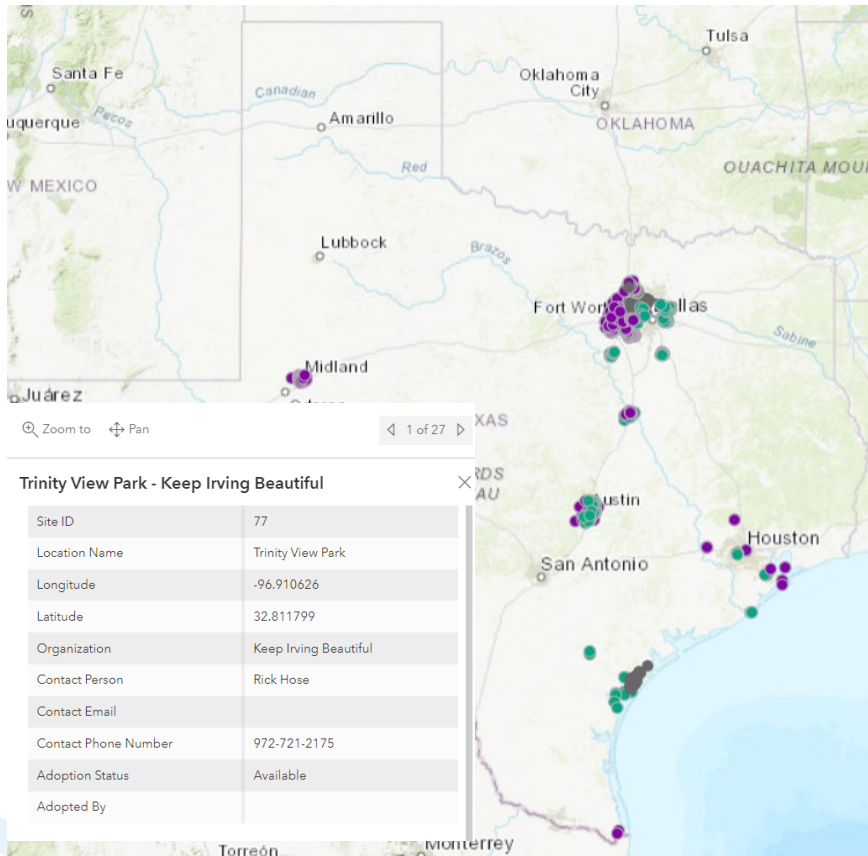
## Project Goals

- 1 Increase Adopt-A-Spot locations on the Trash Free Texas map and promote a statewide trash collection database → The Texas Litter Database
- 2 Support regional clean-up events through partnerships with local governments, recreational clubs, and Keep Texas Beautiful affiliates
- 3 Partner with communities and Texas-based restaurants to reduce the use of single-use plastic
- 4 Share project successes with other councils of government and replicate work across state



# Project Tasks and Outcomes So Far

Increased number of entities on the [Trash Free Texas Adopt-A-Spot Map](#) (Facilitate communication with volunteers)



- The Trash Free Texas map is an interactive map that displays litter cleanup locations and site contact information.

## Trash Free Texas

### Adoption Status

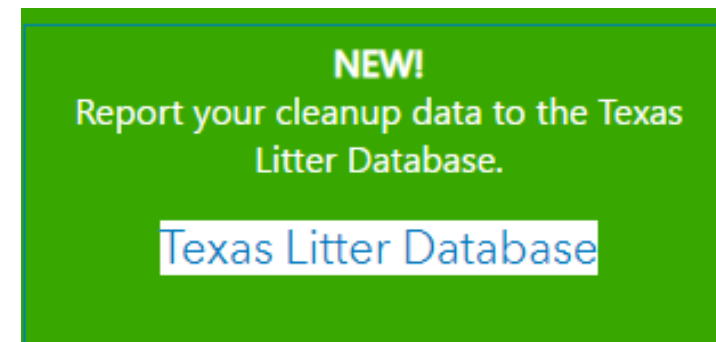
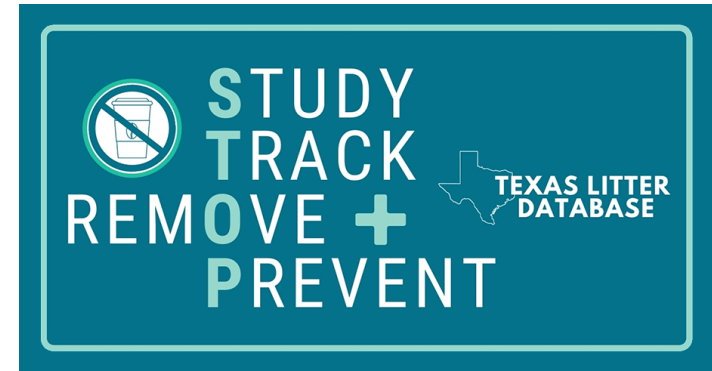
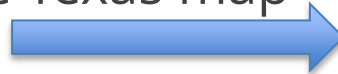
- Adopted
- Available
- Contact for Status

Image Source: Adopt-a-Spot map, [Trash Free Texas Website](#).

# Project Tasks and Outcomes So Far

## Partnered with KTB to Promote the Texas Litter Database

- Texas Litter Database – [www.txlitter.org](http://www.txlitter.org)
  - Online site for entering, organizing, storing, and viewing all trash and marine debris data collected in Texas
  - Created by Keep Texas Beautiful, Houston Advanced Research Center, Black Cat GIS, and funded by the Garver Black Hilyard Family Foundation
  - Free and available to all
  - Linked on the Trash Free Texas map





# Why Add Your Sites to the Trash Free Texas Map?

- Volunteers can easily view and select litter cleanup sites.
- Great resource large and small communities alike.
- Site coordinators still maintain control over the management of their litter cleanup sites.
- May choose to add your logo to the [Trash Free Texas Partner page](#).

SUPPORTED BY ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT TEXAS, AND BEYOND...



# Who Are Trash Free Texas Partners?

- ANY person or entity who supports litter removal and reduction!
- Just go to [TrashFreeTexas.org](https://TrashFreeTexas.org) and click on the Partner icon.



PARTNER

(Entities who add sites to the map become partners automatically.)





# Project Tasks and Outcomes So Far

**Materials added to the [Trash Free Texas Partner page!](#)**

- Trash Free Texas Partners can use:
  - New and Old Graphics (examples on the next slides!) including the Trash Free Texas logo
  - Trash Free Texas brochure
  - 30-second Trash Free Texas video
  - This Trash Free Texas PowerPoint template
  - Information about the resources and toolkits available on Trash Free Texas
  - Pre-made social media posts

# Trash Free Texas Resources for Partners

New graphics now available for Trash Free Texas Partners!

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

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**

**PROUD  
PARTNER**

LEARN MORE AT  
[TRASHFREETEXAS.ORG](https://www.trashfreetexas.org)

TrashFreeTexas.org

This graphic features a blue and green color scheme. The top half has a white background with blue wavy lines and the 'TRASH FREE TEXAS' logo in green and blue. The bottom half is a solid blue rectangle with a green triangle pointing right, followed by the text 'PROUD PARTNER' and 'LEARN MORE AT TRASHFREETEXAS.ORG'. The website 'TrashFreeTexas.org' is written at the bottom left.

**ADOPT  
OUR SPOTS**

at [TrashFreeTexas.org](https://www.TrashFreeTexas.org)

Connecting People to  
Places that Need to be  
Cleaned

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**

City of Fort Worth, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, HERE, Garmin... esri

Find a Cleanup Site Near You Today!

This graphic has an orange top section with the text 'ADOPT OUR SPOTS' and 'at TrashFreeTexas.org'. Below this is a map of Texas with numerous green and purple dots representing cleanup spots. The 'TRASH FREE TEXAS' logo is in the bottom right of the map area. At the bottom, a blue bar contains a green triangle and the text 'Find a Cleanup Site Near You Today!'.

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**



# Trash Free Texas Resources for Partners

Pre-project graphics now available for Trash Free Texas Partners!

**BE A PART OF  
THE SOLUTION**

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**



**COORDINATE:** Get your community on the map by providing data for adoptable and adopted sites in Trash Free Texas.

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**



**VOLUNTEER:** Use the "Adopt-a-Spot" online mapping tool for easy volunteer options.

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**



**PARTNER:** Share Trash Free Texas with volunteers and stakeholders in your community.

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

**TRASH  
FREE  
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# Project Tasks and Outcomes So Far

## Empowering Communities and Volunteers

- Resources for creating and leading cleanup events



## Cleanup Challenge Toolkit

JOIN THE  
**COMMUNITY CLEANUP CHALLENGE**  
SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2022  
8:00 AM TO 12:00 PM



[YOUR CITY/ORG] WILL GO HEAD  
TO HEAD WITH [OTHER CITIES]  
TO SEE WHO CAN CLEAN UP THE  
MOST LITTER.

COME HELP US WIN AND  
BEAUTIFY OUR COMMUNITY!

Insert  
City/County  
Logo Here

Insert  
City/County  
Logo Here

Insert  
City/County  
Logo Here

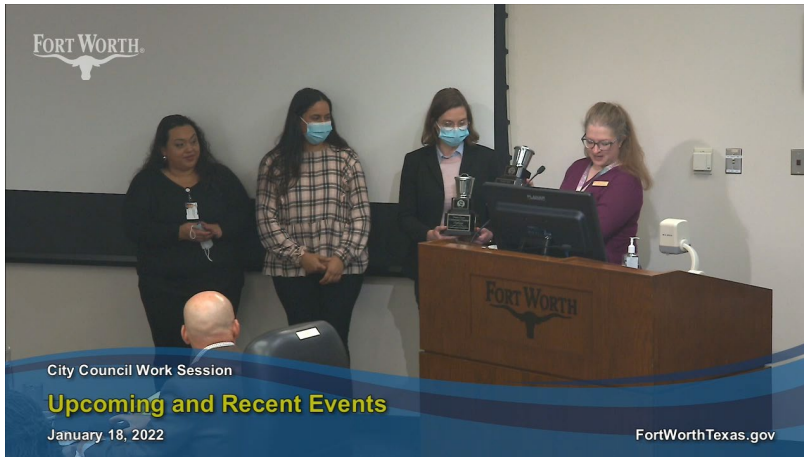
# Empowering Communities

**NORTH TEXAS**



COMMUNITY CLEANUP CHALLENGE

- Engage communities in a competition-style cleanup to see which one can pick up the most trash per resident during a designated timeframe.



*Image Sources:* North Texas Community Cleanup Challenge Website, [www.communitycleanupchallenge.com](http://www.communitycleanupchallenge.com), NCTCOG.

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





# Project Tasks and Outcomes So Far

## Empowering Communities

- What are other communities doing to reduce trash?
- What funding is available to help?
- What anti-littering campaigns are already out there?



## Local Government Trash Reduction Toolkit

(posted on Trash Free Texas website)

# Connecting Communities to New Audiences

- Walking, Running, Paddling Groups



## Recreational Litter Cleanup Toolkit

**Pladdling Drop-off**  
*Please place your collected litter in the bin.*



What is Pladdling?  
  
Scan To Learn More

**TRASH FREE TEXAS**

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

**Plogging Drop-off**  
*Please place your collected litter in the bin.*



What is Plogging?  
  
Scan To Learn More

**TRASH FREE TEXAS**

**FORT WORTH.**

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

# Project Tasks and Outcomes So Far

## Let's **REDUCE** litter, not just remove it

- Focus: To voluntarily reduce use of single-use plastics at restaurants (mainly straws and utensils)
- Restaurants rely on communities to lead, inform, and engage residents/customers.



## Trash Free Texas Restaurant Program

- Draft Toolkit for Restaurants
- Draft Toolkit for Communities





# Project Tasks and Outcomes So Far

- Convened **Single-Use Plastic Reduction Workgroup**
- Partnership with Texas Restaurant Association, communities, and interested parties
- Provided input on draft toolkits for Trash Free Texas Restaurant Program

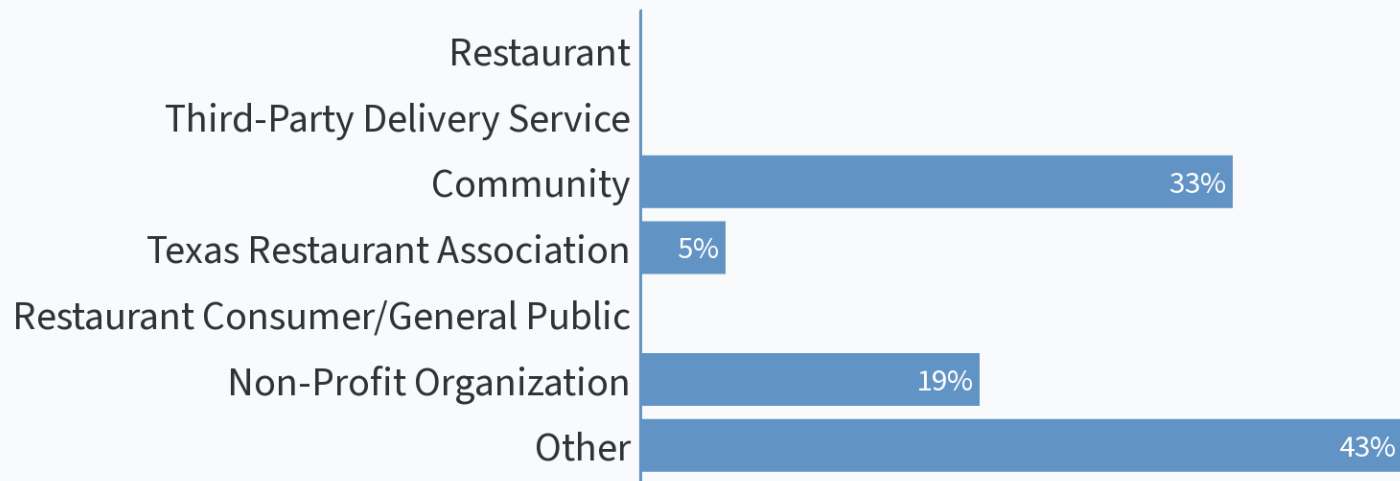
# Single-Use Plastic Reduction Workgroup

## Attendance from last meeting in November 2022

When poll is active, respond at [pollev.com/nctcogenv444](https://pollev.com/nctcogenv444)

Text **NCTCOGENV444** to **22333** once to join

### What type of organization are you representing today?



# Why Engage Restaurants to Reduce Litter?

- Together, communities and restaurants can help raise awareness and initiate behavior change
- Win-Win: Reduce costs and reduce litter
- Restaurants already implementing strategies have stated that strategies “help with overall customer experience.” – Sunhee’s Farm and Kitchen. Troy, New York; and Organic Crush Restaurant Group



# Materials from Trash Free Texas Restaurant Program

**Reduce single-use plastic to  
protect our waters**



**City  
logo**

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**



City  
Logo

**TRASH  
FREE  
TEXAS**

**Reduce single-use plastic to  
protect our wildlife**

# MORE Materials from Trash Free Texas Restaurant Program!



**A TRASH FREE TEXAS STARTS HERE**



[Restaurant Name or Logo]

is reducing our single-use plastic waste to keep litter out of our community. You can help by skipping the straw, utensils or drink lids when you don't need them. If you need an item - don't worry, we have them available on request. Just make sure you properly dispose of the items.

## TAKE A PAUSE ON PLASTIC



[Restaurant Name or Logo]

is reducing our single-use plastic waste to keep litter out of our community.

You can help by skipping the straw, utensils or drink lids when you don't really need them.

If you need an item - don't worry, we have them available on request. Just make sure you properly dispose of the items.



# EVEN More Materials from Trash Free Texas Restaurant Program!



**Help Us Keep  
Our Community  
Clean**

[Restaurant Name or Logo]

is reducing our single-use plastic waste to keep litter out of our community.

You can help by skipping the straw, utensils or drink lids when you don't need them.

If you need an item - don't worry, we have them available on request. Just make sure you properly dispose of the items.





# Next Steps: Piloting and Leveraging

- Currently working to pilot toolkits:
  - Recreational Litter Cleanup Toolkit
  - Trash Free Texas Restaurant Program Draft Toolkits



- Piloting entities receive materials FREE OF CHARGE!
- “Order form” for pilot materials
- Leveraging existing partnerships, new stakeholders, funding



# How You Can Help the Project

- Consider the benefits of adding your community's cleanup sites to the AAS map.
- Use the Texas Litter Database for recording trash cleanup data.
- Become a Trash Free Texas Partner and use graphics/logos on your newsletters/websites as you are able.
- Pilot the Recreational Toolkit Materials
- Pilot the Trash Free Texas Restaurant Program and Support Restaurants that Participate



# Where Can I Find Project Updates, Presentations, and Draft Toolkits?

## NCTCOG Trash Free Waters Project Website

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





## Contact

## Connect

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

### Trash Free Texas

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



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