

**North Central Texas  
Council of Governments**



May 2021

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*NCTCOG is working to build a coalition of partners and organizations to work collaboratively together to build on the many North Central Texas and statewide initiatives focused on the challenge of reducing trash in waterways, and litter in general.*

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## **North Central Texas Spotlight**

### **Joe's Creek Trash Mitigation Study: A Step Towards a Cleaner Trinity River**

Trash accumulation in waterways is an ongoing problem that affects water quality, creating detrimental impacts for the environment, our economy, and our society. The Trinity River is one of many river systems suffering from trash-related problems, preventing Texans from taking advantage of the river's various benefits. To begin to solve such a large-scale problem, Kendall Bradley, a SMU student, decided to look at a small piece of the Trinity River; Joe's Creek in Northwest Dallas. Ms. Bradley conducted a study on Joe's Creek as a project for her M.A. in Sustainability and Development. Joe's Creek is a 4 mile-long tributary that contributes a large amount of trash to the Elm Fork of the Trinity River. To identify sources of the trash problem, Ms. Bradley evaluated land uses within the Joe's Creek watershed to find some of the most responsible properties and hot spots for litter. By targeting distinct zones, it was hoped that specific solutions could be developed based on the conditions of each area.

Ms. Bradley recorded data at approximately 50 assessment points using the [On-land Visual Trash Assessment Protocol for Stormwater – Protocol C](#). This Protocol uses an A – D scoring system to establish whether a site is Not Littered, Slightly Littered, Littered, or Very Littered. The data indicated that downstream properties were generally more littered than upstream properties, with 58% of all the properties either slightly littered (B) or littered (C). Ms. Bradley developed a heat map that indicates

some of the major sources of the trash ending up in Joe's Creek which included a park, a multi-family residential area, and a commercial area.

Ms. Bradley also evaluated potential trash mitigation solutions for Joe's Creek including structural trash prevention, regulatory controls, and education programs. Ms. Bradley concluded that the most effective way to prevent trash pollution is through source reduction, which means all materials are disposed or recycled on site before it can be carried away by stormwater runoff to other sites or a nearby waterway. Other trash mitigation solutions can include trash capture systems, trash collection planning, recycling programs, and signage. There are endless ways to contribute to trash mitigation efforts, and with collaboration between community organizations, creeks around the world just like Joe's Creek can be cleaned up so that they can serve as the environmental treasures that they are. Follow these links for more information:

[Presentation Report](#)

Source:

Kendall Bradley, SMU Capstone Project

Trinity Coalition, [TrinityCoalition.org/Clean-Trinity](https://TrinityCoalition.org/Clean-Trinity)

## North Texas Trash Free Waters Project Initiatives Underway



### Reducing Single-Use Plastics – Initiating Steps Forward in Collaborating with Partners

Texas has more marine debris along its coastline than any other state in the nation. One of the elements of the North Texas Trash Free Waters project is to advance efforts in both North Texas and Houston on reducing single-use plastics, specifically in restaurants through partnerships and establishment of recognition programs. To move these efforts forward, NCTCOG hosted a Recycle Roundtable discussion with North Central Texas

member governments as well as representatives from HGAC (NCTCOG's project partner) about reducing single-use plastics, specifically in restaurants. The Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport (DFWIA) provided a presentation on their waste reduction efforts, including discussion of their program to switch plastic straws to paper straws within all concessionaires in the terminals. The Turtle Island Restoration Network shared a presentation about their efforts to implement "The Final Straw" campaign; a campaign to end the use of plastic straws in the City of Galveston, Texas and along the coast.

NCTCOG and HGAC will continue to work to build partnerships with appropriate organizations, such as the Texas Restaurant Association, and others to understand the current context and potential wins that could move forward in North Texas, the Houston area, and beyond. With the goal to advance efforts to reduce single-use plastics, specifically straws, NCTCOG and HGAC are currently working to develop case studies, a possible restaurant survey, and soliciting input from potential partners, including cities who may be interested in piloting a recognition program.

Presentations from the Recycle Roundtable are found here:

[https://www.nctcog.org/nctcg/media/Environment-and-Development/Committee%20Documents/RCC-Recycle%20Roundtable%20Subcommittee/RR-Presentation\\_04-01-21.pdf?ext=.pdf](https://www.nctcog.org/nctcg/media/Environment-and-Development/Committee%20Documents/RCC-Recycle%20Roundtable%20Subcommittee/RR-Presentation_04-01-21.pdf?ext=.pdf)

## New NCTCOG Trash Free Waters Webinar Series: Best Practices to Prevent and

## Capture Trash in Texas Waterways

NCTCOG is launching a new webinar series as part of the Trash Free Waters grant. This webinar series is intended to highlight different aspects and elements that NCTCOG, and their project partners, are working on and delivering for use by member governments and partner organizations in North Texas, Houston, the State and nation.

NCTCOG held a webinar in January 2021 focused on the Trash Free Texas website Adopt-A-Spot map, resulting in several cities and Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) affiliates adding their sites to the map. NCTCOG will be hosting the second webinar in the series, Wrangling Trash from Waterways – Texas Style, on May 26, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. CST. This webinar and possible virtual site/field visits will highlight trash capture devices and practices in North Texas and around the state. To register and find details on this event, visit the event section below or visit:

[www.NCTCOG.org/TrashFreeWaters](http://www.NCTCOG.org/TrashFreeWaters).

## Trash Free Texas Welcomes New Partners and Adoptable Spots for North Texas

Adopt-A-Spot map has recently been updated with new adoptable locations from **Keep Kennedale Beautiful and Keep Corinth Beautiful!** Cities and Keep Texas Beautiful affiliates now included on the map from North Texas include:

- Keep Arlington Beautiful
- Keep Corinth Beautiful
- Keep Denton Beautiful
- Keep Fort Worth Beautiful
- Keep Garland Beautiful
- Keep Grand Prairie Beautiful
- Keep Irving Beautiful
- Keep Kennedale Beautiful
- Keep Lake Dallas Beautiful
- Groundwork Dallas

The Adopt-a-Spot Tool and map can be viewed from the Trash Free Texas website [here](#). NCTCOG is working with the Texas State Meadows Center for Water and the Environment to make some revisions to the online mapping platform, in hopes of achieving more flexibility and functionality for cities and KTB affiliates who add their sites.

By July 2023, NCTCOG has a goal to add at least 25 new organizations to this mapping tool to build a comprehensive map of adoptable sites in North Central Texas. NCTCOG will be contacting cities, Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) affiliates, and non-profits with specific requests to add locations to this map.

Any organization that hosts or coordinates clean-up events or individuals that know of locations within their community that need clean-up can request to have their data added to this site. This map and website can be linked to any city, KTB affiliate, or other non-profit website so residents and businesses interested in adopting a location can view the available spots.

## Add your Adopt-A-Spots to the Map!

If you are interested in adding your organization's Adopt-a-Spots (ex. road, waterway, stream, river, school, or other spot) to the Trash Free Texas mapping tool, please contact the Meadows Center for

Water and the Environment at [Contact@TrashFreeTexas.org](mailto:Contact@TrashFreeTexas.org) or fill out the Adopt-A-Spot Data Submittal Form at [www.TrashFreeTexas.org/Become-A-Coordinator](http://www.TrashFreeTexas.org/Become-A-Coordinator).

## Trash Free Texas Call for Partners

*Take Action: Become a Trash Free Texas Partner!*

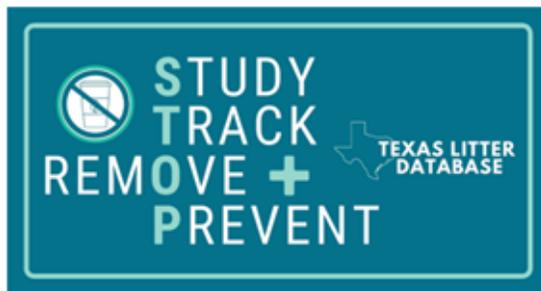
Trash Free Texas Partners share Trash Free Texas with volunteers and stakeholders in your community. Partners help create an online community where we can educate volunteers and the public to encourage positive environmental change. Partners provide feedback on the website, mapping interface and other tools as the program expands to respond to the needs of our communities and volunteers.

Since our last newsletter, two organizations have joined Trash Free Texas as a Partner. Thank you to the following new partners representing efforts around the State:

- Keep Somerville Beautiful
- Village of Surfside Beach

As an entity interested in litter prevention and reducing trash in waterways, if you would like to join the Trash Free Texas effort as a Partner (at no-cost), please visit <https://www.TrashFreeTexas.org/Partner> and fill out the Partner form.

## Statewide Trash Collection Database



Being able to input, view, and analyze trash data compiled at litter cleanup events in Texas on a shared, common platform is an important component of understanding the litter problem in Texas and its waterways, and therefore, managing it. The Texas Litter Database, currently under development by Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) and the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC), and funded by the Garver Black

Hilyard Family Foundation will provide that needed platform. It will be a central database that organizes and stores trash and marine debris data statewide. When completed, the database can be used by litter cleanup volunteers, cleanup site coordinators, or any other user to either input their trash collection data or view and download trash collection data in Texas. The trash data in The Texas Litter Database will enable detailed trash data collection that can be analyzed by location, quantity, type, and/or count. NCTCOG, and its partners on the Trash Free Waters grant, the Houston-Galveston Area Council and The Meadows Center at Texas State University, are currently reviewing a beta-version of the Texas Litter Database and providing input through a collaborative partnership with KTB and HARC. The database is expected to be available for use in June 2021 and NCTCOG will announce more details at that time. Stay tuned!

## North Central Texas Trash Free Waters Partner Resources

## Find Upcoming Cleanup Events on Keep Texas Beautiful Calendar

Keep Texas Beautiful provides a great calendar of upcoming clean-up events. [Here](#) you can find an extensive list of upcoming events hosted by Keep Texas Beautiful affiliates around the state.

## EPA's The Flow Of ... Trash Free Waters – March 2021 Issue Released

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a March 2021 edition of "The Flow of...Trash Free Waters." Highlights of this latest newsletter focused on Trash Free Waters and COVID-19, highlights from Trash Free Waters projects around the nation, and information about the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act that was signed into law. View the newsletter [here](#).

## The Rapids: US EPA's Trash Free Waters Monthly Update – April 2021 Issue Published

Find the April 2021, in addition to previous monthly editions of The Rapids [here](#).

## EPA's Reuse Models as Part of the Solution to the Plastic Pollution Crisis

EPA's webinar that took place on March 11th and featured presentations from Crystal Dreisbach, Executive Director of Don't Waste Durham and Founder of Durham GreenToGo; Annika Greve, Business Development Director for Loop; and Miriam Gordon, Policy Director, UPSTREAM Solutions. If you missed it, the recorded webcast is available to view [here](#).

## U.S. Contributions to the Marine Litter Problem – Research Highlighted by EPA

A recent study published in [Science](#) provides an updated estimate on U.S. plastic waste generation and loadings to coastal ecosystems. Authors found that in 2016, the U.S. generated the largest amount of plastic waste of any country in the world, totaling 42 million metric tons. According to their research, the amount of plastic waste generated in the U.S. estimated to enter the coastal environment in 2016 was up to five times larger than that estimated in a 2010 [study](#). "rendering the United States' contribution among the highest in the world."

## Upcoming Events of Interest

### Partners in Litter Prevention 2021 Trash Summit

The Annual Houston-Galveston Regional Trash and Marine Debris Meeting. Presented by the Partners in Litter Prevention

Date: May 5th, 9:00 - 11:00 am CST via Zoom Online Meeting

RSVP: <https://www.DontTrashAGoodThing.org/2021-Trash-Summit>

## California Plastic Crisis Conference Series - Plastic Impacts and Solutions

Join this first in a 4-part UC-Irvine Plastic Crisis Conference Series, Impacts and Solutions at Home and Beyond. This session will cover an overview of the plastic pollution problem and its impact on coastal ocean ecosystems, waterways, and public health.

Dates: May 6th. 1:00 CST

Registration: [Link Here](#)

## Taking Out the Trash - Trash Capture and Compliance

Fourth in the California Trash Monitoring Webinar Series, this webinar will feature presenter Chris Sommers, Vice President at EOA, Inc. The event will explore how Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) are achieving compliance and improving our environment by reducing the amount of trash discharged from stormwater conveyances.

Dates: May 20th, 12:30 pm CST

Learn more and register here: [Link Here](#)

## Wrangling Trash from Waterways – Texas Style

Just like there are multiple sources of litter in the environment, there is more than one way to wrangle all that trash from waterways. This webinar and virtual tour hosted by NCTCOG will highlight several trash capture devices and case studies from around North Central Texas and the State. More details will be provided at [www.nctcog.org/trashfreewaters](http://www.nctcog.org/trashfreewaters)

Date: May 26, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm CST

Register: [Link Here](#)

## Legislative Update

### HB 3814 and Companion Bill SB2097 Update

[HB 3814](#), and companion bill [SB2097](#), colloquially referred to as the "Nurdle Bill" relate to the regulation by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality of the discharge of preproduction plastic from point and nonpoint sources to ensure zero discharge or release of plastic into water or onto land in the state and to ensure the prompt cleanup of any discharged or released plastic. HB 3814 was referred to the Environmental Regulation Committee on March 23, 2021 and no further action has been taken.

### Save Our Seas 2.0 Act Signed into Law

On December 18th, 2020, the [Save Our Seas 2.0](#) was signed into law. The Act addresses the marine litter issue domestically and enhances the United States' international engagement on this global problem. Among the provisions of the Act is the establishment of a new national Trash Free Waters grant program, authorized at \$10 million per year through 2025 (though there was no appropriation

for this program in 2021). The Act also calls for the development of a public EPA strategy for improving post-consumer materials management, and outlines several reports EPA will lead including microfiber pollution, new end-use markets for recyclable plastics, among others.

### **Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act**

Introduced on March 25th by Senator Jeff Merkley and Representative Alan Lowenthal, places emphasis on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) of products and packaging, targets single-use plastics bags and Styrofoam take-out containers, and calls for increased post-consumer recycled content in products. Read the bill [here](#).

**NCTCOG will be posting past editions of the North Texas Trash Free Water Newsletters here: [www.NCTCOG.org/TrashFreeWaters](http://www.NCTCOG.org/TrashFreeWaters)**

View additional events and training opportunities at [www.nctcog.org/envir/events](http://www.nctcog.org/envir/events).

For questions or additional information on any of these items, please contact:

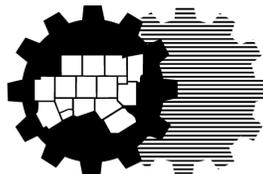
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Join Trash Free Texas efforts on Twitter and Facebook and share posts and information!



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