

**North Central Texas
Council of Governments**



July 2021

Trash Free Waters: North Central Texas Newsletter

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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.

Subscribe to future editions of this newsletter.

North Central Texas Spotlight

Call for Cities and Recreation Groups to Join Advisory Group on Plogging and Other Recreational Litter Cleanup Activities

Over the summer, NCTCOG and the Houston-Galveston Area Council will draft toolkit resources and convene workgroups with local stakeholders to make headway on two goals of the [Trash Free Texas: Basin-wide Community Engagement Strategies to Reduce Aquatic Debris](#) project:

1. Provide outreach and engagement support for litter cleanup events through partnerships with local governments, recreational clubs (such as cycling and running clubs), and Keep Texas Beautiful affiliates.
2. Work with Texas-based restaurants to reduce the use of single-use plastic.

We will design toolkits to provide resources for holding multi-community cleanup events, such as Mayor's Challenges; resources to help engage recreational groups in cleanup activities, such as "plogging"; and resources for outreach on general cleanup and litter education for communities. We plan to convene two workgroups. The Recreation and Litter Cleanup Advisory Group is composed of recreational groups, local governments, and other entities. This workgroup will develop

best practices to support recreational groups in becoming more active in their litter cleanup efforts. The second workgroup, The Restaurant Stakeholder Advisory Group will consist of owners and/or representatives from local restaurants; local restaurant associations; local governments and local chambers of commerce. This group will develop programs and resources to help with single-use plastic reduction.

To help us begin drafting the toolkits and convene the workgroups, we would love YOUR feedback!

- Are there any resources your city or group would find particularly beneficial in the litter cleanup toolkits?
- Have you hosted multi-city style cleanups, and would you be interested in providing feedback, lessons learned, or identified needs with us?
- Are you interested in participating in the recreation group or restaurant workgroups to be convened later this summer?
- Do you know any local restaurants that have initiated single-use plastic reduction strategies and would be interested in sharing their experience as a possible case study?
- Would you like to learn more about any of the resources or workgroups we are working on?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, please contact Crysta Guzman for more information. The Recreation and Litter Cleanup Advisory Group's first virtual meeting will be in August or September. The Restaurant Stakeholder Advisory Group's first meeting is planned for Fall 2021. You can contact Crysta Guzman at cguzman@nctcog.org.

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

The Trash Free Waters Adopt-A-Spot map has recently been updated with new adoptable locations from the following cities and Keep Texas Beautiful affiliates. Now included on the map from North Texas:

- City of Mansfield
- Keep Ennis Beautiful
- Keep Rowlett Beautiful
- Keep Cleburne Beautiful
- Keep Grapevine Beautiful
- City of Mesquite/ Keep Mesquite Beautiful

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 improvements to the online mapping platform in hopes of achieving more flexibility and functionality for cities and KTB affiliates who add their sites. So, be on the look out for those improvements in the future!

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 has added 17 organizations' sites to the map in the first year of the grant.

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-Spot (ex. road, waterway, stream, river, school, or other spot), please contact the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at contact@trashfreetexas.org or fill out the Adopt-A-Spot Data Submittal Form at <https://www.trashfreetexas.org/become-a-coordinator>. For a step-by-step process on submitting Adopt-A-Spot Data, view the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6zYVLd27W8&t=3s>. Please visit <https://www.trashfreetexas.org/frequently-asked-questions> to learn more about adding Adopt-a-Spot Data and to answer further questions.

North Texas Trash Free Waters Project Initiatives Underway

Launch of Texas Litter Database

Keep Texas Beautiful and the Houston Advanced Research Center are developing a central database to organize and store 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. Analysis of this data is an important component of understanding the litter problem in Texas and its waterways, and therefore, managing it. The project is funded by the Garver Black Hilyard Family Foundation. The North Central Texas Council of Governments, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and The Meadows Center at Texas State University are testing a beta version and giving feedback for the database which is expected to be available this summer.

An informational webinar is being planned in August to show how to use the database. Contact Elena Berg, eberg@nctcog.org, if you want to be added to the email list that will receive the announcement for the webinar. The webinar will also be recorded and then linked in an upcoming newsletter and posted on the NCTCOG Trash Free Waters Project website, www.nctcog.org/trashfreewaters.

North Texas Community Cleanup Challenge Informational Webinar

Join this informational webinar to learn all about the 2021 North Texas Community Cleanup Challenge! Topics to be covered include:

- What and when is the challenge;
- Who can participate;
- How to sign-on;
- How to enter your litter data;
- How to enter your events on the event calendar;
- How to join the optional Mayor's Challenge;
- FAQ's and more.

Date: August 5, 2021

Time 8:00 am - 10:00 pm CST

Register: [Link Here](#)

Plastic Free July - Be Part of the Solution

Plastic Free July is a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution, so we can have cleaner streets, oceans, and beautiful communities. Plastic Free July challenges participants to limit their consumption of single-use plastics during daily life. Beyond the individual level, the movement encourages local governments to host workshops and talks, that will engage and empower their communities. The organization suggests that government agencies also conduct a bin audit to understand the scope of the problem and inform new policies. Local governments must review procurement policies and understand their organization's plastic consumption to influence and model sustainable behaviors for the community.

Source:

[Plastic Free July – Be Part of the Solution](#)

A Bubble Barrier' is trapping plastic waste before it can get into the sea

The Bubble Barrier was created to prevent plastic waste from entering waterways and traveling to the ocean. Designed with simplicity in mind, this device uses an air compressor to create a stream of bubbles that brings trash to the surface, trapping waste, and guiding it to a catchment system. Most of the plastic pollution found in our oceans can be traced to river and coastlines; plastic waste can suffocate and entangle some aquatic species, and microplastics cause further harm to aquatic life when mistaken for food. Since its installation in 2019, the Bubble Barrier has stopped 86% of trash from flowing to the River IJssel in Amsterdam and traveling all the way to the North Sea. Conservation ecologist, Stephanie Borrelle says that one benefit of this pollutant barrier is that the Bubble Barrier is not problematic in its interaction with systems ecological functioning, due to the lack of physical barrier blocking the river. Certain limitations of the device, however, are its suitability for wide rivers, unknown ability to lift heavier pieces of plastic, and concern about installation in developing economies, as the pump requires continuous electricity needs. Regardless of the few weaknesses, the Bubble Barrier is a necessary tool for combatting plastic pollution already in our waterways. The invention also holds the potential to educate the public on plastic waste because the catchment system is visible to passerby's, it holds a powerful visual representation of how much waste ends up in waterways.

Source:

Maheshpreet Kaur Narula

CNN, [CNN - Breaking News, Latest News and Videos](#)

Past Webinar Now Posted: Wrangling Trash from Waterways - Texas Style

The webinar recording and presentations have been posted on the NCTCOG Trash Free Waters page <https://nctcog.org/trashfreewaters> under the green Past Events banner. This webinar features presentations on floatables removal projects from the City of Frisco, the City of Pasadena, and the San Antonio River Authority.

[North Central Texas Trash Free Waters Partner Resources](#)

Keep Texas Beautiful Awards in North Texas

The Beautify Texas Awards, sponsored by Keep Texas Beautiful, acknowledge the hard work of these organizations and individuals to enhance their community and protect Texas's environment. More information about the awards and the award winners visit: [https://ktb.org/ktbawards?ct=t\(BTAwinners2021\)&mc_cid=0aeef3bac6&mc_eid=b442966f12](https://ktb.org/ktbawards?ct=t(BTAwinners2021)&mc_cid=0aeef3bac6&mc_eid=b442966f12).

Congratulations to the Beautify Texas Award winners in North Central Texas:

Ruthe Jackson Youth Individual
Meghan Holloran, Allen

Outstanding Program Award
Life Message Thrift Store & Food Pantry, Rowlett

Outstanding Project Award
City of Irving Urban Forestry Team, Irving

Sadie Ray Graff Educational Institution
Biodiversity Education Center, Coppell

Keep Fort Worth Beautiful Recognized as Gold Star Affiliate by KTB

Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB), a statewide grassroots environmental and community improvement non-profit organization, recently named Keep Fort Worth Beautiful a Gold Star Affiliate. The Gold Star is the highest recognition a member affiliate can achieve. Keep Fort Worth Beautiful, and other Gold Star communities, will be formally recognized at the 54th Annual KTB Conference in June.

Keep America Beautiful Publishes the 2020 National Litter Study

Keep America Beautiful has recently release data from its 2020 study on litter in America. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the quantity, composition, and sources of litter along roadways, waterways, and in non-roadway areas across the U.S. The 2020 study has four components: Public Attitudes Survey, Visible Litter Survey, Behavioral Observations Survey, and Financial Cost of Litter Survey. Results from the study show that litter in America has decreased by 54% since the last comprehensive study in 2009, however there are still 50 billion pieces of litter on the ground in the U.S. Although roadway litter has declined, there is slightly more litter along waterways, according to the study. Additional findings include:

- 90% of U.S. residents agree that litter is a problem in their state.
- Of the 50 billion pieces of litter, 24 billion are along roadways and 26 billion are along waterways.
- An estimated 207 million PPE items were littered on U.S. roadways and waterways through early fall 2020.
- More than 2,000 pieces of litter per mile

One of the biggest take-aways from the study is the emphasis on the importance of behavioral change; the study estimates that if littering were to stop today, waste was properly managed, and every American picked up 152 pieces of litter, we would have a litter-free nation.

Source:

[Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study](#)

Applications sought for Texas Environmental Excellence Awards

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is now accepting applications for the 2022 Texas Environmental Excellence Awards, the state's most prestigious environmental prize. The TEEA is an annual awards program that honors achievements in environmental preservation and protection. Applications must be submitted by Sept. 24, 2021.

The award categories include: Agriculture, Civic/Community, Education, Environmental Educator of the Year, Individual, Innovative Operations/Management, Pollution Prevention, Technical/Technology, Water Conservation, and Youth. To apply or to nominate an environmental effort that exemplifies the best in conservation and environmental stewardship, visit the [TEEA webpage](#).

Upcoming Events of Interest

54th Annual Keep Texas Beautiful Conference

KTB provides an innovative keynote, speakers, panels and sessions that tackle environmental topics like community beautification, volunteer engagement, waste reduction, recycling education, and more.

Date: June 28 - July 1, 2021

RSVP: [Here](#)

Big Data for Trash Monitoring Programs Big or Small

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: July 15, 2021 2:30 PM EDT

Registration: [Here](#)

Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Regional Summit

Each of the three virtual half-day sessions will inspire collaboration and empower partners to work on solutions to marine debris. Attendees will represent state and federal agencies, NGOs, academia, and other groups tackling marine debris in the five Mid-Atlantic coastal states (New York,

New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) and Washington, DC. The public also is encouraged to participate.

Dates: July 20 - 22, 2021

Learn more: [Here](#)

North Texas Community Cleanup Challenge Informational Webinar

Join this informational webinar to learn all about the 2021 North Texas Community Cleanup Challenge! Topics to be covered include:

- What and when is the challenge;
- Who can participate;
- How to sign-on;
- How to enter your litter data;
- How to enter your events on the event calendar;
- How to join the optional Mayor's Challenge;
- FAQ's and more.

Date: August 5, 2021

Time 8:00 am - 10:00 pm CST

Register: [Link Here](#)

EPA Region 6 Stormwater Conference

EPA Region 6 is hosting the [Annual EPA Region 6 Stormwater Conference August 8-12](#) in New Orleans, Louisiana. The conference provides participants national, regional and state updates on water regulations and policy, as well as information on stormwater controls, water conservation management practices, and new technologies that can address stormwater pollution discharges to surface waters.

Date: August 8 - 12, 2021

Register: [Link Here](#)

Highlights from The Rapids: US EPA's Trash Free Waters Monthly Update

The Rapids is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters>

New Tools for Reducing Litter

New Toolkits for Litter Awareness

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) recently published a toolkit for community engagement titled ["Reducing Marine Litter Through Local Action."](#) The purpose of this toolkit is to help North American urban, suburban and rural communities located inland or in coastal areas to mobilize and coordinate efforts to reduce and prevent improperly disposed trash from becoming

marine litter. An accompanying resource is the ["Last Stop: The Ocean" Campaign Toolkit and website](#), which uses creative illustration to emphasize the interconnectedness of our waterways, river systems, and shared watersheds.

EPA Region 7 Healthy Environments Challenge Video

EPA Region 7's Healthy Environments Challenge, launched last month in an effort to educate students about the impacts of trash in the environment and what they can do to help prevent it, now features a fun video explaining how to get involved in the initiative. Watch the video clip [here](#).

Gulf of Mexico Division for Trash Free Waters Issued RFA

The EPA's Gulf of Mexico Division has issued the Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico 2021 Request for Applications (RFA) on June 1 with a deadline of August 6th. One of the funding opportunities under this RFA is titled "Trash Free Waters – Preventing More, Picking Up Less." This TFW RFA seeks projects in the five Gulf States, or within several upstream cities, focused on preventing trash from reaching our waterways. Learn more about this RFA [here](#).

Release of the EPA's Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol (ETAP)

The Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol (ETAP) is a quantitative survey tool that provides a standard method for collecting and assessing litter data. The protocol can be used to assess item age and level of fouling and analyze and compare across specific material types and categories of trash collected. This highly adaptable method for trash monitoring will provide practitioners and citizen scientists with a comprehensive and rigorous method for quantifying trash loadings. Download the ETAP Reference Guide and Excel Spreadsheet Tool [here](#).

NCTCOG will be posting past editions of the North Texas Trash Free Water Newsletters here: www.NCTCOG.org/TrashFreeWaters

View additional events and training opportunities at www.nctcog.org/envir/events.

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

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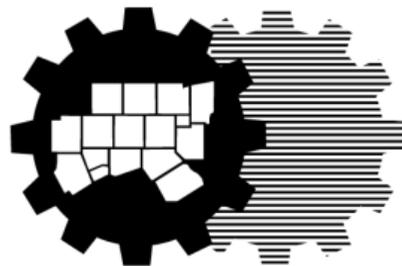
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