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# Trinity River National Water Trail Task Force Meeting (Virtual)

Wednesday, November 2, 2022, 9:00 AM

## Meeting Summary

### 1. **Welcome & Meeting Purpose.** – *Steve Smith, Trinity Coalition (5 minutes)*

Erin Blackman (NCTCOG) welcomed the participants to the Trinity River National Water Trail Task Force meeting. Steve Smith (Trinity Coalition) reviewed the purpose and history of the National Water Trail Task Force. In 2020, the Trinity River Paddling Trail was awarded the National Water Trail designation by the National Park Service. As a result, the Trail must be kept up to National standards. This Task Force was created to support the Trail, with quarterly meetings designed to keep partners updated on the status of the Trail and coordinate improvement/expansion efforts.

### 2. **State of the Trail.** Presentation on the current state of the Trinity River National Water Trail, including river events, sites that are open, closed, or in need of attention, and opportunities for expansion. – *Dale Harris, Steve Smith, & Teresa Patterson, Trinity Coalition (12 Minutes)*

Dale Harris (Trinity Coalition) overviewed the last quarter of updates for the Trail. Dale provided facts about the trail (e.g., 130-mile trail; one of 35 national water trails in the U.S., etc.). Currently 20 of 21 launch sites are open; one launch site is difficult to use. Moore Park launch site has been covered in silt, but it is now cleaned up and open. All but two sections along the Trail are 4-6 miles in length.

Dale mentioned that several new launches/opportunities for expansion are on the horizon. That list can be found in slide 10 of the presentation. In the chat, Sandra Youngblood (City of Fort Worth) indicated that the new launch at Riverside Park in Fort Worth could open separately from the completion of Panther Island and that she would follow up with an update.

Dale identified the special events that have recently occurred and are planned on the Trail (slide 11 of the presentation). Teresa Patterson (Trinity Coalition) explained that these events are well attended and always offer a fun experience. For example, at the Spooky Paddle and Costume Contest event, a beaver stole some of their decorations (later retrieved). There are over 13,000 members registered to local paddling clubs and interest groups. The trail has been usable most of the year with a few exceptions.

Dale highlighted some of Trinity Coalition's web site tools – including the interactive map with hazard warnings and miles between launch sites as well as water level gauge outputs. Trinity Coalition also interacts with the public through four of its social media sites – website, Facebook page, meetup page, and Trinity River Paddling Trail Association's Facebook group page. These tools and outreach efforts help paddlers plan their trip along the Trail.

### 3. **Paddling Trail Update – City of Irving.** *Gene Moulden, City of Irving (10 Minutes)*

Gene Moulden (City of Irving) provided an update on the planned Trinity View Park Canoe Launch. This project has been in the works for over two years and is expected to open in Fall 2023. The launch site is close to the Dallas Skyline Trail and parking and will help cut the distance between neighboring launch sites. Future plans may provide a permanent portage around Frazier Dam (2-3



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years out). Gene showed pictures of the location and engineering specs. Throughout this process, Irving has been coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for any needed permits, etc. Steve commented that the 45-degree angle launch design follows recommended best practices to minimize maintenance (e.g., silt buildup) and create a better launching eddy.

**4. Dallas County Parks & Open Space Program.** Presentation will provide a program overview, including its history, how the county's preserves are currently managed, and the future direction of the program. – *Mia Brown, Dallas County (25 minutes)*

Mia Brown (Dallas County) gave a past, present, and future overview of Dallas County's Parks and Open Space Program. It consists of 21 preserves, 3500+ acres of open space, 12 management partners, and additional entities that assist with preservations. The first preserve was gifted to the County in 1976 by Lester Lorch, and the adoption of Dallas County's open space plan shortly followed.

Mia indicated that all the Dallas County Parks and Open Space properties are called preserves (except Lorch Park) and are meant to provide passive recreation opportunities such as hiking, birdwatching, picnicking, etc. Mia highlighted the Cedar Ridge Preserve, Grapevine Spring Preserve, and Lee. F Jackson Spring Creek Forest Preserve.

Dallas County's Parks and Open Space Program is housed in the Planning and Development Department. Dallas County is a specialized partner, and not an operator or manager of parks or open spaces. The 1991 Open Space Plan recommended the acquisition of the Trinity River Greenbelt – unincorporated areas without a management partner for these properties. This includes Goat Island Preserve and Palmetto-Alligator Slough Preserve.

Mia highlighted the County's new effort to build a volunteer program for the Parks and Open Space Program to help build public investment in the preserves. They have revamped and rebranded the program with social media sites and a new logo. Dallas County will be developing a plan to create recommendations for each existing preserve, with land acquisition a secondary focus (unlike the 1980 and 1991 plans that focused primarily on acquisition). The planning process is expected to begin in early 2023 and will focus heavily on public engagement.

Dale Harris (Trinity Coalition) suggested Circle Ten as a potential partner to help with trails. Steve Smith (Trinity Coalition) mentioned that Garrett Boone installed a launch in 2015 at McCommas Bluff, but it washed away. He would like to install a replacement through the Audubon Center. Mia responded that she would be open to discussing. Heather Firn (Trinity River Authority) is interested in partnering with some of Dallas County's "Management Partners" on the Rowlett Creek Characterization Study and Watershed Protection Plan. Mia will pass along related contact information.

**5. Coordinated Approach for Mitigation of Lock & Dam #1 in Southern Dallas.** Presentation on the concerns of Lock and Dam #1 and the benefits and opportunities for mitigating the effects. – *Dale Harris, Trinity Coalition (12 Minutes)*

Dale Harris (Trinity Coalition) provided details of a high-level idea to mitigate Lock and Dam #1 in Southern Dallas. The lock and dam system is a historic system that has been abandoned along the Trinity River. The water flowing over the dam and remaining debris and hardware at this site create a hazard for paddlers (e.g., gear and equipment may get caught or snagged). Dale explained there may be an opportunity to mitigate these impacts when the adjacent McCommas Bluff Landfill



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expands. Heavy equipment would be brought in anyway, and the thought is to capitalize on this to remove the hazards.

Dale has explored a potential mitigation solution (Cincinnati's Office of Environment and Sustainability) that may be a low-cost alternative to removing the dam. Dale explained the "backfill" method, which consists of adding rock riffles downstream of the dam to submerge the dam. The threshold on the leading edge of the lock and dam would protect swift water from moving the rocks further downstream.

Edith Marvin (NCTCOG) asked Dale if he contacted any of the stakeholders, and he said he tried to contact the City of Dallas and USACE. Edith relayed the importance of understanding where Dallas stands on this. Steve Smith (Trinity Coalition) also asked Dale if he was able to put together a draft budget for potential mitigation efforts. Dale responded that he was still exploring this.

**6. Task Force Roundtable.** The attendees will discuss regional opportunities, community goals, concerns, partnership efforts, and economic development projects along the Trinity River National Water Trail. – *All members* (20 minutes)

Jerry Cotter (USACE) provided input on what to consider for a project such as mitigating Lock and Dam #1. He mentioned that any time there is a disturbance to waters of the U.S./levees/dams, permits may be required (404 Clean Water Act program and the Section 408). Jerry also mentioned a new USACE program, Sustainable Rivers, being brought to the Trinity River. Sustainable Rivers seeks to increase environmental benefits provided by the Corps' already built water resources projects. Danny Allen with USACE is the lead for this program and is building a collaboration group for the Trinity River. Jerry has sent Danny this group's contact information.

Jerry mentioned USACE is also looking at Regulation Plans for the eight dams on the Trinity River and how to regulate flood control, water supply, etc. (similar to Sustainable Rivers environmental plan). Operations and maintenance funding will allow forecasting dam operations to incorporate weather forecasts. Steve Smith (Trinity Coalition) asked how to be notified of future dam releases. Jerry mentioned the National Weather Service (Greg Waller) has a recreational product that should be available to all that reports the release forecast weekly. For the USACE dam operator, the number is 817-886-1551 and the website is [www.swf-wc.usace.army.mil](http://www.swf-wc.usace.army.mil).

Sandra Youngblood (City of Fort Worth) indicated that she had been contacted by Irish Mae with RentFun about self-service kayak rental and asked if other communities had experience with this. Teresa Patterson (Trinity Coalition) relayed potential safety issues with self-service kayak rentals in that there are no staff present to enforce safety gear. No one mentioned that they had direct experience with this and were encouraged to contact Sandra ([sandra.youngblood@fortworthtexas.gov](mailto:sandra.youngblood@fortworthtexas.gov)) if so.

**7. Upcoming Opportunities.** A list of upcoming committee meetings, webinars, and other events relevant to the state of the Trinity River. – *NCTCOG staff* (5 minutes)

Erin Blackman (NCTCOG) quickly identified upcoming community- and NCTCOG-related meetings/events that may be of interest. They are listed in the presentation (slides 50-52). The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for February 2023 and members will be notified of the date once determined.

Steve Smith adjourned the meeting a 10:36 AM.



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**Meeting Attendance.** The following members participated in the virtual meeting.

Stacie Anaya, City of Lewisville  
Lisa Biggs, City of Fort Worth  
Erin Blackman, NCTCOG  
Debbie Branch, City of Fort Worth  
Mia Brown, Dallas County  
Katie Christman, Dallas County  
Jerry Cotter, USACE  
Matt Craig, Halff Associates  
Clair Davis, City of Fort Worth  
Robert Denkhous, City of Fort Worth  
Heather Firm, Trinity River Authority  
Dale Harris, Trinity Coalition  
Jai-W Hayes-Jackson, NCTCOG  
Kristi Kerr Leonard, Trinity Coalition  
Webster Mangham, Trinity River Authority  
Edith Marvin, NCTCOG  
Bud Melton, Halff Associates  
Gene Moulden, City of Irving  
Richard Nevins, City of Grand Prairie  
Tina Nikolic, Tarrant Regional Water District  
Pritiben Patel, NCTCOG  
Teresa Patterson, Trinity Coalition  
Erika Pelletier, National Parks Conservation Association  
Steve Plumer, City of Grand Prairie  
Liliana Rivera, Visit Dallas  
Steve Smith, Trinity Coalition  
Daniel Snyder, NCTCOG  
Aaron Tuley, Halff Associates  
Erik van Bloemen Waanders, NCTCOG  
Michelle Villafranca, City of Fort Worth  
Sandra Youngblood, City of Fort Worth  
Kate Zielke, NCTCOG