



Town Lake Trail Foundation Newsletter

October 2005

Welcome!

The news from the trail is all good this quarter. Many exciting improvement projects are moving forward (detailed below), and as soon as the heat subsides a little, we'll be organizing a number of volunteer workdays. We'd love your help if you have a little time to spare.

We also want to say thanks to the 600 plus runners and walkers who took part in the first annual Milago Moonlight Margarita Run. Despite a storm that narrowly missed us and free-flowing margarita machines that temporarily shut down power at the American Legion Hall, the event was a huge success.

We now have more than 1,000 Town Lake Trail Foundation members. If you are not yet a member of the Town Lake Trail Foundation, join TODAY at <http://www.townlaketrail.org>.

Here's an update on many of the projects we're currently working on. If there's anything here that's of particular interest and you'd like to get more involved, please send an explanation of your interest directly to the project director or send your contact information to volunteers@townlaketrail.org.

~~~~~ Trail Foundation Events and Activities ~~~~~



On Thursday evening, August 4, the Town Lake Trail Foundation hosted the first annual Milago Moonlight Margarita Run benefiting Austin's Town Lake Trail. After a shotgun start at sunset, runners, walkers, and kids of all ages wound their way along a 5K course through the streets bordering Town Lake. After the run, the Trail Foundation hosted a post-race moonlight party with Tex Mex from El Arroyo, music and margaritas on the grounds of the Legion Hall. Thanks to everyone who took part.

The nighttime race was held to raise money for a new restroom facility that will be situated just east of Waller Creek near the Milago Condominiums. The facility will replace the 27-year old eyesore that is there now. More than \$15,000 was raised and more is coming. A site permit application has been submitted to the city and we hope to break ground soon.



We also want to thank all our sponsors who made the Moonlight Margarita Run such a tremendous success:



Next year's run is tentatively planned for the evening of Thursday, August 10, 2006. Check out our website, www.moonlightmargaritarun.com, in the spring for more information.

Fall 2005 Trash & Treasure Hunt a Tremendous Success!



On Saturday, October 2, more than 75 volunteers gave up their morning plans to come out for a major end-to-end trash clean-up. These hard-working, trash-hating do-gooders removed more than 250 bags of waste from the woods, ditches and brush that line our trail. Along the way, they discovered an amazing amount of valuable loot.



Valuable prizes, hidden in Trail Foundation envelopes, were provided by great Austin businesses including Joe Koen & Son Jewelers, The Café at The Four Seasons Hotel, The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Scarbroughs, Julie Horvath and Castle Hill Specialized Fitness, Central Homegoods, Ballet Austin, Theresa Woodson, Texas Rowing Center, Pear Izumi, Salon Aura, Amy's Ice Cream and Mangia Pizza. Thanks to all who volunteered and those great Austin businesses and individuals that provided prizes. Look for the next Trash and Treasure Hunt in April 2006.

The Roberta Crenshaw Walkway Gardens

On October 4th, the Great Outdoors Garden Center on South Congress completed the installation of a charming all-native garden at the entrance to the north end of the MOPAC pedestrian bridge. Great Outdoors generously donated the irrigation system, its installation, and all the plants in order to beautify this heavily used entry to the Trail. Great Outdoors is a great friend to the Town Lake Trail Foundation. You can thank them by patronizing their store at 2730 South Congress for plants, pots, supplies and even Christmas trees.



Upcoming Trail Volunteer Workdays

This fall, after an incredibly hot summer, we're going to get back to work and we would love your help. Here are the planned dates and volunteers projects and dates.

- Bamboo Grove, clearing, landscaping, installation of sustainable uses of bamboo
 - Healthy Trees Program, gardening, planting, brush clearing
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- Saturday, October 22, 8:30 to 12
Saturday, Nov. 5, 8:30 to 12
Saturday, Dec. 17 8:30 to 12

For an invitation for you and your friends to come out for any of these efforts, please send an email to volunteers@townlaketrail.org. Contact: Sara Moore, sara@townlaketrail.org.

Upcoming Membership Meetings

If you are a Trail Foundation member and would like to see firsthand what we're up to, please consider attending one of our bimonthly membership meetings. The next meetings will be held Wednesday, October 12, Wednesday, November 9 and Wednesday, January 11. The meetings run from 6 pm to 7:30 pm. We provide drinks and our hosts usually provide a light dinner. This is the best way to learn how you can get involved with the Trail Foundation and meet other cool trail users like yourself.

Racing for the Trail

Racing for the Trail, a program to benefit the Town Lake Trail Foundation, kicked off its second season with the Capital 10K on Sunday April 3rd. Through Racing for The Trail, you can turn your racing miles and fun runs into donations for the Trail. If you are interested in being a sponsored runner or in sponsoring a runner, please visit www.racingforthetrail.org or contact program director Jeff Burrus at jeff@townlaketrail.org.

Lady Bird Johnson Adopt-a-Garden Auction

The 3rd annual Lady Bird Johnson Adopt-a-Garden Auction will take place on February 4th, 2006, 11:00 AM at the Zilker Botanical Garden Center, 2220 Barton Springs Rd. We will auction off a new crop of gardens for adoption along the Town Lake Trail. John Dromgoole, Austin's best known natural gardener, will speak. Refreshments and gardening door prizes will be available. Come join us. Contact: Sara Moore, 467-9489 or sara@townlaketrail.org.



~~~~~ Trail Improvement Projects Already Underway ~~~~~

New Mile Markers are Coming!

At the Town Lake Trail Foundation's Mile Marker Auction in February 2005, we offered a sneak peak at the new mile marker design and raised more than \$24,000 in funding for the program. In May, the City gave their final blessing and we began manufacturing the mile markers. We anticipate that they will be complete and installed along the trail this fall. Just half's and whole's will be installed initially but soon thereafter we plan to include $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile markers using generous funding received from being the beneficiary of the Austin Runners Club's Decker Challenge races and our Racing for The Trail program.



So, if you want to help with the mile marker effort, please consider running in this year's Decker Challenge



on Sunday, December 4. This is a great race and one of the favorites in the Austin Distance Challenge. Learn more about the race and register at <http://decker.austinrunners.org>.

Eight mile markers, primarily those located between Holly Street Power Plant and I-35 on the spectacular east end of the trail, remain available for underwriting. If your family, friends or company are interested in underwriting the manufacture and maintenance of a new Mile Marker, please send a check for \$1,500 to New Mile Markers, Town Lake Trail Foundation, P.O. Box 5195, Austin, Texas 78763. In return, we'll send you a framed certificate once they're installed with a photograph of your mile marker, a map of its location and a letter of thanks from the Trail Foundation and the City of Austin.

The Historic Old Town Lake Trail Mile Markers

What to do with the legendary old mile markers? The first few old mile markers will be donated to the Austin Parks Foundation for installation along the trail in Guerrero-Colorado River Park at the east end of the Town Lake Trail. The rest will be made available for sale to anyone who wants one for \$500 each to the first 40 people who send us a check. All proceeds will go toward Town Lake Trail improvements. They'll be offered first come—first served, so if you have a specific mile number request, please send your check soon. Contact: John Graham, project director, john@townlaketrail.org.



The Barton Creek Bamboo Grove

Just east of Barton Creek lies an enormous grove of bamboo. For years, this area was an eyesore and sometimes a scary place for trail users since there appeared to be a high rate of vagrancy in the area. In addition, this form of bamboo is a troublesome invasive species that grows by its root system underground and was spreading up and down the bluffs of Barton Creek at an alarming pace. Working under the direction of Jim Phillips of Bamboo Specialists and the Texas Bamboo Society, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, our volunteers spent countless workdays deep in the grove removing rubbish, trash, and trimming back the bamboo. Additionally, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department helped us install a 36" deep rhizome barrier in the earth surrounding the grove. Now the garden is a safe and enjoyable place to visit and trail users can see deep into the grove so their fear of whom or what might be lurking inside no longer exists.



We are organizing Bamboo Grove workdays for Saturday, October 22 and Saturday, November 5. If interested, please send an email to volunteers@townlaketrail.org. Contact: Jim Phillips, project director, at jamboo@bamboospecialists.com.

Landscape Lighting Pilot Project Almost Ready for Prime Time!



Part of the extensive project completed by Deloitte and Freescale on Impact Day (June 3, 2005) included installation of a landscape lighting pilot project along a 200' section of the Zilker trail that is notorious for trip and fall hazards. Our intention with this test project is to mitigate the "trip and fall" hazards and demonstrate that the trail can be lighted in an aesthetically and environmentally sensitive manner.

The lamps have now been installed. The system is solar powered and a solar mast and array has been installed at the west end of the test section. Once the heat subsides, we'll be planting around the lights and the control box. After that, we'll formally turn the project over to the city and ask for public feedback about the project. If this pilot is successful, there are a few other dark, trip and fall-prone stretches where we want to test similar landscape lighting solutions.

Contact: Bill Curra, project director, at william.curra@sbcglobal.net.

Healthy Trees for the Trail

Throughout 2005, you'll see professional arborists and volunteers from the Town Lake Trail Foundation and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center working in wooded areas along the trail.

Healthy Trees for the Trail is a comprehensive woodland management plan for the Town Lake Trail. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Town Lake Trail Foundation, and Austin Parks and Recreation Department are partnering to return the meadows and woodland areas along Town Lake to a healthy state and assure that care of the trees, wildlife, and flora is sustained for years to come. The activities of these trained volunteers and professionals include brush and vine removal, tree trimming, creating and administering individualized healthcare for specimen trees, elimination of poisonous and invasive species, replanting with native species to restore ecosystem health, as well as construction and installation of interpretive signage to educate us all about the significance of pristine ecosystems and the role of native plants and trees. Our work crews have been instructed not to block the trail under any circumstances.

To date, we have removed roughly 350 diseased, dead or dangerous trees from the Austin High, Zilker Park and Waller Creek areas and planted more than 350 native species saplings. We anticipate that by February 2006, we will have completed work in the first two priority sections: north of the river between Lamar and MOPAC and south of the river between Barton Creek and MOPAC. Maintenance efforts will continue through the spring and winter of 2006. As additional funding is secured, we plan to continue the tree work in east Austin near Holly Street Power Plant, at Waller Creek, by Deep Eddy Pool and downtown. Contact: Dan Garrison, project director, at dan@townlaketrail.org.

~~~~~ *Upcoming Trail Improvement Projects* ~~~~~

### Lou Neff Point Landscaping Restoration

One segment of the trail in need of immediate repair and improvements is located at the confluence of Barton Creek and the Colorado River (along the south shore of the lake). This heavily used area, known as Lou Neff Point, is adjacent to the City's Barton Springs Pool, Zilker Park soccer fields, and duck feeding area along Barton Creek. Items in need of repair and improvement along this 1/2 mile segment include:

- Widening the trail to decrease overcrowding and conflicts between walkers, runners, and cyclists
- Improving the trail surface, lake edge protection and drainage facilities to minimize erosion and loss of vegetation
- Removing and replacing timber retaining walls and steps that have rotted away
- Installing drainage culverts under the trail to reduce erosion
- Reducing the steep grade along the concrete portion of the trail so that it is not as steep
- Installing a new water fountain and dog fountain
- Improved landscaping



Work on Lou Neff Point was to begin September 1 but the Austin City Limits Music Festival and the Trail of Lights required that we delay the start until January 2006. This section of the trail will be closed and a trail detour through Zilker Park will be in place for approximately 60 days. Unfortunately, the overhaul is just too big a project to handle any other way. Incentives are being put into the contract for rapid completion so we ask for your patience as we transform the once glorious Lou Neff Point again into one of the most beautiful spots anywhere in Austin.

This project, unfortunately, is a little like a visit to the dentist: you know it will be painful but it has to be done. This section of the trail

will be closed and a trail detour through Zilker Park will be in place for approximately 60 days. Unfortunately, the overhaul is just too big a project to handle any other way. Incentives are being put into the contract for rapid completion so we ask for your patience as we transform the once glorious Lou Neff Point again into one of the most beautiful spots anywhere in Austin. Contact Dan Garrison, project director, at [dan@townlaketrail.org](mailto:dan@townlaketrail.org).

## New Trailhead Maps



Today, if you want to find your way from the Stevie Ray Vaughn statue on Auditorium Shores to Deep Eddy Pool, you'd better already know the way or be willing to stop and ask for directions. You'd be hard pressed to find your way using the limited signage that exists on the trail. Our plan is to design, manufacture and install trailhead entrance maps at the most heavily used entrances to the trail, along with a meaningful system of 20 directional signs and 21 new mile markers. Each map will show the well-known 10.2 mile loop.

Additionally, we want to install directional signage at forks in the trail that says simply: "Barton Springs this way" or "Downtown >." TLTF volunteers have mapped the entire park and its system of trails in order to establish key locations for directional signs. After completing 300 trail user surveys to assess the effectiveness of the maps, and receiving a favorable 92% approval rating, we presented our designs to the Parks

and Recreation Department and received their approval. We hope to begin manufacture of the signs and installation this coming winter or spring. Contact: Eddie Rash, project director, at [eddierrash@austin.rr.com](mailto:eddierrash@austin.rr.com).

## The Rowing Center Overlook Restoration

One of the prettiest sections of trail is located between Austin High and the Colorado River on the north bank. Just east of the Rowing Center is an oval-shaped overlook with four or five benches, a few trash cans and a small garden.



In the 70's, the parks department stabilized the riverbank by dropping odd-sized rocks ("rip rap") along the edge that were glued together with concrete. They also landscaped the area with rocks, raised elevations, railroad tie retaining walls and benches. A decomposed granite trail runs along the outer edge of the overlook. People having picnics, reading books, feeding ducks, and just gazing out at the water frequently use the area.

The river has continued to erode the edges of the overlook and has slowly eaten away at the "rip rap." A local family who often visits this site has expressed an interest in funding its restoration. We have developed shoreline and landscaping designs and are in the

process of routing these through the city's permitting office for approval. We hope to begin this project in the fall or winter of 2005. Contact John Loudamy, project director, at [loudamy@yahoo.com](mailto:loudamy@yahoo.com).



**See you on the Trail!**