



Great Hills Neighborhood Park - Land Stewardship Planning Guide

I. Plan Overview

This land stewardship planning guide was made in partnership with the Great Hills Park Committee, Austin Parks Foundation (APF), the City of Austin's Parks & Recreation Department (PAR), the City of Austin's Watershed Protection Department (WPD), and the Austin Fire Department. The items outlined in this plan provide guidance for long-term stewardship of and community engagement at Great Hills Neighborhood Park.

The land stewardship initiative is housed in the [PAR PARKnerships program](#) which coordinates the efforts of partners and volunteers to enhance Austin's parks and help grow a sense of community and stewardship. Through the PARKnerships program, community members and business partners can adopt their park, participate in volunteer days, propose enhancements at their local park, donate resources, and assist with land stewardship plan conception and implementation.

Site Description

Great Hills Neighborhood Park is a 85 acre park on the Bull Creek Watershed, located in District 10. This park was established in 1994 and is owned and maintained by the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department. The Great Hills Park Committee has been providing stewardship at the park for over 30 years. The park's prominent features are a playground and fitness area, pavilion, 2.3 miles of nature trails, and 2.0 miles of Bull Creek Tributary 2. Special features at this site include: two chimney swift towers near the playground area; bat nesting boxes along the trail near Floral Park; and a ¼ acre wildflower meadow at the Floral Park trailhead. It is a Level 3 developed park.

Site History

History of the park, as recorded by the Great Hills Park Committee:

http://greathillspark.org/blog/?page_id=154

Site Characteristics

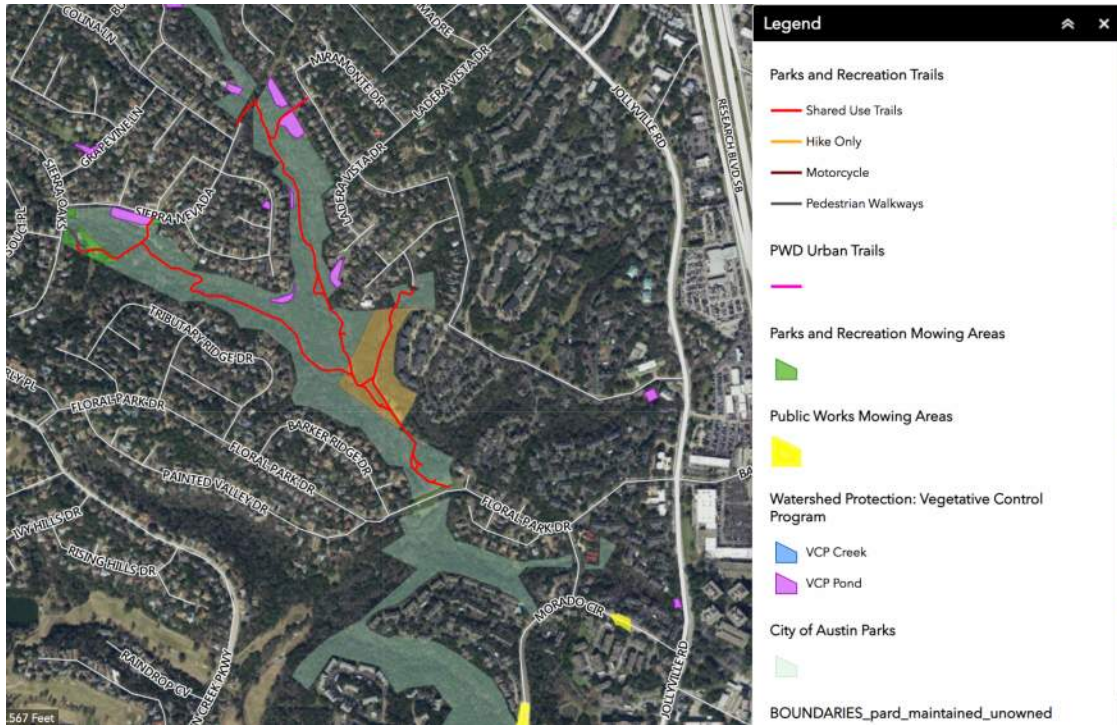
- Creek
- Trails (1.7 mi.)
- Playscape amenities area
 - Playground equipment
 - Outdoor exercise area
 - Covered pavilion with 4 picnic tables
 - 4 additional picnic tables located around the playscape
 - Native plants gardens
 - Pea gravel playbox
 - Benches

- Brick plaza
- Musical instruments
- Telescope
- Flagpole
- Water fountain for dogs and visitors
- Trash/Recycling receptacles
- Dog waste removal stations
- Wildflower meadow (1/4 acre)
- 5 Trailheads and Kiosks
- Swift towers and bat boxes
- Wastewater sewage system throughout the creek area

Management Units:

- High-Use - mowed [1 acre - 28 day mow cycle]
- Woodland - Riparian
- Woodland - Upland [~76 acres]
- High-Use - Trails
- VCP Ponds - 7 in total





Social Inventory

Great Hills Park Committee has been actively involved for over 30 years, and officially part of the Adopt-A-Park Program since 1996. You can read a full history of their involvement here:

http://greathillspark.org/blog/?page_id=154

Multiple neighborhoods border this large park space, but the stewardship group is not affiliated with a particular neighborhood association, though they invite all neighbors to get involved at the park.

Species Inventory

- NATIVE PLANTS
 - <https://www.inaturalist.org/places/great-hills-park>
 - Great Hills Park Committee website's extensive list: http://greathillspark.org/blog/?page_id=193
 - Among the native plants found in the park are:
 - Sideoats grama - *Bouteloua curtipendula*
 - Possumhaw - *Ilex decidua*
 - Pearl milkweed vine - *Matelea reticulata*
 - Frostweed - *Verbesina virginica*
- INVASIVE PLANTS
 - Elephant ear - *Colocasia esculenta*
 - Maltese star thistle - *Centaurea melitensis*
 - Glossy privet - *Ligustrum lucidum*

- Waxyleaf privet - *Ligustrum quihoui*
- Nandina - *Nandina domestica*
- Rescuegrass - *Bromus unioloides*
- KR bluestem - *Bothriochloa ischaemum*
- Johnsongrass - *Sorghum halapense*
- Bermuda - *Cynodon dactylon*
- Chinese tallow - *Sapium sebiferum*
- Chinaberry - *Melia azedarach*
- WILDLIFE
 - <https://www.inaturalist.org/places/great-hills-park>
 - Great Hills Park ebird website: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L721762>
 - Jollyville plateau salamander - *Eurycea tonkawae*
 - Great horned owl - *Bubo virginianus*
 - Migrating chimney swifts - *Chaetura pelagica*
 - Monarch butterfly - *Danaus plexippus*
 - Rough greensnake - *Ophedrys aestivus*
 - Eastern cottontail rabbit - *Sylvilagus floridanus*

II. City Services – Parks and Recreation Department (PARD), Watershed Protection Department (WPD), Austin Fire Department - Wildfire Division

Overview

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department has been the trusted steward of the City of Austin’s public lands since 1928. As such, we protect and maintain parkland and our urban forest. We preserve trails, and offer a variety of sports, recreation, educational enrichment, arts programs, cultural opportunities, nature and aquatic activities. PARD is responsible for managing over 20,000 acres of land, including more than 200 miles of trails and nearly 300 parks, including Great Hills.

WPD manages the City’s drainage system and waterways to protect the community from flooding and erosion and to prevent environmental degradation of our creeks. Protecting the health of our creeks includes protecting and improving the natural areas surrounding them. The Grow Zone program is a WPD/PARD partnership to improve creek health on City parkland that involves pulling back mowing from the creekside and allowing the native woody vegetation to return. This often involves a community education effort to clarify the goals of the program and presents opportunities for volunteer engagement through seedling plantings, invasive plant management and other restoration activities. Please see austintexas.gov/restorationguide for more information.

Primary Contacts

- Parks and Recreation Department
 - Christine Chute Canul, christine.canul@austintexas.gov
 - Julia Hill, julia.hill@austintexas.gov
- Watershed Protection Department
 - John Clement, john.clement@austintexas.gov
- Austin Fire Department - Wildfire Division

- James Duff, james.duff@austintexas.gov
- Austin Water
 - David Marsqueda, david.marsqueda@austintexas.gov

Mowing

Parks and Recreation is responsible for mowing in this park. One can refer to the [City of Austin MOWS map](#) for the most up to date publicly available mowing information. The map shows details about mowing on all city parcels. Suggestions for changing mowing patterns or frequency can be brought to PARD for consideration.

Tree Maintenance

PARD Urban Forestry or its contractors will handle all tree maintenance issues, unless otherwise approved through a [Public Tree Care Permit](#).

If there are issues with dangerous trees on trails (or trees blocking trails) these should be brought to the attention of PARD through the City's 311 service.

With prior approval from PARD Urban Forestry and/or WPD, volunteers can perform work, such as girdling of invasive trees. Volunteers are not permitted to use power tools on parkland.

Wildfire Risk Mitigation

The Austin Fire Department's (AFD) Wildfire Division is the agency which advises on wildfire risk reduction for other city departments, and produces risk reports for the city. Created after the devastating fires of 2011, the wildfire division's goal is not to suppress all fires, but to help Austin become resilient to wildfires in general.

AFD is responsible for all active fires and is reachable through 911.

The wildfire division partners with land managers (such as PARD) to assist in the development of risk reduction plans. While green spaces may seem like the obvious threat, 90% of wildfires are human caused, and the Wildfire Division focuses on education and outreach to protect homes from wildfire as well as public greenspaces from accidental ignitions from neighbors.

Useful information can be found at www.atxwildfire.org or by calling 311 and asking to be connected to the Fire Adapted Communities program at the AFD wildfire division.

Prescribed Fires within the City of Austin and on public land include a cadre of AFD personnel stationed on scene as a contingency resource.

Improvements to Natural Areas

PARD oversees all improvements to natural areas at Great Hills Neighborhood Park. Improvements generally fall within two categories - **volunteer projects** (see Section III: Volunteer Activities for examples and processes) or **Community Activated Park Projects** (see Section IV: Community Activated Park Projects for examples and processes).

If the volunteer group would like to suggest additions and/or improvements to their parkland, including to features/items outlined in this plan, they must submit a proposal through the Community Activated Park Project (CAPP) form for the project to go through a feasibility review and approval process with the City of Austin. See the CAPP agreement for more information.

Additional Resources

PARD, Austin Parks Foundation (APF), and WPD staff can provide other resources to volunteer groups depending on level of volunteer engagement, community needs and site characteristics.

- *Texas Conservation Corps (TXCC) Crews* – Groups that are actively engaged in restoration can propose projects, such as larger scale management of invasives, or construction of creek access points or similar features. WPD staff can then hire and manage Texas Conservation Corps crews for approved projects. Volunteers would work with WPD staff to determine the scope and goals of the project. WPD staff would coordinate the workday with TXCC.

For invasive management projects that would not fall under the purview of WPD, volunteers can apply for an APF grant to hire TxCC crews (e.g., ligustrum removal in upland forest areas). A CAPP form must be submitted and the proposed work reviewed before a crew can be hired with grant funds.

- *Ready Set Plant* - Ready Set Plant (RSP) is a riparian sapling planting program run by Treefolks in partnership with Keep Austin Beautiful (KAB) and the City of Austin. Different creekside areas are selected each year for seedling plantings. Volunteer groups in the Adopt-a-Creek program that are active in restoration have priority for consideration for Ready Set Plant events. After an initial site list is developed based on volunteer interest, WPD, KAB, and Treefolks staff do site visits in the spring to evaluate site suitability. Volunteer events are organized and run by Treefolks and adopter groups are given priority to participate in the RSP events.

<p>Observation/Historical Context: Parks Committee has participated in past tree care trainings and would like to receive additional training so that they may continue to safely care for the trees and trails at the park.</p>

III. Volunteer Activities

Overview

Generally, volunteer activities in adopted parks are supported through the [Adopt-A-Park program](#), a partnership between Parks and Recreation and Austin Parks Foundation. Adopt-a-Park members commit to a minimum of one park improvement or cleanup activity per year. Austin Parks Foundation provides tools, supplies, guidance and suggestions on planning successful workdays and can help recruit new volunteers through social media and the GivePulse platform.

In parks with creeks, volunteer groups may also be working through the [Adopt-A-Creek program](#), a partnership between the COA Watershed Protection Department and Keep Austin Beautiful. Adopt-a-Creek members commit to a minimum of two activities per year. Keep Austin Beautiful supplies clean-up and restoration materials, can provide guidance and suggestions on planning successful workdays and can help recruit new volunteers through social media and their event calendar.

Generally, Keep Austin Beautiful and Austin Parks Foundation communicate when new groups are involved in a particular creek/park when the two programs overlap.

When volunteers wish to do projects on parkland, they will work with these partner organizations to submit a volunteer request form to PARD. This form is routed for review by the District Manager. For recurring projects, one-time approval is permitted and volunteers are requested to use GivePulse to manage volunteer groups so participants are easier to track and communicate with and are covered for liability while working on parkland. APF can assist with page setup to ensure updated liability forms are available to volunteers who register.

The following are general guidelines for different types of volunteer activities, with specific notes regarding Great Hills Neighborhood Park in text boxes.

- **Trash cleanups**

Trash is often the first issue community members notice with our waterways. Keep Austin Beautiful and Austin Parks Foundation can provide trash bags, pickers, gloves and other materials for clean up days and will arrange for bagged trash to be picked up by Austin Resource Recovery. Clean up days must be planned in advance through the KAB website or the APF website so the City can review and approve the cleanup project and respond to the pick up request in a timely manner.

Observations/Historical context: When the park was first established in 1994, the GHPC found out that early homes around the park had no trash service. They used a portion of what became park land for dumping their garbage. A major effort was undertaken by the volunteers to clean up the old dump. Since 1994 there have been cleanup activities throughout the park. Great Hills Park volunteers participate in the twice yearly It's My Park Workday programs and pick up trash during those events. Periodically the volunteers identify areas that need additional clean up in the playscape area, the creek and trails, natural plant gardens, and the wildflower meadow. All trash is put in park trash cans or taken to neighbor's trash cans. For big cleanups, the city picks up the many trash bags.

Trash and brush debris do frequently collect at the Floral Park entrance where there is a storm water drain.

Doggy bags are frequently left at the Floral Park entrance, where there is no trash service.

KAB volunteer groups have historically done trash pickup at the park, and may continue to do so as COVID restrictions are lifted.

Possible Tasks: Neighbors are encouraged to contact 311 and report a **safety concern** when the area

becomes full of trash or debris, so that Watershed can service the drain.

- **Restoration**

Volunteers are highly encouraged to consider activities that will help to restore natural areas in their adopted parks. This can include activities like invasive vegetation removal (discussed below), strategic planting and seeding of native species, and long-term maintenance of restoration areas. Volunteer efforts should be coordinated through Austin Parks Foundation or Keep Austin Beautiful staff who can provide necessary guidance, tools and other resources through their respective Adopt-a-Park and Adopt-a-Creek programs.

WPD supports restoration activities near our City's creeks, ponds and lakes through the Grow Zone program. See WPD's Creekside Restoration Guide (austintexas.gov/restorationguide) for additional resources, including a discussion of their guiding principles of restoration.

Observation/Historical Context: Under Floral Park Drive is a culvert between two sections of the park. During a major storm event it frequently gets blocked with debris. Park volunteers monitor this area and call 311 to request WPD to remove the debris.

Volunteers have participated in riparian restoration efforts that include planting native seedlings, native grasses and broadcasting seeds to reduce erosion and mitigate flooding. Volunteers leave standing and fallen dead wood for habitat and nutrients for wildlife.

Possible Tasks: Volunteers are expecting to continue with this activity in the future.

- **Invasive Plant Removal**

Volunteers can remove small invasive trees in non-riparian areas (i.e., upland woodland) with approval by PARD through the volunteer project request form. Volunteers are required to participate in training through WPD or partner organizations like KAB and APF. Generally, volunteers can remove invasive plants up to 3" in diameter with a weed wrench. Invasive trees should not be cut to the ground as they will just re-sprout. APF and KAB can lend volunteers weed wrenches of varying sizes for approved small invasive tree removal projects.

Removal of invasive trees greater than 3" or large-scale removal of invasive plants will require a CAPP. Revegetation is a priority for areas where canopy is removed and a revegetation plan is required (see **Section IV: Community Activated Park Projects**). Volunteers can apply for an [APF grant](#) to hire TxCC crews for large-scale invasive removal projects once they have an approved CAPP form and scope of work from TxCC.

Observation/Historical Context: Opportunities for ligustrum removal are available near the trails.

There have been several Invasive plant removal activities over the years. This has been included in the

activities managed during the It's My Park Workday. In the past, Keep Austin Beautiful has worked with the volunteers to remove invasive plants. Plants targeted included elephant ears, ligustrum, and nandina. Volunteers have been trained in girdling techniques for larger trees and proper use of weed wrench tools for smaller invasives.

Possible Tasks: For larger trees, or larger sections of trees, will need to submit a CAPP for removal by a contractor in most cases. APF grants are available to fund these projects. Saplings can be removed by weed wrench during volunteer work days, and should be submitted for approval via the chosen partner organization (APF or KAB).

Volunteers are expected to continue with this activity in the future.

- **Tree Care/Maintenance**

Volunteers play an integral part in caring for and monitoring our urban forest. There are a variety of activities that volunteers can do to increase the health and longevity of the trees in their adopted area. All work (except tree mapping) must be approved through PARD Urban Forestry or WPD staff. Below is a list of potential volunteer activities:

- Root collar clearing – The root collar is the area where the trunk meets the lateral roots of the tree. The root collar should always be visible but it is often buried or covered by mulch and soil. When the root collar is buried it can cause decay and rot that can lead to the early death of a tree. Volunteers can remove the excess soil or mulch to the great benefit of the tree.
- Mulching – If volunteers are interested in mulching trees in their park or greenbelt they can set up a workday through KAB or Austin Parks Foundation. Proper mulching is very important to long-term tree health. Additional information and tips can be seen in this [Mulching 101](#) video created by Austin Parks Foundation.
- General tree health assessment (aka hiring an Arborist) – If volunteers are interested they can get a great sense of the overall health of the tree canopy on their adopted property. Hiring an arborist can cost anywhere from 70-200 dollars per hour. To help offset the cost, volunteers can apply for the [Urban Forest Grant](#) through the City of Austin Development Services Department. Any contracted tree work must be authorized through the Public Tree Care Process.

Observations/Historical Context: Great Hills Parks volunteers have managed several projects with coordination and approval from the City, such as watering, mulching, and fertilizing the trees and plants. There is a weekly watering and gardening activity at the playscape area from spring through fall. Trees have been planted with the approval from the City to improve the park and to replace dead or damaged trees. When the park area was new, many trees were planted and faithfully watered. Many of these trees are now mature.

Volunteers mulch trees 1-2 times a year during It's My Park Day. Volunteers have requested that they continue to do tree pruning along the trail to keep at least an 18" width across the trails, which get a

lot of use. There are concerns about other individuals who are also trimming trees without PARD permission that have not had previous experience and training, as the Great Hills Parks committee has.

Possible Tasks: Volunteers will work with PARD Urban Forestry and other city partners to receive necessary training to be approved for the tree work. They should also submit a [Public Tree Care Permit](#) to communicate ongoing plans for tree work once they have received the updated training.

- **Wildfire Risk Mitigation**

Community members play an important role in wildfire risk mitigation, and care should be taken to follow the right protocols.

All residents are encouraged to focus on home hardening first (a burning structure fire will continue to produce dangerous embers long after a wildfire front has passed); landscape manipulation should be addressed by its proximity to a structure. Often even for properties that butt up against park property an intermediate backyard exists.

Excessive pruning and canopy reduction actually increases the likelihood of wildfire and fire-spread. Any fuels work should be done within a PARD sponsored wildfire risk reduction plan. Vigilante wildfire fuels work is considered trespassing as well as potentially counterproductive, and a breach of the Federal Endangered Species Act.

The AFD Wildfire Division has created a site for all things related to wildfire in the Austin-Metro area <https://wildfire-austin.hub.arcgis.com/>.

Observations/Historical Context: Great Hills Parks volunteers have observed neighbors to the park, unaffiliated with the stewardship group, conducting fire risk mitigation work (e.g., tree and brush removal) around the perimeter of the park. This work is not permitted by volunteers.

Possible Tasks: Volunteers will contact Austin Wildfire Division if they perceive a fire risk due to onsite conditions, or call 911 if an active fire is present.

Dead-and-down brush removal projects (collection for PARD to chip with a chipper or other service, depending on resource availability). These efforts should be done in partnership with APF so that collected brush can be removed in coordination with PARD or other service.

While pruning of live limbs or perceived dead limbs is ill advised, the clearing of dead underbrush is a perfectly acceptable and helpful effort to reduce ladder fuels that could help a ground fire climb higher into the forest canopy.

IV. Community Activated Park Projects

For park improvements that go beyond the volunteer activities highlighted above, volunteers must fill out

a Community Activated Park Project form, located here:

- [In English](#)
- [En Espanol](#)

These project proposals will be reviewed by PARD and other relevant city staff for feasibility and community support. If approved, volunteers can apply for funding through [APF](#), [Neighborhood Partnering Program](#), or the [Urban Forest Grant](#).

The following are some examples of possible CAPP projects in natural areas:

- **Wildflower Meadows**

If volunteers have an area that may be appropriate for a wildflower meadow, PARD or WPD staff can, at times, provide native seed and reduce mowing frequency to help establish this type of habitat. APF grants can also cover the purchase of seeds. Groups that are part of the Adopt-a-Creek program can obtain additional seed and tools from KAB.

Observations/Historical Context: Volunteers rake the Wildflower Meadow near the Floral Park Drive entrance in the Fall. Native flower seeds have been provided by the city, purchased from grants from APF, and donated by neighbors. The volunteers plant the seeds and monitor their growth. The city has mowed around the flower meadow each summer to protect it and are expected to continue this plan in the future.

Possible Tasks: Volunteers are expected to continue the raking and planting activities in the future.

- **Trees**

Planting – If volunteers are interested in planting trees on their adopted property (outside of a Ready Set Plant event) they must have PARD approval. PARD Urban Forestry, via the CAPP process, will review any tree planting plans for feasibility. Volunteers are encouraged to provide a planting and maintenance plan for tree care with their CAPP proposal.

Observations/Historical Context: In the playscape area are many native trees and plants. Many have been planted and all have been maintained by the volunteers. All tree planting has received approval from the City. Great Hills Parks volunteers have also managed several other activities with coordination and approval from the City, including: establishing native plant gardens; watering, weeding, mulching, and fertilizing of trees and plants. There is a weekly watering and weeding activity at the playscape area from spring through fall.

Volunteers have been mulching and pruning trees along the trail with It's My Park Day activities. The City has offered to conduct training sessions for these activities with the park volunteers. This would include proper use of garden and tree hand tools, tree and plant management, and other park-related training. Over the years volunteers have attended training classes and found them useful.

Possible Tasks: Volunteers are expecting to continue with this activity in the future.

- **Trails and Creek Access**

In an effort to increase community use and connectivity of the adopter area, volunteers may be able to add low-impact trails or footpaths. All plans for trails must be approved by WPD GIM staff and any associated HOA's or neighborhood associations. WPD can potentially provide some resources, guidance, plants, and maintenance assistance. APF can provide grant funding, if needed, for CAPP approved trail and creek access projects.

Observations/Historical Context: The original park land for GHP was donated to the city by a local developer and over time other developers donated parcels adjoining the park. The biggest donation was the North area of the park starting just beyond the Fish Pool. This was purchased back from a tax sale and donated to the park by the neighbors living in that area. Trail building was started in 1994 with the encouragement of PARD. Volunteers were told they could have a trail but it was up to the neighborhood to build and maintain the trails. PARD offered GHPC advice and lent tools. Many volunteer groups came to help. In 2001, a University of Texas geologist joined our effort. He brought professional trail building skills and a geologist's understanding of the land where the trails would go. He ensured the trails were designed to provide safe access to the trails but also minimize soil erosion. The trail network is mature. Maintaining the trails is an ongoing project. For more information go to www.GreatHillsPark.org. Native plants and trees throughout the park are managed under the direction of professional landscaper and gardener with years of experience. With his professional eye our native plant gardens at the play area flourished.

The creek, a tributary of Bull Creek is a major feature of the park. There are multiple access paths to it off the main trails. It contains natural springs active throughout the year even in dry summer months. One deep area named the fish pool is a favorite of dogs and people alike. Water from springs is used to water plants during dry times.

A sewer line runs down the creek. This is maintained by Austin Water. In 2019 there was a major break in the playscape area since then Austin Water and Watershed Protection have been working on restoration of the area where the break occurred. Volunteers maintain the trails, creek crossings, and trail access with a concern for safety.

Possible Tasks: Volunteers are expecting to continue with this activity in the future.

- **Signage**

Groups interested in educational or other useful signage should contact PARD or WPD staff to Discuss.

Observations/Historical Context: There are five trailhead kiosks within the park that contain park maps and other park related information. The kiosks were designed by PARD and constructed by

local Eagle Scouts under the supervision of the City and GHPC volunteers. The construction costs were funded by the GHPC. The trails are well marked with GHPC provided trail signs and two trail maps which are positioned at helpful points along the trail. Kiosks and trail signs are maintained by volunteers.

Possible Tasks: Volunteers are expected to continue with these activities in the future.

- **Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) Installation**

Green stormwater infrastructure, such as rain gardens, berms, and swales, integrate natural systems like vegetation and soil into water treatment devices to control the quality and quantity of urban runoff. GSI benefits include stormwater control, water conservation, urban heat island cooling, natural habitat, and beautification.

GSI is best used in an area where runoff is causing erosion or water quality issues. WPF staff can help volunteers identify areas suitable for GSI projects, and potentially help with design, installation and maintenance.

- **Other**

Each property has its own unique challenges or projects that are important to the volunteer adopters. This section is meant to include anything not covered in the categories above.

Communications: There are two yearly meetings held with the GHPC board members and interested neighbors. These meetings are used to communicate the activities of the volunteers and planned city projects. Information is also disseminated through the Great Hills Park mailing list and posters installed throughout the neighborhood. GHPC volunteers maintain a website, GreatHillsPark.org, that communicates information on the history, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, budget and recent donations, and other timely pieces of information.

Trail Education Walks: Several trail walks are conducted each year for groups of all ages. Trail walks are a fun and educational walk through the main trails in the park. They have been hosted by naturalists, geologists, master birders and native plant experts and highlight geology, birds, fish, bats, flowers, plants and other wildlife, along with some interesting history about the park.

Community Events: The volunteer committee organizes several family activities during the year. The week before Easter an Easter egg hunt is held in the park. It is a great opportunity for family members of all ages to visit their neighbors and participate in the egg hunt.

On the 4th of July a neighborhood parade is conducted. The Travis County Sheriff's department and the Austin Fire Department provides members of their teams during the parade. The Sheriff's deputies lead the parade and the AFD provides a firetruck with hands on education. The families are encouraged to decorate bikes, wagons, dogs, baby strollers, etc. in patriotic outfits for the parade. Neighbors visit at the park after the parade.

During August and September there are two Swift Night Out events. The number of swifts that enter

the main swift tower are counted and are reported to the Audubon society.

Another family event is the free Halloween Carnival for preschoolers. Family members are encouraged to wear Halloween costumes. The carnival is usually held the weekend before Halloween and is fun for all participants.

National Night Out events at the park occur during the first week of October. Neighbors are encouraged to meet in the park to get to know their neighbors. Austin Police, Fire Department, and other Austin Departments often send representatives and equipment and provide an opportunity to meet with neighbors and address any concerns.