

Many songs and stories have been written or dedicated to rivers. Most people consider them just a home to fish and turtles and bugs and ducks.

In truth, rivers and their associated wetlands, act as the ecotone between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems; inherently different but dependent upon both. It is the region where plants emerge from the sea, animals live in the shelter of the flora, and the cool waters flow freely along, carrying with them the power to shape and control our world.



It may seem trivial or remote at first to think about the long-term impact from our daily lives on *our* river, The Trinity. *"It's so big, how can I possibly make that big of a difference?"* Well, when you consider one teaspoon of gasoline can contaminate 976 gallons of water, it is not

hard to imagine how all the lawn and pest chemicals we spray in our yards and the oil and gasoline leaks on the streets can contaminate our Trinity River.

It may not affect *you* personally, but it is affecting the wildlife that calls the banks of the Trinity home.

***And?***

So maybe you think it's just tree-hugger hooley. Maybe you think we have to act now. Where ever you fall on that spectrum, there is something we all can do to make a difference.

We do not have to stop commerce and go back to candles and caves. We also do not have to just sit still and let it happen. We can make the same choices when it comes to the health of our planet as we do for our own health...*what am I putting in, where is it going, and what will it do once it gets there?*

Fertilizers, pesticides, motor oil, soap from washing the car in the driveway or the local fund-raiser, these are the obvious culprits that harm our beloved Trinity. But what about grass trimmings,

fallen leaves, pulled weeds? Blowing these items into the gutter and the storm drains affects the oxygen carrying capacity of the water in which it flows. This can have the same negative impact as direct poisons.

As with many decisions in life, you have options. Each of us can contribute, positively or negatively, to protecting our environment and the Trinity. Each of us can choose greener alternatives upstream so we keep the River clean downstream for our local, and distant, neighbors. Each of us can change a habit we didn't know we had and make things a little better in the future.

Please, think about where it will go once you put it down and what it will do once it gets there.



***The Trinity River Corridor Project***

The Trinity River Corridor Project (TRCP) and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are constructing a 4 mile, 190 acre, chain of wetlands in the Great Trinity Forest that will serve the dual purposes of flood protection and habitat creation as well as provide a future economic stimulus for South Dallas.



The wetlands are tiered, allowing the importation of suitable soil for wetland plants. The USACE are in the second phase of their test planting on our first completed cell at Overton and Interstate 45. When established in each of the cells, these plants will provide the foundation for a natural food chain and allow the wetlands to provide habitat for fish, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds. Dallas is in the path of several major yearly bird migrations. The habitat created by this project will make the wetlands an important layover for many species, and, in the near future, with the Trinity Spine Trails, and the Trinity River Audubon Center opening Fall 2008; a place where birding enthusiasts from across the United States and maybe the world will come to enjoy their hobby, making Eco Tourism an important part of the future economy of South Dallas.

## Loving Summer Tips

Summer in Texas...is anything hotter? With the heat can come high energy and water bills just to stay comfortable. Using these simple and inexpensive tips can help keep your home more comfortable and can reduce the amount of electricity and water you use.

### Energy Conservation Tips



- You've heard it before...raise the temperature setting on the thermostat. For every degree raised, customers can save as much as 3 percent on cooling costs.
- Postpone activities that require hot water — such as washing dishes or clothes — to early morning or late evening. This will keep from adding more heat and humidity to the home. Also, consider using the warm setting on your washer.
- Turn off unnecessary conventional lights during hot weather. They add to the heat in the home. Also, switching to cooler, energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs where light is needed can not only stop the heat generation but can also save you money on your bills.
- Use power-strips to plug in audio-visual equipment. When you go to bed or leave for the day, switch off all the power to a television, VCR, DVD player and stereo that doesn't need it. This also works for computers. All of these "energy vampires" suck in small amounts of energy which can add up to higher bills!
- Use ceiling fans and portable floor fans to move the air around in the home.

If the home does not have air conditioning, fans are essential for cooling. In homes with air conditioning, fans allow residents to raise the thermostat and save energy without affecting comfort. Turn the fans off when you aren't home...it's the motion of the air across your skin that cools. If you've taken your skin with you, why leave the fan running?

- Close drapes during the hottest times of the day to block heat from entering the home and save energy. Turn slat blinds to block sun from seeping in between the slats.
- Clear attic vents. If the home has an attic fan, make sure it is functioning properly. Check your soffit vents to ensure they are large enough...often the hole behind the screen is much smaller than the screen and that prevents air flow.
- Make sure window air conditioners are sized correctly. Ones that are too small will run constantly but not cool the room. Ones that are too large use more energy than necessary. Those that are improperly installed can leak the cool air out and the hot air in!
- Clean or replace filters to central air conditioning systems and clean filters to window air conditioning units. Clogged filters cause air conditioners to use more energy to keep rooms or homes cool.

### Water Conservation Tips



- Drip, drip, drip. Leaking outdoor faucets, just like leaking sink faucets, can lead to higher bills! Replace old spigots or washers and watch the savings pool.
- Keep up with the Joneses, but do it better! Did you know your lawn needs only 1" of water per week. Automatic sprinkler systems tend to give short

drinks many times a week which results in shallow roots and an easily fried lawn in the hottest conditions. Water before 10am or after 6pm once a week and give your lawn only an inch—place an empty tuna can on the lawn and water until it's full. Or use a full one and watch the stray cats dance around in the water.



- Mulch. Most of the water in the ground would stay in the ground if it wasn't baked right out of it. Mulching your flowerbed and gardens with cedar mulch traps the moisture in the soil and acts as a pest-deterrent. Also, don't bag your lawn trimmings. Let them fall back into the lawn and they'll act like a natural barrier to prevent the soil under your lawn from drying in the hot sun. We don't usually have the worry for mold and fungus buildup here due to our drier climate than other regions of the country.
- Plant native. Texas wildflowers are amazing! Planting these colorful favorites in your garden can save on your water bill because we usually get enough rain to keep them alive. They're native because they have adapted to this climate.
- Rain-water capturing systems can be a progressive way to harvest and re-use nature's precious resources. Your local organic retailer has many options to choose from and you can be the first on your block to have one!





# City of Dallas Wetlands Awareness

## City of Dallas Zoo

Scientific evidence, gathered over the course of decades, has shown amphibian species are becoming extinct on a global scale. To raise awareness, 2008 has been designated Year of the Frog and the Dallas Zoo is highlighting the diversity of this unique group of vertebrates and educating the public through a special exhibit called "Amphibians: Life Under the Leaf. This exhibit, which opened April 26, features several endangered and threatened amphibians to see and learn about.



Recent studies found that of the 6,000 frogs, salamanders, and caecilians studied, 32 percent are

believed threatened with extinction and another 165 amphibian species may already be lost to extinction. Frogs are vanishing at a rate never seen before. *Why?*

Habitat destruction and fragmentation, introduction of predatory species, infectious disease, pollution and climate change. "People don't realize the important role amphibians play in ecosystems worldwide," said Jessie Crowley, amphibian keeper at the Dallas Zoo. "Amphibians prey on insect populations keeping them down to manageable numbers, which is important in controlling insect-borne pathogens."

One emerging culprit to the decline in amphibian numbers is water quality debasement due to agricultural run-off. Over application of pesticides and herbicides on lawns and agricultural areas runs into our storm drains which lead to our natural wetlands in and around the City.

The herpetologists at the Dallas Zoo are "hopping" into action with breeding programs and studies to try and replenish dwindling populations. But we have to protect our wetlands to keep our amphibian friends safe. Storm water should be the only thing running into the gutter. Too many or harmful chemicals on our lawn and even the soap from the charity car wash is harmful to the aquatic life in our wetlands.

The Zoo is doing what it can, are you?



City of Dallas  
Office of Environmental Quality  
1500 Marilla, L2FS  
Dallas, Texas 75201

(214) 670-1200 office  
(214) 670-0134 fax

The Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ) was formed by the City Council in February 2004, to serve as an internal resource to the City of Dallas staff on environmental issues. These issues now range from compliance with regulations to public outreach events aimed at informing the Citizens of Dallas of the issues facing our City and the environment to the implementation of the Environmental Management System and efforts to move the City toward a more sustainable and prosperous future.

OEQ currently supports the Key Focus Areas of "E3 Government" and "Economic Vibrancy" in the City of Dallas structure with three services: Environmental Management System, Inspections and Spills, and Outreach and Training.



# June Training Schedule

Please RSVP – Spaces are limited to 30

To enroll, contact Bill Brewer in OEQ at [william.brewer](mailto:william.brewer) or 214-671-8140

<u>Class</u>	<u>Instructor</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
SPCC Plan	Bill Brewer	06/03/2008	L1FN A	11:00 am
Managing Contractors	Meghna Tare	06/12/2008	L1FN B	1:00 pm
Green Buildings	Zaida Basora	06/17/2008	L1FN A	2:00 pm
Storm Water Checklist	Kevin Hurley	06/17/2008	L1FN A	3:00 pm
Sustainability Brown Bag Luncheon (1 ½ hour)	Quincy Holloway	06/19/2008	L1FN B	12:00 pm
Introduction To RCRA	Kevin Lefebvre	06/19/2008	L1FN B	2:00 pm
Waste Storage & Handling	Kevin Lefebvre	06/19/2008	L1FN B	3:00 pm
UST – Equipment	William Madison	06/26/2008	L1FN A	10:00 am
Used Oil	William Madison	06/26/2008	L1FN A	11:00 am

Please check the OEQ Training website for updates or changes. Thanks!

## June Events:

May 31: Farm and Flower Festival, Dallas Farmer's Market



June 10:  Ozone Awareness Day, Dallas City Hall

June 12: EPA Administrator Visits, Dallas City Hall for EMS Certification

June 14:  Flag Day

June 15: Father's Day



June 21: Lawn-Mower Exchange, Dallas City Hall

# environmental FUN for kids



## make a toad home

You can make your yard a welcome place for frogs and toads and other bug-eaters.

First, you'll need a grown-up's help and permission. Next, you'll have to be sure your yard is chemical pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer free. Sounds tough, but nature took care of it before chemicals; it can take care of it now. Follow the instructions, courtesy of Earth Day Canada, [www.earthday.ca](http://www.earthday.ca), (right) to make your toad home! Hey, be the first to email a photo of your toad home to us and win a prize! [meghna.tare@dallascityhall.com](mailto:meghna.tare@dallascityhall.com)

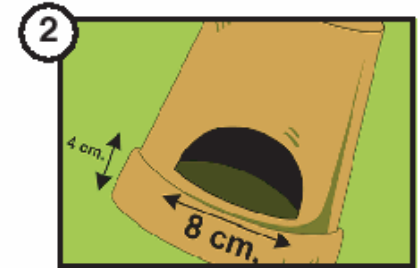
Wetland Neighborhood  
Kevin Lefebvre

G E L W W I L D Y A E M C A O	algae
E H L O E S A L A M A N D E R	beaver
N S W L T A F B I Y F S Y M D	bullrush
N I P O Y N R U F A D R L A A	cattail
A F S I O R A L N I T W O M A	crawfish
R W N G D D Y L O S S T W G F	dragonfly
E A A O G E D R O A A H A A L	egret
E R K E O A R U C G O L A C S	fish
D C E A G L A S C C B T F N T	frog
S S S S F H L H A K N U A S D	geese
E W C A E E L T R U T S S V R	heron
A L A R E V A E B D A A R A O	loon
O W O N N I M R E D S R F N R	mallard
D N F L G R C G K Y W E L I G	mayfly
T F S L S R O E D A F A Y N R	minnow
	raccoon
	reeds
	salamander
	snakes
	spiders
	swan
	toad
	turtle
	woodduck

## How to Make a Toad Home



1 Get an old clay pot. The opening at the top of the pot should be about 20 cm wide.



2 Make a door by very carefully knocking a small section out of the top of the pot. The part you knock out should be in the shape of a half-circle. It should be about 8 cm wide and 4 cm down from the edge of the pot.



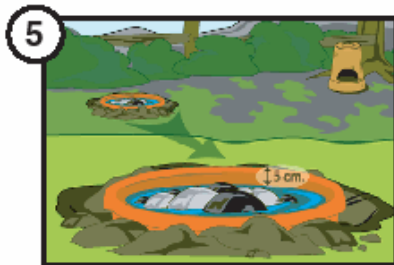
3 Find a shady spot in your backyard. Make sure there is water nearby. Put the pot upside down in the shady spot. Make sure there is water nearby. If there isn't - go on to steps 4 and 5.



4 Get a small plastic bucket. Dig a hole in the ground that the bucket will fit into.

Make sure the top of the bucket is even with the ground.

Be sure to ask an adult for some help before digging any holes.



5 Put some rocks or bricks in the bucket so that they are about 5 cm away from the top of the bucket. Fill the bucket with water. Make sure you put new water in the bucket every few days.

Brought to you by EcoKids



[www.ecokids.ca](http://www.ecokids.ca)



Thanks to our friends at Earth Day Canada, [www.earthday.ca](http://www.earthday.ca), for this great activity!