



rivers & trails

National
Park
Service



rivers, trails, and conservation assistance program

GROUNDWORK – DALLAS

Mission and Goals

Just a few miles southeast of downtown Dallas lies an unpolished jewel, the proposed 6,000-acre Great Trinity Forest located along the Trinity River and White Rock Creek. The forest is not seen by metropolitan residents as an attractive place to visit because many adjacent neighborhoods exhibit urban blight and decay. Both the public land and vacant private tracts are subject to substantial dumping. This diverse, low-income, and historically underserved quadrant of the city would be the initial target area for a Groundwork Dallas.

The Groundwork Dallas pilot project will focus on activities that would make the Trinity River, the Great Trinity Forest, and the gateway neighborhoods welcoming, safe, clean places to visit and live, while mobilizing and empowering people within the communities to help make these projects a reality. City staff would welcome a new organization that could generate commitment from neighborhoods, businesses and community organizations to assist with maintaining these open space properties and gateway parks. This will provide more wanted public visitor presence in areas that have been mostly ignored and/or used for illegal purposes. The Groundwork steering committee believes that improved greenspaces are key to making the Great Trinity Forest attractive to visitors and will help the neighborhoods improve their ability to keep residents and attract desirable businesses and land uses.

Current Status

A Groundwork Dallas Steering Committee has formed. The Cooperative Agreement is expected to be approved at Dallas City Council in March, followed by the hiring of a consultant to assist with the feasibility study and prepare a business plan.

Potential Projects

- **Clean-ups and Dumping Prevention.** One of the most critical projects proposed for Groundwork Dallas is a massive cleanup of the area's illegal dumpsites to make the area more inviting. By merging with an existing organization, Operation ACT (A Clean Trinity), whose mission involves an annual trash clean up in the Trinity River corridor, Groundwork would expand its role into the revitalization of the surrounding river neighborhoods by implementing a comprehensive illegal dumping prevention program.



Tire Dumping

- **Park Site Planning & Development.** Groundwork Dallas will take the lead in involving the community in developing site plans and park master plans for some of the easily accessible open spaces in the Great Trinity Forest. Two high priority sites targeted for improvements include Blue Lake/Roosevelt Heights on Bruton Road and the nature area of Rochester Park where there are lakes with easy unrestricted vehicle access. Designing these sites to attract recreation users would prevent future problems and potential brownfields.

continued

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- **Adopt-A-Park Program.** Many parks in the Groundwork target area have not been adopted through the Dallas Parks Department's "MOWmentum Agreement" program. Groundwork Dallas proposes to enroll community organizations and businesses into such agreements and train participants in caretaking tasks.
- **Brownfield-Landfill Re-use.** The City recently took possession of two landfills and is in the process of acquiring two other closed landfills in the Trinity River floodplain. Staff is interested in the redevelopment of these sites for passive recreation re-uses, and they could provide opportunities for interpretive exhibits, prairie and wetland restoration, and trailhead locations that are above the 100-year flood plain elevation. Groundwork Dallas and the City will explore potential roles for Groundwork in these efforts. In addition, Groundwork Dallas will focus initiatives on smaller sites that are near brownfields thus making the larger areas more palatable for redevelopment.



Larry Johnson Trail cleanup

Partners

The Groundwork Dallas steering committee draws heavily from citizen groups previously involved in the Trinity River Corridor Citizens Committee and the White Rock Heritage District. Primary city involvement comes from the Trinity River Corridor Project Office with additional participation from the Parks and Recreation Department. Operation ACT is providing funding and expertise in organizing major clean-up events using volunteer labor and the Army National Guard. The North Central Texas Council of Governments offers expertise in the prevention of illegal dumping. The Dallas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects has pledged financial and in-kind assistance. A number of participating neighborhood associations and community centers anticipate partnering with Groundwork Dallas to assist in implementing their local greenspace projects. Additional support for Groundwork projects will be sought through a variety of community infrastructures: neighborhood ecclesiastic groups, recreation center advisory boards, community development corporations, student organizations, and conservation groups.

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