Starting Strong in the New Year!

From all of us at TTF, a belated Happy 2012! We hope you have gotten off to a great start! A shiny new year often calls to mind a list of resolutions we make to improve ourselves. If you're like us, right at the top of that list of goals is "Get More Exercise." Luckily for Austinites, this particular resolution is much easier to keep.

Our city is blessed with a fitness mindset and the facilities to sharpen that resolve to get back in shape. For the fitness minded as well as those looking to make a bold new start to another New Year, the Trail represents an important tool - right in the heart of downtown and waiting to serve us.

We know you love the Trail and would like to share your story. Please e-mail us and let us know how your love affair with the Trail started and include a picture if possible. We will choose one story and include in our February e-newsletter.

Planting Seedlings for the Future

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This past Saturday, January 28, TTF volunteers including students from McCallum High School and Austin High School planted 800 native tree saplings. The planting was along Lamar Beach (on the north side of the lake between MoPac and Lamar). You may have already noticed new signs along that section that deliver information as well as colorful images of the trees.

This effort was the result of collaboration between TTF and the Urban Forestry Program of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department. The enhanced beauty and tree diversity of the woodlands along this highly-used Trail section will greatly benefit Trail users, birds, and other wildlife. Native tree species planted include black walnut, Mexican plum, Carolina buckthorn, and Mexican buckeye.

Due to the water situation, we are unable to plant large containerized trees this winter and the seedling planting is a great way to continue planting trees at the Trail. Volunteers water the seedlings using buckets during planting - and then Mother Nature does the rest; or, she doesn't. We hope for 25% to 80% survival. Winter planting, well before the growing season, enables tree roots to grow into the soil to supply water to the leaves during warmer seasons to come. Both small and large-scale reforestation efforts use similar methods.

Many thanks to the hard-working crew from Urban Forestry and the 25 volunteers who got their hands dirty to support our ongoing stewardship of the Trail!

Save the Dates...

Mark your calendar for some TTF fun on Valentine's Day and Leap Day!

Valentine's Day - Tuesday, February 14, noon at City Hall
We will meet at noon at City Hall for the "world's shortest long run," -a free, one-mile social run to show our love for the Trail and help burn off some of Cupid's candy. Wear a TTF shirt if you've got one. Don't have one? No problem. We will have a table set up on the plaza at City Hall where you can renew your membership (or join if you aren't a member). We'll give you your new membership shirt and decal on the spot.

Leap Day - Thursday, February 29, 5:30 p.m. at Paramount Theatre
Join us at the Paramount Theatre after work for a quick Pub Run. We will meet at the theatre and run to Luke's Locker where free beer and music await. Come in, have a brew, look around, chat with other TTF members and then run back to the Paramount where we will be treated to popcorn and a movie. Movie title TBD...stay tuned!
Pretty as a Picture

We are thrilled to announce that The Trail Foundation has been named a finalist for support from ArtPlace, a private-public collaboration of nine of the nation's top foundations, eight federal agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts, and six of the nation's largest banks. As a finalist, The Trail Foundation joins 128 other organizations in 68 cities working to transform their communities by driving vibrancy through investments in the arts.

If awarded a grant, TTF would use the funds to transform a restroom along the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail into a gem of architectural design and art that will combine beauty and function.

Finalists were chosen for their potential to have a transformative impact on community vibrancy. Proposed projects run the gamut from temporary art spaces to permanent performance venues, from music festivals to art walks, and from streetscaping to artist residencies.

ArtPlace expects to distribute $15 million in 2012. In Austin, Big Medium and the Downtown Austin Alliance were also named as finalists. The full list of finalists can be found here. Good luck, all!

Play Nice

Did you know? Bike speed limit on the Trail is 10 mph.

Trail etiquette is almost a "lost art" - common-sense behavior that perhaps too few of us think about. When you're enjoying the Trail and the waterfront, it's important to be considerate of others, as well as remembering to be respectful of the space itself.

As you head out for your next run, walk or ride around the Trail
remember to practice these simple guidelines for Trail etiquette. We all love the Trail; let’s try to enjoy it together.

- Bikers yield to pedestrians.
- Runners yield to walkers.
- Walk or run no more than two abreast.
- Keep to the right.
- Clean up after your dog.
- Keep your dog on a short leash.
- Don’t litter.
- If you see litter, pick it up.
- If you find a car key (or remote), put it on "the Rock" on the north side of the Roberta Crenshaw Pedestrian Bridge under MoPac.
- Bike speed limit is 10 mph. *Really.*

And why not greet others you may encounter with a "Hello" whenever possible? It's not just about being friendly; Austin's a unique place and the Trail is a showcase for helping us all make a positive impression on locals and visitors alike who are using the Trail.

Did we miss something? Send us an e-mail. For a full list of trail rules and regulations, visit Austin Park Police's website.

Volunteer Opportunities

**Bridge Clean-up:** The Roberta Crenshaw Pedestrian Bridge under MoPac needs an eager group of 8-12 volunteers to get it in shape. TTF will supply the brooms, brushes, bags and other tools - we just need your time and enthusiasm. If you have a group interested in volunteering, please contact Jenny.

**Mulch Days:** The trees along the Trail at Festival Beach could use a group of 20+ to spread mulch on Saturday, February 18. Please email Beth by February 10 if you can help. In addition, if you have a group that can mulch on a weekday, please contact us to arrange it. This is an ideal team building exercise for corporate groups, high school or university students.

Thank you!