

# Austin Water – Center for Environmental Research



Austin Water – The University of Texas – Texas A&M University  
A Partnership for Urban Ecology and Sustainability: Community, Ecology, Research  
located at the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant  
2210 South FM 973, Austin, Texas 78725  
Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/cer>



## CER Events November 2012

Nov 3

### Saturday 8am meet at CER

- **Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership - Travis County River Monitoring Trip**
- Join Claude Morris and the Travis County Colorado River Monitoring trip for a day on the river monitoring birds and more, and help the Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership learn more about the ecology of the Colorado River.
- Meet at the CER parking lot at 8:00AM
- A river trip to monitor birds and vegetation along the river and you MUST provide your own boat or rent one from Cook's Canoes in Webberville <http://www.cookscanoes.com/>
- Contact Claude Morris at [cgmorris@flash.net](mailto:cgmorris@flash.net) to participate
- More about the Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership at the CER website Projects and Partnerships page <http://www.austintexas.gov/cer>

Nov 6

### Tuesday – NOON to 1pm AT Dougherty Arts Center, 1110 Barton Springs Road

- **CER Monthly Lunchtime Lecture by Kevin M. Anderson**
- Please note NEW Location for these first Tuesday Lectures – **Dougherty Arts Center**
- **The Natural History of an Urban Wasteland: Hornsby Bend**
- Urban wastelands in American cities are rarely included in “open space” or “green” maps of the urban landscape. In America, urbanization is portrayed as destroying nature and biodiversity, and urban wastelands are considered degraded and disreputable habitat. In contrast, many European cities actively promote urban wastelands as sites of biodiversity and natural history study, and the EU has policies supporting protection of these “new wilderness” habitats. This talk will explore scientific and cultural attitudes towards the natural (and unnatural) history of urban wastelands, and I will focus on the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant as a case study. In the 1950s, the City of Austin built the sewage ponds at Hornsby Bend and over the decades expanded the site to 1200-acres that is, also, home to a sewage farm, composting area, and old gravel pits. Rather than reduced biodiversity, Hornsby Bend has become noted for biodiversity, ecological research, and nature tourism. Join us as we explore the scientific and cultural complexity of urban wasteland natural history.

Nov 10

### Saturday 7am-11am and 4pm to dark meet at CER

- **Hornsby Bend Bird Observatory Monthly Bird Survey**
- The HBBO Bird Survey is open to all levels of birder interested in intensive monitoring, although this is not a field trip. In the morning, we have teams covering different areas of the Hornsby Bend facility, and they count numbers of all birds seen. It is 4 hours of hard hiking and counting, but lots of fun along the way. We meet again around 11am to tally up the species. The afternoon involves looking around for species missed that morning, and we go until sundown. More information about the CER HBBO program at [www.hornsbybend.org](http://www.hornsbybend.org)

Nov 17

**Saturday – 730am – 11am at the CER**

- **HBBO/Travis Audubon Society - Hornsby Bend Monthly Birding Fieldtrip – FREE!**  
Meet at the CER 730am, no registration needed – all levels of birder welcomed, an easy morning of walking and learning the birds of Hornsby Bend. Bring binoculars and some water if the weather is warm. More information at [www.travisaudubon.org](http://www.travisaudubon.org) and [www.hornsbybend.org](http://www.hornsbybend.org)

Nov 20

**Tuesday – NOON to 1pm AT CITY HALL Boards and Commissions Room 1101**

- **CER Monthly Lunchtime Lecture by Kevin M. Anderson**
- **The Natural History of an Urban Wasteland: Hornsby Bend**
- Urban wastelands in American cities are rarely included in “open space” or “green” maps of the urban landscape. In America, urbanization is portrayed as destroying nature and biodiversity, and urban wastelands are considered degraded and disreputable habitat. In contrast, many European cities actively promote urban wastelands as sites of biodiversity and natural history study, and the EU has policies supporting protection of these “new wilderness” habitats. This talk will explore scientific and cultural attitudes towards the natural (and unnatural) history of urban wastelands, and I will focus on the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant as a case study. In the 1950s, the City of Austin built the sewage ponds at Hornsby Bend and over the decades expanded the site to 1200-acres that is, also, home to a sewage farm, composting area, and old gravel pits. Rather than reduced biodiversity, Hornsby Bend has become noted for biodiversity, ecological research, and nature tourism. Join us as we explore the scientific and cultural complexity of urban wasteland natural history.
- **Transportation Options for City Hall**
  - Automobile parking is available in the underground garage. Bring your garage ticket to the talk and we will validate it for free parking.
  - Bicycle parking is available at ground level on both the Guadalupe and Lavaca sides of the block.
  - Buses (select route to see schedule)
    - Chavez & San Antonio: [3 northbound](#).
    - San Antonio & 2<sup>nd</sup>: [3 southbound](#) .
    - Colorado & 3<sup>rd</sup>: [10 southbound and 17 eastbound](#).

Nov 20

**Tuesday 6:30pm to 8:30pm at the CER**

- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department - Texas Whooper Watch Workshop**
- **Free – Registration Required**
- The Whooping Crane has often been described as the symbol of wildlife conservation in North America. The tallest bird in North America, its elaborate courtship displays and haunting bugling call have long inspired humans, but it is a Texas treasure that almost wasn't. While the traditional wintering grounds on and near Aransas National Wildlife Refuge are well-known, biologists have much less information about locations used by Whooping Cranes in migration. In addition, as the Whooping Crane population continues to grow, whoopers are beginning to explore new wintering habitat away from traditional areas. Texas Whooper Watch seeks the help of birders in identifying Whooping Crane migration stopover sites and non-traditional wintering areas, in assessing whether any hazards exist to whoopers at these sites and in learning more about behavior and habitat use at these sites.
- This workshop will introduce this new Watch program and explore how you can get involved.
- For more information and to register, please contact Marsha May at [marsha.may@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:marsha.may@tpwd.state.tx.us) or 512-389-8062

**Nov 24**

**Saturday 9am – 1pm** at the CER

- **Ecological Literacy Volunteer Day** – Help maintain Hornsby Bend! Did you know that all the Hornsby Bend trails, habitat gardens, and kiosks were built and are maintained by volunteers? If you enjoy birding or walking along the Colorado River here, please join us in maintaining these amenities and supporting public access at Hornsby Bend.
- We do three hours work and one hour of learning about the ecology of the Colorado River and Hornsby Bend - Wear work-clothes and work-shoes; bring water and binoculars if interested in birds.
- **New! POTLUCK LUNCH AND More ECOLOGICAL LEARNING** - Bring food for our potluck lunch afterwards at 1pm and learn more at a presentation on ecology during lunch.

**For more information about these events, contact Kevin M. Anderson at  
Kevin.Anderson@austintexas.gov or 972-1960**