



Greenprint for Growth: A Tool for Proactive Conservation Planning



A Green Vision for Central Texas

Central Texas is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. In fact, experts estimate that in the next twenty years, our population will increase by

another million. **A big part of what makes our region so attractive is our natural amenities:** our lakes and rivers, farms and ranches, nature preserves, parks and hike and bike trails. The unique heritage and natural beauty of our area contribute directly to our economic vitality, fostering the kind of livable communities that attract the very best businesses and jobs.

Working with the citizens of our region, Envision Central Texas (ECT) created a vision for how we would like our region to grow in the future. Overwhelmingly, citizens expressed a desire to protect and preserve our environment, natural resources, water and air quality, recreational areas and other important elements that will ensure future generations enjoy the quality of life we have today. Rather than simply reacting to growth and sprawl or settling for what land is left after development occurs, **this vision advocates proactively planning for a green infrastructure** that is as important to our future as power lines, wastewater treatment facilities and roads.



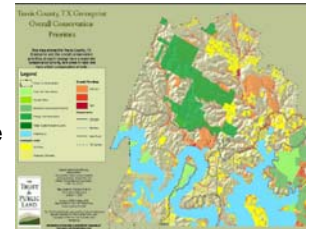
What is Greenprinting?

To help identify this valuable *green infrastructure* in our region, ECT has engaged the respected national organization, Trust for Public Land (TPL), to complete a *Greenprint for Growth* for the region. **This proactive**

tool for conservation planning involves a sophisticated computer model that takes multiple Geographic Information Systems (GIS) layers of information about a specific area and integrates this data with local conservation goals to help communities make strategic, informed decisions about land conservation priorities. Greenprinting has been used successfully in many locations around the country, helping preserve an area's natural environment and character, creating savings in local budgets, identifying synergies, stimulating economic development and fostering livable, vibrant communities.

How Does Greenprinting Work?

The Greenprinting process engages community leaders in a collaborative effort to define conservation priorities and establish criteria that reflect locally distinctive resources and objectives. Then, using state-of-the-art GIS models, the Greenprint analyzes this community-based data and **generates maps and reports that provide unique insights for formulating conservation acquisition strategies.** The maps show color-coded areas that best meet the priorities defined by the community and makes the determination of conservation targets a much more scientific process. The models may be updated for changing priorities and needs. In addition to the development of the models, the Greenprinting process will include benchmarking of our region's open space inventory against other similar regions in the country and recommendations of appropriate open space funding strategies.



Why Create a Central Texas Greenprint?

The Greenprinting process was recently completed in Travis County and now serves as a vital decision making tool. ECT believes that



Greenprinting the entire five-county Central Texas region will result in an integrated, interactive open space map that would be an invaluable tool to identify and preserve critical open space for trails, parks, habitats and other uses, for many years to come. By conducting the Greenprinting process in Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, and Williamson Counties, and then incorporating the Travis County Greenprint, we will be able to clearly see the desired regional green infrastructure and begin to identify synergies between jurisdictions and develop strategies to support collective and individual county land protection plans. **ECT is therefore raising \$250,000 to complete a Greenprint for Growth for the entire five-county Central Texas Region.**

As the growth of Central Texas continues, so must our dedication to protecting our environment, natural resources and recreational areas. Our efforts today will pay off many-fold in the future, as we ensure that our region continues to thrive economically and offer the best quality of life to our citizens.

Greenprinting — A Tool for Proactive Conservation Planning

Proposed 12 Month Work plan for Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays and Williamson Counties

Phase I: Current Conditions Work, Preparation for Outreach

A. Complete a “current conditions” inventory for each county that may include reviewing:

- Any comprehensive, parks, open space or land use plans
- Summaries of any recent planning and public outreach processes
- Information on storm water and water quality plans
- Trails and transportation plans
- Information on schools, demographics, community development goals
- Regulatory tools, ordinances and impact fees
- Demographics – current and projections

B. Complete research for a “Level of Service (LOS) Analysis” for the region to help formulate benchmarks, ranges and goals for planning in each county. This research is based on comparative counties in other parts of the state and nation. Complete comparative analysis on similar counties to help formulate benchmarks, ranges and goals for planning in each county.

- Identify 3-5 “similar” counties across the country (comparable size, population, growth projections, parks budget, land-use patterns etc.)
- Conduct research on existing parks and open space infrastructure.
- Research on future plans/investments for park and open space (public funding, private investments, etc.)
- Use data to set “benchmarks” for Hays, Williamson, Bastrop and Caldwell Counties.

C. Begin conservation finance research on implementation and funding options for land conservation strategies that could support collective and individual county land protection plans.

Phase II: Stakeholder Outreach, Goal-Setting

A. Begin identifying and building stakeholder teams (approximately 25 members each) in all four counties, meeting with county leaders to discuss. Draft and mail invitation letter to groups in each county with outline of work plan, timing and request for their participation. Letter should come from County Chair.

B. Hold kick-off meetings with each county stakeholder group to review project, goals, timeline and role of stakeholder group. Get 1-2 stakeholder members from each county to participate on a steering committee. Hold second meeting about 30-45 days later with each county team to specifically brainstorm goals and criteria for land protection.

Phase III: Model-building

A. Develop/enhance a GIS database inventory of data available in the 4-county region to support community-based goals.

B. Build and test Greenprinting Model.

C. Present draft model results via Webex to Steering Committee.

D. Revise and finalize modeling results.

E. Present model, live, showing how it works with preliminary results in each county.

Phase IV: Implementation Strategies and Final Recommendations

A. Hold a workshop with each county stakeholder team to complete an action plan for each county that builds from Greenprinting results, comparative analyses, and conservation finance options.

B. Complete a final report summarizing highlights of work in all five counties with regional strategies and recommendations.

Phase V: Model Conveyance via Web Strategy

Conveyance would be via ArcGIS Server, new software technology from ESRI. This conveyance would provide an internet-based interactive model, for easy access by ECT and select stakeholders. The model can be password protected. It will allow users to view modeling results and generate property-specific profiles based on conservation criteria identified by the stakeholders. TPL will perform maintenance on the model if data and/or priorities change. TPL will host the model on its server for at least one year. ECT will have the option to host the model after that time, but this will require the purchase of an ArcServer license from ESRI.

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