



## City Forest Credits Carbon Planting Project Application

### 1. Project Name

Travis County Floodplain Reforestation Project - 2021

### 2. Project Type

Planting

### 3. Project Location

*Projects must be in or adjacent to one of the following. Describe which one of the criteria the project meets and provide name of city, town, or jurisdiction where project is located.*

- *“Urban Area” per Census Bureau maps; see <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2010/geo/2010-census-urban-areas.html>*
- *An incorporated or unincorporated city or town*
- *A planning area for a metropolitan planning agency or entity, such as the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning*
- *Land owned, designated, and used by a municipal or quasi-municipal entity such as a utility for source water or watershed protection*
- *A transportation or utility right of way through one of above*

The planting project took place in urban areas in Travis County, TX. Trees were planted on 13 private properties in Elgin, Manor, and Austin.

### 4. Project Operator

*Provide name of organization/entity, and contact information*

*Organization/Entity:* TreeFolks, Inc.

*Address:* P.O. Box 1395

*City:* Del Valle

*State:* Texas

*Zip:* 78617

*Contact(s):* Valerie Tamburri

*Phone:* 512-443-5323

*Email:* Valerie@treefolks.org

## **5. Project Description**

*Provide short narrative including location, number or acres of trees, and overall goals*

TreeFolks and the City of Austin Office of Sustainability offered a second year of programming for the Travis County Floodplain Reforestation Program. The program, operated by TreeFolks, restores healthy forest buffers of local rivers and streams in eastern Travis County.

TreeFolks planted more than 23,000 native trees on 31.47 acres of private owned parcels. Tree saplings were planted less than 10 feet on center in order to provide canopy coverage in these riparian zones.

Carbon+ credits generated from this project will be sold to the local businesses and the City of Austin to help meet the city's 2020 carbon neutrality goal. Using funds allocated for carbon offsets to purchase local credits from these riparian plantings keeps the City of Austin's investments localized while addressing global climate change.

## **6. Project Impacts**

*Provide short narrative of the impacts this project will achieve. Examples include how the project addresses increased access to green spaces for under-resourced communities, flood control, watershed protection, human health benefits, recreation or bird and wildlife habitat.*

The tree planting projects will increase canopy cover and diversity in an ecosystem that needs help. The City of Austin Watershed Protection Department recently concluded that diverse wooded corridors along creeks and riparian zones here are rare. Reestablishing riparian forest corridors in eastern Travis County has many benefits including the protection of watersheds, erosion control, flood mitigation, increased groundwater infiltration, interception and filtration of stormwater run-off into sensitive waterways, regional cooling and creation of vital wildlife habitat. This project ensures protection of the planting areas for a minimum of 25 years.

The reforestation project also serves to engage local community members with the environment, complementing Austin's participation in the Biophilic Cities Network and the Children and Nature collaborative, and aligning with citywide green infrastructure efforts. Reforesting Austin's local stream corridors will create lasting change, both within the city limits and across eastern Travis County floodplains.

TreeFolks worked with professional planting crews and youth service organizations to plant native saplings and provide the reforestation services to private owners free of charge. These services included free trees, free planting services, and free consultations and education on Best Management Practices.

## **7. Number of trees to be planted and general planting-design**

*Provide number of trees and general planting design. Tree planting design options include:*

- *single-tree dispersed (spaced 10" or more apart, i.e. street trees or linear plantings)*
- *single-tree canopy (spaced 10" apart but continuously so to generate canopy over time, i.e. natural areas)*
- *forest canopy (closely planted with spacing less than 10" apart so to generate canopy and forest ecosystem, high tree mortality expected, i.e. riparian areas)*

TreeFolks followed the forest canopy plant design for this project. More than 23,000 saplings were planted at densities ranging from 5' x 8' spacing to 7' x 10' spacing.

## **8. Additional Information**

*Provide additional information about your project. Examples include collaboration with other partners or how this project fits into a larger effort.*

*Partnerships.* Strong partnerships with Travis County and City of Austin has meant regular and substantive support as we go about implementing the program. We have had the support of County and City administrations as we begin talks for program funding sustainability and the City of Austin's Watershed Protection Department has been regularly available for technical assistance. Even though we were unable to plant public land with Travis County or City of Austin this season, due to new protocols and land availability, we plan to resume working with them next season.

*Outreach.* Data from Travis County Appraisal District was used to identify eligible parcels, due to the lack of canopy cover along the riparian/floodplain area. From the Travis County 100-year floodplain database, 769 parcels were selected for their Farm and Ranch Improvement, Vacant or Agricultural designation (as to avoid sending mailers to highly urban residential or commercial lots). Direct mailers were prepared for all 769 parcels and sent on 06/5/20.

Other outreach methods included active outreach to community groups including Wilbarger Creek Conservation Alliance, Pines and Prairies Land Trust, Austin-Bastrop River Corridor Partnership, Gilleland Creek Neighborhood Association, and the Colorado River Land Trust. Other outreach methods included advertising through TreeFolks' newsletter and social media channels and contacting waitlist applicants and prior participants wishing to expand their planting areas this season.

