

## CHAPTER 1

### ABOUT THE GREAT AUSTIN TREE ROUNDUP

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Welcome to the Great Austin Tree Roundup! You are part of an exciting new program developed by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin and TreeFolks, Inc. Other partners include the City of Austin Climate Protection Program and the City Arborist Program. This initiative was launched in May of 2009 with a grant funded by the Watershed Protection Development Review Department's Urban Forest Grant Program.

#### **Why Count Trees?**

As our understanding increases about the important contributions our urban forests make to our cities and communities in filtering pollutants, sequestering carbon, absorbing storm water run-off, reducing energy costs, and overall increasing property values and improving quality of life, we recognize the need to quantify our trees and assess their economic value. Because the economic benefits of our urban forest are often discounted or ignored in development decisions, it is vital that we be able to evaluate benefits in order to move trees to the fore of the planning process.

#### **How Can We Count Our Trees?**

The Great Austin Tree Survey is an innovative campaign whereby volunteers are trained to map and record tree observations in their neighborhoods, school grounds, private homes, and businesses. The intent of the campaign is to empower the public to become involved as citizen scientists, furthering knowledge of the diversity of species, structure, health, and functions of trees in their communities. The data you collect will be verified, mapped, and shared citywide with other citizens, urban forest managers, and stakeholders.

#### **Getting Started**

The [www.treeroundup.org](http://www.treeroundup.org) website will enable you to identify local tree species, use GPS units, and enter collection data via simple web forms. Your data will be validated by experts and used by the US Forest Service models to assign an economic value to our private trees. Your participation in this initiative thus is vital to our efforts to promote the urban forest as a critical component of the urban planning process.



TREEFOLKS

