

defending texas trees and local zero waste progress!



PHOTO BY ALAN KRAUTHUIS



PHOTO BY MARCEL MOHNA JR.

AUSTIN

Gov. Greg Abbott used a special legislative session in 2017 as an attempt to over-ride all local tree protections in Texas, which more than 110 cities have passed.

Local officials, arborists, business leaders, and even children came to the Capitol to tell lawmakers to leave tree protections in place. We helped lead this effort, and thanks to strong public pressure from many others as well, every local ordinance in Texas was saved.

A little closer to home, the City of Austin rolled out its first phase of citywide curbside composting. Now more than 50,000 families have this important service. We also took the first steps towards Zero Waste commitments in Cedar Park and Georgetown—and the rest of Central Texas won't be far behind if we have anything to say about it.

Over the past year we've made considerable progress toward Zero Waste in DFW. In Dallas, a City Council committee instructed staff to draft an ordinance that could bring recycling to all apartments and businesses!

In Fort Worth, we helped strengthen the city's new long-range recycling plan with hundreds of letters and emails from TCE members and our coalition of advocates. As a result, local officials passed a plan that puts the city on track for Zero Waste. Next up is a curbside composting pilot program in several Fort Worth communities.

We organized pressure on Plano officials to develop a Zero Waste plan, and our work in Denton has led to discussion of expanding recycling to all apartments and businesses there. In Lucas, we helped train and organize residents to convince the City Council to restore curbside recycling. Stay tuned for more in 2018!

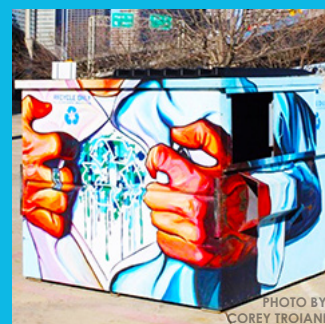
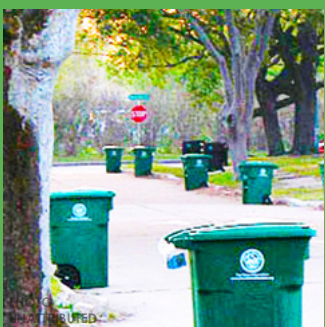


PHOTO BY COREY TROIANI

DFW



HOUSTON

In 2017 we overcame unique obstacles in the wake of Hurricane Harvey and moved forward with Zero Waste policies in Houston.

First, in order to maintain curbside recycling, Houston needed a new long-term recycling contract. We advocated for more types of recyclable materials to be processed and for details of the agreement to be publicly available. The contract was renegotiated to find the best programs for Houston at the right price.

When Harvey hit, contract negotiations—and curbside pickup—were stalled for months. Finally, Mayor Turner and the City Council passed a 15-year contract with FCC Environmental. This includes a brand new recycling facility and will restore curbside glass pickup for residents next year—all at a whopping \$11 million cheaper than the original proposal. We look forward to bringing more Zero Waste programs to Houston in the future!

Empowering Texans to fight pollution...one door at a time.

a letter from our Executive Director



Robin Schneider

The story of the past year is that you helped TCE get results against incredible odds. When you respond to our activists on your doorstep, on the phone, by email or social media, we have the power to make change happen. Here are some prime examples of how we organize in these challenging times.

For years, TCE has worked with communities affected by a liquid waste company that mixed toxic wastes with sewage at a small wastewater treatment plant. This process created noxious odors and killed thousands of fish downstream. The company then took the leftover sludge—laden with heavy metals—and dumped it on land bordering a creek in Victoria County.

With an outpouring of community outrage, we helped stop the use of another town's wastewater plant in the Rio Grande Valley for this same purpose. Then we worked with Victoria County residents and their legislators to urge the state environmental agency to forbid dumping this sludge on land in Texas. They finally did so in 2017, and now all Texas communities are protected from this pollution.

We also have been working to preserve the rights of local governments to address the impacts of single-use bag pollution. This year we mobilized cotton ginners, anglers, ranchers, retailers, environmentalists, and recycling and composting businesses to submit legal arguments to the Texas Supreme Court. The Court will rule, probably later in 2018, whether local governments can continue to pass single-use bag ordinances.

Over the past two years TCE supporters have written thousands of letters to Walgreens and Best Buy urging them to use safer chemicals in their products. These companies and other retailers responded and released plans to move forward with safer chemicals policies!

Thanks to you, TCE's efforts are bearing fruit even in the current atmosphere. We look forward to seeing you again to keep it up!

Robin Schneider



TCE ANNUAL MEETING
MARCH 25TH
1:00-4:00PM
GREEN BUILDING
RESOURCE CENTER

Join TCE in Houston for a potluck at our Annual Members' Meeting!

LOCATED INSIDE THE
HOUSTON PERMITTING CENTER
1002 WASHINGTON AVE.
HOUSTON, TX 77002



CALL 512.326.5655 OR EMAIL
NICOLE@TEXASENVIRONMENT.ORG

meet the staff and friends!

Our staff and a number of our strong supporters, including some of our youngest activist friends, were present at the Texas Supreme Court for the hearing on single-use bags. Although we don't know how the court will rule, with a crew that looked this good (and also media coverage in markets across the state), we certainly know we made an impression!



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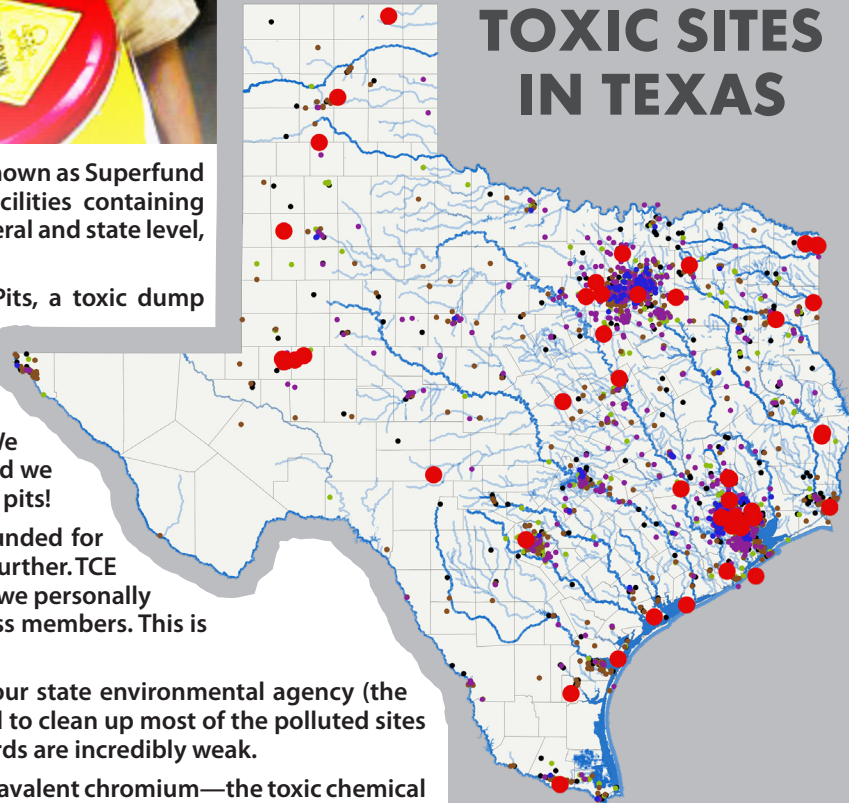
cleaning up toxic sites

superfund and legacy pollution

PHOTO BY LAM OTERO/AP



TOXIC SITES IN TEXAS



LEGEND

- FEDERAL SUPERFUND
- BROWNFIELDS, RCRA, FEDERAL SITES
- DRY CLEANER REMEDIATION SITE
- VOLUNTARY CLEANUP SITE
- SECONDARY CONTAMINATION SITE (IOP)
- INDUSTRIAL & HAZARDOUS WASTE SITE

source: data requests of TCEQ staff on toxic sites programs in jan-feb 2018

Texas is home to hundreds of the nation's most toxic waste sites, known as Superfund and brownfield sites, which are often abandoned industrial facilities containing hazardous materials. Due to lagging clean-up programs at the federal and state level, these sites often sit for decades with little remediation progress.

In working closely with allies on the San Jacinto River Waste Pits, a toxic dump east of Houston, we learned about the impact these sites can have on surrounding communities. This hazardous waste has contaminated the river and is causing health problems linked to dioxin exposure. Hurricane Harvey also flooded this site, which revealed dioxin levels more than 2,000 times the "safe" limit. We helped organize grassroots pressure for a complete clean-up—and we scored a victory with a U.S. EPA decision to fully remove the waste pits!

Unfortunately, the federal Superfund program has been underfunded for years and the current administration had proposed cutting it even further. TCE supporters wrote thousands of letters opposing budget cuts, and we personally delivered them to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and U.S. Congress members. This is making an impact and we will keep the pressure on.

To make matters worse, the lack of federal funding means that our state environmental agency (the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, or TCEQ) is expected to clean up most of the polluted sites in Texas instead. This is a problem because Texas pollution standards are incredibly weak.

How bad is it? The Texas standard for groundwater pollution of hexavalent chromium—the toxic chemical in the movie Erin Brockovich—is 1,500 times weaker than the national standard. For several chemicals tied to birth irregularities, the standards are 45 times weaker. Even after the TCEQ declares a site "fully remediated," it could still be as polluted as a Superfund site in Louisiana, Oklahoma or Arkansas!

We need to improve Texas clean-up requirements so that we have protections just as strong as the national standards. We will use this campaign to address many toxic sites throughout the state while we advocate for faster, more thorough clean-ups to protect our communities. Stay tuned for more in 2018!



PHOTO BY MELISSA WHITT



PHOTO BY TRAVIS HESTER FOR THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



PHOTO BY KATHARINE BAYONE

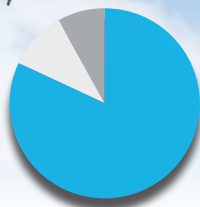
We hand-delivered thousands of your letters to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. Check out his reaction!

financials

Simply put, we are winning campaigns and making progress toward a cleaner, healthier Texas because you and tens of thousands of people engage in our work. One contribution, one letter, one email, one phone call... and then another, and another. And then we win. It's not always flashy and it's not always quick, but we believe that building a broad base of grassroots support is a key path to lasting success. As a TCE supporter, you know this base-building is more important now than ever. Thank you for adding your voice! Please consider using the enclosed envelope to renew your support for our work today—for a more sustainable tomorrow.

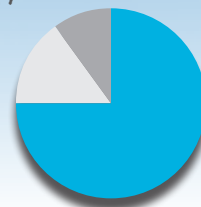
where we got our funding in 2017
revenue total: **\$1,619,959**

- 81% grassroots contributions from nearly 40,000 individual Texans
- 8% special projects funding
- 11% reimbursed expenses, miscellaneous



how we used our funding in 2017
expense total: **\$1,600,007**

- 75% environmental advocacy, community organizing & public education
- 10% managing TCE
- 15% fundraising to sustain TCE



source: TCE financial statement, 2017



**TEXAS CAMPAIGN
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

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FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

TRASH MAKEOVER CHALLENGE

living masterpieces



PERHAPS OUR MOST CREATIVE TRASH MAKEOVER CHALLENGE YET, THE 7TH ITERATION—"LIVING MASTERPIECES"—CHALLENGED DESIGNERS TO DRAW INSPIRATION FROM FAMOUS PAINTINGS ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF ERAS AND GENRES. AS ALWAYS, IT WAS EXCEPTIONALLY FESTIVE, HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE, TRULY ORIGINAL AND DEFINITELY TCE. CHECK OUT TRASHMAKEOVER.COM FOR MORE PHOTOS OF THIS DELIGHTFUL CELEBRATION.