

Regenerating Native Landscapes

Landscapes in their natural state help clean air and water of pollutants, moderate the impact of global warming and control flooding among many other benefits. Staff at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center of The University of Texas have healed damaged, degraded or destroyed landscapes at sites that include national parks, large developments, corporate campuses and government facilities while helping landscape architects, contractors and others better understand the environmental implications of design decisions.

Center staff consult on restoration and landscape sustainability at public and private sites and conduct research on using native plants and ecological systems to solve challenges in the landscape. The Center also is a leader of a [national initiative](#) providing voluntary guidelines and performance benchmarks for green landscapes as a way to transform land development and management practices.

Research Projects: The Wildflower Center's sustainable design practice draws from research conducted by staff on ways to improve the ecological function of the built environment. These studies on site and in the field focus on:

- demonstrating the value of native plants on [green roofs](#) and how environmental benefits vary using different roof products.
- identifying ways to [restore grasslands](#) damaged by overgrazing and mismanagement
- evaluating a [lawn](#) made of several native grasses that performs better than traditional, single-species turf grasses
- demonstrating how to combat [invasive plants](#) by over-seeding with native plant competitors or other approaches

Consulting Projects: Wildflower Center staff are involved in all stages of a project: from leading stakeholder meetings during planning stages, to suggesting native plant choices and landscape features during design, to oversight of landscape installations. The sustainable designs suggested for the Bush Presidential Center and other projects often save money by reducing land maintenance costs, irrigation needs and other expenses.

Among the consulting projects Center staff participates in are:

- Providing ecological consulting on landscaping for the George W. Bush Presidential Center being built at Dallas' Southern Methodist University Campus. Staff suggested specific plants for native prairie habitat that includes a floodplain forest and a wildflower meadow, [native Texas grasses](#) to be used on the north and south lawns, and landscaping, watering and other conditions to keep the native habitats healthy and ecologically stable.
- Developing an all-native landscape for Advanced Micro Devices' (AMD) new corporate headquarters in Austin. Staff inventoried the 58-acre site to help minimize building footprints, salvaged plant material before construction for re-use on site, restored several seep wetlands,

selected appropriate plant species and soils for the landscape, and helped design a 1.2 million gallon rainwater re-use system.

- Designing features at Mueller Austin, a 700-acre, mixed-use development near downtown that once was Austin's primary airport. Center staff designed a 3-acre restoration of endangered blackland prairie in a park and worked with landscape architects to design a native plant demonstration garden at the [park](#). Residents use that garden for recreation and when considering plantings for their yards.
- Training national park employees in Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas to design and conduct restoration projects at in five National Park Service sites.
- Restoring 8 miles of the San Antonio River that connects historic Spanish missions while improving the land's ability to handle flooding. Working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers some of the river's historic sinuosity has been restored while enlarging the floodplain. The greater space has allowed native prairie and woodland ecosystems to be restored. The ecosystems provide wildlife habitat and scenic recreational space while maintaining flood protection. Center staff selected plant species and designed the methodology to plant and maintain them and to reduce the growth of non-native, invasive plant species along the river corridor.

[All Current Consulting Projects](#)

[Past Projects](#)

[Landscape Restoration Center Staff](#)

[Conservation Development](#)

Lady Bird Johnson

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN