**Shoal Creek Conservancy Accomplishments Report**

**January 1 – March 31, 2014**

**FY2014 - Second Quarter**

**Staffing & General Organization Progress**

* Raised over 100% of the Conservancy’s FY2013 $150,000 **budget**
* Hired and managed **spring interns**, including:
  + Membership & Capacity Building Intern Francis Alvidrez, Texas State Geography Undergraduate
  + Communications & Social Media Intern Lauren Minor, UT Public Relations Undergraduate
  + Programming & Volunteer Coordinator Intern Michael Tyler, UT Geography Undergraduate
* Received **IRS 501(c)3** designation
* Negotiated proposal for **community benefit payment** of $333,240 to the Conservancy as part of Riverside Resources Investments Downtown Density Bonus Program Application for its Fifth and West Residences project (approval pending)
* Created working **calendar of grant opportunities**
* Submitted $5,000 grant proposal to **REI** to support workdays, invited to apply
* Organized Conservancy **board tour** of upper Shoal Creek watershed

**Membership Goal**

*Building*

* Established a strategy and schedule for building the **membership program** and increasing membership from current level of 156 members
* Acquired, installed and trained on **Salesforce** for donor, volunteer and prospect management with pro bono assistance from Salesforce experts Ezra Kenigsberg and Chris Robertson from Bazaarvoice (Goal: In use by end of April)
* Developed and implemented a **communications strategy**, including messaging regarding areas of work and an editorial calendar with pro bono assistance from consultant Andy Sobchak
* Improved **website**, including a new Conservancy blog and other features
* Established presence on twitter and instagram, grew facebook likes from 377 in January to 434
* Grew email **distribution list** to a total of 528 subscribers

*Outreach*

* Distributed the Conservancy’s first monthly **e-newsletter** using Mail Chimp
* Provided presentations to Allendale, Bryker Woods and Rosedale **neighborhood associations** as well as the Northwest Austin Civic Association and requested the opportunity to present to 39 other associations within the watershed
* Welcomed our first three Conservancy **Advisory Board Members**, including representatives from Old Austin, Pemberton Heights and Bryker Woods neighborhood associations
* Grew the Conservancy’s **outreach toolkit,** including mini-flyers, “volunteer here” yard signs, a presentation with new messaging, and supplies for tabling at events
* Organized two spring public **walking tours**, including a bird walk in partnership with Travis Audubon

**Trail Maintenance Goal**

*Volunteer Workdays*

* Engaged **over 210 volunteers** in workdays to improve the trail this quarter
* Completed five projects as part of Austin Parks Foundation’s **It’s My Park Day** on March 1 involving over 120 volunteers who spread mulch, removed and painted over graffiti, picked up litter and removed invasive giant reed
* Launched the Conservancy’s monthly **3rd Friday Workday and Happy Hour**, resulting in:
  + Removal of vines from the railing south of 3rd Street Bridge in February
  + Removal of invasive giant reed and planting of seed clay balls between 10th Street and 12th Street bridges in March
  + Plan to work with volunteers to repair trail, remove reeds and paint over graffiti in April
* Hosted a Keep Austin Beautiful **Clean Sweep** litter abatement volunteer event at Duncan Park on April 12
* Hosted workday with **Bella Salon** in March to paint over graffiti at the Lamar Boulevard and 12th Street bridges
* Hosted workday with **GSD&M** in February to paint railing north of the 3rd Street bridge
* Laid groundwork for **future workdays** (see Calendar of Events)

*Relationship Building*

* Developed relationships with **Austin Police Department** officers and Downtown Austin Community Courts, resulting in faster response to homelessness issues and identification of partnership opportunities to improve safety and tagging issues
* Advocacy resulted in **removal of gravel** from the trail at the “gap” below 5th Street after flooding by the City’s Public Works Department
* Established relationships with **Parks and Recreation Department** maintenance staff, resulting in a commitment to address backlog of maintenance issues in April and monthly maintenance walks with the Conservancy

**West 6th Street Historic Bridge Goal (Includes Lighting and Wayfinding)**

* Submitted draft **historic bridge nomination** for 6th Street Bridge to Texas Historical Commission, scheduled for consideration in May
* Held first meeting of the Shoal Creek Historic **Bridges Committee,** resulting in feedback to guide strategy for restoration and fundraising
* Identified potential funding sources for 6th Street Bridge **restoration** project
* Created a library of resources on best practices for removing **graffiti** on historic structures
* Advocacy resulted in commitment by City’s Public Works Department to pay the electricity bill for **lighting** of the trail as part of “gap” project from West Avenue to under the 6th Street bridge
* Advocacy resulted in verbal agreement by Schlosser to provide a meter and pay for a portion of the electricity bill for **lighting** of the trail near the 6th Street Bridge
* Created of a map of potential locations for **wayfinding** devices and other important features along the trail between Lady Bird Lake and MLK Boulevard, shared with City to inform the Downtown Austin Wayfinding Project

**Additional One-Year Goals & Other Accomplishments**

*Public-Private Partnership*

* Gained support of the directors and key staff of the City’s Watershed Protection, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works departments for the creation of a **private-public partnership** agreement with the Conservancy for planning, operations and maintenance, and capital improvements within the watershed
* Secured pro bono assistance from local attorney Brian Burgess to assist with creation of a private-public partnership **agreement**
* Secured support from at least two city council members for the passage of a **resolution** supporting the creation of a public-private partnership with the Conservancy
* Laid the foundation for the creation of multi-departmental task force to develop a **strategic capital improvements plan** for Shoal Creek
* Identified the amount and source of **Parkland Dedication Funds** from new residential developments near the trail that could be used for future capital improvement projects

*Invasive Species Removal and Restoration*

* Raised $10,000 to fund the first phase of a **bamboo removal and restoration** project north of Gaston Avenue, currently negotiating contract with Texas Conservation Corps to initiate work
* Partnered with volunteer to pursue an ongoing invasive **giant reed removal and restoration** project between 10th and 12th streets

*Additional Projects*

* Developed a draft one-page program description for **pilot mural program** for private property abutting the creek, identified two interested landowners, established relationships with key leaders in the arts community, and identified potential funding sources for the project (Project of volunteer intern Roberta Izquierdo)
* Real Estate Easement donated to the City’s Parks and Recreation Department to rebuild and close **“the gap”** in the Shoal Creek Trail between West Avenue and West 5th Street
* Completed analysis of **land ownership** along length of the creek (a pro bono project by planner Mitch Wright)

*General Advocacy*

* Submitted comments on the **Urban Trails Master Plan** and served on the advisory committee
* Submitted comments on the **Pease Park Master Plan**
* Submitted a letter of support for the **Austin Urban Forest Plan**
* Submitted letter of recommendation for the **Improving Austin Streams Implementation Plan**
* Provided comments on the City’s Long-Range **Capital Improvement Program Strategic Plan**