

## My Connection with the Trinity River: The Charles Allen Story

Charles Allen is a business owner who lives and works in Dallas. His company, Trinity River Expeditions, has been in operation for 20 years and provides opportunities for people to canoe and kayak down different sections of the Trinity River.



Charles Allen Photo: Richard Howland-Bolton

Stormwater Management recently spoke with Charles Allen to learn about his personal connection with the Trinity River.

**Stormwater Management (SWM):** In your experience as a river guide, what are people's reactions to spending part of their day on the Trinity River?

**Allen:** Almost universally they have enjoyed it and were glad they did it. People are surprised how clean it is, how little trash they see, and how it seems so much like a wilderness.

You don't have to go to the Brazos River or the Guadalupe River [to connect with nature]. On the Trinity River, you see fewer people and more wildlife.

**SWM:** You were born in Dallas, and have lived here your whole life. Why have you never moved away from Dallas?

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## Sustainable Landscaping

What is sustainability? Trying to find a universal definition can be difficult. People use this term to describe many things. A simple definition is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. This translates easily to several principles and practices of landscaping. Any landscape principles and practices that are modified to conserve resources for future generations can be considered sustainable landscaping.

Turfgrass often gets a bad reputation in discussions of conservation. To clear up the misconceptions, there are different ways to maintain turfgrass while preserving resources. The first decision to make is on the usage of your turfgrass. Designating areas to be low usage can greatly reduce resources required for your landscape. Low usage areas, where ground stabilization (permanent cover) is the primary goal, require little to no traditional maintenance. Make sure your low usage areas comply with all City of Dallas Code requirements.

There are many ways to incorporate sustainable principles in areas where high quality turfgrass is desired. Raising the mowing height saves fuel in maintenance equipment and preserves essential nutrients within the turfgrass plant. Fertilization practices can be drastically changed without sacrificing any quality. There are numerous organic fertilizer options that provide slow release nutrients. Slower release means longer periods between applications. Maintaining a healthy thick turfgrass is the best weed control and it also lowers the amount of herbicides needed. When herbicides are needed, a spot treatment can be used instead of broadcasting over the entire lawn, which will lower any potentially negative impacts on the environment and it also saves on the total quantity of herbicides used. It is important to remember to closely follow all label directions for all chemicals and fertilizers used; even organic products. Another key area for conserving resources is irrigation. Make sure irrigation frequency and amount are only what the turfgrass plant requires to maintain healthy growth. Anything over the required amount is simply a waste of water and not water wise landscaping.

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# Tips & Drops

## Upcoming Events

### May

- 1** Asian Festival, Sammons Park  
www.gdaacc.com/
- 13-14** 2010 Regional Water Quality & Green Infrastructure Conf., Dallas Convention Center  
http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/greeninfrastructure/giconference.cfm
- 15** All About Green Event, Fair Park, Leonhardt Lagoon  
Koi and Water Garden Club of North Texas  
www.kwgcnt.org/
- 22** Farm & Flower Festival, Dallas Farmers Market  
www.dallasfarmersmarket.org/
- 27** Stormwater Rules & Regs: Construction Workshop, City of Dallas Eco Park  
www.wheredoesitgo.com/

### June

- 5** Water-Wise Landscape Tour  
City of Dallas, Water Utilities  
www.savedallaswater.com/wwlt.htm
- 6** Dog Bowl, Cotton Bowl Stadium  
Fair Park  
www.fairpark.org/
- 12-13** 19th Annual Tour of Ponds  
North Texas Water Garden Society  
www.ntwgs.org/pondTour.html
- 23** Stormwater Rules & Regs: Industrial Workshop, City of Dallas Eco Park  
http://www.wheredoesitgo.com/

### July

- 21** Stormwater Rules & Regs: Construction Workshop, City of Dallas Eco Park  
www.wheredoesitgo.com/
- 22** Story Time, Martin Luther King Jr. Branch Library  
dallaslibrary2.org/branch/martin.php



www.wheredoesitgo.com

## Allen Story *Continued from page 1*

Allen: Because Dallas is where my river is.

I first started canoeing along the Trinity River back in the 1970s when I was looking for cheap entertainment. At first I saw a wall of green. I took one leaf home and looked in some field guides to learn it was a Green Ash. Thirty years later, here I am; learning the river one leaf at a time.

**SWM:** How have you seen the Trinity River change during your time on it?

Allen: People are getting closer to it; physically closer. It used to be the place to avoid, but there is more construction in the floodplain now.

More access to the river may equal more problems. We stand to lose a lot of our natural areas because we have not assigned a real economic value to our natural areas.

Not being able to access certain portions of the river helps protect the things we don't understand. The things that protect the river *from* us protect the river *for* us; for our future.

The potential is there for Dallas' future; it is connected to everything. I have seen connections between the river and wastewater, drinking water, politics, public works projects, history, and life.



Charles Allen

Photo: Richard Howland-Bolton

**SWM:** What do you want people to know about the Trinity River?

Allen: Everyone can have their own voyage of discovery down the river because it is new to you. I still don't know everything about the river, which is great. It keeps me going out there.

*This article is the first in a series of articles that will feature Dallasites and their connections to our local creeks, lakes, and the Trinity River. If you or someone you know wants to be considered as an interview subject in this series, contact us at 214-948-4022 or email stormwater@dallascityhall.com.*

## Rainwater Harvesting: An Urban Solution

As North Texans look for additional ways to be green, rainwater harvesting is becoming more and more popular.

Capturing rainwater helps our environment by reducing the amount of stormwater runoff that leaves a property.



The less stormwater there is flowing down Dallas streets, the less pollution there is flowing into our local creeks, lakes, and the Trinity River.

Collected rainwater can be used to water your landscape; helping with water conservation. Rainwater harvesting can help keep more water in our reservoir lakes, and keep more money in our wallets.

The Texas Agrilife Research & Extension, Urban Solutions Center offers several classes throughout the year focused on collecting rainwater including:

- Saving from a Rainy Day – Making a Rain Barrel
- Rain Gardens
- Rainwater Harvesting

The Urban Solutions Center is part of the Texas A&M System, with a focus on research and extension activities for urban areas in Texas.

To learn more about these classes, visit the Urban Solutions Center's web site: <http://urbansolutionscenter.tamu.edu/courses> or call them at 972-231-5362.

# JUST FOR KIDS...

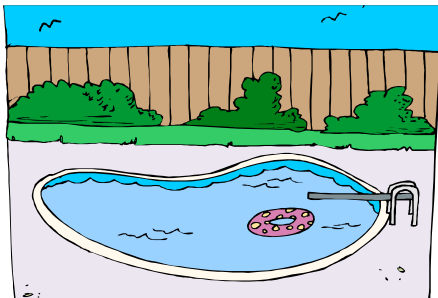
## ...big and small



Ask me, Trinity Trudy!

Are there any restrictions on draining my swimming pool for cleaning or repairs?

YES! There are several Dallas City Codes (Chapter 19-118 and Chapter 43A) that explain proper pool drainage. All filter backwash from a swimming pool, fountain, or spa must go to the sanitary sewer or a separation tank. Filter backwash is prohibited from draining to the storm drain system.



Pools that are drained for repairs or cleaning must drain to the sanitary sewer. If there is not a sanitary sewer available or sanitary sewer would be to slow, pool water can be drained to a natural drainage course. Remember, if the pool water is being drained to a natural drainage course, the chlorine level must be below 5mg/L and the water can not contain harmful quantities of other chemicals used for cleaning. The flow of water must be controlled to ensure it does not leave the natural drainage course or flow onto adjacent properties.

**FACT:** When a pool is drained to a natural drainage course, the pool water and all its chemicals enter the storm drain system and are released untreated to the nearest creek, lake, or the Trinity River. Regulating the chemicals released in pools help minimize negative environmental impacts.

Stormwater Pollution from Swimming Pools is Preventable!

For more information on Dallas City Codes, visit [www.dallascityhall.com](http://www.dallascityhall.com).

*If you have a stormwater question for Trinity Trudy email her at [stormwater@dallascityhall.com](mailto:stormwater@dallascityhall.com). Look for her responses in future issues of "Inside the Inlet."*

### Scrambled Words

Lots of plants and animals live in the Trinity River. Trinity Trudy wants to learn more about them, but she needs your help to unscramble their names. Clues are giving to help you out. Visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/species/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/species/) to learn about these amazing plants and animals.

RDE RDEAE LIDERS

A turtle with a red mark on each side of its face.

T T L I C A A

Tall aquatic plant with a brown, sausage-shaped spike at the top.

T E A R G E E R T G

This bird is the symbol of the National Audubon Society.

G F O R

This animal likes to croak.

Answer Key  
RED EARED SLIDER  
CATTAIL  
GREAT EGRET  
FROG

### Animals In The Inlet

Stormwater Management has received questions and concerns regarding animals being seen inside the storm drains around Dallas. We contacted Dallas Animal Services to discuss what citizens should do if they see an animal in the storm drainage system.



#### What should Dallas citizens do if they see an animal in a storm drain inlet?

Call 311 to report the animal in the storm drain. It's very common for raccoons, opossums, and other wildlife to go in and out of the storm drains so don't be alarmed. Again, call 311 if there is a concern regarding animals in the storm drain.

#### If a person's pet gets stuck in the storm drainage system, should they ever try to rescue the animal themselves?

Owners shouldn't go into a storm drain to get their pets. It can be dangerous to them and/or the pet since they're probably going to be scared. Dallas Animal Services may be able to coax the animal out or into a humane live-trap and remove the animal. If Animal Services is not able to, they may be able to contact other City departments to assist with the issue.

#### What happens to the animals that are picked up by Animal Control?

When Dallas Animal Services (DAS) picks up an animal, the animal is taken to the shelter. Rescued animals are provided shelter, care, food, and water. Many animals are adopted to a good home, rescued by rescue organizations, or reclaimed by their owners. Unfortunately, due to the pet overpopulation problem caused by irresponsible pet owners, animals that are not adopted, rescued, or reclaimed are humanely euthanized. When dealing with wildlife, DAS works with various wildlife rescue groups to provide the best outcome for that animal.

#### What are the hours for adopting a pet from the animal shelter?

Dallas Animal Services is open for adoption Tuesday-Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Sunday noon-5 p.m. Adoption fees for dogs are \$85 and cats are \$55. This includes current vaccinations, spay/neuter, and a microchip. Also, a bag of Hills Science Diet dog or cat food and a coupon for a free physical from a list of participating veterinarians will be included.

#### Where can citizens go to learn about the different programs that Animal Control and the animal shelter offer?

For more information, citizens can come to Dallas Animal Services at 1818 N. Westmoreland Rd., Dallas, TX 75212 or visit the website [www.DallasAnimalServices.org](http://www.DallasAnimalServices.org).

## Volunteer Spotlight



Gary Spence and Tom Heath are volunteers in the Texas Stream Team program in Dallas. In February, Gary and Tom went to their monitoring site on Village Creek and noticed the water did not look how it usually does. The water was cloudy and seemed to be a different color. Gary called Stormwater Management to report his concern.

Stormwater Management's Water Quality Team responded to this inquiry the same day it was reported. The team tested the water at the site for many different parameters, and normal (healthy) readings were recorded.

The team did notice the water's cloudy appearance, so they followed the creek upstream and found a construction site that was the likely cause of the added sediment impacting the creek. The team reported their results to their supervisor who worked with Stormwater Management's Compliance Team to inform the construction site of the citizen's inquiry and results of the water quality testing.

This is an excellent example of how monthly monitoring can help protect our local creeks, lakes, and the Trinity River. If Gary and Tom were not visiting Village Creek every month they would not know the normal color and clarity of the water. Their commitment to Texas Stream Team and to water quality should be noted. Thank you, Gary and Tom.

Gary and Tom are both members of the organization, For the Love of the Lake (FTLOTL). This group monitors seven sites in Dallas as part of the Texas Stream Team program. FTLOTL's dedication to protecting the water quality of White Rock Lake is extremely important to Dallas.

Learn more at [www.whiterocklake.org](http://www.whiterocklake.org).

## Landscaping

*Continued from page 1*

Simple changes to traditional landscape maintenance practices can save huge quantities of resources and drastically lower environmental impacts. There are many different levels of conservation when it comes to landscape. Experiment with different techniques and find a combination that works best for your needs. You might be surprised at how few resources it actually takes you to maintain your definition of a quality lawn.

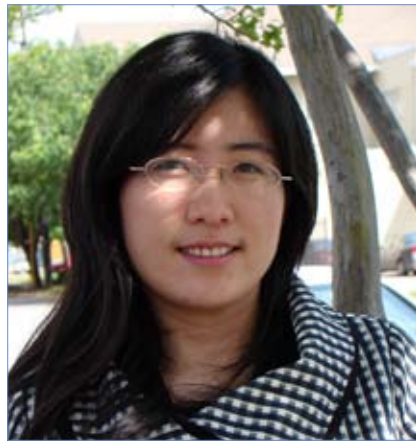
Visit [www.dallascityhall.com/html/codes/hm](http://www.dallascityhall.com/html/codes/hm) for more information.

## Stormwater Enforcement Actions

Stormwater Management conducts construction site inspections and offers education to site operators to promote stormwater compliance. If after inspections and education, sites remain non-compliant, Stormwater's Enforcement team issues Notice of Violations (NOVs) and Citations. Outside complaints will also be filed by the City Attorney. These complaints have associated fines and penalties up to \$2000 per violation if the sites are not brought into compliance. The adjacent table lists some of Stormwater's recent enforcement settlements.

If you see any violations, please call 311.

## Meet a Member of Stormwater



Amanda (Huajun) Chen joined the Stormwater Management Team in July 2009. She works on the GIS team as an Analyst. Her job is to create software tools for the different teams within Stormwater Management. She also helps with computer problems and creates maps as needed.

Several of her projects have helped simplify and streamline the Stormwater Compliance team's daily processes. She is currently working on a user interface that will better track and record the Water Quality team's sampling data. The tools that Amanda creates significantly reduce the amount of time the field personnel spends in the office entering data.

In her spare time, Amanda enjoys watching TV, listening to music, and playing video games. What she enjoys the most about her work is making people happy and hearing "Thank You."

So from all of us here at Stormwater Management Thank You for all your hard work Amanda!

## Stormwater Management Enforcement Metrics

Projects	Violations	Fines
Demolition Skillman Drive	• Best Management Practices maintenance • Sediment discharge	\$19,500
Construction Churchill Way	• Paint discharge	\$3,700
Construction Hillcrest Road	• Best Management Practices maintenance • Vegetation, erosion, & sediment controls	\$7,500
Demolition Manderville & Meadow	• Vegetation, erosion, & sediment controls • Good housekeeping	\$2,250
Demolition Lullwater & NW Hwy	• Preserve existing vegetation • Vegetation, erosion, & sediment controls	\$3,000
Construction LBJ & Preston	• Structural practices to divert flows or limit runoff • Vegetation, erosion, & sediment controls • Good housekeeping	\$4,000

**Total: \$39,950**

## Dallas Stormwater Outreach Leadership

Rick Galceran, P.E.  
**Director  
Public Works and Transportation**

Errick Thompson, P.E.  
**Assistant Director  
Public Works and Transportation**

Susan Alvarez, P.E.  
**Senior Program Manager**

Sonya Batts  
**Outreach Program Coordinator**

## FYI for our readers:

Stormwater Management is here to serve and meet the needs of our valued readers. For additional information regarding the following:

- General stormwater information
- Construction and Industrial workshops
- Presentations about stormwater pollution prevention or permitting requirements

Contact us at:

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320 E. Jefferson Blvd., Room 108  
Dallas, TX 75203

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