

**We need help!**

The Rhizome Collective has been selected to receive a Brownfield Cleanup grant from the EPA to cover the cost of removing the trash. We are \$8000 in debt from closing costs, a survey and lawyer fees from the donation of the land, and need funding to convert the brownfield into a community asset. Any suggestions of possible funding sources and all donations are greatly appreciated! The Rhizome Collective is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible. Volunteers are greatly valued. Internships and fulfillment of community service hours can be arranged. Please contact us for more information.

**The Rhizome Collective**  
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www.rhizomecollective.org

**Who we are:** The Rhizome Collective is a non-profit organization that for the past 4 years has been operating a Center for Community Organizing and the Rhizosphere Educational Center. We run collectively and make decisions using consensus process.

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RHIZOME COLLECTIVE

The Rhizome Collective's

**GROVE  
BROWNFIELD  
CLEANUP  
AND PARK  
CREATION**



A project of the  
**Rhizosphere  
Educational Center**

The Rhizome Collective is pleased to announce our newest project, an exciting extension of the Rhizosphere Educational Center. We have been donated a 9.8 acre brownfield in the Montopolis neighborhood in East Austin, and were selected to receive a Brownfield Cleanup Grant from the EPA. We look forward to completing cleanup using innovative ecologically conscious methods and turning neglected land in a low income neighborhood into an Environmental Educational Park. As always, we invite community involvement- please contact us if you are interested!

#### Environmental Park Ideas

After cleanup, we will create an environmental educational park that complements the adjacent 360 acre Colorado River Park. The land will be tended according to ecological and permaculture principals, with the goal of creating a place for appreciating and learning about nature, as well as sustainability and the environmental justice movement. Native grasses, wildflowers and trees will be planted to create a wildlife habitat for native and endangered species. We will also plant a demonstration model of a food forest – fruit and nut trees and other perennial plants that provide food with little annual human input. The food forest will further enhance the wildlife habitat.

A bicycle/walking trail that links the Montopolis neighborhood to the River Park will be created and opened to the public. Along the trail, educational outdoor kiosks made from earth filled tires recovered from

the site will be built. They will highlight and explain information on the environment and sustainable stewardship. Topics will include:

- ‘Before’ photos of the brownfield, to highlight the possibilities inherent in any degraded piece of land;
- How each of the various forms of debris were recycled or re-used
- Information on natural building techniques
- How diesel engines run on vegetable oil and other biofuels.
- Native plant identification and uses
- Wildlife, and creating wildlife habitat: planting trees, grasses, wildflowers, butterfly gardens, bird and bat houses, etc.
- The importance of wetlands and how they act as nature’s filter
- Soil building and composting
- Environmental racism and the history of East Austin

#### **Long-term goals for the educational park include hands-on demonstrations of:**

- Greenbuilding techniques: cob, rammed earth, slip-straw, adobe, earthbag and strawbale
- Innovative bio-integrated closed loop systems, where wastes from one system supply the needs for another - involves worm composting, methane production, algae harvesting for food and oil, mushroom growing, micro-livestock and small scale aquatic polycultures
- Pilot bioremediation plots to break down landfill contaminants into harmless elements, employing

techniques such as compost tea application as well as phyto and mycoremediation

- Use of Constructed wetlands and floating hydroponic restoration cells for wastewater treatment and storm water mitigation, as well as rainwater harvesting
- Mid-scale composting of local business food wastes employing biofuels tractors, for the purpose of creating a sellable, soil building product, and a working example of industrial ecology.

#### Cleanup Plan

5000 cubic yards of illegally dumped debris need to be cleaned for the Brownfield designation to be removed. We plan to recycle and re-use as much of the debris as possible. Tires, along with metal and wood, will be used to create structures made from waste materials. Tires will be filled with rammed earth and used as giant bricks to form information kiosks. Non-pressure treated wood will be chipped and used to mulch trails. Asphalt shingles will be brought to the only place in Texas that recycles them into roadbase. Any hazardous materials uncovered in the clean-up process would be safely disposed of at the City of Austin Hazardous Waste disposal facility. To prevent future dumping, we will post signs and erect a fence at the top of the ridge. We hope to use equipment and vehicles with diesel engines that have been converted to run off vegetable oil whenever possible.