



**For immediate release:**

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**Trinity River Audubon Center comes to life  
National Audubon Society and the City of Dallas Debut New Conservation Hub**

***Center Opened to the Public on October 18-19 with Free Admission  
And over 10,000 Enjoyed the Festivities!***

**DALLAS, Texas (October 9, 2008)** – National Audubon Society President John Flicker, Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert, state and city officials and invited guests cut the ribbon and dedicated the new Trinity River Audubon Center on Friday, October 17, 2008. The official opening ceremony was followed by the public opening on Saturday, October 18; and over 10,000 Dallasites celebrated with the Audubon team at *Natural Connections* which included workshops, tours, trail hikes and children’s nature play activities.

The City of Dallas is proud to debut this amazing building that is built on top of a reclaimed, former landfill; the Trinity River Audubon Center (TRAC) is the first major signature development for the Trinity River Corridor Project, a \$2 billion City of Dallas public works project.

A flagship location for the National Audubon Society, TRAC is located just **eight minutes** from downtown Dallas on 120 acres of the Great Trinity Forest—the largest urban bottomland hardwood forest in the United States. The Center now serves as a gateway to the Great Trinity Forest, which is more than 6,000 acres.

Anne Brown, vice president of National Audubon Society, said, “The building is uniquely designed so that everywhere you are, you are drawn to the outside. The building takes in the restored Blackland Prairie; you also have the bottomland hardwood forest and surrounding emerging wetlands.”

In addition to bird watching and outdoor conservation programs and clubs, the Center will also serve as a teaching facility for 25,000 students annually, providing them with the option of wet laboratory as well as field-based experiences to help them learn difficult-to-grasp math and scientific concepts.

John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society said, “One of my passions and a key priority for Audubon is connecting people with nature, whether they live in urban, suburban or rural areas.” To achieve this goal, and as part of Audubon’s effort to engage broader and more diverse audiences, Flicker has overseen the addition of over

two dozen Audubon Centers, including ten in urban areas such as Los Angeles and Brooklyn, and now in Dallas. “I envision each Center as the environmental equivalent of a local library, serving as a community resource for enjoying and learning about nature, and a hands-on laboratory for building environmental stewardship.”

“The completion of the Trinity River Audubon Center is a major milestone for Dallas and the Trinity River Corridor Project,” said Mayor Tom Leppert. “It uses reclaimed land that was once an illegal dumping ground, it conserves a 120-acre area of nature in the city, and it provides a living laboratory in nature—an outdoor classroom—for students to have field experiences that will inspire and boost their interest in biology, nature and science.”

### **A Bird Takes Form**

With its roots in bird watching, Audubon wanted a building that reflected its history, but also one that conserves resources and serves as a site for outdoor exploration and education. Designed by Antoine Predock, renowned AIA Gold medal award-winning architect, the Center is sustainably built for a LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) level, the first Dallas Park and Recreation building to strive for this designation. The building mimics a bird with outstretched wings rising into flight.

Some of the building’s innovative green features:

- Rainwater harvesting system for irrigation
- Energy and water efficiency
- Recycled construction materials (271,000 pairs of blue jeans recycled as insulation and 2.1 million milk jugs recycled into boardwalks)
- Use of Texas-made products
- Green roof on administrative wing of building
- Drought tolerant landscaping with native plants

### **Bird Watching and Ecotourism**

Bird watching draws many people to Texas to see peak migrations in March/April and mid-September through late October. Another benefit of the Trinity River Audubon Center will be the growing trend of ecotourism in Texas, already a \$1 billion industry. A major part of that trend is birding.

Tourism is the third largest industry in Texas, after oil and gas production and agriculture. Birding in Texas generates more than \$350 million per year from 2.2 million participants, approximately one-quarter of which travel here from outside of the state. (sources: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2003; Dean Runyon Associates, 2005).

Brown said, “People now fly into Dallas/Fort Worth, but often bypass Dallas and drive through East Texas to Houston and the coasts to go birding. The Trinity River Audubon Center will allow them to come into Dallas, have the opportunity to see more than 50 resident species, and then go on their way.”

Because of where the Trinity River is located in Texas, it’s the largest fresh water inflow into Galveston Bay. The Trinity River is critical for birds because it’s a migratory pass between the northern and southern hemispheres. More than 600 migratory species come into Texas, the most of any state in the country.

“Keeping with that, we’ve engaged Cornell University’s Cornell Lab of Ornithology to provide us with their eBird tracking system at the Center, so people can go birding and then enter the birds into this system. Through Cornell, we will also stream live video of nesting birds. We’ve also hired a citizen science manager, Dr. Jeanette Boylan, who will work with Cornell on enhancing our citizen science program, as Cornell is well known for its citizen science program. Also, we’ll showcase some of Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s research and science documentaries.”

In addition to educational initiatives and bird watching, the Center will offer something for everyone including guided nature walks for visitors of all ages, academic lectures, workshops, nature yoga, exhibits, nature clubs and more. For a complete list of activities, visit [www.trinityriveraudubon.org](http://www.trinityriveraudubon.org).

### **Grand Opening: Natural Connections: October 18-19, 2008**

The community was invited to the Trinity River Audubon Center’s grand opening, Natural Connections, on Oct. 18 and 19, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission was free all weekend. Activities include guided trail hikes, birds of prey, Children’s Discovery Garden, backyard bird feeding, nature play activities for children, outdoor skills clinics (backpacking, back country cooking, hiking), keeping chickens in your backyard, urban beekeeping, organic gardening tips and more. Ongoing, there are activities, classes, field trips and bird watching for people of all ages. A complete list of up-to-date activities can be found at [www.trinityriveraudubon.org](http://www.trinityriveraudubon.org) or by calling 214.370.9967.

Special thanks went to the following foundations for their generous gifts for the building’s sustainability features: **The Meadows Foundation** (also for educational programs), **The Boone Family Foundation** and the **Eugene McDermott Foundation**.

Grand opening sponsors included the following: Green Heron Sponsors: Nissan, REI, *People Newspapers*, and *City of Dallas*. Belted Kingfisher Sponsors: TXU, Pizza Hut, DART, Univision and Clear Channel. American Kestrel Sponsors: Sedalco.

Starting October 21, the Center is open Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. On the third Thursday of each month, the hours are 9 a.m.-9 p.m., with free admission. The Center is closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is \$3 children (ages 3-12); \$4 seniors (ages 60+); \$6 adults (ages 13-59), and free on the third Thursday of each month. Memberships start at \$60 for individuals.

### **About The Trinity River Audubon Center:**

Sustainably built and LEED Gold level designed, the Trinity River Audubon Center is the first major recreational component completed for the Trinity River Corridor Project. It is situated on 120 acres of the Great Trinity Forest, the largest urban bottomland hardwood forest in the U.S. TRAC represents a combined \$37 million restoration and capital improvement project that was funded and built by the City of Dallas, with \$1 million of the funds provided from a Meadows Foundation grant. The National Audubon Society is the managing partner for the Center, and Audubon will manage all aspects. The Center will also feature the prestigious Audubon name.

Located just **eight minutes** from downtown Dallas, the Trinity River Audubon Center is the flagship for Audubon’s science education and conservation initiatives in Texas. The Center is located at 6500 S. Loop 12, Dallas, TX 75217. More information can be found by calling 214-370-9967 or at [www.trinityriveraudubon.org](http://www.trinityriveraudubon.org).



**About the Trinity River Corridor Project:**

THE TRINITY

The projected \$2 billion Trinity River Corridor Project is the largest public works and urban development project in the history of Dallas, and one of the largest of its type in the nation. It will reduce flood damage, provide recreational amenities and visionary environmental benefits, improve downtown traffic congestion, and encourage development along the Trinity River. The Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge, designed by internationally known architect Santiago Calatrava, is now under construction; and in 2011, construction will begin on the second Calatrava designed bridge, the Margaret McDermott Bridge.

The new Trinity River Audubon Center, located at Loop 12 east of IH-45, is open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm daily. Admission is free on the third Thursday of each month.

Work is underway on the Moore Park Gateway project to expand and renovate the park. In addition, an expanded system of pedestrian trails is planned for the Trinity River Corridor Project as well as the Texas Horse Park. For project updates and to watch the bridge progress, visit: [www.trinityrivercorridor.org](http://www.trinityrivercorridor.org).

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