

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TEXAS

GIFT empowers Texans to build resilient communities adaptable to economic, social, and environmental change.



Ghirardi Family WaterSmart Park
League City, Texas

Green infrastructure (GI) is a nature based, engineered solution to stormwater issues. GI encompasses small scale practices, typically referred to as Low Impact Development, mid-scale practices including constructed stormwater treatment wetlands, and large-scale protection and restoration of natural systems. These practices are designed and engineered to work with nature to capture, store, and treat stormwater runoff in ways that provide both water quantity and water quality benefits. Implementing GI practices at every level is an effective way for communities to upgrade their stormwater management infrastructure.



MD Anderson Campus
Houston, TX

Green Infrastructure for Texas (GIFT) is a program of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service through the Texas Community Watershed Partners. GIFT addresses water quantity and water quality issues through GI practices at every scale. In order to encourage GI in watersheds across Texas, the GIFT team demonstrates a range of GI techniques using a multifaceted approach with stakeholder education, on-the-ground projects, and on-going in-situ research.

GIFT workshops engage local elected officials, municipal and county staff, and landowners. They focus on connecting decision makers to the “why” and “how” of GI practices. Workshops highlight successful local projects, emphasize locally derived data, and explore lessons learned from every project phase. These events showcase GI as a design solution that is based on local strengths and context, creating beautiful and functional projects with meaningful community impacts.



Sheldon Lake State Park
Houston, TX

The GIFT project team works directly with partners including communities, drainage districts, water authorities, parks departments, and landowners to fund, design and install GI practices. **Local, on-the-ground** projects showcase the potential for GI practices and test design specifications for conditions in Texas. Each project is an educational tool for the community to advance the local knowledge of stormwater issues and solutions, and share the benefits of GI practices.

As part of the Texas A&M University System, **research** is an essential component of the GIFT package. Studies from around the world document the ability of GI practices to improve water quality in a variety of soil types and climates. However, home-grown Texas data speaks to local elected officials, and helps them convey the value of GI projects as they advocate for these solutions in their towns.

The next step for GIFT is the addition of participatory stakeholder engagement through interactive technology to provide greater understanding of the multi-level benefits of GI and improve ownership of stormwater solutions. Complex issues are examined through stakeholder discussions around a powerful visualization tool that allows users to explore siting of GI practices in their community, the impacts on water quality and quantity, and the associated costs. This tool is important because it not only computes local data, but also sparks real discussions and empowers communities to envision broad-scale implementation of green infrastructure practices.



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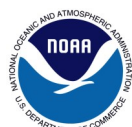
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