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[HOME](#)[ABOUT](#)[CAREERS](#)[SERVICES](#)[MARKETS](#)

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# SUSTAINABLE BIOSOLIDS PLANT MOONLIGHTS AS BIRD OBSERVATORY; V&A COMPLETES DRAINAGE DESIGN FOR EXPANSION

January 2011

The Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant and Bird Observatory is the Gold Medal Winner of the American Concrete Pavement Association's 2011 Industrial & Specialty Paving Award.

The Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant and Bird Observatory is located on a 1,200-acre site that stretches along 3.5 miles of the Colorado River, approximately eight miles east of downtown Austin. The plant has grown into a nationally recognized and award winning biosolids recycling facility.

The plant was also previously the recipient of a first-place award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for its recycling program. The plant was established in the 1950's and uses a series of stabilization ponds to treat wastewater sludge from the City of Austin's wastewater plants. The treated sludge is recycled into a stable organic product marketed under the trade name "Dillo Dirt™" that can be used safely as a fertilizer for City park facilities and sold to the general public as an EPA-certified soil conditioner.

The bio-treatment processes used by the plant combine with a diversity of habitat on the site to produce a unique ecology that attracts a wide diversity of birds and other wildlife. The site is nationally known as one of the best places in Texas for bird-watching. The Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant site is also home to the City of Austin Water Utility's Center for Environmental Research (CER). The City of Austin is using most of the \$32 million in stimulus money it received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 to improve sustainability at the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant.

One of the ARRA-funded sustainability improvements at the plant is a new 15-acre reinforced concrete pad to serve as a drying bed facility for composting wastewater treatment sludge into "Dillo Dirt™." Vickrey & Associates (V&A) designed the drainage improvements for the composting pad which is located north of the existing facility in an existing undeveloped but cultivated field. The drainage for the new composting pad is contained in 7-acres of concrete storm water storage areas and transported approximately 1,500 feet south to an existing pond via an existing lift station. V&A's design for the stormwater facility met the client requirements of complete containment of the City of Austin 100-year storm event as well as specialized outlet structure controls to allow isolation of the drainage area runoff volumes and to provide screening capabilities to prevent damage to pumps located downstream of the detention facility. V&A was also responsible for obtaining right of entry to private properties and performing Texas One Call for utility locates for survey purposes.

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