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Naked City

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Hornsby Bend Gets Greener

The **Austin Water Utility** has broken ground on new "green infrastructure" to reduce the environmental impact of the city's **Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant**, thanks to receiving \$31.8 million in federal funds. The award-winning 1,200-acre plant recycles Austin's sewage and yard trimmings, producing **Dillo Dirt** compost; it's also home to AWU's Center for Environmental Research, and its ponds attract migrating birds and waterfowl, making it Austin's top birding destination. At the event, Dr. Al Armendariz of the Environmental Protection Agency called the plant "a new, innovative solution for an age-old problem. Besides improving the environment by reducing waste, it creates jobs, cuts energy usage, and reduces carbon emissions. Once again, Austin is leading the way for other communities in Texas as well as nationwide." AWU projects that the improvements will yield about 560 local jobs and a carbon footprint reduction of 6,500 tons of greenhouse gases a year (in part by saving 30,000 gallons of diesel fuel). The project will expand plant capacity and increase production of biogas – which new generators will convert to electricity, said AWU, sending up to 1.75 megawatts of electricity to Austin Energy's grid annually. – *Katherine Gregor*