



## Rhizome Collective Austin, Texas

### Sustainable Redevelopment

#### From Landfill to Environmental Education Park

Grove Landfill, a 9.8 acre site located in an economically depressed area of east Austin, is being transformed into an environmental education park promoting sustainable concepts. The park will be managed using ecological and permaculture principals. Native grasses, wildflowers, and trees will be planted to create a wildlife habitat for native and endangered species. A demonstration project will include the planting of fruit and nut trees and other perennial plants that provide food with little annual human input. This is in keeping with the Rhizome Collective's mission to promote sustainability in an urban environment that enhances the quality of life of the surrounding community and complements the adjacent 363-acre Colorado River Park.

From 1967 to 1970, 3.6 acres at the site were used as a municipal household solid waste landfill, and for about 15 years following the closure of the landfill, illegal dumping occurred. Tests revealed the presence of volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile com-



**Cleanup Presented a Daunting Challenge**

pounds, RCRA metals, pesticides, and herbicides at this site. The cleanup officially began in January 2005 when the diverse crew assembled by Rhizome, including generous volunteers, took on the formidable task of taking down the 25 foot tall by 600 foot long sheer wall of debris located on the site, containing 680 tires, 10.1 tons and 36.5 cubic yards of trash, and 31.6 tons of recyclable metal. Huge amounts of wood scrap and concrete were diverted from landfills and used for erosion control on site. Without an accessible power source, equipment was run using biofuel generators and solar panels. Biofuel was made from local sources of used vegetable oil.

Rhizome Collective received a \$200,000 Brownfields cleanup grant and collaborated closely with the City of Austin throughout the site cleanup. Along with the city's Brownfields Redevelopment Office and Solid Waste Services (SWS), it coordinated large scale volunteer cleanups on several different weekends. SWS provided for the disposal of unrecyclable materials collected at these cleanups. During the city-sponsored Keep Austin Beautiful (KAB) Clean Sweep 2005, 6.1 tons of trash were collected from the Rhizome Brownfield alone! Much credit goes to the 175 volunteers who assisted in the cleanup over a two-year period, contributing over 1600 service hours.



**Former Grove Landfill After Site Cleanup**

The site was entered in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Voluntary Cleanup Program and awarded a Certificate of Completion in April 2007.