An Abbreviated History of OKC Beautiful

1960s

April 10, 1962 - First meeting of the Beautification Committee of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, organized by Mayor Ron Norrick.

1962 - First effort was advising garden clubs on beautification efforts and providing awards for beautification efforts.

1962 - As 1962 was an election year, an early project was to address the number of election signs that were scattered throughout the City. The Beautification committee worked directly with candidate to encourage prompt collection of signs.

1962 - A theme song was written for Oklahoma City Beautiful, and Conway Twitty appeared on television on behalf of the organization.

October 6, 1962 - The first "anti-litter march" was held.

1968 - Stanley Draper secured Oklahoma City Beautiful's first office space.

1968 - First "Vision in Action" Newsletter is published.

1968 - Oklahoma City Beautiful incorporated as a nonprofit organization.

1969 - Conducted project to decorate downtown windows of buildings emptied as a result of Urban Renewal.

1970s

1970 - Developed plan for removal of 1,000 dilapidated houses.

1970 - Advocates for air quality control ordinance that is passed by City Council.

1970 - Hosts city-wide "Operation Clean Sweep" to abate litter.

1971 - Organizes a promotional and education campaign about bagging trash before putting in the bin, to prevent unintentional litter.

1972 - Conducted a litter study for the city.

1973 - 6,700 trees are distributed through a partnership with banks and tree nurseries. People creating a new account at a bank would receive a tree.

1973 - 1,000 trees were given to the Oklahoma City and Putnam City school districts.

1970s, Continued

1973 - Successfully advocates for an ordinance against burning trash in city limits.

April 27, 1974 - This day is declared city-wide "Beautification Day," encouraging city-wide clean ups.

1974 - Provided 1,500 trash bags to the Boy Scouts for clean ups around Lake Hefner.

1975 - Successfully advocated for an anti-littering ordinance, passed by City Council.

1976 - Creates the city's first litter photometric measurement, with help from Tinker Air Force Base.

March 9, 1977- Hosted a seminar on the Dutch Elm Disease.

1978 - A city-wide telephone survey was conducted to find out more about public attitudes toward littering.

1978 - Ceremonial planting of the first Centennial Tree took place at the southeast corner of City Hall, following accepted proposal of the Red Oak as the official Centennial Tree.

1979 - Planted eight varieties of saplings at target areas along highways and interstates.

1979 - Developed a postcard for reporting people littering from automobiles.

August 4, 1979 - Hosted first "Park Perk Up."

1980s

1981 - Adopt-A-Park program is started, with eight parks participating.

1982 - Hosts a spring clean-up, bringing in approximately 7,000 truckloads of trash.

1982 - Inaugurated a new computer paper and paper recycling program.

1982 - Developed a new slogan, “Make Oklahoma City LOOK as good as it is.”

1982 - An elementary school beautification competition was initiated. Willard Elementary School was the first winner.

1983 - Oklahoma City Beautiful worked with Oklahoma Paper Mill Supply Company to develop a citywide program for collecting newspapers. As a result, newspaper collection containers were placed at high traffic commercial areas citywide.

1980s, Continued

1983 - Initiated plaques for "Yard of the Month" competitions of local neighborhood associations.

1984 - Designed and promoted a new bumper sticker with the motto, "LitterBUGSme", free to the public.

1984 - Hosted first annual Distinguished Service Awards dinner, with 178 people attending.

1984 - Conducted a Clean Builder Workshop for construction company officials.

1984 - Burger King was the first participant in a "Fast Food Connection" project, designed to discourage littering at fast food restaurants.

1985 - Channel 4 worked with Oklahoma City Beautiful to create a TV announcement promoting proper use of garbage containers.

1986 - Organized an environmental court for the city and created an ordinance for phasing out portable signs.

1986 - Began to develop beautification curriculum for schools.

1986 - Piloted a wildflower planting program.

1987 - Continued recycling program and placed more than 100 newspaper containers throughout the city.

1987 - Received 40,000 additional trees from from Ralph Reiger's Tree Farm, significantly expanding its City of Trees program.

1987 - Received a grant for the development of a beautification area at the airport.



1987 - Furnished seed for experimental planting in four acres of state land and six Oklahoma City gardens through its wildflower planting program.

1988 - Conducted a major median landscaping with trees, flower gardens and flag poles on the east side of the fairgrounds.

1989 - An agreement between Oklahoma City Beautiful and Lake Hefner Trails was made for services to be furnished by Oklahoma City Beautiful. This later resulted in the incorporation of the Trails organization into Oklahoma City Beautiful.

1990s

1990 - Construction was underway on an $11,000 entryway into Lake Hefner Trails, adjacent to Stars and Stripes Park, just south of Lake Hefner. Oklahoma City Beautiful handled administration of Lake Hefner Trails.

1990 - Penny Round-up for Wildflowers raised $15,500 to purchase 1,522 pounds of wildflower seeds, planted on 181 acres.

1990 - Sponsored Project ReDirectory. 213,000 used phone books were recycled.

1990 - 1,562 volunteers participated in community clean ups.



1990 - Conducted Lake Hefner STREAK, a timed cycling event. Proceeds funded the expansion and beautification of trails around Lake Hefner.

1990 - Hosted a nationwide videoconference on waste management, titled, "Let's not Waste the '90's," held at Oklahoma City Community College.

1991 - A new handbook, "Trees for Oklahoma City," was published by OKC Beautiful.

1992 - Oklahoma City Beautiful and the Junior League of Oklahoma City developed a brochure titled "The 2-Minute Guide—How to be a Part of the Environmental Solution".

1993 - A new Youth Board was created that consisted of a group of ten students from area high schools.

1993 - Received a $500,000 grant for the expansion of trails at Lake Hefner.



1993 - More than one thousand individuals participated in the Lake Hefner STREAK, including cyclists and inline skaters.

1993 - Board of directors was expanded to 50 members.

1994 - Organized a new Wildflower Society with 137 charter members. This organization gives special support to the wildflower planting program

1995 - Created the Central Oklahoma Trash Cop program. Included Oklahoma, Logan, Canadian and Cleveland Counties. For the first time in Oklahoma's history, four sheriffs' deputies were designated to enforce illegal dumping and littering laws in their respective counties. They focused on catching, ticketing and testifying against people who litter.

1995 - A new "Property Ordinance" brochure was published and distributed.

1996 - More than one hundred trees were planted on Northwest Expressway.

1996 - Distributed 5,000 portable ash-trays, designed to persuade people to quit throwing cigarette butts on the ground.

1990s, Continued

1996 - Established first website for the organization.

1996 - Helped stablish a career fair at Metro Technology Center for students interested in an environmental career.

May 13, 1997 - Ground breaking held for the Lake Hefner Trails.

1998 - The landscaping program at NW Expressway and I-44 was expanded.

1998 - The trails program was enlarged. South Grand Boulevard and Lake Overholser were designated as the next two locations for new walking and cycling trails.

1998 - Monthly Beautification Award program is established.

1998 - Mother Earth program is established.



2000s

2000 - First Mayor's Golf Tournament is held.

2000 - With help from the City of Oklahoma City 85 newly designed Adopt-A-Park signs were installed to replace the old signs.

2001 - LandScape area sponsored by Chesapeake Energy completed.

2001 - The "Mother Earth" program reached approximately 2,900 students. At the end of each semester a Shumard Red Oak tree was planted at each school.

2001 - Annual clean up program was named "LitterBlitz." Oklahoma City Beautiful partnered with the City of Oklahoma City for the spring clean-up. The event was kicked off on April 17th at the City Council meeting. 3,494 volunteers participated that year.

2002 - North May and Wilshire LandScape completed.

2002 - Coordinated four public meetings to start the long-term enhancement design of the new I-40 and Boulevard.

2002 - Hosted first Adopt-A-Park reception to recognize all of the volunteers participating in the program.

2003 - LandScape was completed at Highway 152 and South Meridian.

2000s, Continued

2003 - A “Dash for Trash-OKC Leaders Against Litter” was held with the Mayor and members of the City Council challenging members of the OKC Beautiful board to a litter pick-up.



2004 - Relocated to current office at 3535 N Classen Blvd.

2004 - Developed a media campaign to spread the word about “making trash a thing of the past.” The advertising campaign featured Terry the Trash-A-Saurus

2004 - LandScape developed for SW 25th and Shields, an entry to the Capitol Hill District.

2004 - Relocated to current office at 3535 N Classen Blvd.

2005 - Partnership with Gatewood Neighborhood Association for landscape project recognizing the Interurban Trolley Line. (Off Classen and 17th)

2005 - Planted 4,500 daffodils along the Lake Hefner Trails and 800 pounds of wildflower seeds along roadsides.

2007 - LandScape added on South Meridian as entrance to Will Rogers Airport.

2007 - Added a landscaped flagpole area at Southern Hills Elementary.

2008 - Co-hosted a bus tour with the Neighborhood Alliance to tour neighborhood beautification projects. There were over 170 attendees.

2008 - Donated 200 pine seedlings to Elementary Schools.

2008 - LandScapes added along Northwest Expressway.

2010s

2010 - Recycle Bin Loan Program is launched.

2010 - Teen Board program is created, with 20 high school students participating.

2010 - Educare Median LandScape on South Grand Boulevard is completed.

2011 - TreeScapes Grant Program is offered, funding 120 trees planted in the metro.

2012 - OKC Beautiful launches new brand and logo.

2010s, Continued

2012 - #LitteringIsWrongToo public information campaign launches.

2012 - Making Oklahoma City Beautiful Young Professionals Board is created.

2012 - First OKC Harvest school garden is constructed.

2013 - OKC Beautiful leads new beautification project at Lake Hefner and renaming of the trails to the Bert Cooper Trails.

2013 - Median LandScape at 34th and Classen is completed.

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2014 - Manuel Perez Park improvements completed in a partnership with Bud Light.

2016 - Cigarette Litter Prevention Program is launched.

2018 - 50th Anniversary Project is completed - a two-block art installation on Classen Boulevard, by structural artist Joe Slack.

2020s

2020 - River Protectors Initiative launched in collaboration with Riversport.

2021 - Tabitha Community Park completed in a vacant lot in northeast Oklahoma City.

2022 - Tree OKC urban forestry program is launched.

2023 - Classen and Northwest Expressway median LandScape is completed.

2023 - Sustainability Social Hour program is launched.

2023 - First large-scale neighborhood planting is hosted, with 100+ trees planted in one day in the John F. Kennedy neighborhood.

2023 - Inaugural Earth Fest event is hosted, bringing thousands of attendees together.

2024 - First Community Foresters cohort is selected.

2024 - Esperanza Elementary School Garden is completed.

2020s, Continued

2025 - First Tackle the Trails event hosted, with 300+ volunteers participating in a one-day cleanup of the trail system.

2025 - Mark Twain School Garden is constructed.

2025 - 400+ trees planted in neighborhoods in south Oklahoma City, in partnership with Oklahoma Forestry Services.

2025 - OKC Beautiful selected as a partner for a National Science Foundation grant, in partnership with the University of Oklahoma.

2025 - Largest single-day tree planting event hosted, with 250 trees planted in northwest Oklahoma City neighborhoods.

2026 - OKC Beautiful moves to new community space in the Metro Park neighborhood.

2026 - Kaiser Elementary School garden is constructed.





