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TreeFolks and EcoRise Provide Free At-Home Curriculum for Parents and Teachers of K–12 Students

AUSTIN, Texas - April 15, 2020 - Local nonprofits TreeFolks and EcoRise will launch a free, 4-part environmental educational experience to introduce students to their urban forest and explore some of the most common tree species found in Central Texas. The first part of the series, delving into the benefits of an urban canopy, is slated for release just in time for Earth Day 2020.

Our world has been upended by COVID-19, but this provides an opportunity for us to reflect on the world we want to come back to. Nature, including our urban forests, acts as a refuge in times of crisis and is vital to the future sustainability of our planet.

TreeFolks' Education Coordinator, Collin McMichael is excited for the release.

"Forests and trees have always brought me peace in stressful times, but the soothing aspect of trees is just one of the many ways they can make our lives better. I'm excited to share with everyone our video series exploring the urban forest and profiling a few of the most common tree species in our area. Hopefully, while we all do our part to slow the spread of this pandemic we can also enhance and improve our understanding of the natural world," said McMichael.

"When students are able to connect to the trees and environment around them, they are better able to problem-solve important issues such as biodiversity and heat island effect," said EcoRise Program Director, Kristi Hibler-Luton. "By partnering with Tree Folks, we hope remote learning will empower students to connect with their surroundings and solve issues on their home campus, even at a distance."

During Earth Week 2020, teachers and parents will have access to all the tools and resources needed to immerse their students in the first part of the series: A City Made for City Shade. Visit www.treefolks.org/online-learning to tune in.

This video will provide a deep dive into issues facing our urban forest, the steps we have taken to preserve it, and the important ecosystem services trees provide for the people, wildlife, and plants surrounding them. It will also provide opportunities for hands-on experience with at-home urban forestry

activities and the planting and care of trees that will ultimately improve the health of our forests.

EcoRise focuses on inspiring a new generation of leaders to create a sustainable future for all. TreeFolks focuses on building communities through planting and caring for trees while combating the climate crisis. By partnering together, the two nonprofits can immerse students in nature during this time of crisis and usher the new generation of sustainable leaders to be stewards of their urban forest.

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TreeFolks

TreeFolks' mission is to **empower Central Texans to build stronger communities through planting and caring for trees**. Since 1989, TreeFolks has planted over 2.8 million trees in Central Texas. The organization focuses on large-scale reforestation, riparian sapling plantings, urban tree canopy education, and distributing trees to Austin residents.

EcoRise

EcoRise develops the next generation of creative problem solvers by enlivening conventional classrooms with academically aligned K–12 curricula that introduce students to environmental literacy, social innovation, and hands-on design skills. EcoRise is currently supporting 3,900 teachers in helping over 220,000 students solve real-world sustainability challenges concerning energy, water, waste, transportation, air quality, food, and public spaces. The program focuses on enhancing STEM education, promoting sustainability, introducing students to green careers, and helping students develop 21st-century skills. To learn more about EcoRise, visit www.ecorise.org.