

November 2009



**Buffalo Bayou
& Lower White Oak Bayou
Federal Flood Damage
Reduction and Ecosystem
Restoration Study**

A Harris County Flood Control District Study

FACT SHEET

Buffalo Bayou & Lower White Oak Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Study

Overview

The Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) initiated the Buffalo Bayou & Lower White Oak Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Study in September 2005 in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Working with USACE enables the HCFCD to share in the costs of a study. Upon study completion, approval by USACE, and appropriation of funds by the federal government, HCFCD is eligible for reimbursement for up to 75% of the federally-approved project costs.

The purpose of the study is to:

- investigate flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration components, and
- identify a plan that has public support and is competitive for federal funding

A plan is expected to be identified by 2012, although the process to obtain federal approval and funding may take longer.

About the Study Area

The Buffalo Bayou and lower White Oak Bayou watersheds are located in west and central Harris County and drain a 113 square-mile area. The study area on Buffalo Bayou includes 32 miles from Barker Reservoir eastward through downtown Houston to the Houston Ship Channel Turning Basin. Additionally, the study area extends along White Oak Bayou from Loop 610 to its confluence with Buffalo Bayou in downtown Houston, a distance of about 7 miles.

Most of the study area is within the City of Houston with some of the area in unincorporated Harris County and the Villages of Piney Point, Bunker Hill, Hunters Creek, Hilshire, Hedwig, and Spring Valley.

The Federal Process

Federal legislation, referred to as Section 211(f) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 [WRDA 1996 (amended by WRDA 2007)], enables the HCFCD to take the lead on the planning, design, and construction of specific flood damage reduction projects in cooperation with USACE. Working with USACE, the HCFCD will comply with all of the laws and regulations pertaining to a federal study, including compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Study Status

HCFCD is currently identifying and evaluating components for flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration. Examples of an individual flood damage reduction component include a stormwater detention basin to safely store stormwater during times of heavy rain, channel modification to facilitate the flow of stormwater, or the buyout of homes and businesses to remove them from harm's way. Examples of an individual ecosystem restoration component include restoring a low-quality wetland, re-creating marsh, or reestablishing riparian forest along the channel.

After component identification and evaluation, components will be grouped together as alternatives from which a plan for the study area will be selected. HCFCD coordinates with USACE and environmental agencies during the plan selection process. The selected plan will be verified for technical, environmental, and policy compliance.

Public Involvement

Your input is important to us. HCFCD will be reaching out to communicate with the community in several ways throughout the study process, including community briefings, public meetings, a web site, and direct mail communications.

If you are interested in learning more about the study or would like to sign up to receive communications, please visit www.hcfcd.org/BufferLowerWhiteOak. You may also call the Harris County Flood Control District at 713-684-4040 or contact us by mail at 9900 Northwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77092.



www.hcfcd.org/BufferLowerWhiteOak