

December 15, 2010
December 15, 2010
October 18, 2010
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October 06, 2010
October 4, 2010
October 4, 2010
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July 27, 2010
July 21, 2010
July 8, 2010
July 1, 2010
July 1, 2010
July 1, 2010
June 30, 2010
June 3, 2010
February 11, 2010
February 8, 2010
February 1, 2010
January 27, 2010

- ⌵ 2009 News Archive
 - November 25, 2009
 - November 24, 2009
 - September 30, 2009
 - September 18, 2009
 - August 26, 2009
 - July 21, 2009
 - July 8, 2009
 - June 30, 2009
 - June 22, 2009
 - June 18, 2009
 - June 3, 2009
 - April 24, 2009
 - April 1, 2009
 - March 27, 2009
- ⌵ 2008 News Archive
 - December 8, 2008
 - September 18, 2008
 - July 2, 2008
 - May 29, 2008
 - April 16, 2008
 - March 31, 2008
 - March 25, 2008
 - March 21, 2008
 - March 3, 2008
 - February 13, 2008
 - February 8, 2008
- ⌵ 2007 News Archive
- ⌵ 2006 News Archive
- ⌵ 2005 News Archive
- ⌵ 2004 News Archive
- ⌵ 2003 News Archive
- ⌵

conservation.

The event was co-sponsored by the Texas Urban Forestry Council, Texas Forest Service and AgriLIFE Extension of Texas A&M System.



The District's tree nursery currently accommodates more than 20,000 hard-to-find trees for future plantings.

Trees Louise!

Since 2001, the District has [planted roughly 100,000 trees](#) on project sites countywide. In fact, the District has planted so many trees it exhausted its local supply and had to launch its own tree nursery. There, the District currently growing about 6,600 trees, many of which are hard to find, including bald cypress and water tupelo - water-loving trees that can thrive in wet conditions. The tree nursery can accommodate more than 20,000 trees, if needed. Typically, the District plants native trees including loblolly pines, river birch, cherry laurels, sycamores and many types of oak.

[> Learn more about the District's Tree Planting Program](#)

[> Learn more about the District's Vegetation Management Program](#)

[> Learn more about the District's Property Management Program](#)



- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Flood Control District Honored with 2010 Arbor Day Award

February 1, 2010

Recognizing the Harris County Flood Control District's efforts to bring mature trees to Hermann Park after Hurricane Ike uprooted hundreds of pines in 2008, Trees for Houston has awarded the District the 2010 Arbor Day Award.



A Unique Opportunity

While the Flood Control District regularly works to save trees that otherwise would be disrupted by bayou widening and stormwater detention projects, it typically relocates them to other rights-of-way along channels and detention basins. About 300 felled trees in Hermann Park, however, prompted the Flood Control District last March to relocate 72 oak, elm and cypress trees to the 445-acre city park. The trees were carefully spaded from a segment along Brays Bayou between Alameda Road and Ardmore Street that was to be widened as part of the \$450 million Brays Bayou Flood Damage Reduction Project (Project Brays).

A Significant Flood Damage Reduction Project

Project Brays consists of widening the bayou from its mouth at the Houston Ship Channel to Fondren Road and from Old Westheimer Road to Highway 6; excavating four regional detention basins with a total combined capacity of seven "Astrodomes" of stormwater storage; and replacing or modifying 32 bridges. This project is the largest undertaking by the Harris County Flood Control District. The project's federal partner is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Doing the Right Thing

The Flood Control District typically plants new trees once projects are completed, but it also strives to preserve trees when possible. The District performs tree rescues when its projects put large, desirable trees in harm's way. These trees are typically moved near their original locations outside a construction zone, or sometimes to areas farther away.

Trees for Houston is a nonprofit organization founded in 1982 with a mission to plant, promote and protect trees all over the greater Houston area.



A Hundred Thousand Trees?

Since 2001, the District has planted roughly 100,000 trees on project sites countywide. In fact, the District has planted so many trees it exhausted its local supply and had to launch its own tree nursery. There, the District currently growing about 6,600 trees, many of which are hard to find, including bald cypress and water tupelo - water-loving trees that can thrive in wet conditions. The tree nursery can accommodate more than 20,000 trees, if needed. Typically, the District plants native trees including loblolly pines, river birch, cherry laurels, sycamores and many types of oak.

> [Learn more about the District's Tree Planting Program](#)

> [Learn more about the District's Vegetation Management Program](#)

> [Learn more about the District's Property Management Program](#)

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Sixth Annual Volunteer Tree Seedling Potting Event Yields More Than 1,100 New Trees For Future District Plantings

February 8, 2010

Gearing up for tree planting season, the Harris County Flood Control District recently held its Sixth Annual Volunteer Tree Seedling Potting Event at the District's tree nursery in South Harris County. The event drew many participants, including students from Clear Brook High School's Jr. ROTC Program. More than 1,100 new trees were potted, and those seedlings will grow throughout the summer at the District's tree nursery, which currently houses about 8,000 trees.



Volunteer students prepare tree seedlings for potting. The potted seedlings will be grown for future plantings.

Restocking the Inventory

New, potted seedlings will replenish the current stock at the District's tree nursery, which grows roughly 12 different species, including Live Oak, White Oak, American Plum, Ironwood, Paw Paw, Mayhaw, Persimmon, and Button Bush. The tree nursery can accommodate more than 20,000 trees, if needed. New tree plantings begin every fall on project sites countywide. The typical planting season lasts from October through March.

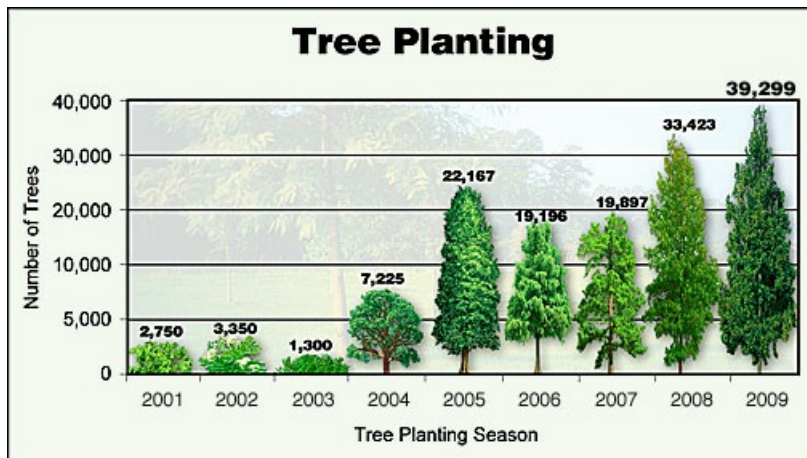


The District's tree nursery currently accommodates more than 20,000 hard-to-find trees for future plantings.

Benefits From Large-scale Tree Plantings Are Numerous

On average, the District plants about 20,000 trees every year, making it the No. 2 tree-planting government agency in Harris County. In 2009, the District planted almost 40,000 trees, setting a new annual record. Although the number of trees the District plants annually may seem large, trees provide a great number of benefits.

Once a successful canopy of trees is established, the need for mowing decreases and consequently saves taxpayers money. Trees intercept rain and lessen the impact upon soil, thus reducing the amount of erosion that can occur. Less erosion on the banks of a stormwater detention basin or drainage channel means greater storage for stormwater.



December 15, 2010
December 15, 2010
October 18, 2010
October 11, 2010
October 06, 2010
October 4, 2010
October 4, 2010
October 4, 2010
October 4, 2010
July 27, 2010
July 21, 2010
July 8, 2010
July 1, 2010
July 1, 2010
July 1, 2010
July 1, 2010
June 30, 2010
June 3, 2010
February 11, 2010
February 8, 2010
February 1, 2010
January 27, 2010

↳ 2009 News Archive

November 25, 2009
November 24, 2009
September 30, 2009
September 18, 2009
August 26, 2009
July 21, 2009
July 8, 2009
June 30, 2009
June 22, 2009
June 18, 2009
June 3, 2009
April 24, 2009
April 1, 2009
March 27, 2009

↳ 2008 News Archive

December 8, 2008
September 18, 2008
July 2, 2008
May 29, 2008
April 16, 2008
March 31, 2008
March 25, 2008
March 21, 2008
March 3, 2008
February 13, 2008
February 8, 2008

↳ 2007 News Archive

↳ 2006 News Archive

↳ 2005 News Archive

↳ 2004 News Archive

↳ 2003 News Archive

↳

In addition to discouraging the spread of undesirable [vegetation](#), trees improve air quality and aesthetics, and can even increase property values and energy conservation.

[> Learn more about the District's Tree Planting Program](#)



- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Don't Believe the Flooding Myths – Insuring Your Home is Well Worth the Cost

By Mike Talbott, P.E.
Director
Harris County Flood Control District

February 11, 2010

The announcement came last week: The price tag carried by Hurricane Ike totals \$15 billion in damages, making it the costliest storm to hit Texas and the third costliest in the United States, trailing hurricanes Katrina in 2005 and Andrew in 1992.

The official tally serves as a reminder of how costly natural disasters can be. While wind-related damages comprise the bulk of Ike's bill, flooding damages total \$2.2 billion, according to the Insurance Council of Texas, reporting on the amount of claims covered by the [National Flood Insurance Program](#). That amount, however, does not include what [uninsured home and business](#) owners who flooded will pay out of pocket.

Perhaps more staggering than the damages caused by Ike is the number of [people without flood insurance](#). Of the 1.4 million households in Harris County, roughly one in every five is protected with flood insurance. Approximately 290,000 policies are in force.

The number is alarming considering that the average amount of damages expected from flooding in Harris County every year is several hundred million dollars. That amount is reflective of the fact that flooding is the No.1 natural threat to our area.

Notable [historical floods](#) include those of 1929 and of 1935, which severely crippled downtown Houston and threatened to wipe the city off the map — prompting [creation of the Harris County Flood Control District](#) in 1937. In more recent times, Tropical Storm Frances flooded 1,400 homes in 1998, [Tropical Storm Allison](#) flooded 73,000 homes in 2001, and most recently, a non-tropical rainfall event flooded 2,300 homes last April.

Given our area's flooding history and natural risk for flooding, why don't more residents protect themselves with flood insurance? The reasons are speculative, of course, but they most likely boil down to three common misconceptions: The belief that flood insurance is too expensive, that not all people are eligible and a false sense of security — the most prevalent flooding "myth."

Many people are fortunate enough to live in homes that have never flooded or have not experienced flooding in decades. When 30 or 40 years pass and homes remain dry, it's understandable that homeowners might conclude they will not flood. Such was the case last April on the west side of town when 8 to 10 inches of rain fell in 12 hours and 7 inches of rain fell in three hours in isolated areas. Residents scurried to find answers to their "sudden" flooding problem, as many had not seen water in their homes in roughly 30 years. Many were surprised to learn the rainfall they experienced in April was greater than the rain they saw from Hurricane Alicia in 1983, from Allison in 2001 and from Ike in 2008. In fact, the last time their area saw comparable amounts of rain was the early 1980s.

Furthermore, about 70 percent of the homes that flooded last April were not located in a [mapped flood plain](#). Many people believe if they are not located in a mapped flood plain they are not at risk for flooding, and they view flood insurance as an extended warranty on an appliance: comforting yet nonessential. However, they may not realize that [flood insurance rate maps](#) only show flooding risks from bayous and streams leaving their banks during certain theoretical floods. They do not show [risks from street flooding](#), which occurs when water begins to rise in streets and eventually inundates homes. Unfortunately, half or more of the flooding that occurs in our area falls into this category.

Many also mistakenly believe that if their homes did not flood during [Tropical Storm Allison](#) — an unprecedented storm that dropped 28.5 inches of rain in just 12 hours and 35 inches of rain in five days — they will never flood. But it's important to note that Allison did not distribute rain evenly over the county. Many areas experienced less than 5 inches of rain. Using Allison as a benchmark for flooding risks could be a costly mistake for many.

[Billions of dollars](#) have been spent widening bayous, excavating [stormwater detention basins](#) and [helping families move outside the flood plain](#) — projects that have spared thousands of homes from floods. However, more work needs to be done. Everyone in Harris County is at risk for flooding to varying degrees. All are eligible for flood insurance, which is relatively inexpensive, especially for those outside a mapped flood plain. Don't forget that homeowners insurance does not cover flooding.

For those who still may question its worth, let the numbers speak for themselves: In terms of paid flood insurance claims, Houston and Harris County rank third and fourth, respectively, in the nation, trailing only New Orleans and Jefferson Parish in Louisiana.

Flooding is a costly natural disaster. Flood insurance determines who will ultimately pay for it.

[> Learn more about flood insurance](#)

[> Learn more about the District's flood damage reduction programs and projects](#)

[> Visit the National Flood Insurance Program official website, FloodSmart.gov](#)

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Buffalo Bayou Partnership Hosts 4th Annual KBR Kids Day along Buffalo Bayou - Saturday, June 5

June 3, 2010

Join the Buffalo Bayou Partnership for a day of adventure and activities along the Bayou. KBR Kids Day on Buffalo Bayou will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2010 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at downtown's Sabine Promenade on Sabine Street between Memorial Drive and Allen Parkway. Admission is free.

[> View map and directions](#)

EVENT INFO

WHEN: Saturday, June 5, 2010
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

ADMISSION: Free and open to all

WHERE: Sabine Promenade on Sabine Street between Memorial Drive and Allen Parkway

PARKING: Free parking is available at City Lot H (next to Fonde Recreation Center at Sabine Street and Memorial Drive) and Lot C (Memorial Drive and Houston Street).

Family fun festivities include:

- Hands-on activities with over 30 Houston organization partners
- Recycling crafts including Keep Houston Beautiful's On the Trail of Trash and Treasure
- Bayou boat rides and kayak demonstrations
- Sun prints and wildflower seed planting
- Up close with bayou wildlife and plants
- Music, park performers, balloon artist, face painters and much more!

Performance Schedule:

10 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Skateboarding demonstrations with Pro Skateboarder Dan MacFarlane of Mentality Skateboards. Presented by Sun & Ski Sports. (giveaways and surprise skateboarding guests)
Lee and Joe Jarnail Skatepark

10:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

Watch for Houston Texans' TORO who will be greeting guests along the trails

10:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Break Dancing/VisciousGermzCrew
Buffalo Bayou Performance Platform

11:30 a.m. - Noon

EISA/Japanese drumming group
Buffalo Bayou Performance Platform

Noon - 1 p.m.

Watch for Houston Rockets' CLUTCH who will be greeting guests along the trails

Noon - 1:30 p.m.

Radio Disney Team Green Rockin Road Show
Buffalo Bayou Performance Platform

1:40 p.m. - 2 p.m.

Ki-gong martial arts demonstration
Buffalo Bayou Performance Platform

For more information, call 713.752.0314 or visit www.buffalobayou.org

[> Learn more about the Buffalo Bayou watershed](#)

Harris County Flood Control District Prepares for the First Named Storm of the Hurricane Season

June 30, 2010

The Harris County Flood Control District's Flood Watch staff is monitoring Hurricane Alex and its potential impact to Harris County in terms of possible coastal flooding and rainfall. We are coordinating with other county agencies and participating in regional and state conference calls related to weather and emergency preparation. In the field, crews are calibrating rainfall and water surface elevation gages along many of our bayous and streams, in addition to removing debris from channels to ensure the positive flow of water.

Current News

2012 News Archive

- [December 17, 2012](#)
- [November 26, 2012](#)
- [October 30, 2012](#)
- [October 25, 2012](#)
- [September 20, 2012](#)
- [September 17, 2012](#)
- [August 16, 2012](#)
- [August 1, 2012](#)
- [July 14, 2012](#)
- [July 9, 2012](#)
- [June 25, 2012](#)
- [May 29, 2012](#)
- [May 24, 2012](#)
- [May 15, 2012](#)
- [May 14, 2012](#)
- [May 10, 2012](#)
- [April 19, 2012](#)
- [April 19, 2012](#)
- [April 9, 2012](#)
- [April 9, 2012](#)
- [March 15, 2012](#)
- [March 8, 2012](#)
- [February 29, 2012](#)
- [February 16, 2012](#)

2011 News Archive

- [November 28, 2011](#)
- [November 03, 2011](#)
- [October 25, 2011](#)
- [September 28, 2011](#)
- [September 02, 2011](#)
- [September 01, 2011](#)
- [August 30, 2011](#)
- [August 23, 2011](#)
- [August 12, 2011](#)
- [August 08, 2011](#)
- [July 01, 2011](#)
- [June 20, 2011](#)
- [June 17, 2011](#)
- [May 26, 2011](#)
- [May 25, 2011](#)
- [May 23, 2011](#)
- [May 19, 2011](#)
- [May 9, 2011](#)
- [April 18, 2011](#)
- [April 6, 2011](#)
- [March 30, 2011](#)
- [February 14, 2011](#)
- [February 2, 2011](#)

2010 News Archive

District's Flood Watch Team Keeps its Eye on Alex

July 1, 2010

Hurricane Alex made landfall overnight about 115 miles south of Brownsville with 100 mph winds. The Harris County Flood Control District's Flood Watch team continues to monitor impacts along the upper Texas coast including elevated tides and the potential for heavy rainfall in our area. As of this morning, heavy rainfall has not materialized and tides have remained just below critical levels near Clear Lake and the western side of Galveston Bay. Minor tidal flooding during times of high tide could impact low lying coastal roads near Clear Lake and the western side of Galveston Bay.

[> Visit the District's Tropical Weather Center](#)

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - [December 17, 2012](#)
 - [November 26, 2012](#)
 - [October 30, 2012](#)
 - [October 25, 2012](#)
 - [September 20, 2012](#)
 - [September 17, 2012](#)
 - [August 16, 2012](#)
 - [August 1, 2012](#)
 - [July 14, 2012](#)
 - [July 9, 2012](#)
 - [June 25, 2012](#)
 - [May 29, 2012](#)
 - [May 24, 2012](#)
 - [May 15, 2012](#)
 - [May 14, 2012](#)
 - [May 10, 2012](#)
 - [April 19, 2012](#)
 - [April 19, 2012](#)
 - [April 9, 2012](#)
 - [April 9, 2012](#)
 - [March 15, 2012](#)
 - [March 8, 2012](#)
 - [February 29, 2012](#)
 - [February 16, 2012](#)
- 2011 News Archive
 - [November 28, 2011](#)
 - [November 03, 2011](#)
 - [October 25, 2011](#)
 - [September 28, 2011](#)
 - [September 02, 2011](#)
 - [September 01, 2011](#)
 - [August 30, 2011](#)
 - [August 23, 2011](#)
 - [August 12, 2011](#)
 - [August 08, 2011](#)
 - [July 01, 2011](#)
 - [June 20, 2011](#)
 - [June 17, 2011](#)
 - [May 26, 2011](#)
 - [May 25, 2011](#)
 - [May 23, 2011](#)
 - [May 19, 2011](#)
 - [May 9, 2011](#)
 - [April 18, 2011](#)
 - [April 6, 2011](#)
 - [March 30, 2011](#)
 - [February 14, 2011](#)
 - [February 2, 2011](#)
- 2010 News Archive

Flood Watch Team Currently Monitoring Heavy Rainfall

July 1, 2010

The Harris County Flood Control District's Flood Watch team is monitoring the heavy rainfall over Harris County. One to 3 inches has fallen in the last 2 to 3 hours from Galveston Bay to downtown Houston. Some street flooding is likely under the heavy rainfall. Always remember to "Turn Around... Don't Drown."

[> Visit the District's Tropical Weather Center](#)

Current News

2012 News Archive

- December 17, 2012
- November 26, 2012
- October 30, 2012
- October 25, 2012
- September 20, 2012
- September 17, 2012
- August 16, 2012
- August 1, 2012
- July 14, 2012
- July 9, 2012
- June 25, 2012
- May 29, 2012
- May 24, 2012
- May 15, 2012
- May 14, 2012
- May 10, 2012
- April 19, 2012
- April 19, 2012
- April 9, 2012
- April 9, 2012
- March 15, 2012
- March 8, 2012
- February 29, 2012
- February 16, 2012

2011 News Archive

- November 28, 2011
- November 03, 2011
- October 25, 2011
- September 28, 2011
- September 02, 2011
- September 01, 2011
- August 30, 2011
- August 23, 2011
- August 12, 2011
- August 08, 2011
- July 01, 2011
- June 20, 2011
- June 17, 2011
- May 26, 2011
- May 25, 2011
- May 23, 2011
- May 19, 2011
- May 9, 2011
- April 18, 2011
- April 6, 2011
- March 30, 2011
- February 14, 2011
- February 2, 2011

2010 News Archive

Flood Watch Team Moves to Standby Mode

July 1, 2010

The Harris County Flood Control District's Flood Watch team has moved to Standby Mode and will be monitoring rainfall trends through the evening into Friday. The National Weather Service has issued a Flash Flood Watch for Harris County until 7 a.m. Friday. The Flood Control District plans to open the Clear Creek 2nd Outlet Gates this evening, and they will remain open until the threat for flooding has ended

[> Visit the District's Tropical Weather Center](#)

Current News

2012 News Archive

- [December 17, 2012](#)
- [November 26, 2012](#)
- [October 30, 2012](#)
- [October 25, 2012](#)
- [September 20, 2012](#)
- [September 17, 2012](#)
- [August 16, 2012](#)
- [August 1, 2012](#)
- [July 14, 2012](#)
- [July 9, 2012](#)
- [June 25, 2012](#)
- [May 29, 2012](#)
- [May 24, 2012](#)
- [May 15, 2012](#)
- [May 14, 2012](#)
- [May 10, 2012](#)
- [April 19, 2012](#)
- [April 19, 2012](#)
- [April 9, 2012](#)
- [April 9, 2012](#)
- [March 15, 2012](#)
- [March 8, 2012](#)
- [February 29, 2012](#)
- [February 16, 2012](#)

2011 News Archive

- [November 28, 2011](#)
- [November 03, 2011](#)
- [October 25, 2011](#)
- [September 28, 2011](#)
- [September 02, 2011](#)
- [September 01, 2011](#)
- [August 30, 2011](#)
- [August 23, 2011](#)
- [August 12, 2011](#)
- [August 08, 2011](#)
- [July 01, 2011](#)
- [June 20, 2011](#)
- [June 17, 2011](#)
- [May 26, 2011](#)
- [May 25, 2011](#)
- [May 23, 2011](#)
- [May 19, 2011](#)
- [May 9, 2011](#)
- [April 18, 2011](#)
- [April 6, 2011](#)
- [March 30, 2011](#)
- [February 14, 2011](#)
- [February 2, 2011](#)

2010 News Archive

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - [December 17, 2012](#)
 - [November 26, 2012](#)
 - [October 30, 2012](#)
 - [October 25, 2012](#)
 - [September 20, 2012](#)
 - [September 17, 2012](#)
 - [August 16, 2012](#)
 - [August 1, 2012](#)
 - [July 14, 2012](#)
 - [July 9, 2012](#)
 - [June 25, 2012](#)
 - [May 29, 2012](#)
 - [May 24, 2012](#)
 - [May 15, 2012](#)
 - [May 14, 2012](#)
 - [May 10, 2012](#)
 - [April 19, 2012](#)
 - [April 19, 2012](#)
 - [April 9, 2012](#)
 - [April 9, 2012](#)
 - [March 15, 2012](#)
 - [March 8, 2012](#)
 - [February 29, 2012](#)
 - [February 16, 2012](#)
- 2011 News Archive
 - [November 28, 2011](#)
 - [November 03, 2011](#)
 - [October 25, 2011](#)
 - [September 28, 2011](#)
 - [September 02, 2011](#)
 - [September 01, 2011](#)
 - [August 30, 2011](#)
 - [August 23, 2011](#)
 - [August 12, 2011](#)
 - [August 08, 2011](#)
 - [July 01, 2011](#)
 - [June 20, 2011](#)
 - [June 17, 2011](#)
 - [May 26, 2011](#)
 - [May 25, 2011](#)
 - [May 23, 2011](#)
 - [May 19, 2011](#)
 - [May 9, 2011](#)
 - [April 18, 2011](#)
 - [April 6, 2011](#)
 - [March 30, 2011](#)
 - [February 14, 2011](#)
 - [February 2, 2011](#)
- 2010 News Archive

The Harris County Flood Control District Begins One of the Largest Phases of Project Brays

July 8, 2010

One of the largest construction phases to reduce flooding from Brays Bayou began on June 21 when crews started widening the bayou from Holcombe Boulevard to Ardmore Street as part of the Harris County Flood Control District's "Project Brays." The 1.7-mile stretch, which will cut through the Texas Medical Center and Hermann Park, will take about a year and a half to complete and cost approximately \$10 million.

The \$489 million Project Brays is the largest effort of the Flood Control District and includes widening 21 miles of Brays Bayou, excavating four massive [detention basins](#) that collectively store several billion gallons of stormwater, and replacing or modifying 32 bridges.



One of the largest construction phases to reduce flooding from Brays Bayou began on June 21, 2010.

Not only is this stretch of the project impressive in scope, but it is taking place in parts of town that are both high-profile and sensitive. The Texas Medical Center has been documented as a high-traffic area in Houston not only for vehicles but for cyclists and pedestrians who use the trails along Brays Bayou for commuting and recreation. Hermann Park is one of the largest and most visited public parks in Houston and requires a gentle touch by crews widening the bayou, which bisects the park's southeast corner. As a result, Flood Control District officials have taken many precautions to reduce impacts to residents, commuters, park patrons and the environment.

In addition to implementing traffic control plans that will minimize disruption to motorists, the Flood Control District is requiring contractors to widen one side of the bayou at a time to keep [hike and bike trails](#) accessible throughout the construction process, said Raouf Farid, program manager for Project Brays. A recent survey conducted by Harris County and the City of Houston suggests that many cyclists use the trails along Brays Bayou to commute to work traveling an average of 7.7 miles each way.

Furthermore, rather than replacing the S.H. 288 Bridge to accommodate a wider channel, engineers were able to design a wider bayou under the bridge using 67,000 square feet of retaining walls – a more practical and less expensive alternative to reconstructing the bridge, Farid said. "We're still able to achieve the same [hydraulic](#) requirements in the bayou but at a lower cost and with far less disruptions to drivers," he added.

When construction crews reach Hermann Park, they will be working within a narrow area to limit the amount of disruption to the 445-acre park. Not only will the bayou be wider through the park, but it will appear more natural when the work is complete, Farid said. Rather than remain in its current trapezoidal shape with steep banks, the newly-widened bayou will have scalloped edges and gentler slopes above the concrete lining, and it will be more visible from North and South MacGregor drives. "Not only will this project improve the capacity of the bayou, it will be an aesthetic enhancement to the park," Farid said. "It's a win-win situation."

To make way for the channel widening project, the Flood Control District worked to carefully uproot approximate 75 quality trees between Holcombe and Ardmore and relocate them to other sections of the bayou and to Hermann Park, which lost many mature pines during Hurricane Ike in 2008. When construction is complete, the District plans to plant 1,400 [trees](#) and shrubs along the newly-widened banks.

To date, the District has completed widening Brays Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to Lawndale Street, from Lawndale to Old Spanish Trail, from Calhoun Road to Ardmore, from Holcombe to South Braeswood Boulevard, and from Old Westheimer Road to S.H. 6. Later this year the District will bid a stretch from South Braeswood to Bertner Avenue. Four additional channel segments remain.

The District has completed the [Arthur Storey](#) (Bellaire Boulevard and Beltway 8) and Old Westheimer (Old Westheimer Road and the Westpark Tollway) stormwater detention basins and is 65 percent complete with the Eldridge basin (Eldridge Road and the Westpark Tollway) and 45 percent complete with the [Willow Waterhole](#) (South Post Oak Road and Gasmer Drive) basin.

In addition, the District has completed two of 32 bridge replacements and modifications and is currently working on extending a pedestrian bridge near Cambridge Street as well as the South Braeswood Bridge.

Project Brays is expected to be complete in 2017, funding permitting.

[> Learn More about Project Brays](#)

[> Learn More about the Brays Bayou Watershed](#)

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

FEMA Selects Flood Control District to Participate in the Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) Delegation Program

July 21, 2010

The Harris County Flood Control District has been selected by FEMA to participate in the [Letter of Map Revision \(LOMR\)](#) Delegation Program.

[> View/Download LOMR Delegation Notice \(PDF, 548KB\)](#)

Submittals will now be reviewed locally by the District instead of FEMA.

The official start date is September 1, 2010

Benefits to the Local Community

1. Local management of models/supporting data and floodplain maps
2. Knowledge of local area issues and projects
3. Coordination of adjacent active [CLOMRs](#) and [LOMRs](#)

Questions and submittals should be directed to:

LOMR Delegation Program Administrator
Planning Department
Harris County Flood Control District
9900 Northwest Freeway
Houston, TX 77092

Phone: 713-684-4009

Users may also [e-mail the District with questions or comments](#).

Please include **ATTN: LOMR Delegation Program Administrator** in the subject field.

The e-mail address included in the [PDF of this announcement](#) is also acceptable.

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - [December 17, 2012](#)
 - [November 26, 2012](#)
 - [October 30, 2012](#)
 - [October 25, 2012](#)
 - [September 20, 2012](#)
 - [September 17, 2012](#)
 - [August 16, 2012](#)
 - [August 1, 2012](#)
 - [July 14, 2012](#)
 - [July 9, 2012](#)
 - [June 25, 2012](#)
 - [May 29, 2012](#)
 - [May 24, 2012](#)
 - [May 15, 2012](#)
 - [May 14, 2012](#)
 - [May 10, 2012](#)
 - [April 19, 2012](#)
 - [April 19, 2012](#)
 - [April 9, 2012](#)
 - [April 9, 2012](#)
 - [March 15, 2012](#)
 - [March 8, 2012](#)
 - [February 29, 2012](#)
 - [February 16, 2012](#)
- 2011 News Archive
 - [November 28, 2011](#)
 - [November 03, 2011](#)
 - [October 25, 2011](#)
 - [September 28, 2011](#)
 - [September 02, 2011](#)
 - [September 01, 2011](#)
 - [August 30, 2011](#)
 - [August 23, 2011](#)
 - [August 12, 2011](#)
 - [August 08, 2011](#)
 - [July 01, 2011](#)
 - [June 20, 2011](#)
 - [June 17, 2011](#)
 - [May 26, 2011](#)
 - [May 25, 2011](#)
 - [May 23, 2011](#)
 - [May 19, 2011](#)
 - [May 9, 2011](#)
 - [April 18, 2011](#)
 - [April 6, 2011](#)
 - [March 30, 2011](#)
 - [February 14, 2011](#)
 - [February 2, 2011](#)
- 2010 News Archive

Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project: The End is Drawing Near

July 27, 2010

After widening and deepening Sims Bayou for the past two decades, crews have reached the final segment -- spanning from South Post Oak Road to Croquet Street (about 0.5 miles). This marks the beginning of the end of an 18-year and 19-mile long construction project. The Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project is the largest project in Harris County's history led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in terms of cost and the number of homes and businesses that will no longer be in the floodplain.



Starting from the Houston Ship Channel, more than 19 miles of bayou widening and deepening will be completed by 2012.

The \$379 million project includes more than 19 miles of bayou widening and deepening beginning at the Houston Ship Channel and extending upstream into the south central part of Harris County. The channel work is supplemented by three stormwater detention basins along Sims Bayou constructed by the Harris County Flood Control District using local funds. The basins, totaling 700 acres, collectively store about 582 million gallons of stormwater. The project also includes the replacement or modification of 20 bridges. When complete, the entire project will have removed the 1 percent (100-year) floodplain from approximately 35,000 houses and 2,000 commercial structures.

The project is ranked No. 6 as a National Priority Project (it's one of the largest flood-control projects in the nation), and it prompted a visit in 2008 from Lieutenant General Robert Van Antwerp, the Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the Corps -- a very rare occurrence.

One of the most unique aspects of the project is the innovative material used to armor the newly-widened slopes of the bayou. Instead of using solid concrete to stabilize the large bayou's banks, engineers used Articulated Concrete Blocks (ACBs), which resemble large, interlocking puzzle pieces with holes big enough to allow grass to grow through. Over time, grass and other vegetation will completely mask the blocks, providing a more environmentally-friendly habitat.

Another unique feature of the Sims project is the stormwater detention along the bayou near Scott Street and East Orem Drive. About 1.6 million cubic yards of the excavated material was used to build a 60-foot tall hill on site. This basin, which can store 325 million gallons of stormwater, has earned the nickname the "Hill at Sims." When standing on top of the hill, the site appears almost canyon-like, offering spectacular views of the Downtown Houston skyline.

The Sims project is expected to be complete in 2012.

[> Learn More about the Sims Bayou Watershed](#)

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Halls Bayou Erosion Repairs

October 4, 2010

The Harris County Flood Control District is completing an extensive repair project on Halls Bayou from Bertrand Street to just south of Mary Withers Park. An approximate 9,000-foot stretch of channel has been repaired as a result of severe erosion along the slope and toe (where the sides of the channel meet the bottom).

If left unchecked, erosion could undermine the integrity of the banks of Halls Bayou and affect its ability to move water downstream.



The work on this stretch of Halls Bayou not only includes erosion repair, but also the replacement of failed outfall pipes, concrete interceptors and the installation of riprap, or small rocks, to help protect the bayou from future erosion. Native grasses will be planted along the slope of the bayou after construction is complete to further armor the channel's banks.

"By repairing the eroded areas, the District is able to maintain the channel's carrying capacity and reduce the amount of soil and sediment that fall into it," said Heather Saucier, District spokeswoman.

Erosion along Halls Bayou also began to threaten an adjacent hike and bike trail near the north end of Mary Withers Park. The erosion-repair project helped to save the existing trail.

"Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soil quality and the conveyance of stormwater," Saucier explained. "In Harris County, soils are often sandy in texture and can easily slough off, especially from the rapid conveyance of stormwater."

The \$650,407 project began in March, and the construction phase is currently nearing completion. Turf establishment should begin in September, weather permitting.

The District oversees more than 2,500 miles of bayous and streams (about the distance from New York City to Los Angeles) and routinely performs maintenance projects to repair channels that have experienced erosion, slope failure and sediment buildup.

For more information about the District, visit hcfcd.org.

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Erosion Repairs on Lemm Gully

October 4, 2010

The Harris County Flood Control District has begun a project to repair erosion on parts of Lemm Gully, specifically from Cypresswood Drive to 1,100 feet downstream and from 1,450 feet upstream of Lockridge Drive to 2,000 feet downstream - a total project length of 4,650 feet.



After repair is complete, native grasses will be established along the slope to help prevent future erosion.

"Over time, Lemm Gully has experienced erosion along the slope, the bottom of the channel and the toe, which is where the side slopes meet the bottom of the channel," said Heather Saucier, District spokeswoman. "These issues are not uncommon, as channels in Harris County are particularly vulnerable to erosion because of the soil's soft, sandy nature. By repairing the erosion, the District can reduce the amount of soil and sediment that fall into the channel to help maintain its carrying capacity."

The project, which began mid-July, costs \$465,108 and is slated to end late-September, weather permitting. In addition, native grasses will be established along the slope of the channel after construction is complete to help prevent future erosion.

The District oversees more than 2,500 miles of bayous and streams (about the distance from New York City to Los Angeles) and routinely performs maintenance projects to repair channels that have experienced erosion, slope failure and sediment buildup.

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- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Storm Sewer Replacement at Shoreacres Circle

October 4, 2010

City of Shoreacres residents will see construction activity in the area beginning mid-October as the Harris County Flood Control District begins replacing the storm sewer system from Shoreacres Circle to Galveston Bay, a project approximately 510 feet in length.



Storm sewers are maintained by local cities or municipalities, but this storm sewer in Shoreacres is an exception to the rule.

The area has experienced sinkholes caused by the existing 42-inch reinforced concrete pipe storm sewer system that has reached the end of its design life and is separating at its joints. The removal and replacement of the system with a new 3-by 4-foot reinforced concrete box storm sewer system will resolve the sinkhole issue and maintain the system's carrying capacity.

"While the District generally maintains the open drainage system of Harris County, there are a few special exceptions where the District does maintain local, underground storm sewers," said Heather Saucier, District spokeswoman. "Most of the time storm sewers are maintained by local cities or municipalities, but this storm sewer in Shoreacres is an exception to the rule, and the District is responsible for its maintenance."

The \$109,508 project is slated to begin mid-October and last approximately 20 working days, weather permitting.

The District oversees more than 2,500 miles of bayous and streams (about the distance from New York City to Los Angeles) and routinely performs maintenance projects to repair drainage infrastructure that has experienced damage, erosion, slope failure and sediment buildup.

For more information about the District, visit hcfcd.org.

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Concrete Lining Replacement on Brickhouse Gully

October 4, 2010

Concrete Lining Replacement on Brickhouse Gully

The Harris County Flood Control District recently began replacing the concrete lining along Brickhouse Gully from 300-feet upstream of Mangum Road to the BNSF Rail Road, a total project length of 1,197 feet. This project is part of a larger undertaking that extends from Costa Rica Road downstream to where Brickhouse Gully joins White Oak Bayou in T.C. Jester Park, a total project length of 4,877 feet.



Repairing the concrete channel lining reduces the possibility of future concrete lining failures.

"The concrete lining began to separate from the banks after a heavy rain event in October 2002," said Heather Saucier, District spokeswoman. "Following that event, the District evaluated the integrity of the lining and began designing plans to move forward with repairs. Because of the large size of the channel and the length of the project, the District has been making repairs in phases."

The first project phase replaced the channel's concrete lining from the BNSF Rail Road downstream 1,439 feet to White Oak Bayou and was completed in 2006. The current project, which costs \$738,381, is the second phase of the repair and is slated to be complete in January 2011, weather permitting. A third project phase from Mangum Road to Costa Rica Road, about 2,011 feet, will begin after the current project is complete.

"By repairing the concrete channel lining, the District is able to maintain the channel's carrying capacity and reduce the possibility of future concrete lining failures," Saucier added.

The District oversees more than 2,500 miles of bayous and streams (about the distance from New York City to Los Angeles) and routinely performs maintenance projects to repair channels that have experienced erosion, slope failure and sediment buildup.

For more information about the District, visit hcfcd.org.

The Harris County Flood Control District to Participate in the Second Annual State of the Prairie Conference on Nov. 4, 2010

October 6, 2010

The Coastal Prairie Partnership will host its Second Annual State of the Prairie Conference on Nov. 4 at the Houston Zoo and will offer field trips to various prairie locations throughout the Houston area on Nov. 5. As one of the conference participants, the Harris County Flood Control District will join a host of other organizations from Texas, Louisiana, and the Midwest to discuss prairie conservation, restoration projects, techniques and best practices for educating the public on the important role prairies play in our ecosystem.

The coastal prairie of Texas and Louisiana is one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States, yet it still offers tremendous biodiversity. Prairies serve as much-needed grazing land, help store stormwater, provide recreational opportunities such as hiking, bird-watching and hunting, and help cool an increasingly urbanized landscape. Its long-term survival depends on increased protection and restoration and a broad public awareness and appreciation.

Registration is required to attend the State of the Prairie Conference. Additional conference information and registration information is available at www.coastalprairiepartnership.org.

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Clear Creek Erosion Repairs

October 11, 2010

The Harris County Flood Control District recently completed a maintenance project on a tributary of Turkey Creek and began a separate repair project on the Beamer Road Ditch (Mud Gully). Both projects, located in the Clear Creek watershed, are intended to repair erosion and to restore each channel's carrying capacity.



Before and after photos showing repairs on a tributary of Turkey Creek paralleling Grapewood Drive.

In August, the District began repairs on the entire length of the tributary of Turkey Creek paralleling Grapewood Drive in the Highland Meadows subdivision. The project was completed earlier this month.

"The repair work on the tributary included removing sediment and silt that built up over time along the bottom of the channel and affected the flow of stormwater," said Heather Saucier, District spokeswoman.

In addition to the silt removal project on the tributary, a larger effort has been underway on the Beamer Ditch (Mud Gully).

"The District is replacing the concrete lining along the Beamer Ditch at Beamer Road," explained Saucier. "The flow of stormwater through a channel can cause concrete lining to separate from the channel's banks over a long period of time."

Repairs to the Beamer Ditch include excavating and replacing areas of the slope's concrete paving. The work began in early July and is scheduled to be complete in November, weather permitting. The maintenance area extends from 250 feet upstream of Beamer Road to approximately 2,400 feet downstream of Beamer Road – a total project length of 2,650 feet. The project also includes removing silt in the channel at Hughes Road.

"We know area residents were especially pleased to see the District working on Beamer Ditch," added Saucier, "and the slope repairs will ensure that the integrity and carrying capacity of the ditch is maintained."

The District oversees more than 2,500 miles of bayous and streams (about the distance from Los Angeles to New York City) and routinely performs maintenance projects to repair channels that have experienced erosion, slope failure and sediment buildup.

For more information about the District, visit hcfcd.org.

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

Troop 44 Raises New Flags at Harris County Flood Control District

October 18, 2010

Boy Scout Troop 44, together with their scoutmaster and staff of the Harris County Flood Control District, recently said farewell to weathered U.S. and Texas flags at the Flood Control District's North Service Center at Beltway 8 and U.S. Highway 249. New flags were raised in their place, and the old flags were taken by Troop 44 for a proper retirement ceremony to take place later this fall.



"We work with various scouts throughout the year who are earning their Eagle Scout badges or conservation awards," said Heather Saucier, spokeswoman for the Flood Control District. "Our scouts provide a great service to the Flood Control District and to our community, and hopefully we're able to help them learn along the way."

Troop 44 Scouts Taylor Hanath-Culp, Diego Ruvalcaba, Clayton Marshall and Damian Wilkerson, and Scoutmaster Lance Wilkerson conducted a solemn flag lowering and raising ceremony. Troop 44 is located in the Sam Houston Area Council, Big Cypress District. The scouts attend various schools in the Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and streams with appropriate regard for community and natural values throughout Houston and Harris County. With more than 1,500 bayous and streams totaling approximately 2,500 miles in length, the Flood Control District accomplishes its mission by devising flood damage reduction plans, implementing the plans and maintaining its open channel drainage infrastructure and stormwater detention basins. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit hcfcd.org.

STUDENTS SOAK UP SCIENCE IN FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT'S "NATURAL CLASSROOM"

December 15, 2010

Peering through the cracks in a pier at the edge of a pond at the Harris County Flood Control District's North Service Center, several McDougle Elementary second-graders yelped with delight when they saw a frog swimming through the dark waters below.

The frog was one of several sightings McDougle students witnessed in their trek through the Flood Control District's "outdoor classroom" off State Highway 249 and Beltway 8 – located conveniently across the street from their school. They studied birds eating insects, made crayon rubbings of tree bark and rocks, and inspected wildflowers and fungus that thrive along a quarter-mile natural trail around the pond.

In the past five years, more than 1,000 McDougle students have crossed the street to explore the pond, stream and forested area that have come to serve as a natural setting for science experiments and hands-on field investigations. They learn about natural habitat, food chains, erosion and photosynthesis – many of the concepts that are a part of the state of Texas science curriculum and covered in the science portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

Since 2006, McDougle fifth-grade students' passing rates have jumped from 43 percent to almost 93.5 percent on the science TAKS. Their commended passing rates – those students who meet the highest performance level on TAKS – rose from 11 percent to almost 47 percent.

Jane Rau, Klein ISD instructional specialist, said the field trips to the Flood Control District's outdoor classroom are part of a variety of instructional strategies that have contributed to those remarkable improvements.

"The field trips give students a real-life connection to the concepts they are learning in the classroom," Rau said. "You can't beat that."

After McDougle opened in 2004, Rau approached the Flood Control District and asked if its foresters could help educate students about flooding and topics relating to vegetation management.

McDougle fifth-graders began making field trips to the Flood Control District outdoor classroom in spring 2006. Each April, foresters John Watson, Nic Griffin and Jeremy Webb use their lunch hour to help students learn how to observe living organisms, count tree rings and conduct erosion experiments.

McDougle Kindergarten students started examining butterflies and ladybugs in their natural element two years ago. Starting this year, first- through fourth-grade students are making field trips as well.

Karen Comeaux, the Flood Control District's Community Services Section Leader, said the partnership is mutually beneficial and an extremely successful example of multiple uses of the Flood Control District's facilities.

"Better educated young people mean better educated future adults regarding the environment and the advantages of green space in cities," Comeaux said. "The children are so excited to be outdoors in a controlled learning environment, and the looks on their faces are priceless."

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and streams with appropriate regard for community and natural values. The Flood Control District's Infrastructure Division supports the mission through the Community Services Section's promotional efforts of recreational and educational uses of Flood Control District property. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit hcfcd.org.

- Current News
- 2012 News Archive
 - December 17, 2012
 - November 26, 2012
 - October 30, 2012
 - October 25, 2012
 - September 20, 2012
 - September 17, 2012
 - August 16, 2012
 - August 1, 2012
 - July 14, 2012
 - July 9, 2012
 - June 25, 2012
 - May 29, 2012
 - May 24, 2012
 - May 15, 2012
 - May 14, 2012
 - May 10, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 19, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - April 9, 2012
 - March 15, 2012
 - March 8, 2012
 - February 29, 2012
 - February 16, 2012
- 2011 News Archive
 - November 28, 2011
 - November 03, 2011
 - October 25, 2011
 - September 28, 2011
 - September 02, 2011
 - September 01, 2011
 - August 30, 2011
 - August 23, 2011
 - August 12, 2011
 - August 08, 2011
 - July 01, 2011
 - June 20, 2011
 - June 17, 2011
 - May 26, 2011
 - May 25, 2011
 - May 23, 2011
 - May 19, 2011
 - May 9, 2011
 - April 18, 2011
 - April 6, 2011
 - March 30, 2011
 - February 14, 2011
 - February 2, 2011
- 2010 News Archive

FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT PROJECT SECURES STRETCH OF BAYOU AND HIKE-AND-BIKE TRAIL IN NORTH HOUSTON

December 15, 2010

The Harris County Flood Control District has wrapped up a \$650,407 project that restored a severely-eroded section of Halls Bayou that runs from Bertrand Street in north Houston to just south of Harris County Precinct 2's Mary Withers Park.

As part of the extensive project, a 1.7-mile (9,000-foot) stretch of Halls Bayou was repaired where the sides of the bayou meet the bottom.

If left unchecked, the erosion could have weakened the banks of the bayou and affected its ability to move water downstream.

Erosion along Halls Bayou was also threatening an adjacent hike-and-bike trail near the north end of Mary Withers Park. The erosion-repair project helped to save the existing trail.

Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soil quality and the continual flow of stormwater through the channel. In Harris County, soils are often sandy in texture and can easily wear down, particularly with a constant flow of water through the bayou.

"Erosion can pose problems for a bayou's stormwater-carrying capacity," said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman. "This project restores the bayou and allows it to function effectively."

Project work included the replacement of failed outfall pipes, concrete interceptors and the installation of riprap, or small rocks, to help protect the bayou from future erosion.

"This project will help reduce the amount of soil and sediment that fall into the bayou," Saucier said.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and streams with appropriate regard for community and natural values throughout Houston and Harris County. The Flood Control District oversees more than 1,500 bayous and streams totaling approximately 2,500 miles in length (about the distance from Los Angeles to New York City) and routinely performs maintenance projects to repair bayous and streams that have experienced erosion, slope failure and sediment buildup. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit hcfcd.org.

Current News

2012 News Archive

December 17, 2012

November 26, 2012

October 30, 2012

October 25, 2012

September 20, 2012

September 17, 2012

August 16, 2012

August 1, 2012

July 14, 2012

July 9, 2012

June 25, 2012

May 29, 2012

May 24, 2012

May 15, 2012

May 14, 2012

May 10, 2012

April 19, 2012

April 19, 2012

April 9, 2012

April 9, 2012

March 15, 2012

March 8, 2012

February 29, 2012

February 16, 2012

2011 News Archive

November 28, 2011

November 03, 2011

October 25, 2011

September 28, 2011

September 02, 2011

September 01, 2011

August 30, 2011

August 23, 2011

August 12, 2011

August 08, 2011

July 01, 2011

June 20, 2011

June 17, 2011

May 26, 2011

May 25, 2011

May 23, 2011

May 19, 2011

May 9, 2011

April 18, 2011

April 6, 2011

March 30, 2011

February 14, 2011

February 2, 2011

2010 News Archive