CLEAR BROOK HIGH SCHOOL JR. ROTC STUDENTS BRAVE FRIGID TEMPERATURES TO PLANT 1,600 TREE SEEDLINGS AT HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT TREE NURSERY SATURDAY

February 14, 2011
Seventeen Jr. ROTC students from Clear Creek Independent School District’s Clear Brook High School braved frigid temperatures and rolled up their sleeves to plant 1,600 tree seedlings at the Harris County Flood Control District’s eighth annual volunteer tree seeding potting event at the District’s South Service Center Tree Nursery, 5301 Almeda Genoa Road.

For economic reasons, the Flood Control District recently purchased 3,600 tree seedlings with no soil around the roots, which are delicate and subject to drying out if they are not potted soon after they are delivered to the tree nursery. The race was on Saturday to transfer as many of the seedlings as possible into pots.

Staff from the District’s Infrastructure Department potted the remainder of the seedlings.

The tree seedlings are now a viable part of the stock at the Flood Control District’s tree nursery, which provides trees for the District’s Tree Planting Program. The District plants trees because of their aesthetic value and, once they mature, trees greatly reduce the cost of maintaining bayous, streams and detention basins. Trees also help reduce the risk of erosion because their web-like root systems help anchor soil and protect the banks of channels and detention basins.

Karen Comeaux, the Flood Control District’s Community Services Section Leader, said the students’ potting efforts were phenomenal.

Comeaux said the Clear Brook Jr. ROTC group has participated in previous tree seedling potting events, and their repeat performances have lent them expertise.

“I believe it was their experience that enabled them to get the job done, even in frigid weather conditions,” Comeaux said. “Last year, some of the same students planted 1,100 seedlings. This year, the group planted 1,600 seedlings with the same number of students.”

“They were organized, energized and knew what to do,” she said.

Comeaux said the Clear Brook Jr. ROTC group has participated in previous tree seedling potting events, and their repeat performances have lent them expertise.

The students’ volunteer efforts also help to replenish the seedling stock at the Flood Control District’s tree nursery. The potted seedlings will grow throughout the summer, and new tree plantings will occur during planting season (typically October through March) on project sites throughout Harris County. On average, the District plants about 20,000 trees every year, making it the No. 2 tree-planting government agency in Harris County.

About the Harris County Flood Control District’s Tree Planting Program

The Flood Control District started planting trees on project sites in 2001.

As the Tree Planting Program gained momentum, the District exhausted its local tree seedling supply. The solution was the creation of a tree nursery at the South Service Center in 2003. Currently, there are about 6,000 trees in various stages of growth, many of which are hard to find, including bald cypress and water tupelo – water-loving trees that can thrive in wet conditions.

The District regularly partners with individuals and organizations to plant trees in appropriate places on District right-of-way. For more information on organizing a voluntary tree planting, contact the Community Services Section of the Property Management Department or go to http://www.hcfcd.org/trees.html.

The Flood Control District also regularly works to rescue trees that otherwise would be disrupted by bayou widening and stormwater detention projects by relocating them to other rights-of-way along bayous and detention basins. In recognition of these efforts, Trees for Houston presented the District with a 2010 Arbor Day Award.

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages while always considering the values of our community and the environment. The Flood Control 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. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit hcfcd.org.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT URGES ALL PROPERTY OWNERS TO HAVE FLOOD INSURANCE COVERAGE

Homeowner’s insurance policies do not guard against the risks and damages caused by flooding

March 30, 2011

Intense rains and tropical storms/hurricanes are common in our region during the spring and summer months. Because flooding is at the top of the list of Harris County’s natural disaster threats, the Harris County Flood Control District recommends that all property owners in Harris County have flood insurance.

Just an inch of water inside a home or business can cause thousands of dollars in damages. Many who have experienced flooding in the past did not realize until too late that flood insurance was not included in their standard homeowner’s policy. A separate flood insurance policy must be purchased to cover damages from flooding, including both contents and structure.

The fact is that all structures in Harris County are at risk for flooding to varying degrees because of the region’s relatively flat terrain, impermeable clay soils, vulnerability to tropical storms and hurricanes, and average annual rainfall of 48 inches (four feet). In fact, about half of all flooding events in Harris County occur outside a mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain.

Flood insurance is available for all homeowners but is typically required for structures located in a mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain with federally-backed mortgages. Though mortgaging institutions also have the authority to require flood insurance for structures located outside a mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain, not all of them do and many people are not aware that a homeowner’s insurance policy does not cover flood damage from rising, vagrant water. You don’t have to be in a mapped floodplain to flood in Harris County.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) - of which every community in Harris County is a member - underwrites flood insurance for the entire nation. Flood insurance is sold through private insurance companies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs or floodplain maps) help determine flood risk zones and associated rates for flood insurance policies.

FEMA’s Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Harris County show a structure’s flooding risks from a bayou, stream or other waterway overflowing its banks from a 1 percent (100-year) flood event and a 0.2 percent (500-year) flood event and from coastal flooding. Many property owners who find they are not located in a floodplain believe they do not need flood insurance, but that is not the case.

Residents and businesses can also flood from other scenarios not captured on floodplain maps. In many cases, flooding is caused by water flowing overland trying to reach bayous and streams. Flooding also occurs when floodwaters exceed the capacity of roadside ditches or underground storm sewers.

All of Harris County is at risk of flooding to varying degrees, and all homeowners should have flood insurance to protect their investments.

Contact your insurance agent for more information about purchasing flood insurance, or visit the National Flood Insurance Program at www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-888-379-9531.

Having flood insurance will not keep you from flooding, but it will help you recover.

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, hcfcd.org.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT PROJECT OPENS UP VIEW TO LITTLE WHITE OAK BAYOU

April 6, 2011

The Harris County Flood Control District has selectively cleared a dense wooded area and removed debris from a section of Little White Oak Bayou near Woodland Park in Houston’s Woodland Heights neighborhood. The vegetation was so thick that it obscured views of the bayou.

That section of Little White Oak Bayou runs through the city of Houston’s Woodland Park before joining White Oak Bayou to the south at the Interstate 45 and Interstate 10 intersection.

The Flood Control District removed invasive underbrush and trees and pruned trees with low-hanging limbs along Little White Oak Bayou from White Oak Drive 1,500 feet upstream through Woodland Park. Approximately 900 cubic yards of debris was removed from the bayou itself.

The Flood Control District performs selective clearing in order to prevent debris from falling into the bayou and possibly affecting the conveyance of stormwater. Other benefits of selective clearing include improved access to the bayou and a larger tree canopy, which increases shade and reduces the growth of undesirable species. The Flood Control District works to ensure that the most desirable plant and tree species remain in place so that native ecological areas have a chance to prosper.

Residents can now walk through the trees and enjoy clear views of the water as well as a variety of birds and woodland creatures.

Local residents say they are thrilled with the results.

"To see the bayou area open up is exhilarating," said Becky Houston, a Woodland Heights resident and president of the non-profit Friends of Woodland Park, Inc. "It was an impenetrable jungle before the Flood Control District cleared out the invasive species."

"Now we can access the bayou on both sides," Houston said. "The county has moved us forward a quantum leap."

Friends of Woodland Park and the Woodland Heights community have been eager to move forward with plans to revitalize Woodland Park and the Flood Control Project cleared the way for the next step, Houston said. The community’s vision included the removal of the invasive species near the bayou in order to create nature trails and other amenities, such as a canoe launch on Little White Oak Bayou.

Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman, said this is a prime example of various government and community groups joining forces to bring a shared vision to life.

Working with SWA Group Inc., residents developed the Woodland Park Revitalization Master Plan in 2009 and approached officials with Harris County Precinct 2, the Flood Control District and the city of Houston for assistance. With the strong level of public participation and support behind the plan, the selective clearing and debris removal project was born.

The city of Houston’s Public Works and Engineering and Maintenance Department provided the Flood Control District with heavy equipment that was particularly helpful during heavy clearing operations, and the city’s Parks and Recreation Department transported the debris that Flood Control District employees removed from the bayou.

“This was a cooperative partnership that resulted in a win-win situation for the public," Saucier said. "The Woodland Heights community is working hard to revitalize a wonderful asset in their neighborhood and we are thrilled to do our part to help move the effort along."

The Friends of Woodland Park has scheduled a “Spring Clean-Up” day on Saturday, April 9 at 9 a.m. For more information, visit the Friends of Woodland Park website at www.friendsofwoodlandpark.org or e-mail info@friendsofwoodlandpark.org.

Woodland Park - History

Woodland Park has a lively history. The Houston Electric Company announced plans to open the park, then named “Highland Park,” on 30 acres between Houston Avenue and the banks of Little White Oak Bayou in 1903. The park, which was the second in the city of Houston, celebrated its grand opening in July 1903 and soon boasted a restaurant and a dance pavilion that accommodated up to 1,000 people. A dam across Little White Oak Bayou created a large artificial lake to accommodate small motor boats, and Houston Electric built an extension to Houston’s streetcar system that featured a stop at the entrance of the park. Thousands flocked to the park because of music concerts, concessions, rides and boating. However, the lake is believed to have merged back into the bayou after a flooding event in the early 1900s.

The city of Houston purchased the park in 1911. The park’s name was changed to Woodland Park in 1914 after Woodland Heights residents successfully petitioned the city. In 1915, Houston’s first zoological collection started at the park with a pair of ostriches paid for by penny donations from Houston school children. A few years later the city’s Department of Public Parks built a shelter building and a swimming pool. Now the park is about 19.6 acres and has a community center, basketball court, tennis court, softball field, trail system and playground.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT AWARDS VOGEL CREEK PROJECT

April 18, 2011

The Harris County Flood Control District is moving forward with a project that will remove sediment and repair eroded sections of a one-mile stretch of Vogel Creek in northwest Houston.

The Flood Control District awarded the $397,590 contract to N & Z Contracting, Inc. in early April. Work will start this summer.

For three months "spot" repairs will be made in various locations along the creek between Arcliffe Drive and West Mount Houston Road.

The Inwood Forest neighborhood, Paradise North Cemetery and Aldine Independent School District's Dwight D. Eisenhower High School's athletic fields border the creek in that area.

Sediment deposited in the creek's bottom along that stretch will be removed so that the channel's conveyance capacity is restored.

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

If left unchecked, the banks of Vogel Creek will continue to erode and affect its ability to move water downstream. The project will reduce the amount of soil and sediment that fall into the creek and allow it to function effectively.

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 creek.

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STUDENTS WITNESS SCIENCE TEST CONCEPTS IN REAL TIME AT HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT’S “OUTDOOR CLASSROOM”

May 9, 2011

Science concepts sprang to life for McDougle Elementary fifth-graders recently at the "outdoor classroom" at the Harris County Flood Control District’s North Service Center.

The open-air instruction came in handy when those fifth-grade students took the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) April 28. McDougle Elementary teachers said the time students spent at the Flood Control District’s outdoor classroom served as an important review session for the TAKS.

McDougle fifth-graders got up close and personal with aquatic creatures that call the Flood Control District’s stormwater detention basin home. They analyzed the rate at which soil eroded when water was poured down a hill at the basin’s edge. They counted tree rings on various stump “seats” in the outdoor classroom located in a cool clearing along the half-mile trail that winds through the District’s property.

Jane Rau, Klein Independent School District instructional specialist, tag-teamed with Flood Control District foresters John Watson and Nic Griffin in creatively instructing students 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 TAKS.

“This really helps get them prepared for the test,” said Rau. “They see a whole new world that they would not normally see.”

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, Rau said.

Rau added that 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.

In the past five years, more than 1,000 McDougle students – kindergarten through fifth grade- 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.

“It’s never just one thing that makes a difference in these outdoor learning sessions,” said Karen Correaux, the Flood Control District’s Community Services Section Leader. “The various lessons combined with the natural setting allow students to better connect with what they are learning in school. That has a positive impact on their science education.”

When planning the construction of the North Service Center, located off State Highway 249 and Beltway 8, District officials incorporated natural design elements in the building design, landscaping and stormwater detention plans. For example, the 4.85 acre-feet stormwater detention basin resembles a pond with an observation deck and the half-mile trail snakes through a 10-acre wooded area adjacent to the North Service Center’s conference/meeting facility.

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. 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.
Tropical Storm Allison’s 10-Year Anniversary is June 5

Harris County Flood Control District Reflects on Milestones Achieved After the Storm

May 19, 2011

June 5 marks the day that, 10 years ago in 2001, Tropical Storm Allison first made landfall and over the course of five days unleashed 35 inches of rain over parts of Houston and Harris County. Ten years later it is still known as the costliest tropical storm in U.S. history.

This year the Harris County Flood Control District recognizes the solemnity of Allison’s anniversary, but also marks a decade of building projects that have steadily reduced flooding risks and damages for residents in Harris County.

The Flood That Took Harris County by Storm

After flooding approximately 1,000 residences during its initial pass through the area June 5-7, 2001, Allison moved back out to the Gulf of Mexico and then returned June 8-9 to deliver its final blow to an already saturated region. In the storm’s wake were 22 fatalities, 95,000 damaged vehicles, 73,000 flooded residences, 30,000 people stranded in shelters and $5 billion-plus in total property damages.

Federal, state and local relief agencies, law enforcement officials, emergency medical services personnel and thousands of volunteers worked tirelessly to help people recover from the unprecedented storm. Not too much later, another type of recovery effort began. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Flood Control District took advantage of brand new technology developed by NASA to produce new Flood Insurance Rate Maps for all 22 watersheds of Harris County. The multi-year effort was called the Tropical Storm Allison Recovery Project.

Milestones That Have Made a Difference

Cutting-edge technology known as Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) was used to our topography and determine in greater detail the boundaries of the 1 percent (100-year), 0.2 percent (500-year) and coastal floodplains. Floodplains show structures’ risks for flooding from bayous and creeks overflowing during certain rainfall events and flooding from storm surge. The FIRMs were officially adopted by FEMA in 2007.

FEMA and the District also implemented the Tropical Storm Allison Home Buyout Program. The program enabled homeowners whose homes are located deep in a floodplain and that repeatedly flood to move to higher ground. The Flood Control District purchased more than 2,400 flood-prone homes in partnership with FEMA for a total cost of approximately $240 million. The homes are demolished, and the remaining land serves as a natural floodplain.

Funding and the Capital Improvement Program

Coincidently, just prior to Tropical Storm Allison’s formation in the Gulf of Mexico, the Flood Control District entered into a partnership with Harris County to increase its funding from roughly $20 million a year to $150-$200 million a year. With increased funding levels, the Flood Control District has been able to build more flood damage reduction projects at a faster pace. These include widening and deepening bayous and tributaries, excavating large stormwater detention basins that safely store millions of gallons of stormwater, and maintaining more than 2,500 miles of open channel infrastructure.

Key capital projects include the $500 million Project Brays, the $379 million Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project and several projects on White Oak Bayou. The Flood Control District has partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on all three efforts, which serve to remove the floodplain from tens of thousands of homes and commercial structures and greatly reduce flooding for citizens living near these bayous.

- Project Brays includes widening 21 miles of Brays Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to Fondren Road and from Old Westheimer Road to State Highway 6, excavating four stormwater detention basins that when completed will hold the equivalent of seven “Astrodomes” of water, and replacing/modifying 32 bridges.
- The Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project includes widening and deepening of 19.3 miles of Sims Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to Crockett Street, just west of South Post Oak Road. The project is supplemented by three stormwater detention basins that were excavated using local funds. It also requires the replacement/modification of 20 bridges.
- The Flood Control District also has spent roughly $75 million excavating 10 stormwater detention basins along White Oak Bayou, widening the bayou from Cole Creek (near Tidwell Drive) to Beltway 8 and constructing the Jersey Village Channel, which carries 90 percent of White Oak Bayou’s flows around the city of Jersey Village during times of heavy rain.
- The Flood Control District has or is currently implementing projects in the following watersheds: Brays Bayou, Sims Bayou, White Oak Bayou, Buffalo Bayou, Greens Bayou, Cypress Creek, Spring Creek, Armand Bayou, Halls Bayou, Hunting Bayou, Goose Creek, San Jacinto River, Mason Creek, Vince Bayou, Spring Gully, Cedar Bayou and the Addicks Reservoir.

Since 2001, several significant rainfall events have challenged our bayous and creeks, though none have reached Tropical Storm Allison’s magnitude. If Allison were to occur again today, we would still experience flooding, of course, but less than we experienced during Allison because of the many projects that have been constructed in the last 10 years.

Looking Forward

The question has been raised throughout the past decade, “Can we prevent another Tropical Storm Allison?” No one can control or prevent a storm, and given our area’s flat topography and clay soils, there will be flooding in Houston and Harris County in the future. While government agencies, such as the Flood Control District, can build projects that reduce flooding risks and damages, residents should do their part and have flood insurance policies in place.

Nearly 65 percent of the area that flooded during Tropical Storm Allison was not in a mapped floodplain. As a result, many of the 73,000 residences that flooded were not protected with flood insurance, as many believe if they do not
live in a mapped floodplain they do not need flood insurance.

While FIRMs are good indicators of a structure’s risk of flooding from a bayou or creek overflowing during certain rainfall events, they do not show all flooding risks. The maps do not show flooding that can occur from roadside ditches and underground storm sewers exceeding their capacity. Furthermore, while Harris County has more than 2,500 miles of channel, only about 1,300 miles have been studied. So, if a home is located near an unstudied channel or stream, it may be located in a floodplain that has not yet been identified. In addition, FIRMs do not show flooding risks from storms greater than a 0.2 percent (500-year flood), such as Allison.

Just an inch of water inside a home or business can cause thousands of dollars in damages. Many who have experienced flooding in the past did not realize until too late that flood insurance was not included in their standard homeowners insurance policies.

Having flood insurance will not keep you from flooding, but it will help you recover. Contact your insurance agent for more information about purchasing flood insurance, or visit the National Flood Insurance Program at www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-888-379-9531.

About the Harris County Flood Control District
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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT IS READY FOR THE 2011 HURRICANE SEASON

Flood Control District Urges Residents to “Plan, Prepare and Protect Your Family”

May 23, 2011

June 1 marks the official start of the 2011 Hurricane Season, and Harris County residents should be prepared.

The Harris County Flood Control District is also preparing for hurricane season, which lasts six months from June through the end of November.

The Flood Control District’s Flood Watch team monitors water levels in Harris County’s bayous and creeks on a daily basis. The team is prepared to activate any time there is a threat of heavy rainfall, flooding, or a tropical storm or hurricane. The team coordinates extensively with the National Weather Service (NWS), Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (CHSEM), the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the news media and other organizations to communicate crucial information to the public. The team meets monthly to review the latest information, procedures and personnel schedules and will be holding an internal hurricane preparation drill in June.

The District also maintains 133 water level and rainfall gages strategically located near bayous and creeks throughout the county. The gages, which are regularly monitored by the Flood Watch team, transmit real-time information about where the heaviest rains are falling and where flooding is most likely. This reliable, real-time data is made available to other organizations, local officials and the public and is used to facilitate making decisions before, during and after storm events to reduce the risk of property damage, injuries and loss of life. The information is critical during tropical storms and hurricane events.

The District serves as a support agency to the NWS and CHSEM during tropical storms and hurricanes. When there is a threat of a tropical storm or hurricane in the Gulf, members of the Flood Watch team are typically deployed to the Greater Houston Transportation and Emergency Operations Center (Houston TranStar), which becomes the county’s primary communication hub. Before and during the storm, the district’s team works to provide the public with crucial and timely information through www.hcfcd.org and media communications.

After the storm, the District’s team documents high water marks in and near bayous and tributaries, storm surge high water marks along the coast and the approximate number of structures that were flooded. The information is compiled in post-event reports and relayed to the state of Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and local jurisdictions to aid in the disaster recovery process.

Throughout the year, District employees distribute information on hurricane awareness and preparedness through presentations made to resident and employee groups, at town hall meetings and at disaster preparedness workshops. All residents are encouraged to visit the District’s exhibit area at the Hurricane Workshop on Saturday, June 4 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Residents can also view and track potential storms using the Flood Control District’s online, interactive hurricane tracker at www.hcfcd.org/hurricanetracker.

Currently, residents can monitor local flooding conditions at www.hcoem.org/HCRainfall.aspx. By selecting a specific gage location on the map on this website, a person can check the amount of rain collected in that area during the past 24 hours as well as the changes in water levels of bayous and creeks. The Flood Control District will launch a new and enhanced Rainfall and StreamLevel Map this summer at www.harriscountyFWS.org.

On the home front, the District urges all residents to create and review family disaster preparedness plans; refresh and assemble hurricane preparedness kits; and keep a close watch over the forecasted paths of tropical storms and hurricanes headed toward the Gulf Coast region. And, don’t forget one very important item: flood insurance.

Flash back 10 years ago this month: Harris County residents were taken by surprise when Tropical Storm Allison dumped 36 inches of rain over Harris County in just five days. Nearly 65 percent of the area that flooded was not in a mapped floodplain on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Flood Insurance Rate Maps, or FIRMs. As a result, many of the 73,000 residences that flooded were not protected with flood protection, as many believe if they do not live in a mapped floodplain they do not need flood insurance.

While FIRMs are good indicators of a structure’s risk of flooding from a bayou or creek overflowing during certain rainfall events, they do not show all flooding risks. The maps do not show flooding that can occur from roadside ditches and underground storm sewers exceeding their capacity. Furthermore, while Harris County has more than 2,500 miles of channel, only about 1,300 miles have been studied. So, if a home is located near an unstudied channel or stream, it may be located in a floodplain that has not yet been identified. In addition, FIRMs do not show flooding risks from storms greater than a 0.2 percent (500-year flood), such as Allison.

Just an inch of water inside a home or business can cause thousands of dollars in damages. Many who have experienced flooding in the past did not realize until too late that flood insurance was not included in their standard homeowners insurance policies.

Having flood insurance will not keep you from flooding, but it will help you recover. For more information on flooding and flood insurance, visit the National Flood Insurance Program at www.floodsmart.gov or the Harris County Flood Control District at www.hcfcd.org.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT RELEASES COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE ON EVE OF 2011 HURRICANE SEASON

“A to Z” Guide Details Threats to Our Area and How to Prepare for the Storm

May 25, 2011
What is the difference between a tropical storm and a hurricane? Who needs to evacuate and when? What is a family disaster preparedness plan and what items should be included in a family emergency kit?

In preparation of the 2011 Hurricane Season, which starts June 1, the Harris County Flood Control District has released a comprehensive Hurricane Guide that pulls together a wide range of information about the anatomy of a hurricane and information about the history of some of nature’s most violent storms, the destructive forces they can unleash and how Harris County residents can prepare if a tropical storm or hurricane makes its way through the Gulf of Mexico and into our region.

Questions are answered, myths and facts of flooding are explored and valuable information is communicated in the Hurricane Guide, which is available at www.hcfcd.org/tropicalweather/hurricaneguide.html

Here is a sampling of essential information included in the guide:

- **The storm surge** produced by a hurricane is often the greatest threat to life and property. The rise in sea level caused by a storm surge can lead to severe flooding in coastal areas. Combined with intense waves, storm surge can damage roads, homes and other critical infrastructure and can severely erode beaches and coastal highways. The guide’s list of “Storm Surge Preparedness” tips recommends that all residents know their home’s elevation relative to sea level and that they have flood insurance because homeowners and wind storm insurance do not cover damages from storm surge and flooding.

- **It is estimated that on average a hurricane will produce 10 to 15 inches or more of rain after making landfall.** To roughly estimate the rainfall amount (in inches) expected from a tropical storm or hurricane, divide 100 by the speed of the storm’s forward motion. For example, a storm moving 8 mph: 100 ÷ 8 mph = 12.5 inches of rain.

- **There are five categories of hurricanes based on wind speed and potential property damage.** Tropical systems still can intensify or weaken unexpectedly prior to landfall, and you should always plan for one category higher than the storm being forecasted. The Hurricane Guide features the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, which details the range of wind speeds that determine a hurricane’s category and the potential damages associated with each storm category. Hurricane Ike, which made landfall in 2008 along the Galveston coastline, was a Category 2 storm.

The Hurricane Guide also includes important preparedness resources: a guide to creating a family disaster preparedness plan and information about what to do before, during and after a tropical storm or hurricane; a hurricane preparedness kit checklist; and a list of local resources that can help with preparation, information and recovery efforts.

For residents who want to track the progress of tropical storms and hurricanes, the Flood Control District has also developed an interactive hurricane tracker. The Hurricane Guide features a Quick Response (QR) code that when scanned by a mobile phone will download the hurricane tracker application, which will directly link to the hurricane tracker tool at www.hcfcd.org/hurricanetracker. You can also go online to access the tracker.

Currently, residents can monitor rainfall amounts and water elevations in the bayous at www.hcoem.org/HQRainfall.aspx. By selecting a specific gage location on the map on this website, a person can check the amount of rain collected in that area during the past 24 hours as well as the changes in water levels of bayous and creeks. The Flood Control District will launch a new and enhanced Rainfall and StreamLevel Map this summer at www.harriscountyFMS.org

District employees are distributing information on hurricane awareness and preparedness through presentations made to resident and employee groups, at town hall meetings and at disaster preparedness workshops. All residents are encouraged to visit the District’s exhibit area and pick up the new Hurricane Guide at the Hurricane Workshop on Saturday, June 4 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

**About the Harris County Flood Control District**

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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT SUPPORTS "NATIONAL DAY OF FAMILY PREPAREDNESS"

District Offers Guides for Preparedness Plans, Emergency Kit in on-line Tropical Weather Center

May 26, 2011

It is now the 2011 Hurricane Season and the Harris County Flood Control District urges all Harris County residents to prepare now and to stay prepared.

Hurricane Season starts June 1 and runs through November 30. That means Harris County residents should be prepared for a tropical storm or hurricane for a full six months, and with our region's relatively flat terrain, impermeable clay soils, and average annual rainfall of 48 inches (4 feet), it also makes good sense to be prepared for heavy rainfall year-round.

The Flood Control District's on-line Tropical Weather Center at www.hcfcd.org/tropicalweather/ has many tools to help individuals and families get prepared and stay prepared, including:

- A guide to creating, reviewing and updating a family disaster preparedness plan and hurricane preparedness kit.
- Information on what to do before, during and after a tropical storm or hurricane.
- A comprehensive Hurricane Guide that pulls together a wide range of information about the anatomy of a hurricane and information about the history of some of nature's most violent storms, the destructive forces they can unleash and how Harris County residents can prepare if a tropical storm or hurricane makes its way through the Gulf of Mexico and into our region. The Hurricane Guide is available at www.hcfcd.org/tropicalweather/hurricaneguide.html
- Information about the importance of having flood insurance. Because flooding is at the top of the list of Harris County's natural threats, the Flood Control District recommends that all property owners in Harris County have flood insurance.

For residents who want to track the progress of tropical storms and hurricanes, the Flood Control District has also developed an interactive hurricane tracker. The Hurricane Guide features a Quick Response (QR) code that when scanned by a mobile phone will download the hurricane tracker application, which will directly link to the hurricane tracker tool at www.hcfcd.org/hurricanetracker. You can also go online to access the tracker.

Currently, residents can monitor rainfall amounts and water elevations in the bayous at www.hcoem.org/HCRainfall.aspx. By selecting a specific gage location on the map on this website, a person can check the amount of rain collected in that area during the past 24 hours as well as the changes in water levels of bayous and creeks. The Flood Control District will launch a new and enhanced Rainfall and Stream Level Map this summer at www.harriscountyFWS.org

District employees are distributing information on hurricane awareness and preparedness through presentations made to resident and employee groups, at town hall meetings and at disaster preparedness workshops. All residents are encouraged to visit the District's exhibit area and pick up the new Hurricane Guide at the Hurricane Workshop on Saturday, June 4 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks with appropriate regard for community and natural values throughout Houston and Harris County. With more than 1,500 bayous and creeks 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 the infrastructure. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit www.hcfcd.org.
CLEAR CREEK OFFICIALS EXPLORE GATED STRUCTURE BETWEEN CLEAR LAKE AND GALVESTON BAY

Harris County Flood Control District's Annual Open House Aims to Foster Relationships with Local Partners

June 17, 2011

Representatives from various Bay Area and Clear Creek governmental entities and organizations spent the better part of the morning June 15 at a Harris County Flood Control District-hosted Open House exploring the 141-foot long gated structure located just west of State Highway 146 on a man-made channel connecting the waters of Clear Lake and Galveston Bay.

The Clear Creek Second Outlet Channel and Gated Structure drew more than 30 officials and guests from Galveston County; the cities of Brookside Village, Friendswood, League City, Webster and Seabrook; the Fort Bend County Drainage District; and where Clear Creek Memorial Park is located. A local park, the Clear Creek Second Outlet Channel and Gated Structure is a 15-foot deep, 1-mile long underwater channel that provides a second conduit for water flowing from Clear Lake to Galveston Bay when there are potential flooding conditions created by rainfall in the Clear Creek Watershed. The primary or “first” Channel Outlet is located just south of the Second Outlet Channel and remains open year-round.

The Flood Control District’s Flood Watch team monitors conditions in the Clear Creek Watershed to determine when to open the gated structure. Those conditions include:
- When Clear Lake’s elevation is above 3 feet and exceeds Galveston Bay’s elevation.
- When the Clear Lake elevation is higher than the Galveston Bay elevation by any amount, and a rise in the Clear Lake elevation is anticipated above 3 feet from rainfall exceeding 3 inches.
- Once per month to exercise gates, actuators and the generator.

While the gates are opened during times of heavy rain to relieve certain flooding conditions in Clear Lake, there are exceptions when they are left closed: when winds exceed or are forecasted by the National Weather Service (NWS) to exceed 55 mph, and when the Clear Lake or Galveston Bay water elevations are rising and anticipated to go above the height of surrounding land (about 8 feet).

The Flood Control District’s Flood Watch team utilizes rainfall and stage gages to estimate the predicted rise in lake level, actual water levels in the lake and upstream Clear Creek, and tide forecasts. With that information in hand, the Flood Watch leader assesses the situation and provides instructions to the gate operator.

The gated structure is not accessible to the public, but information about its status - open or closed - is available online at www.harriscountyFWS.org.

FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS

Even with the Clear Creek Second Channel Outlet and Gated Structure in place, no one can control or prevent a severe storm such as Tropical Storm Allison, which unleashed 35 inches of rain over parts of Houston and Harris County in June 2001. Given our area’s flat topography and clay soils, there is still a chance of flooding in Houston and Harris County in the future, and residents should do their part to protect their families and property by creating a family preparedness plan, purchasing flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program, and staying put during a flood unless your life is threatened. For more information on being “flood wise,” visit the Harris County Flood Control District’s website at http://www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare.html.

ABOUT THE CLEAR CREEK WATERSHED

The Clear Creek watershed is located in southern Harris County. The watershed encompasses portions of Harris, Galveston, Brazoria and Fort Bend counties; all or portions of 16 cities; and 5-drainage/flood control districts. Clear Creek flows from west to east through Clear Lake and into Galveston Bay. Armand Bayou is the largest tributary to Clear Creek and is a separate watershed. The Clear Creek watershed covers approximately 197 square miles and includes two primary streams on the Harris County side - Clear Creek and Turkey Creek. There are about 154 miles of open streams within the watershed on the Harris County side, including the primary streams and tributary channels.
About the Harris County Flood Control District

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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT LAUNCHES NEW FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM WEBSITE. RESIDENTS, OFFICIALS CAN MONITOR HARRIS COUNTY'S RAINFALL AND BAYOU LEVELS

June 20, 2011
The Harris County Flood Control District has launched a new Flood Warning System website at www.HarrisCountyFWS.org

The Flood Warning System draws information from a network of 133 gages that measure rainfall data and water levels in bayous and major streams throughout Harris County on a "round-the-clock" basis. The real-time information is available on the Flood Warning System website through a user-friendly interactive map.

"Knowing on a real-time basis the amount of rain our watersheds receive and the water levels in our bayous helps emergency management officials alert the public of potentially dangerous and life-threatening situations caused by flooding," said Heather Saucier, spokeswoman for the Flood Control District.

Residents can monitor bayou/stream levels near their homes, places of work and daily commute routes by inputting an address that will "zoom" the map to the nearest gage station location. The Flood Control District urges the public to utilize the website and the information it provides to prepare and take appropriate precautions during periods of heavy rain and flooding.

This website, which is best viewed using Internet Explorer version 8 or higher, Firefox or Chrome, was built upon a similar, previous website managed by the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and incorporates enhanced and new features. In addition to the address input feature, users can look up current and historical rainfall and stream levels on a county scale or at an individual gage location, can export that information to Excel, can overlay watersheds within Harris County onto the map feature, and can print information displayed on the screen.

The information is used by the Flood Control District and Harris County's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HCOHSEM) to inform the public of imminent and current flooding conditions along bayous and streams, and by the National Weather Service to assist in the issuing of flood watches and warnings.

HOW THE FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM WORKS
Real-time information from the 133 gages strategically located near bayous and streams throughout the county is transmitted to the Flood Control District's Flood Warning System team, which constantly monitors the information and works with public and local officials to advise the public and local officials of areas that are and could be affected by flooding.

The data-collecting sensors located within the gages report each time the water levels in bayous and streams rise or fall more than one-tenth of a foot.

Those sensors also collect rainfall data. When rainfall amounts reach a certain point - two-fifths of an inch of rain - the data is transmitted via radio frequency through a network to the Flood Control District's Flood Warning System.

In addition, some gages collect data on wind speed and direction, barometric pressure, air temperature, road temperature and humidity.

The real-time data is used to facilitate making decisions before, during and after storm events to reduce the risk of property damage, injuries and loss of life. The information is also critical during winter weather and hurricane events.

HISTORY OF THE FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM
The Harris County Flood Warning System launched in 1982 under the direction of the Harris County Flood Control District and included 13 gage stations. The system was first tested during Hurricane Alicia in 1983 and proved successful in supplying rainfall and stream level data that had previously not been available. In 1996 the Flood Warning System moved to Houston TranStar under the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HCOHSEM), which operated and maintained the gages until 2009 when the system was transferred back to the Flood Control District. The OCHSEM also operated and maintained the website until the new site was launched recently.

From 1983 to 2007, the number of gage stations increased more than tenfold from 13 to 133. The stations were strategically positioned across Harris County to maximize rainfall coverage and obtain water level information at critical high impact locations.

Today the gage network is part of a larger 650-gage network that gathers information from bayous and streams throughout the Gulf Coast region. Partners in the larger network include the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Harris County Toll Road Authority (HCTRA), cities of Houston, Sugar Land and Pearland, the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA), Trinity River Authority (TRA), the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County and Fort Bend County.

About the Harris County Flood Control District
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* The data presented on this mapping tool and website may be delayed by approximately 5 minutes.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT WINS PRSA HOUSTON’S INAUGURAL “GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS TEAM OF THE YEAR” AWARD

July 01, 2011

The Harris County Flood Control District won four awards at the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Houston’s 2011 PRSA Excalibur Awards Gala on June 23, including the inaugural “Government Communications Team of the Year” award. The Flood Control District also received three Gold Excalibur awards in the “Feature Release,” “Feature Story” and “Op-Ed/Bylined Article” categories. The Excalibur Awards for Excellence Program is an annual competition that honors outstanding professional accomplishments in the development and execution of comprehensive public relations programs and individual communications tactics and recognizes outstanding individual and team achievements.

“We were honored to be presented with PRSA Houston’s first Government Communications Team of the Year award and the three Gold Excalibur awards,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman. “The Flood Control District has worked diligently to increase communication efforts on all fronts, and we believe these awards reflect our dedication to keeping the public informed and educated about our agency and our area’s flooding risks.”

The Government Communications Team of the Year award recognizes work accomplished in 2010, which marked the start of a new era for the Flood Control District’s Communications Department.

At the beginning of 2010 the Communications Department was restructured with the goal of better serving and communicating with the community. The departmental team evaluated and updated goals and operational methods, brainstormed new ways to educate and communicate with the public and created new objectives and programs that help guide the Flood Control District in the pursuit of organizational goals. The team worked throughout the year to improve and provide consistent communications to its residents and stakeholders.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT PROJECT TO IMPROVE DRAINAGE DITCH IN THE GALLERIA AREA INSIDE WEST LOOP 610

Project Includes the Reconstruction of Westheimer and San Felipe Bridges

August 8, 2011

On Aug. 15, the Harris County Flood Control District will begin a $13.2 million capital improvement project that will rebuild and enclose a poorly-functioning drainage ditch and greatly improve the flow of stormwater in the Galleria area. The project spans from San Felipe Street to Richmond Avenue on the drainage ditch, which runs adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks just inside West Loop 610. The drainage ditch is formally identified by the Flood Control District as W129-00-00. (See adjacent map.)

The project will include the demolition and replacement of 50-year-old bridges that cross the drainage ditch at Westheimer Road and at San Felipe. It is not yet known when work on the Westheimer and San Felipe bridges will begin; however, the Flood Control District will announce the construction schedule when it becomes available. The bridge replacement projects will require traffic flow on the Westheimer bridge to be limited to one lane in each direction for up to a month, and all lanes on the San Felipe bridge to be closed for up to two weeks. The bridges will not be replaced at the same time. The Flood Control District will establish detour routes that will aid in the flow of traffic during the bridge projects. The City of Houston is contributing funds to the bridge projects.

Construction on the drainage ditch itself will begin on Aug. 15. The Flood Control District will rebuild and enclose the drainage ditch in dual 12-foot by 10-foot reinforced concrete boxes. The Flood Control District is committed to communicating information about the project to affected individuals and organizations so that citizens can make informed decisions to minimize inconvenience during construction.

In anticipation of the bridge closures, Flood Control District officials are meeting with local homeowners and civic associations, churches, schools, businesses, and transportation and emergency services providers to provide information about traffic detour plans and to answer questions. The District also will distribute traffic detour information to the media (Internet, print, radio and television) on an on-going basis.

For more information on the W129-00-00 project and the opportunity to sign up to receive regular email updates, please visit the W129-00-00 project webpage at www.hcfcd.org/W129, or call the Project Hotline, which is monitored daily, at 713-684-4040.

ABOUT THE W129-00-00 DRAINAGE DITCH

The W129-00-00 drainage ditch flows northward from Westpark Drive inside of West Loop 610 and runs parallel to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. It drains into Buffalo Bayou on the southern edge of the City of Houston’s Memorial Park. Along its approximately 2-mile route, W129-00-00 crosses under U.S. 59, Richmond Avenue, Westheimer Road and San Felipe Street, which all carry heavy loads of traffic between the Galleria area and downtown Houston. The drainage ditch is bordered by concentrated areas of residential and commercial development.

The Flood Control District has been maintaining the drainage ditch since the mid-1950s. The drainage ditch has exceeded its design life, and over time the slopes of W129-00-00 have experienced concrete failures and erosion. The right of way for the drainage ditch is restricted to a narrow 35-foot area, and that property is owned by Union Pacific Railroad and CenterPoint Energy.

The Flood Control District recognized the need for repairs and launched a three-phase reconstruction project in 2004. The first phase of the project consisted of replacing eroded sections of W129-00-00 between San Felipe and Buffalo Bayou. This $9.4 million project enclosed the drainage ditch with dual 12-foot by 10-foot reinforced concrete boxes and was completed in 2006.
The second phase began on Aug. 15 and focuses on the section of the drainage ditch from San Felipe to Richmond. The third phase will consist of similar work from Richmond to Westpark Drive. Final Design of the third phase is set to start in mid-to-late 2011, although construction has not yet been funded. When all three phases are complete, the structural integrity of the drainage infrastructure will be greatly improved, reducing the risk of flooding to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas.

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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT MAKES PROGRESS ON BRICKHOUSE GULLY PROJECT

August 12, 2011

The Harris County Flood Control District recently completed repair work on a section of Brickhouse Gully in northwest Houston and will launch work later this fall on an adjacent section of the gully that runs through the Mangum Manor neighborhood.

In May, the Flood Control District completed a $738,000 maintenance project on Brickhouse Gully that replaced failed concrete lining from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to 300 feet upstream of Mangum Road.

This week, the District awarded a $1.5 million contract to Menade, Inc. for the project’s third phase, which includes concrete lining replacement from 300 feet upstream of Mangum to 50 feet upstream of Costa Rica Road.

Heather Saucier, the Flood Control District’s spokeswoman, said that over time sections of concrete have failed and threatened the integrity of Brickhouse Gully. New concrete panels on the gully’s slopes will guard against the reoccurrence of slope failure, as the new concrete will be a uniform thickness with rebar instead of a thin wire mesh, and the slope paving will be tucked into a 3-foot trench at the top of the slope. This will prevent water from seeping under the paved area and causing voids.

In addition to these major infrastructure repairs, the Flood Control District continues to maintain a stormwater detention basin on Brickhouse Gully along U.S. 290 near West 43rd Street that was designed to provide additional stormwater storage for the Brickhouse Gully watershed and to reduce flooding risks downstream.

The Brickhouse Gully Stormwater Detention Basin holds 36 million gallons of stormwater, and provides water quality treatment for stormwater entering the basin from U.S. 290 and a section of the Oak Forest subdivision. In February, the Flood Control District planted 22 large trees rescued from construction project sites on Hunting Bayou and on Brays Bayou. Those trees were in addition to 600 trees and shrubs already planted around the stormwater detention basin.

ABOUT BRICKHOUSE GULLY

Brickhouse Gully is a 6.8-mile concrete-lined drainage channel that runs just west of Gessner Road downstream to its confluence with White Oak Bayou in the White Oak Bayou watershed. Approximately 11.6-square-miles of land in northwest Houston drains into Brickhouse Gully.

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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT WILL BEGIN HORSEPEN CREEK MAINTENANCE PROJECT

August 23, 2011

The Harris County Flood Control District will start work this month on a project that will restore a 3.25-mile section of Horsepen Creek from State Highway 6 to the Addicks Reservoir in west Harris County.

Harris County Commissioners Court recently approved the Flood Control District’s recommendation to award the Horsepen Creek project to general contractor Sprint, Sand & Clay, LLC for $1,097,725.

Work is scheduled to start in late August and will take about 140 days to complete depending on weather conditions. The District’s project includes the removal of sediment that has naturally accumulated in Horsepen Creek over the years.

“We are restoring the creek to its original carrying capacity not necessarily its original geometry,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman.

The District will also make spot erosion and pipe repairs to eroded sections of the creek’s side slopes in order to reduce the amount of soil and sediment that fall into the creek.

Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soil quality and the continual flow of stormwater through the creek that is exacerbated during times of high flows. If left unchecked, the banks of Horsepen Creek will continue to erode, filling the creek with sediments that affect its ability to move water downstream. Erosion of the banks can also prevent maintenance vehicles from accessing the right of way, which in turn affects the District’s ability to properly maintain the creek.

Neighborhoods bordering the creek within the project limits include the Hearthstone Community and Country Club, Bradford Colony, Charleston Colony, Jamestown Colony, Fairway West, Concord Bridge, Copperfield Place and a mobile home community.

In addition to and upstream of the Horsepen Creek maintenance project, the Flood Control District plans to complete construction on a 150-acre stormwater detention basin on Horsepen Creek near Barker-Cypress and West roads that is designed to provide flood damage reduction to areas downstream. The estimated $1.5 million capital project will go out for bid in September 2011 and work is expected to start in early 2012. The majority of the site has already been excavated through excavation and removal (E&R) agreements.

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HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT STARTS CONSTRUCTION ON NEXT PHASE OF ELDRIDGE STORMWATER DETENTION BASIN

Basin Habitat Supports a Variety of Birdlife

August 30, 2011

The Harris County Flood Control District recently started excavating a new section of the Eldridge Stormwater Detention Basin on Brays Bayou near the intersection of State Highway 6 and the Westpark Tollway in west Houston.

The Flood Control District awarded SRK-Canver Construction, L.P. a $6.3 million contract, which includes the removal of approximately 948,000 cubic yards of soil from the southeast segment of the Brays Bayou Stormwater Detention Basin. This is the eighth of 11 phases of construction, and when this segment is finished the stormwater detention basin will be 75 percent complete.

The Eldridge basin has 340 acres of usable greenspace for the nearby communities and when completed will hold 1.5 billion gallons of stormwater.

As part of the contract, crews will also repair eroded sections of Brays Bayou near Arthur Storey Park, which is located west of the Sam Houston Tollway and south of Bellaire Boulevard.

The work is expected to take one year to complete.

The Eldridge Stormwater Detention Basin is part of the roughly $500 million Brays Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, known as “Project Brays.” The federal project is a cooperative effort between the Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and includes the widening of 21 miles of Brays Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to Fondren Road and from Old Westheimer Road to State Highway 6, excavating four stormwater detention basins that when completed will hold the equivalent of seven “Astrodomes” of water, and replacing or modifying 32 bridges.

“The overall objective of Project Brays is to reduce the risk of flooding within the Brays Bayou watershed,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman.

Saucier said that while the primary goal of the Eldridge Stormwater Detention Basin project is to help reduce flooding risks for thousands of area residents and businesses, it has been designed by the Flood Control District to be environmentally friendly and has created habitat for wildlife.

Tamara Foster, a resident who lives near the Eldridge basin, said it has been fascinating to watch the eco-system develop over the past several years. She said she has spotted a surprising variety of birdlife on her evening walks around the basin’s edge, including a Mute Swan, Osprey, Crested Caracara, Pelican, ibis, Kingfisher, Great Blue Heron, Egret, Black-Bellied Whistling-Duck and a pair of Bald Eagles.

Foster said residents recently observed the migration of thousands of Bank Swallows in various locations around the Eldridge basin. She said the bird population is increasing as well as the number of people enjoying the area.

“I think the basin has been a fabulous addition to our community,” Foster said. “I am looking forward to seeing it develop further.”

About the Brays Bayou Watershed

Located in southwest Harris County, the Brays Bayou watershed covers approximately 128 square miles and drains stormwater from unincorporated areas of Harris County, as well as from communities within Bellaire, Houston, Southside Place, West University Place, Meadows Place and Missouri City.

The 31-mile Brays Bayou is the primary waterway in the watershed, originating west of Highway 6 and flowing east through many residential, commercial, institutional and industrial areas to its mouth, where it joins Buffalo Bayou at the Houston Ship Channel. Key landmarks along or near Brays Bayou include the East End, Texas Medical Center, Rice University, University of Houston, Texas Southern University, Reliant Park, Hermann Park and the Houston Zoo, Meyerland and West Houston.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

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Flood insurance coverage is a key component in a disaster preparedness plan

September 1, 2011

With weather experts and emergency preparedness officials closely monitoring a tropical system developing in the Gulf of Mexico, the Harris County Flood Control District urges all residents to review their hurricane preparation plans and be prepared to enact them if the system develops into a tropical storm or hurricane. The Flood Control District's on-line Tropical Weather Center at www.hcfcd.org/tropicalweather has many tools to help individuals and families get prepared and stay prepared, including:

- A guide to creating, reviewing and updating a family disaster preparedness plan and hurricane preparedness kit.
- Information on what to do before, during and after a tropical storm or hurricane.
- A regional Hurricane Evacuation Zip-Zone map for Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Matagorda counties.
- A comprehensive Hurricane Guide.
- An interactive hurricane tracker tool at www.hcfcd.org/hurricanetracker.
- Information about the importance of having flood insurance.

Even in the midst of a drought, flooding is at the top of the list of Harris County’s natural disaster threats.

Given our area’s flat topography and clay soils there is a chance of flooding in Houston and Harris County, and residents should do their part to protect their families and property by creating a family preparedness plan, purchasing flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program, and staying put where you are during a flood unless your life is threatened.

Just an inch of water inside a home or business can cause thousands of dollars in damages. Many who have experienced flooding in the past did not realize until too late that flood insurance was not included in their standard homeowner’s policy. A separate flood insurance policy must be purchased to cover damages from flooding, including both contents and structure.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) - of which every community in Harris County is a member - underwrites flood insurance for the entire nation. Flood insurance is sold through private insurance companies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs or floodplain maps) help determine flood risk zones and associated rates for flood insurance policies. Be aware that you don’t have to be in a mapped floodplain to flood in Harris County. In fact, about half of all flooding events in Harris County occur outside a mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain.

Residences and businesses can also flood from other scenarios not captured on floodplain maps. In many cases, flooding is caused by water flowing overland trying to reach bayous and streams. Flooding also occurs when floodwaters exceed the capacity of roadside ditches or underground storm sewers.

All of Harris County is at risk of flooding to varying degrees, and all homeowners should have flood insurance to protect their investments.

Contact your insurance agent for more information about purchasing flood insurance, or visit the National Flood Insurance Program at www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-888-379-9531.

For more information on being “flood wise,” visit the Harris County Flood Control District’s website at http://www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare.html

Having flood insurance will not keep you from flooding, but it will help you recover.

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Harris County Flood Control District and City of Houston Join Forces on the Project

September 2, 2011

This month construction will start on the Bretshire Stormwater Detention Basin project near Jensen Drive and U.S. 59, an area that has experienced repeated flood losses throughout the years.

The Harris County Flood Control District and City of Houston are partners in the project, which includes the construction of a 68-acre stormwater detention basin adjacent to Halls Bayou that, when completed, will hold approximately 167 million gallons of stormwater and reduce flooding risks for those who live along the bayou’s banks.

The City of Houston is funding and managing the basin’s construction on property owned by the Flood Control District. The District also funded project design work.

Sprint Sand & Clay, LLC was awarded the $4.7 million contract and will remove existing culverts, debris, trash and abandoned tires from the site and excavate approximately 825,000 cubic yards of soil. In addition, water quality features that will be constructed at the bottom of the basin will improve the quality of urban stormwater runoff before it is released into Halls Bayou.

The project will take approximately 400 calendar days to complete.

The District previously prepared the Bretshire basin site for excavation by removing utility poles and streets that were once part of a subdivision of homes that flooded frequently. Those homes were purchased by the District and all residents relocated out of the floodplain.

The Bretshire basin will be located between two parks – Harris County Precinct 2’s Mary Withers Park to the north and the City of Houston’s Shady Lanes Park to the south. The north side of the basin will be located in Harris County Precinct 2’s Bretshire Park, which currently features a pavilion and a segment of the Halls Bayou Hike and Bike Trail.

The Bretshire Stormwater Detention Basin project is one of three District projects to reduce flood risks and damages along Halls Bayou.

In 2008, the District completed a 112-acre stormwater detention basin along the bayou at the City of Houston’s Keith-Wiess Park on Aldine-Westfield Road. That basin can store 300 million gallons of water and resembles a natural valley with a lake. A Texas Parks and Wildlife grant funded the installation of a fishing pier and wetlands boardwalk within the basin along with hike-and-bike trails, soccer fields and a playground within the 500-acre park.

In addition to the Bretshire basin, the Flood Control District plans to excavate the 93-acre Hall Park Stormwater Detention Basin located downstream of U.S. 59 near Langley Street. That project is in the design phase.

“The three basins will hold stormwater that otherwise might flood homes and businesses,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman.

About Halls Bayou

The largest tributary of Greens Bayou, Halls Bayou is located in north central Harris County and flows through the City of Houston and unincorporated areas of Harris County. The 20-mile bayou flows east from a point just west of
Veterans-Memorial Drive to its confluence at Greens Bayou east of U.S. 59 at Brock Park. During Tropical Storm Allison, an estimated 13,000 residences flooded in the Halls Bayou watershed. The District is currently working on a study that will identify additional flood damage reduction projects for the watershed.

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The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages, with appropriate regard for community and natural values. With more than 1,500 bayous and creeks 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 the infrastructure. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit [www.hcfcd.org](http://www.hcfcd.org).
The Harris County Flood Control District’s New Flood Education Mapping Tool: What it can do for you

September 28, 2011
The Harris County Flood Control District recently launched a new tool to help Harris County residents gain knowledge about floodplains and their flooding risks – the Flood Education Mapping Tool at www.hcfcd.org. The mapping tool replaces the mapping tool formerly found on the Tropical Storm Allison Recovery Project (TSARP) website.

The Flood Education Mapping Tool builds on the interactive mapping tool created through TSARP, a multi-year, joint initiative spearheaded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Flood Control District in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Allison in 2001. TSARP produced a new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) or floodplain map that was adopted by Harris County, the city of Houston and the county’s 33 municipalities in 2007.

New Mapping Tool Has User-friendly Features
Since TSARP, members of Harris County’s real estate, engineering and governmental communities as well as residential and business property owners have used the mapping tool on the TSARP website as an educational source to learn the location of structures relative to the mapped 1 percent (100-year), 0.2 percent (500-year) and coastal floodplains.

“Having recently marked the 10-year anniversary of Tropical Storm Allison, the Flood Control District is launching a mapping tool with an updated look and new features,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman.

“Having served a valuable purpose for nearly a decade, the TSARP website has been retired with the launch of the Flood Education Mapping Tool.”

Some of the prominent new features of the Flood Education Mapping Tool include:

- Regular updates to mapped floodplains in Harris County as they are revised by FEMA
- An interactive legend with pop-up “tool tips” that help users get the most of out each legend item
- Easy map navigation
- Known ponding areas where stormwater typically collects when rainfall exceeds the capacity of a street’s drainage system or the land’s ability to drain

The Flood Education Mapping Tool features a glossary and frequently-asked questions that address topics about flooding risks, floodplains and flood insurance. It also contains updated information about TSARP.

While the floodplains shown on the new mapping tool are the floodplains delineated on the FEMA effective FIRM for Harris County, the mapping tool is not the effective FIRM. Residents are urged to visit FEMA’s Map Service Center at www.msc.fema.gov to view the effective FIRM and to contact an insurance agent or mortgage lender for an official floodplain determination.

Introducing the Floodplain Information Line
Complementary to this effort to provide the public with tools to better understand flooding risks, the Flood Control District also recently introduced the Floodplain Information Line at 713-684-4150.

The Floodplain Information Line provides answers in English and in Spanish to frequently asked questions about topics including:

- General floodplain information
- How to obtain an official FIRM
- How to obtain an official floodplain determination from official sources, such as mortgage lenders and insurance agents (floodplain determinations are not made by FEMA, the Flood Control District or by local floodplain administrators)
- Information on flood insurance and elevation certificates

About the Harris County Flood Control District
The mission of the Harris County Flood Control District is to provide flood damage reduction projects that work, with appropriate regard for community and natural values. The Flood Control District widens and deepens bayous and creeks, excavates large stormwater detention basins, implements voluntary home buyout programs and maintains more than 2,500 miles (about the distance from Los Angeles to New York City) of waterways.
Halls Ahead Open House

October 25, 2011

Important Meeting Announcement
The Harris County Flood Control District will host a public open house on Tuesday, Oct. 25, to provide information about “Halls Ahead,” an accelerated flood damage reduction study within the Halls Bayou watershed that will incorporate community needs and interests. The purpose of the open house is to inform the public about the study and solicit feedback. This is the first of three “Halls Ahead” public open houses that will occur in the next 12 months. Details for the “Halls Ahead” open house are below:

Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2011
MacArthur High School
4400 Aldine Mall Route Road, Houston, Texas 77039
6 - 8:30 p.m.

About the study
"Halls Ahead" is an accelerated flood damage reduction study by the Harris County Flood Control District within the Halls Bayou watershed. During a 12-month period that started in August 2011, a team of experts in fluvial geomorphology and in hydrology, urban designers, environmental scientists and civil engineers began creating a flood damage reduction plan that incorporates sustainable design principles and considers enhancement of the urban and natural environment. Public input is a critical part of creating a successful plan that identifies needs in the Halls Bayou watershed. The “Halls Ahead” study will accomplish two main objectives: The first objective is to identify flood damage reduction projects that can be designed and implemented as funding allows. The second objective is to identify opportunities to enhance the urban environment and provide neighborhood-friendly amenities, such as trails, parks and habitat restoration, that may be implemented through partnerships with community, civic or other organizations.

Meeting Details
Members of the public are invited to attend the open house anytime between 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. The same information will be presented throughout the duration of the open house. Displays relating to the study will be available for public viewing, and Flood Control District representatives and their consultants will be available to provide information and answer questions about “Halls Ahead.” No formal, oral presentation is planned, and all information will be provided in English and Spanish. All comments will be documented, reviewed and considered during the study.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT PROJECT FOCUSES ON FIVE HARRIS COUNTY DRAINAGE DITCHES

November 3, 2011

The Harris County Flood Control District will soon launch a maintenance project that will remove sediment from several drainage ditches in west and northwest Harris County. The sediment is being removed to facilitate the flow of stormwater.

Work is already under way on a section of the Langham Creek tributary in Cy-Fair formally known as U125-00-00 that runs from Hudson Oaks Drive in Copperfield’s Westcreek Village subdivision to its confluence with Langham Creek southeast of the Westgate subdivision.

When that project is complete, the Flood Control District will start work on the Barker Reservoir tributary in Katy formally identified as T103-01-01. Sediment will be removed from the north end of the drainage ditch at Highland Knolls Drive to a point located 1,400 feet downstream of North Lake Village Drive in the Cinco Ranch North Lake Village subdivision.

In mid- to late November, the Flood Control District will get started on two Dry Gully tributaries and one Little Cypress Creek tributary in northwest Harris County.

Sediment will be removed from the Dry Gully tributary formally identified by the Flood Control District as K133-03-00 from Landry Drive in the Memorial Chase subdivision south to its confluence with Dry Gully between Sunny Creek Drive in the Memorial Chase subdivision and Summer Point Drive in the Colony Creek Village subdivision. The ditch also flows through the Champion Springs Village subdivision.

The second Dry Gully ditch slated for maintenance is formally identified by the Flood Control District as K133-04-01 and flows between the Brentwood Lakes and Memorial Chase subdivisions parallel to Jan Glen Lane.

The Flood Control District will also remove sediment from a section of the Little Cypress Creek tributary formally known as L104-00-00 that runs between Grant and Louetta roads in the Fainwood subdivision.

“In addition to building flood damage reduction projects, it is important that we maintain Harris County’s extensive and complex drainage network,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman. “These drainage ditches branch off from our major bayous and creeks and play a vital role in capturing and moving stormwater away from our neighborhoods.”
WILLOW WATERHOLE STORMWATER DETENTION BASIN SERVES AS A STAGE FOR COMMUNITY EVENT

November 28, 2011

The Harris County Flood Control District’s Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin in southwest Houston is a shining example of a flood damage reduction project that is serving as a recreational hub for the surrounding community.

Recently, the south gazebo at the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin’s overlook off South Post Oak Road served as a stage for the Westbury High School Jazz Band, which entertained local residents at the first “Sunday in the Park.” The event was hosted by the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy, Westbury Area Improvement Corporation and Westbury Civic Club, and sponsored by the Brays Oaks Management District. Houston Independent School District Superintendent Terry Grier was recognized at the event for his leadership and support of the future expansion of the Westbury High School campus to the edge of Willow Waterhole basin.

“We strive to design our flood damage reduction projects for maximum functionality, but also to look beautiful and to serve as a community amenity,” said Heather Saucier, the Flood Control District’s spokeswoman. “Nothing pleases us more than to see the Willow Waterhole basin utilized for that purpose—to honor Terry Grier as an educational and community leader, to showcase the talents of the Westbury High School Jazz Band and to provide a gathering place for an enjoyable event courtesy of community organizations dedicated to the Willow Waterhole Greenway Project.”

Flood Control District officials were on hand to provide information about Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin, which is part of the Brays Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, known as “Project Brays.” The $500 million federal project is a cooperative effort between the Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and includes the widening of 21 miles of Brays Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to Fondren Road and from Old Westheimer Road to State Highway 6, excavating four stormwater detention basins that when completed will hold the equivalent of seven “Astrodomes” of water, and replacing or modifying 32 bridges.

One of those four stormwater detention basins is the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin - an interconnected set of six compartments on 280 acres near Willow Waterhole Bayou, South Main Street/U.S. Highway 90 A and South Post Oak Road. When completed the basin will hold approximately 600 million gallons of stormwater and offer 280 acres of greenspace.

The Willow Waterhole basin is being constructed to reduce flooding risks and damages in the Brays Bayou watershed and it has been designed by the Flood Control District to be environmentally friendly. Almost three of its six stormwater storage compartments have been excavated. The compartments retain a permanent pool of water year-round and they have been planted with thousands of specifically-chosen wetlands plants that attract many types of birds. The District has also planted thousands of trees and native plants.

In addition to hosting concerts at the Willow Waterhole basin, the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy and various local organizations are spearheading the Willow Waterhole Greenway Project, which is a local initiative to provide recreational and aesthetic amenities along the Willow Waterhole basin and bayou. Through a $750,000 Texas Parks and Wildlife grant, the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department was able to fund construction of the pavilion, walking paths and bridges, bike trails, playgrounds and picnic areas throughout the Willow Waterhole basin area. The amenities are designed to provide a place for families and neighbors to gather and enjoy.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages, with appropriate regard for community and natural values. With more than 1,500 bayous and creating totally approximately 2,500 miles in length, the Flood Control District accomplishes its mission by devising flood damage reduction plans, implementing the plans and maintaining the infrastructure. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit www.hcfcd.org.
The event was co-sponsored by the Texas Urban Forestry Council, Texas Forest Service and AgriLIFE Extension of Texas A&M System.

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
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 Almeda 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 6,000 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
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 seedings for potting. The potted seedlings will be grown for future plantings.](image)

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.](image)

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.
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
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 250,000 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 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
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 MacFarlance of Mentality Skateboards. Presented by Sun & Ski Sports. (giveaways and surprise skateboarding guests)

Lee and Joe Jamail 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](http://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.
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
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
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
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 Andmore 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.

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. 388 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 Andmore 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 Andmore, 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 segements 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
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.
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.

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
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 <a href="hcfcd.org">hcfcd.org</a>. 
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.

"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 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.

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

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.
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.

"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.
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.

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.
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.
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

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