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Vogel Creek Homeowner Association President's Meeting

January 25, 2005

Homeowner Association and Civic Club presidents in the Vogel Creek Project area were invited to attend a status briefing on January 25, 2005, at Living Word Fellowship Church. Attendees included representatives from Arbor Oaks HOA, Inwood Forest HOA, Inwood Forest Country Club and Near Northwest Management District. City councilmember Toni Lawrence attended as did a representative from Harris County Commissioner El Franco Lee's office.

[> View Presentation Materials](#)

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Vogel Creek Monthly Update

February 2005 Update

Phase II Excavation Project Long Creek Drive to Arncliffe Drive

The design of the Phase II Excavation Project from Long Creek Drive to Arncliffe Drive has been completed by CivilTech Engineering, Inc. and all necessary approvals required by the City of Houston to construct the project have been obtained.

The utility adjustment agreements with CenterPoint Electric and Gas and TimeWarner Cable for the Phase II Excavation Project were approved by Commissioners Court on February 8, 2005, and February 22, 2005, respectively. HCFCO finalized the agreement with SBC and will submit the agreement for approval on the March 8, 2005, Commissioners Court agenda.

Also on the March 8th Commissioners Court agenda will be a request for approval to advertise for bids for the construction of the Vogel Creek Phase II excavation project. The bids will be due on April 4, 2005.

Utility Adjustment Work

HCFCO anticipates the necessary utility adjustment work to be completed prior to the end of the bid and award process for the construction project, which is approximately 90 days.

Right-of-Way

The last residential property at 7635 Streamside was acquired at the end of January by HCFCO for the ultimate channel project. The existing structure will be demolished within approximately 60 days of the time we acquired the property.

The Harris County Right of Way Division has commenced acquisition on 16 tracts in which partial property is needed for the Vogel Creek project, including 8 tracts within Inwood Forest Golf Course. To date, three of the 16 tracts have been purchased by HCFCO.

Communication with Residents

Residents in the Vogel Creek project area received a project update via mail in early February. The handout materials were the same as those that were distributed at the January 25 HOA/Civic Club Presidents meeting.

The next HOA/Civic Club Presidents Meeting is tentatively scheduled to be on April 26, 2005. Location TBD.

Other

At the Jan. 25 meeting, Arbor Oaks residents inquired about a pump station potentially planned for their neighborhood. HCFCO has no plans to construct a pump station and verified with the City of Houston that they, too, have no such station planned for the Arbor Oaks subdivision at this time.

Additionally, HCFCO has determined that the metering or rain gauges available at www.hcoem.org are managed by the Harris County Office of Emergency Management. To inquire about specific gauges, please contact Jennifer Suter at 713-881-3137.

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Area Groups to Sponsor "Flood Control Begins at Home" Workshop

CONTACT:

Hana Ginzburg
713-664-4320
Ginzburg@hal-pc.org

OR

Mary Elen Whitworth
713-529-6443
Bpa@hic.net

February 7, 2005

On February 26th from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Bellaire, TX and area residents, along with urban planners, can learn how to be a part of the solution to area flooding problems by attending the **Flood Control Begins At Home** workshop. The workshop will be at the Bellaire Civic Center at 7008 South Rice Avenue. This event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be provided by Whole Foods in Bellaire. RSVPs are requested and may be sent to either contact above.

According to event organizer Hana Ginzburg, "There is much that can be done by both the citizens and cities of Bellaire and Houston to alleviate flooding. The flooding problem is not going to simply go away, and it is getting worse as more land is covered with impermeable surfaces. Effective ways for individual homeowners and urban planners to be part of the solution include promoting the absorption of water by plants and soils, creating stormwater detention ponds and rain gardens, and harvesting rainwater with cisterns for irrigation use."

The **Flood Control Begins At Home** workshop will feature practical presentations by land use design professionals Mindy Vanderford, Ph.D., Kevin Shanley, J. Kolenovsky, Kevin Topek, and Mark Bowen. Educational exhibits will include the Blackwood Educational Land Institute's rainwater cistern demonstration.

This workshop is a joint effort and is being sponsored by The City of Bellaire, the Bayou Preservation Association, Whole Foods Market in Bellaire, the Bellaire Garden Club, the Hana and Arthur Ginzburg Nature Discovery Center, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Harris County Flood Control District, Urban Harvest, the Native Plant Society of Texas and the Harris County Master Gardeners Association.



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Project Brays Brings Freshwater Tidal Marsh to Southeast Houston

 [View Press Release](#) (PDF, 324KB, 8 February 2005)

February 8, 2005

The Harris County Flood Control District recently finished the site preparations needed to begin construction on the [Freshwater Tidal Marsh project](#), which will focus on widening Brays Bayou at Mason Park. This undertaking is part of [Project Brays](#), an extensive flood damage reduction project designed to benefit thousands of residents and businesses along Brays Bayou.

The 3.5-acre Freshwater Tidal Marsh project is located at Mason Park, two miles north of the IH-610 and IH-45 interchange in southeast Houston. It will serve as a beneficial resource for Magnolia Park, Harrisburg, Klywood and other southeast Houston communities by creating a wetland that will catch stormwater runoff and improve water quality by removing pollutants entering Brays Bayou. In addition, it includes a gently-sloped freshwater marsh that will create a habitat for native plants and wildlife, also serving as an educational tool for the community.

"The Freshwater Tidal Marsh is an excellent example of how collaboration and partnerships bring about enhanced projects that benefit the surrounding community," said Mke Talbott, Director of the Harris County Flood Control District. "For instance, we are focusing on the flood damage reduction part of the project, while our partners are contributing the land, an intensive tree planting program and expertise on the development of the wetland by monitoring the water quality and plant life."

Project Partnership is Extensive

The District is primarily responsible for the overall engineering design and construction of the Freshwater Tidal Marsh project, which is scheduled for completion later this year. However, the marsh project is a collaboration between the District and many city, state and national organizations, both public and private, including the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Natural Legacy, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Reliant Energy, Texas Coastal Watershed Program (Texas Sea Grant), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The marsh project will create a gathering area for educational opportunities by offering an outdoor classroom space for teachers and students, and a site for a community mural about wetlands.



More about Project Brays

Project Brays is a cooperative effort between the District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designed to reduce the risk of flood damage for the thousands of residents and businesses along the 31-mile stretch of the Brays Bayou. In addition, Project Brays brings green space and recreational amenities to the Brays Bayou community. The project is one of the largest and most extensive to ever be managed by the District. To learn more about Project Brays, call the project hotline at 713-316-4820 or visit www.projectbrays.org.





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Vogel Creek Monthly Update

March 2005 Update

Phase II Excavation Project Long Creek Drive to Arncliffe Drive

As mentioned in early March, all utility adjustment agreements were secured from the utility companies and approved by Harris County Commissioners Court for the Phase II Excavation Project.

On March 8, HCFCF submitted and Commissioners Court approved, the advertisement of bids for the construction of the excavation project. Bids were received on April 4, 2005.

The utility work for the Phase II Excavation Project must be completed by the utility companies prior to the start of construction of the project. If all utility work has been completed, the project team estimates construction will begin toward the end of June 2005.

Utility Adjustment Work

The utility companies are commencing with work as follows: Purchase orders for CenterPoint (both gas and electric companies) were issued on Feb. 24 and they have 90 calendar days from the date they receive the purchase order to complete their work. Agreements with Time Warner Cable and SBC were approved by the Harris County Commissioners Court on February 22 and March 8 respectively. According to the agreements, Time Warner has 90 calendar days and SBC has 60 calendar days from the date they receive the purchase order to complete their work. A purchase order for Time Warner was delivered March 24; cable rerouting has begun and is anticipated to be completed within two weeks. The purchase order for SBC was received on April 5 and hand delivered to SBC to expedite the process. Each of the utility companies has indicated to us that they anticipate their work to be completed prior to the dates specified in the agreements.

We will be monitoring this progress very closely.

Right-of-Way

The last residential property at 7635 Streamside was demolished on March 10.

Additionally, Time Warner has recently rerouted the active cable system running through the Rosemeadow Town Homes property that the Flood Control District purchased. The Contractor is currently proceeding with the demolition of the structures on this property.

The Harris County Right of Way Division is in the process of acquiring 16 tracts in which partial property is needed for the Vogel Creek project, including 8 tracts located within the Inwood Forest Golf Course. To date, three of the 16 tracts have been purchased by HCFCF.

The Environmental Permit

The Flood Control District received the environmental permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers on March 5, 2005. Included erroneously in the permit was a Special Condition for Archeology. Since this provision was never discussed between the Flood Control District and the Corps, the Flood Control District requested that the Corps remove the Special Condition for Archeology. The Corps is currently processing the revision of this permit.

Bridges/Street Closures

CivilTech Engineering, Inc. submitted the necessary application to the City of Houston's Joint Referral Committee for the closing of Arncliffe Drive on March 31. A letter of support for the complete abandonment of Arncliffe bridge was obtained from Councilmember Toni Lawrence's office and included in the application.

Communication with Residents

The next HOA/Civic Club Presidents Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26, 2005, at 7 p.m. at the Inwood Forest Country Club in the Forest Room.

Additionally, prior to the start of construction on the Phase II Excavation Project, a post card notice will be sent to residents in the affected area.

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Mighty Tidy Continues to Make a Clean Sweep

April 21, 2005

The **Mighty Tidy**, a 21-foot, hot pink, trash-skimming vessel that can be seen in action along Buffalo Bayou, was featured in a **KHOU-TV 11** story on its continued success in removing tons of trash and debris from our local waterways.

Since it began service about two years ago, the Mighty Tidy has collected over 2,300 cubic yards of floating trash along a 16-mile stretch of Buffalo Bayou.

It's been so successful, a second Mighty Tidy could soon be brought into service.

[> View the entire KHOU-TV 11 news story](#)



To view [this news story](#), you must have Macromedia Flash Player installed on your computer. You can download the Flash Player on [Macromedia's Website](#).



Greens Bayou Wetlands Mitigation Bank Will Soon Have Additional Credits Available

May 20, 2005

The [Greens Bayou Wetlands Mitigation Bank](#), a 1,400-acre wetland project located in northeast Harris County and operated by the Harris County Flood Control District, will soon receive approval to offer new wetland mitigation credits from the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#). Over 100 additional credits will be offered within the Mitigation Bank - an inexpensive and simple wetland mitigation alternative - meaning easier accommodation for public and private projects that have unavoidable impacts to jurisdictional wetlands.

The new mitigation credits are to be located in a portion of the Mitigation Bank known as Subdivision B. This area collects, naturally treats, and manages stormwater runoff from the drainage area around Beltway 8. Prior to the construction of this project, the stormwater was collected in stormsewers and routed without storage, detention, or natural treatment directly into Greens Bayou. Now, the stormwater enters the system and is filtered through a series of ponds and marshes where various species of plants clean certain pollutants from the water. The treated stormwater is then used as a water source for created wetland habitats also within Subdivision B. Both the water quality treatment cells and the habitat marshes will be used as wetland mitigation credits.

Before the Corps of Engineers will allow wetland mitigation credits within each subdivision of the Mitigation Bank, the District must demonstrate that the subdivision has met a certain level of success. This ensures that the wetland systems are functioning at a high level and wetland vegetation is flourishing. The District has completed all of the required studies and the Corps of Engineers has visited the site to verify that Subdivision B has met this criteria.

The monies collected for wetland mitigation credits will fund reporting requirements and bank-related operations and maintenance to help ensure future success of this endeavor.

The District is excited about this innovative and unique project. The [Greens Bayou Wetlands Mitigation Bank](#) is only partially complete; there are plans for additional wetland habitat areas to be created in the future, as well as an educational facility onsite.

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Urban Stormwater Management Study to Begin Soon

Will Provide Valuable Insight For Public and Private Sector Alike

May 27, 2005

- Why does it flood so much around here?
- Why do some areas flood more than others?
- Why don't we build better drainage systems so the roads don't flood?
- Is new development doing its fair share to address flooding?
- Is the government doing enough to protect me and my property from flooding?
- Are public projects being designed the best way possible, with respect to drainage and flooding?

Questions like these are going to be explored through a new effort entitled the Urban Stormwater Management Study. This substantial study is being sponsored by the Harris County Flood Control District, the City of Houston, Harris County, and the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), with the District serving as the managing agency. Preliminary discussions and activities among the partners have begun, with work focusing on setting up a Study Management Committee and a Public Communications Management Committee, as well as solidifying the partnerships with an interlocal agreement. The Urban Stormwater Management Study will take approximately two years to complete.

The timing is right for such a study. With advances in technology, additional rainfall and streamgage records, the tools developed during the [Tropical Storm Allison Recovery Project \(www.tsarp.org\)](#), questions raised during the development of the District's updated [Policy, Criteria, and Procedure Manual](#), and public interest in the subject, an opportunity exists to improve the understanding of issues related to rainfall & stormwater runoff, development & mitigation, and flooding & drainage.

The Urban Stormwater Management Study will include two primary components. The first is a technical component, which will help us all gain a better understanding of natural and urban flooding and drainage systems - from when the rainfall hits the ground until it reaches Galveston Bay. Confirming and/or recommending changes to local stormwater management policy, regulations, and criteria, based on science and engineering, is a major portion of the technical component of this study. The technical component of this study will also help support [watershed](#) master plan updates, laying out and designing future land developments, and local governments' future capital improvement programs.

Public communications will be the other primary and equally important component of this study. The public's perceptions, concerns, and expectations regarding flooding and flood risks will be identified, which will help develop the technical scope of services, as well as help shape study recommendations. The study will also work toward increasing public awareness and understanding of flood risks and the work being done to lessen such risks.

The Urban Stormwater Management Study will successfully integrate input from the community, technical professionals, academia and government. While the District, the City of Houston, Harris County, and TXDOT are taking the lead in conducting this study, broader public interest and interaction in the study is crucial for ensuring an open and objective process. To this end, a Stakeholder Committee and a Government Entity Committee are being established to foster public participation, represent organizations and agencies, and to work closely with the study team throughout this effort.

More information will follow, and you are encouraged to get involved and stay informed as this important study progresses. A website for this study will soon be online, and in the meantime, check the District's website for any new information about the study.



Harris County Flood Control District Releases 2005 Interactive Tracking Chart

CONTACT(S):

Fred Garcia, P.E.
Director of Communications
Harris County Flood Control District
713-684-4000



[View press release \(PDF, 88KB, 29 June 2005\)](#)

June 29, 2005

In June 2005, the Harris County Flood Control District released its new 2005 interactive hurricane tracking chart. It's a robust, on-demand tracker that displays on users' computer screens and is also filled with valuable, educational content to keep citizens informed... and prepared.

Packed With Features

The full version 2005 Hurricane Tracking Chart includes:

- An automatic tracker, with new inset tracking map that displays the Atlantic Ocean and tracks storms from the coast of Africa
- Path projections, plus additional storm data, including speeds, coordinates, and more
- A printable tracking chart
- Interactive, animated historical storms
- Hurricane & flood safety info, including printable evacuation routes
- Downloads/PDFs
- Contact info & more!

Tracker Lite Too!

For users who do not wish to download the feature-packed full version of the tracker, there is a "Tracker Lite" web version that is viewable online. It tracks 2005 storms only, with live coordinate points and path projections.

"Once again, we're pleased to provide this free educational tool for Harris County citizens, and the interactive tracker is useful for citizens anywhere," said Mike Talbot, Director of the Harris County Flood Control District. "While we're not an emergency management agency, we want to leverage our ability to help educate and prepare local citizens to better cope with the dangers and seriousness of hurricanes and flooding."

For more information on flooding and the District's efforts to reduce flooding in Harris County, log on to www.hcfcfd.org.

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District Representatives Present Vogel Creek Project Status to Community Leaders

July 26, 2005

Homeowner Association and Civic Club presidents in the Vogel Creek Project area were invited to attend a status briefing on July 26, 2005, at Living Word Fellowship Church. Attendees included representatives from Arbor Oaks HOA, Inwood Forest HOA, Inwood Forest Community Improvement Association, Sheraton Oaks, Villas of Huntington Park, and the Near Northwest Management District. City of Houston Councilmember Toni Lawrence also attended.

About the Project

The [Vogel Creek Conveyance Improvement Project](#) is being implemented by the Harris County Flood Control District to reduce the risk of flooding from Vogel Creek. The project begins at White Oak Bayou and extends upstream about 8,300 feet to Arncliffe Drive.

[> Learn more about the Vogel Creek Conveyance Improvement Project](#)



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NOAA Increases 2005 Hurricane Projections

Full Report From NOAA.gov Website

www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2005/s2484.htm

August 2, 2005

A very active Atlantic hurricane season is underway, and with more storms projected, NOAA today increased the number of storms in its [2005 hurricane season outlook](#). NOAA expects an additional 11 to 14 tropical storms from August through November, with seven to nine becoming hurricanes, including three to five major hurricanes. In total, this season is likely to yield 18 to 21 tropical storms, with nine to 11 becoming hurricanes, including five to seven major hurricanes.

"The tropics are only going to get busier as we enter the peak of the season," said Brig. Gen. [David L. Johnson](#), USAF (Ret.), director of the [NOAA National Weather Service](#). "This may well be one of the most active Atlantic hurricane seasons on record, and will be the ninth above-normal Atlantic hurricane season in the last eleven years."

"Although we have already seen a record-setting seven tropical storms during June and July, much of the season's activity is still to come," said Gerry Bell, lead meteorologist on NOAA's Atlantic Hurricane Seasonal Outlook. The predicted high levels of activity during the remainder of the season are consistent with NOAA's pre-season outlook issued last spring, and are comparable to those seen during August to October of the very active 2003 and 2004 seasons.

[> See full report](#)

[> Learn more about Family Flood Preparedness](#)

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Harris County Flood Control District Statement Regarding Hurricane Rita

September 21, 2005

The Harris County Flood Control District is an engineering, construction and maintenance organization created to reduce flood risks for citizens living near primary drainage systems, such as creeks and bayous, in Harris County. Questions regarding evacuations, shelters and emergency preparedness are most appropriately answered by [your local Office of Emergency Management](#). However, Flood Control District officials are available to discuss [on-going projects](#), which include channel improvements, stormwater detention basins and buyouts that lessen the risk of flooding every day.

The District continuously inspects its drainage channels and detention basins, and there are no critical functional problems. The systems are ready for rainfall. The District has recently completed the latest round of [seasonal maintenance](#) (primarily mowing) of its channels and basins. Furthermore, significant progress on [major construction projects](#) is providing residents a level of protection greater than ever before. Since Tropical Storm Allison, more than [2,000 homes have been purchased](#) by the District, often with the help of [partnerships](#) with other government agencies, and families have moved to higher ground.

During Hurricane Rita, the District will be in communication with the [Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management](#), National Weather Service and other agencies to assist in assessing the status of the District's drainage facilities and potential flood levels.

Once the hurricane has passed, the District will assess the situation and take whatever steps are necessary to get the channels and detention basins ready for the next storm.

Members of the media may contact Heather Saucier at 713-684-4078 or 832-256-8697.

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Second Phase of Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin Underway

October 17, 2005

Construction on the second phase of the [Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin](#) began in October with plans for further excavation, in addition to linking the basin to the South Post Oak Road stormsewer, which ultimately connects to Brays Bayou. This phase marks an important step in the construction process by giving the basin a drainage outlet.

When completed, the total storage volume of the basin will be approximately 1,900 [acre-feet](#) - holding more than one Astrodome of water. The projected final completion date of the entire basin will be 2010. "Although the Willow Waterhole [detention basin](#) is not yet 100 percent complete, it is providing flood damage reduction benefits," said Heather Saucier, spokeswoman for the Harris County Flood Control District. "With each shovel of dirt removed from the site, risks of flooding decrease."



Willow Waterhole is part of the [Brays Bayou Flood Damage Reduction Project](#) (Project Brays), a [partnership](#) project between the Harris County Flood Control District and the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#). It includes 21 miles of channel widening and deepening, four regional stormwater detention basins (including Willow Waterhole) and the replacement and/or modification of 32 bridges.

[> Learn more about Project Brays](#)

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Mason Creek Extension Project is Completed

October 20, 2005

Residents living in Katy can look forward to improved drainage, as the Harris County Flood Control District recently completed a \$5.1 million project to extend Mason Creek and construct a stormwater [detention basin](#).

The Mason Creek Extension Project is designed to provide residents on the east side of Katy in Harris County functional infrastructure that reduces the risk of flooding while incorporating environmental features, including enhanced wildlife habitat, wetland areas, thousands of trees and improved [stormwater quality](#).



Mason Creek Extension and Detention Basin,
Near Completion

The project is a partnership between the District and the City of Katy. Construction on the project began in 2002 and ended last June. The project extended Mason Creek from its original end near Trotter Drive to the Katy Hockley Cutoff Road near Katy Park.

Stormwater Quality Features Bring Additional Benefits

The extension augments the area's existing roadside drainage system by providing better area-wide drainage and allowing roadside ditches to drain more quickly and efficiently. Water collected in the extension drains into a large stormwater detention basin, where three water quality ponds are specially designed to filter sediments and other impurities from the water before it enters the creek. All three ponds combined hold roughly 44 acre-feet of water.

"The District and Katy are pleased to help reduce flood risks and at the same time enhance the quality of stormwater in the area. Filtering sediments and other pollutants from stormwater provides a cleaner habitat for aquatic life and simultaneously maintains a channel's carrying capacity. It's a win-win situation," said Heather Saucier, spokeswoman for the District.

Trees Enhance Project Area

The District signed an inter-local agreement with Harris County Precinct 3 on Sept. 13 for the precinct to build park features on the entire project site. There also will be approximately 7,000 trees planted along the creek's extension and detention area.

> [See project overview exhibit](#) (JPG, 480KB, 10/20/05)



First Flood Control Engineer Honored With Memorial

December 9, 2005

To honor the first Flood Control Engineer of the Harris County Flood Control District, the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy and the District established a memorial Nov. 28 at the [Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin](#). The memorial, called the Jack Rafferty Gathering Area, consists of large granite "seating" blocks under a live oak tree and two plaques bearing his image, biography and historic flood control plan. It is located off Ricecrest just south of South Willow Drive.



Jack Rafferty Gathering Area at Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin. Biography display inset.

Jack Rafferty: Flood Control Engineer, Pioneering Leader

Rafferty (1896-1940), a pioneer in developing flood control projects, paved the way for continued efforts to spare millions of citizens from flooding. For many Houstonians, Rafferty's untimely death at age 44 brought feelings of personal loss. His compelling personality made him a natural leader and provided hope that the deadly, recurrent floods might subside.

Triple-Corridor Plan Was Precursor To Large-Scale Efforts

Rafferty devoted years developing what was called the Rafferty "triple-corridor" flood control plan, which outlined a system of canals and enlarged bayous to divert flood waters around the City of Houston, the Port of Houston and the Houston Ship Channel. The plan was devised in the aftermath of tremendously destructive floods in 1929 and in 1935 that crippled the port for months, caused millions of dollars in damages and loss of life. Rafferty's plan served as a precursor to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Buffalo Bayou Project Plan, which constructed the Addicks and Barker reservoirs in west Harris County.

Set the Stage for Today's Projects

Rafferty's legacy remains alive in current flood damage reduction projects, such as the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin, designed to temporarily store flood waters and lessen flood risks for those living in the area.

> [See Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin Exhibit](#)

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Initial Efforts Underway for Urban Stormwater Management Study

December 14, 2005

To expand the knowledge of flooding as it relates to interactive drainage systems throughout the area, a community study has been launched and funded by the Harris County Flood Control District, the City of Houston, Harris County and the Texas Department of Transportation. Goals of the Urban Stormwater Management Study include increasing understanding of flooding and drainage issues, improving how stormwater is managed among government entities, developing better public projects, and boosting the public's confidence and understanding of such issues.

Agreements Being Finalized, Technical Data Collection Begins

Currently, interlocal agreements between the partners are being finalized, while technical consultants already under contract are collecting and evaluating data and information. A Web-based collaboration site is also being developed and will be utilized by the project teams for the duration of the study.

Communications Component Vital to Success of Study

With the help of a communications consultant, a market-wide telephone survey is being prepared to gain additional insight into residents' opinions, concerns and current levels of understanding about flooding and related issues. An example of a question that will be asked is, "What changes or improvements do you believe should be made in order to improve drainage and reduce flooding in Houston and in Harris County?" Results of the survey will help officials determine the scope of technical efforts and the type of public education campaign to implement. In other words, is public perception a reality that would require a technical or regulatory change by some entity, or is public perception incorrect and in need of addressing through additional education?

The study should take about two years to complete and cost an estimated \$2.5 million, with approximately \$800,000 allocated toward public communications.

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District's Massive Tree Planting Efforts Are in Full Swing

December 15, 2005

Tripling the number of trees it has planted in the past, the Harris County Flood Control District is in the process of planting approximately 21,000 trees on various project sites. A newly-completed stormwater detention basin known as The Hill at [Sims Greenway](#), will receive the largest portion, approximately 10,000 trees, beginning this month. And after weeks of planting, the site of the [Mason Creek Extension Project](#) is now covered in nearly 7,000 native trees.

More than 3,000 other trees also will be planted along various channels and stormwater detention basins throughout the Harris County, including two basins along [White Oak Bayou](#) and another basin along [Armand Bayou](#). The newly-constructed [Freshwater Tidal Marsh at Mason Park](#), near the mouth of Brays Bayou, is set to receive 600-700 trees.



Newly planted trees at the stormwater detention basin that is part of the Mason Creek Extension Project.

Last year, the District planted 7,200 trees, which is more than five times the amount it planted the year before, making the District one of the largest and fastest-growing tree-planting organizations in the area.

Benefits From Large-scale Tree Plantings Are Numerous

Although the numbers 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. An established tree canopy can also discourage the spread of undesirable vegetation. 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 a drainage channel means greater storage for stormwater. Trees also improve air quality and aesthetics, and can even increase property values and energy conservation.

High Demand For Trees Puts The District in The Growing Business

Approximately 1.5 years ago, the District began its own temporary tree-growing nursery in south Harris County near Alameda-Genoa Road, prompted by a need greater than its suppliers could meet. Today, approximately 20,000 trees of 18 different species grow at the nursery - most of which will be used this planting season.

The District also receives trees from the Texas Forest Service and local suppliers. The typical planting season lasts from October through March.



District to Receive Up to \$20 Million in FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Funds

December 21, 2005

The Harris County Flood Control District has been approved to receive up to \$20 million from [FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation \(PDM\)](#) program to [purchase](#) hundreds of homes on a voluntary basis from Harris County residents who have a history of flooding.

Repetitive Loss Properties Are Priority For Funding

The District applied for grants on behalf of 251 homes throughout the county that are repetitive loss properties, insured by the [National Flood Insurance Program](#). Repetitive loss properties are defined as those with two or more insured losses greater than \$1,000 each within any 10-year period. The best candidates for the grant were homes on the NFIP's Pilot List, which tracks properties that have a history of four or five paid flood losses; or two paid flood losses within a 10-year period that equal or exceed the current value of the insured property; or have three or more paid losses that equal or exceed the current value of the insured property.

Homeowners are currently being contacted and asked if they wish to participate. Of the 251 identified candidates, 90 are located on the NFIP's Pilot List.

The District competed for \$255 million in funds nationwide to help relocate residents who wish to move to higher ground and will also contribute an additional \$6.4 million, or 25 percent of the cost in matching funds, as approved by Commissioner's Court on Nov. 22. This amount does not include relocation costs, also paid by the District.

Buyout is a Viable Flood Damage Reduction Tool

Voluntary [home buyout](#) is a [tool used by the District](#) to reduce residents' flooding risks. To date, the District, at times using monies from various FEMA grants, has purchased more than 2,000 homes located hopelessly deep in a floodplain. These are homes that will never flood again.

[> Learn more about the District's Home Buyout Program](#)

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Construction of Arthur Storey Park Stormwater Detention Basin More Than 90 Percent Complete

December 22, 2005

Construction on the [Arthur Storey Park Stormwater Detention Basin](#) is more than 90 percent complete. It can currently store 2,832 acre-feet of stormwater. When complete, its storage capacity will be 3,540 acre-feet - just less than the capacity of 2.5 Reliant Astrodomes.

Construction is currently in the 10th of 11 construction phases on this project. Phase 10 is expected to be completed in August 2006. It consists of completing the excavation of the basin, specifically some acreage recently acquired by the District adjacent to a Home Depot. The cost of phase 10 is just less than \$10 million.

Phase 11 includes the final grading of the site, planting of vegetation and trees and further increasing the basin's capacity by altering an adjacent tributary. The cost of phase 11 is just less than \$3 million. The District expects to seek bids for phase 11 in February 2006, and construction to begin in May 2006.

The estimated cost for the entire stormwater detention basin is \$49 million.



Project Brays is One of The Largest Projects In District History

The Arthur Storey Park Stormwater Detention Basin is one of four basins being excavated by the District as part of the [Brays Bayou Flood Damage Reduction Project \(Project Brays\)](#). Project Brays is a partnership between the District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with the District taking the lead on the project. The project includes 21 miles of channel widening and deepening, four stormwater detention basins ([Arthur Storey Park](#), [Willow Waterhole](#), [Old Westheimer Rd.](#) and [Eldridge](#)) and the replacement or modification of 32 bridges. The channel modifications begin at the Houston Ship Channel and end near Highway 6.

The cost of Project Brays is an estimated \$450 million, and the anticipated completion date is 2014.

The project's goal is to contain the 1% (100-year) floodplain within the bayou's banks, removing it from tens of thousands of structures (homes and businesses).

Status of Other Project Brays Activity

All four stormwater detention basins are currently undergoing excavation. In addition, the District is preparing to widen the channel from its mouth near the Houston Ship Channel upstream to Lawndale Street. The District also is completing construction of the [Freshwater Tidal Marsh Project at Mason Park](#) as a pilot program involving several other entities including the Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, the City of Houston and two local schools.

> [Learn more about Project Brays](#)