HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT PREPARES FOR HEAVY RAINFALL

January 08, 2013

Harris County Flood Control District meteorologist and engineers are monitoring the threat of heavy rainfall for Harris and surrounding counties forecast for Tuesday and Wednesday, January 8-9. The Flood Control District’s Flood Watch team is taking the following routine steps in advance of the storm:

- Coordinating with the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the National Weather Service and its West Gulf River Forecast Center
- Monitoring bayou levels
- Calibrating flood stage gages
- Fueling flood control fleet and work vehicles so that high water marks can be recorded and any debris jams as a result of high flows in the channels may be removed
- Preparing phone bank operations

The Flood Control District urges all residents to monitor rainfall and bayou water levels on its Harris County Regional Flood Warning System website at www.harriscountyfws.org. With the mobile application, residents can check conditions near their homes, places of work and daily commute routes on their mobile devices, anytime and anywhere.

REMINDERS: When faced with a flooding situation: STAY PUT wherever you are, unless your life is threatened or you are ordered to evacuate. DO NOT drive or walk into high water areas.

The Flood Control District has a “Family Flood Preparedness” center at http://www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare.html with helpful, printable resources, including a guide on how to create and implement a FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS PLAN, a FAMILY EMERGENCY KIT checklist and a “TURN AROUND, DON’T DROWN” brochure (developed by the National Weather Service). The Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has disaster preparedness resources and the latest information about conditions in Harris County at www.readyharris.org.

Residents are urged to report flooding by calling the Flood Control District at 713-684-4000.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY RAINFALL AND BAYOU LEVELS UPDATE

January 09, 2013

As of early morning Wednesday, Harris County’s creeks and bayous have performed well and handled rainfall amounts, which have ranged from ½-inch to 2 inches across the county since early Tuesday morning.

The Harris County Flood Control District’s Flood Watch team continues to monitor rainfall trends. The National Weather Service has issued a Flash Flood Watch for Harris County until midnight.

REMINDER: When faced with a flooding situation: STAY PUT wherever you are, unless your life is threatened or you are ordered to evacuate and do not drive or walk into high water areas.

The Flood Control District reports real-time rainfall and bayou water levels on its Harris County Flood Warning System website at www.harriscountyfws.org. Accessing the website with a mobile device allows residents to check conditions near their homes, places of work and daily commute routes anytime and anywhere.

The Flood Control District features a “Family Flood Preparedness” center at http://www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare.html with helpful, printable resources, including a guide on how to create and implement a FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS PLAN, a FAMILY EMERGENCY KIT checklist and a “TURN AROUND, DON’T DROWN” brochure (developed by the National Weather Service). The Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has disaster preparedness resources and the latest information about conditions in Harris County at www.readyharris.org.

Residents are urged to report flooding by calling the Flood Control District at 713-684-4000.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Harris County Flood Control District to Co-Sponsor Tree-Planting Events in 2013

Planting Trees Part of District's Commitment to Supporting Community and Natural Values

January 30, 2013

The Harris County Flood Control District will be participating in several tree-related special events along Harris County bayous, drainage channels and stormwater detention basins in early 2013. These events are in addition to the regular year-round maintenance activities that have made the Flood Control District the No. 2 governmental tree-planting agency in Harris County.

Mark your calendars:

On Saturday, February 2, the Flood Control District has invited nearby high schools to participate in its ninth annual tree seeding potting event at its South Service Center Tree Nursery, 5301 Almeda-Genoa Road. Student teams will receive expert training in proper potting techniques from Flood Control District foresters and then will vie to see which team can pot the most seedlings in the time allowed. The bare-root seedlings are acquired for the Flood Control District's Tree Planting Program from an East Texas vendor. After being potted, they will remain at the tree nursery and allowed to grow through the summer. They then will be replanted during the Flood Control District's planting season, typically October through March, on project sites across Harris County.

Since the Flood Control District's inaugural potting event in 2004, more than 500 area high school students have helped plant an average of 2,000 seedlings per year. The competition gets underway at 8 a.m.

On Saturday, February 9, tree-planting teams in professional, amateur and youth divisions will compete in the Houston Area Urban Forestry Council's 2013 Regional Tree Planting Competition. Organized by HAUFC and co-sponsored by the Flood Control District and the Texas Forest Service, this year’s regional event will take place on the banks of a stormwater detention basin in north Houston. Commonly known as the Elia Stormwater Detention Basin and formally identified as P500-12-00, this basin is located on Greens Bayou, east of Bis Boulevard and north of the North Sam Houston Tollway. The tree-planting site is across from the Aldine Independent School District’s new Gen. Benjamin Oliver Davis Jr. High School.

Hundreds of trees will be planted as part of the rain-or-shine competition, which begins at 9 a.m. If a team from the regional competition in Houston qualifies for State Placement, they will be awarded a trophy at an official State Arbor Day event in Bastrop in April 2013.

The news media is invited to cover both the seedling and tree-planting competitions. The Flood Control District will also provide press releases and photos with captions after the events. Please let us know if you are interested!

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

The Flood Control District started planting trees on project sites in 2001 to enhance capital improvement projects and as part of its routine maintenance program. Trees provide valuable benefits and support the Flood Control District’s mission by reducing erosion and creating a shade canopy that decreases maintenance costs, improves water quality and provides wildlife habitat.

In 2003, the Flood Control District created a tree nursery at the its South Service Center, to supplement the local tree supply and to ensure the availability of harder-to-find species – such as overcup oak and water tupelo – that thrive in wet conditions. Currently, the nursery houses about 6,000 trees in various stages of growth.

The Flood Control District plants an average of 20,000 trees per year along the banks of waterways and stormwater detention basins around Harris County – more than 160,000 since 2001. That number makes it the No. 2 governmental tree-planting agency in the county. The Flood Control District’s efforts to rescue and relocate trees that otherwise would be disrupted by bayou widening and stormwater detention projects won the District a 2010 Arbor Day Award from Trees for Houston, a privately funded organization that provides trees for public lands.

As part of its overall Tree Planting Program the Flood Control District works throughout the year with Boy Scout troops, conservation groups and other organizations that wish to expand Harris County’s canopy of native trees. The Flood Control District does NOT organize volunteer tree-planting events. It DOES encourage volunteer planting events throughout its extensive web of bayous, drainage channels and stormwater detention basins. Many of these sites include space for trails and parks, and could usually benefit from additional trees.

The Flood Control District will supply trees and suggest locations for a volunteer tree planting, if requested. District foresters also will offer guidance in the choice of tree species and in proper tree planting techniques.

Last November, for example, Trees For Houston planted 80 15-gallon cedar elm, live oak, burr oak and chinquapin oak at the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin on Willow Waterhole Bayou in southwest Houston. On March 9, the Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition also will plant 35 trees provided by the Flood Control District along Greens Bayou in the Greenspoint District.

And on January 5, Eagle Scout candidate Phillip Maynard organized a volunteer tree planting along a channel that drains into South Mayde Creek in west Harris County. With help from other members of his Troop 1001 in Katy, Maynard planted 25 cedar elm, live oak, burr oak, bald cypress and ash provided by the Flood Control District.

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.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
An upcoming Harris County Flood Control District maintenance project will restore the stability of the channel formally identified as HCFCD Unit E127-00-00. This map shows the project limits from the channel's confluence with White Oak Bayou upstream approximately 900 feet to Senate Avenue.

The Harris County Flood Control District will begin construction in March 2013 on a maintenance project along a channel in Jersey Village.

The project will span the channel formally identified as HCFCD Unit E127-00-00 from its confluence with White Oak Bayou upstream approximately 900 feet to Senate Avenue.

The maintenance project will repair erosion and replace damaged outfall pipes along E127-00-00 and install a drop structure at the confluence of White Oak Bayou and E127-00-00. A drop structure helps prevent erosion by controlling the energy and velocity of water passing through the channel. The overall goal of the project is to restore the channel's stability and improve its ability to convey stormwater. The project will also replace damaged concrete slope paving along White Oak Bayou.

An approximately $432,000 contract has been awarded to N&Z Contracting, Inc. for the maintenance project. Construction is expected to take about 60 working days, weather and schedule permitting.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
High School Volunteers Pot Seedlings at Harris County Flood Control District Tree Nursery

Seedlings Destined For Replanting at Flood Control District Sites Across Harris County

February 5, 2013

Twenty Jr. ROTC students from the Clear Creek Independent School District’s Clear Brook High School dug through a 6-foot-high mound of soil Feb. 2, in their quest to pot 1,700-plus tree seedlings for the Harris County Flood Control District.

The students were volunteers for the Flood Control District’s ninth annual seedling potting event, which took place at its South Service Center Tree Nursery, 5301 Almeda-Geneva Road. The goal of the event was to prepare the native seedlings for eventual replanting next fall as part of the Flood Control District’s Tree Planting Program.

The Flood Control District acquired the bare-root seedlings from a Texas grower. Buying the seedlings without soil around the roots is more cost effective, but the delicate seedlings are subject to dying out if they are not potted soon after delivery to the tree nursery.

Armed with shovels, the Clear Brook students spent more than three hours separating and carefully planting the seedlings in 5-gallon plastic containers. It was the fifth year Clear Brook High School’s Jr. ROTC program has helped with the seedling event.

“We put in a lot of hard work and got the job done fast!” said proud senior Keri Zombory, who has participated for the last three years.

Students like sophomore Cory Bell, who was volunteering at the seedling event for the first time, said it was also "a lot of fun."

“It builds character and it’s beneficial for the Flood Control District and our group,” Bell said.

Maj. Brent Brod, who led the Clear Brook students with the help of 1st Sgt. Angel Brito, said community service is an important part of the Junior ROTC program. “The students learn teamwork and leadership skills, and it’s part of giving back to the community."

The Clear Brook students’ volunteer efforts help replenish seedling stock at the Flood Control District’s tree nursery. The potted seedlings will grow there throughout the spring and summer, and will be planted on Flood Control District sites around the county during the 2013-14 planting season (typically October through March).

On average, the Flood Control District plants about 20,000 trees every year, making it the No. 2 tree-planting government agency in Harris County. Mature trees and their web of roots help reduce the risk of erosion in drainage channels. Trees also create a shade canopy that reduces mowing costs, provides wildlife habitat, and improves water quality by dissipating erosion-causing rainfall.

“We certainly appreciate Clear Brook High School’s hard work with our tree-planting program” said John Watson, the Flood Control District’s Facilities Maintenance Department Manager. “The seedling event helps ensure a healthy supply of trees for our project sites, and it gives the students a great opportunity to participate in promoting a greener Harris County."

Flood Control District foresters provided guidance in proper potting techniques at the event. Since the Flood Control District’s inaugural potting event in 2004, more than 500 area high school students have helped put an average of 2,000 seedlings per year.

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

The Harris County Flood Control District started planting trees on project sites in 2001 to enhance capital improvement projects and as part of its routine maintenance program. Since then, the Flood Control District has planted more than 100,000 trees along the banks of bayous, creeks and stormwater detention basins throughout Harris County. The
trees come from Texas growers and the Flood Control District's tree nursery, which was created in 2003 to supplement local vendors and to ensure a source for hard-to-find species – such as overcup oak and water tupelo – that thrive in wet conditions.

The nursery usually has 6,000-10,000 trees in various growth stages. After planting, the Flood Control District waters, mulches and fertilizes trees for a 2-year period while they establish their root systems. The Flood Control District currently maintains approximately 25,000 trees on 40 sites in Harris County.

The Flood Control District regularly partners with individuals and organizations to plant trees in appropriate places on District right-of-way. For more information on organizing a volunteer 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 excavation projects, by relocating them to other project sites along bayous and basins. In recognition of these efforts, Trees for Houston presented the District with a 2010 Arbor Day Award.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Harris County Flood Control District Begins County-Wide Maintenance Project

**Sediment Removal Planned for 10 Channels in Seven Watersheds**

February 7, 2013

The Harris County Flood Control District has begun a series of maintenance projects to remove sediment and restore the stormwater carrying capacity of 10 drainage channels in seven watersheds around Harris County.

These channels are located in the Clear Creek, Sims Bayou, Brays Bayou, White Oak Bayou, Vince Bayou, Greens Bayou and Barker Reservoir watersheds.

In November, Harris County Commissioners’ Court awarded a $527,960 contract to Complete Concrete to remove sediment that has accumulated over time in these channels. The contractor will use special equipment such as bobcats, skid-steer loaders and track hoes to perform the work.

The Flood Control District launched work on this maintenance project in January as a regular part of its mission. In addition to building flood damage reduction projects, the Flood Control District also mows and maintains an extensive network of bayous, creeks and drainage channels. Local drainage channels that branch off from major bayous and creeks play an important role in capturing and moving stormwater away from neighborhoods and commercial areas.

It should take about 160 working days to complete work at all sites, which include:

1. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit T101-03-00, that carries stormwater into Mason Creek, from Katy-Fort Bend Road to 1,000 feet downstream, just north of Interstate 10.

2. a. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit D124-00-00, that carries stormwater into Brays Bayou, from Harwin Drive to Wilcrest Drive in the Westchase area.

   b. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit D124-01-00, that carries stormwater into a tributary of Brays Bayou, from near Richmond Avenue to the Sam Houston Tollway (Beltway 8) feeder road in the Westchase area.

3. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit E141-00-00, that carries stormwater into White Oak Bayou, from West Road to 8,000 feet upstream, near the Arbor Vineyard and Maple Leaf Gardens neighborhoods east of the Sam Houston Tollway (Beltway 8).

4. A section of Greens Bayou, from Mills Road to the State Highway 249 feeder road, in the Willowbrook area. Greens Bayou is formally identified as HCFCD Unit P100-00-00.

5. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit C127-00-00 and commonly known as Swengel Ditch, that carries stormwater into Sims Bayou, from Merchant Road to South Acres Drive near Cullen Boulevard.

6. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit A120-03-00, that carries stormwater into Clear Creek, from Kirkwood Drive to Sabo Road in the Southbelt/Ellington area.

7. A section of a Clear Creek tributary, formally identified as HCFCD Unit A119-00-00 and commonly known as Turkey Creek, from south of Sage Glen Drive to Grapewood Drive, near the southwest corner of the Sam Houston Tollway (Beltway 8) and Interstate 45.

8. a. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit I100-01-00, that carries stormwater into Vince Bayou, near the intersection of Strawberry Road and Genoa Red Bluff Road. The work site includes the entire drainage channel.

   b. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit I100-02-00, that carries stormwater into Vince Bayou, near the intersection of Strawberry Road and Genoa Red Bluff Road. The work site includes the entire drainage channel.
ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Volunteer Teams Compete to Plant 1,300 Trees in 141 Minutes

Harris County Flood Control District Co-Sponsors Arbor Day Event at Stormwater Detention Basin on Greens Bayou

February 13, 2013

More than 130 volunteers planted 1,300 trees in less than 2 ½ hours February 9 at a stormwater detention basin in north Houston, as part of the Texas Urban Forestry Council's 2013 Arbor Day Tree Planting Competition. The event was sponsored by the Houston Area Urban Forestry Council, the Harris County Flood Control District and the Texas A&M Forest Service.

The Flood Control District provided pines, oaks, elms, bald cypress and other species for the competition, which took place at the Ella Stormwater Detention Basin on Greens Bayou, east of Ella Boulevard and north of the North Sam Houston Tollway. A dozen 11-member teams in professional, amateur and youth divisions competed to see which team could plant 100 trees in the shortest amount of time.

Winner in the professional category was BIO Landscape and Maintenance, with a blistering finish time of 17 minutes, 42 seconds. The Asplundh Tree Expert Company team was second, with a time of 36 minutes, 27 seconds. Third place went to Lewis Tree Company, with a time of 58 minutes, 48 seconds.

In the amateur category, a team from the Houston Alumni Chapter of Sam Houston State University came out on top with a time of 46 minutes. Second place went to the US Green Building Council team, with a time of one hour, 9 minutes and 26 seconds. Malachi Masonic Lodge #6, Team 1, was third, planting its 100 trees in one hour, 26 minutes and 30 seconds.

The Memorial High School Mustang Outreach Bunch (MOB) was the first and only student team, with a time of one hour, 11 minutes and 31 seconds.

For the competition, each 11-member team - 10 diggers and one captain - was assigned 100 trees in 5-gallon containers, a large mound of mulch, and a designated area. Teams worked against the clock to plant the trees, according to established guidelines for correct hole depth and size, proper mulching, and other factors. Only hand tools were allowed. Several of the teams, got into the spirit of competition with matching T-shirts, vests and - in the case of one group from the Houston Asian Junior Chamber of Commerce - hula skirts.

The newly planted trees now shade the bottom of what is formally identified as HCFCD Unit P500-12-00. This 12.5-acre stormwater detention basin site is across from the Aldine Independent School District's new Gen. Benjamin Oliver Davis, Jr. High School. Following the competition, the Flood Control District has plans to plant several hundred additional trees and shrubs at the bottom and along the slopes of the basin. The Flood Control District will maintain the trees for two years while they establish roots.

Trees support the Flood Control District's mission of maintaining Harris County's flood damage reduction infrastructure. Trees and their web of roots help reduce erosion and create a shade canopy that decreases maintenance costs, improves water quality and provides wildlife habitat. Trees at the bottom of basins - which are dry most of the time - do not significantly detract from the basins' capacity to hold stormwater.

The Ella Basin holds approximately 105.9 acre-feet or approximately 34.5 million gallons of stormwater that otherwise might flood homes and businesses located downstream along Greens Bayou.

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

The Flood Control District started planting trees on project sites in 2001 to enhance capital improvement projects and as part of its routine maintenance program. In 2003, the Flood Control District created a tree nursery at its South Service Center to supplement the local tree seedling supply and to ensure the availability of harder-to-find species - such as overcup oak and water tupelo - that thrive in wet conditions. Currently, the nursery houses about 6,000 trees in various stages of growth.
The Flood Control District plants an average of 20,000 trees per year along the banks of waterways and stormwater detention basins around Harris County - more than 160,000 since 2001. That number makes it the No. 2 governmental tree-planting agency in the county. The Flood Control District's efforts to rescue and relocate trees that otherwise would be disrupted by bayou widening and stormwater detention projects won the District a 2010 Arbor Day Award from Trees for Houston, a privately funded organization that provides trees for public lands.

As part of its overall Tree Planting Program the Flood Control District works throughout the year with Boy Scout troops, conservation groups and other organizations that wish to expand Harris County's canopy of native trees. The Flood Control District does NOT organize volunteer tree-planting events. It DOES encourage volunteer planting events throughout its extensive web of bayous, drainage channels and stormwater detention basins. Many of these sites include space for trails and parks, and usually could benefit from additional trees.

The Flood Control District will supply trees and suggest locations for a volunteer tree planting, if requested. District foresters also will offer guidance in the choice of tree species and in proper planting techniques. 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](http://www.hcfcd.org/trees.html).

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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).
Volunteers Needed Year-Round for Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network

Make Texas No. 1 in the 2013 National CoCoRaHS Cup!

February 27, 2013

The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) is a non-profit, community-based organization that measures rain, hail and snow across the United States. During the month of March, the network will conduct a nationwide campaign – the CoCoRaHS Cup – to recruit volunteers of all ages and backgrounds to act as backyard data collectors.

Last year, Texas was second behind only North Carolina in the CoCoRaHS Cup category of most new observer data collectors. Last year, Texas placed 2nd in the annual CoCoRaHS Cup, states compete in "traditional" and "per capita" categories. Last year, Texas placed 2nd in the "traditional" category, with 133 new volunteer observers recruited overall during the March campaign. But Texas

Volunteers for CoCoRaHS do not need a meteorology degree – just an interest in weather conditions and a desire to learn more about how weather impacts our region. Volunteers are asked to obtain an official CoCoRaHS rain gage and place it in a strategic location. They take precipitation measurements each day – or as often as possible – and record those measurements on the CoCoRaHS website (www.cocorahs.org).

Many agencies – including the Harris County Flood Control District – rely on precipitation data collected by CoCoRaHS during and after rainfall and flood events to determine where the most rain has fallen and where the potential for flooding is greatest. CoCoRaHS's volunteer precipitation reports help to fill in the gaps between official rainfall data collection sites in our region, such as the Flood Control District's Flood Warning System (www.harriscountyfws.org), the National Weather Service's climate sites, and the Lower Colorado River Authority's Hydromet system (http://hydromet.ucr.ca/fullassp).

"Ground truth is always better than radar because it shows what is actually happening," says Harris County Flood Control District meteorologist Jeff Lindner, who heads the Houston/Galveston region of the CoCoRaHS Network.

"Texas can have incredible, locally intense rains that don't always detect well on the radar and might go unnoticed without our CoCoRaHS observers."

The data reported by volunteers is organized and displayed on the website for use by meteorologists, hydrologists and emergency managers – as well as the general public. The Flood Control District, National Weather Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture utilize CoCoRaHS data in their work, along with engineers, insurance adjusters, mosquito control technicians, ranchers and farmers, teachers and students, and public works managers concerned with water supply, water conservation and stormwater quality. These agencies and experts use the information for everything from severe storm analysis to comparisons of how much rain fell in neighboring backyards.

The Houston/Galveston region of the CoCoRaHS Network currently has approximately 338 volunteers in 15 counties: Austin (8), Brazoria (21), Chambers (8), Colorado (6), Fort Bend (27), Galveston (41), Harris (123), Jackson (4), Liberty (3), Matagorda (3), Montgomery (32), Polk (28), San Jacinto (9), Waller (9), and Wharton (16) counties. The network needs many more volunteers to better measure precipitation across the region.

To join, go to the CoCoRaHS website (www.cocorahs.org) and click on the "Join CoCoRaHS" emblem in the upper right corner of the homepage. The website also offers information on the organization's background, training and educational tools, where to purchase the required CoCoRaHS rain gage, how and where to set up the gage on your property, and much more. County and regional coordinators are available to host training presentations across the region.

About the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network and the CoCoRaHS Cup

In July 1997, a devastating flash flood dumped more than 12 inches of rain on sections of Fort Collins, Colo., resulting in $200 million in damages. In 1998, CoCoRaHS was launched at the Colorado Climate Center at Colorado State University to improve the mapping and reporting of intense storms.

As more volunteers joined in, rain, hail and snow maps were produced for storms of all shapes and sizes, and the resulting data patterns caught the interest of scientists and the general public. By 2010, CoCoRaHS was a nationwide volunteer network. CoCoRaHS is supported nationally by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Partners in Texas include the Office of the State Climatologist (Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon) at Texas A&M University, the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Department of Geography and the Environment at the University of Texas at Austin, the Harris County Flood Control District, and many other agencies.

Such reports are vital in this part of the country where rainfall can vary greatly over a small area. The importance of the CoCoRaHS Network was clearly demonstrated in May 2012 when a narrow band of very heavy rainfall produced amounts of 4-8 inches over parts of Fort Bend and Harris counties. The Sugar Land Airport recorded 8.25 inches of rainfall on May 11-12, but a CoCoRaHS observer in the nearby Pecan Grove subdivision recorded an amazing 11.19 inches overnight. Without this observer, this amount of rainfall would have gone undetected.

In the annual CoCoRaHS Cup, states compete in "traditional" and "per capita" categories. Last year, Texas placed 2nd in the "traditional" category, with 133 new volunteer observers recruited overall during the March campaign. But Texas
The Harris County Flood Control District has completed the final construction phase of the Stormwater Detention Basin at Cypress Park. The completed basin will now hold approximately 80 million gallons of stormwater that could otherwise flood homes and businesses along Cypress Creek during times of heavy rains.

This completed basin will now hold stormwater during heavy rainfall events, and will reduce flooding risks and damages for homes and businesses along Cypress Creek during times of heavy rains.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Harris County Flood Control District begins Phase Two Construction of Homestead Stormwater Detention Basin

May 23, 2013

The Harris County Flood Control District has begun a second phase of excavation at a stormwater detention basin in northeast Houston that will reduce flooding risks for neighborhoods and businesses near Hunting Bayou.

The basin, formally identified as H600-01-00 and commonly known as Homestead Stormwater Detention Basin, is located northeast of the North Loop 610 and Homestead Road intersection. The basin sits on a 75-acre site just north of Hunting Bayou and west of the Union Pacific Railroad Company’ Seifert Railroad Yard. It is a part of the overall Hunting Bayou Flood Damage Reduction Project, commonly known as Project Hunting.

Construction on the first phase of the Homestead basin was completed in 2009. The Flood Control District removed 265,000 cubic yards of soil during the first phase, at a cost of approximately $1.25 million.

During the upcoming second phase, an additional 647,000 cubic yards of soil will be removed from the site. This excavation will more than triple the capacity of the Homestead basin to approximately 564 acre-feet, or 184 million gallons of stormwater. The project also includes installation of an additional culvert connecting the basin to the bayou under the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

On March 12, 2013, Harris County Commissioners Court awarded an approximately $5.7 million contract for the Homestead basin project to Serco Construction Group Ltd. Construction. The project began in mid-May and is expected to be completed in 300 working days.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded a $2.34 million Hurricane Ike Hazard Mitigation Grant to help the Flood Control District finance expansion of the Homestead basin. As of May 2013, the Flood Control District and FEMA have together spent more than $12.6 million on right of way, design and construction of this basin.

Project Hunting calls for widening and deepening 4 miles of Hunting Bayou from US 59 to just downstream of North Wayside Drive, replacing or modifying approximately 20 bridges, and excavating the Homestead basin in three phases.

Stormwater detention basins reduce flooding risks and damages during heavy rain events by safely storing excess floodwater and slowly releasing it back to the bayou when the threat of flooding has passed. The Homestead basin, predominately in the Kashmere Gardens and Liberty Gardens areas. When the final phase of excavation is complete, the Homestead basin will hold approximately 1,000 acre-feet or 326 million gallons of stormwater.

About The Hunting Bayou Watershed

The Hunting Bayou watershed is located in central Harris County, northeast of downtown Houston and is within the city limits of Houston, Galena Park and Jacinto City. Hunting Bayou is the watershed’s primary drainage channel and runs 15 miles from its headwaters west of US 59 to its confluence with the Houston Ship Channel. The watershed covers about 30 square miles and contains approximately 45 miles of open drainage channels, including Hunting Bayou and its tributaries.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Construction is Complete on Bretshire Stormwater Detention Basin

June 12, 2013

Construction is complete on the new Bretshire Stormwater Detention Basin, a partnership project between the City of Houston and the Harris County Flood Control District. The basin is designed to reduce flooding risks and damages for homes and businesses along Halls Bayou in central Harris County.

Located on a 68-acre site near Jensen Drive and US 59 and bisected by Halls Bayou, the new basin will hold approximately 167 million gallons of stormwater. Basins like Bretshire reduce flooding risks and damages by safely holding excess stormwater during periods of heavy rain, and slowly releasing that stormwater back to the bayou as water levels drop. The basin also serves to improve the quality of urban stormwater that flows through it.

The Flood Control District funded design of the facility on property it currently owns. The City of Houston funded and managed the basin’s construction, with help from a federal disaster recovery grant for up to $6 million. Now formally identified as HCFCD Unit P518-04-00, the Bretshire basin will be mowed and maintained by the Flood Control District as part of its county-wide infrastructure network.

The Bretshire basin site is located adjacent to and connects three parks — Harris County Precinct 2’s Mary Withers Park and Bretshire Park to the north, and the City of Houston’s Shady Lane Park to the south. The north side of the basin also adjoins a segment of the Bretshire Stormwater Detention Basin will reduce flooding risks and damages for homes and businesses along Halls Bayou.

The City of Houston recently announced plans to redevelop Shady Lane Park, with help from a state parks and wildlife grant. The city will match the $220,000 grant to create a $440,000 funding source for park improvements. These will include a new playground and playground site, a play hill area and seating plaza, connections to the existing trail, native plant landscaping and shade trees, and the demolition and site preparation of the old and obsolete playground for future parking expansion.

The Bretshire Stormwater Detention Basin receives stormwater from adjacent neighborhoods and routes it through a series of water quality enhancement ponds connected by what will be tree-lined corridors. The constructed wetlands have been planted with specialized vegetation, such as pickerelweed (Pontederia cordata) and softstem bulrush (Scirpus validus), propagated at a wetlands nursery at the Texas Parks and Wildlife’s Greens Bayou Wetlands Mitigation Bank. These plants help filter out and transform pollutants in the stormwater as it flows through the ponds and into Halls Bayou. Basin wetlands also reduce mowing maintenance costs, provide aquatic and wildlife habitat, expand recreational opportunities, and add aesthetic appeal. These wetlands are maintained under the Flood Control District’s sensitive habitat maintenance program.

After turf is established at the basin to protect side slopes from erosion, the Flood Control District also plans to plant trees, which reduce maintenance costs and improve water quality.

Sprint Sand & Clay LLC was the construction contractor for the $4.7 million Bretshire Stormwater Detention Basin project. The basin was built on the site where several flood-prone homes had been purchased and demolished by the Flood Control District as part of this capital project. All former residents were relocated out of the floodplain.

The Bretshire basin project is the second recently constructed Flood Control District project along Halls Bayou to reduce flood risks and damages. In 2008, the Flood Control District completed a stormwater detention basin on a 112-acre site that is part of Keith-Wess Park on Aldine-Westfield Road. That basin can store 300 million gallons of stormwater. A Texas Parks and Wildlife grant funded installation of a fishing pier and wetlands boardwalk within the basin, along with hike-and-bike trails, soccer fields and a playground within the park.

The Flood Control District also has started design of the 93-acre Hall Park Stormwater Detention Basin site located along Halls Bayou dowstream of US 59 near Langley Street.

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 US 59 at Brock Park. During Tropical Storm Allison, an estimated 13,000 residences flooded in the Halls Bayou watershed. The Flood Control District is currently working on a study that will identify additional flood damage reduction projects for the watershed.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
The Harris County Flood Control District began construction in late July to widen a section of Hunting Bayou in the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood of central Harris County.

The project site is located along the south side of Hunting Bayou, north of Minden Street between Lockwood Drive and Hoffman Street. Formally identified as H100-00-00-E002, this project is part of the overall Hunting Bayou Flood Damage Reduction Project, commonly known as Project Hunting.

The work involves excavating and removing approximately 39,000 cubic yards of soil along a 1,000-foot section of Hunting Bayou to create a gently-sloped terrace – or “bench.” During periods of heavy rain, this bench will hold excess stormwater.

On May 21, 2013, Harris County Commissioners Court awarded the approximately $340,000 construction contract to Lecon Inc. The project is scheduled to be completed in 75 working days.

The benched area will be across the bayou from Harris County Precinct 1’s Hutcheson Park. When complete, this benched area will remain dry most of the time and, as part of Project Hunting, offers opportunities for the creation of linear parks and hike-and-bike trails. The Flood Control District made every effort to save trees in the construction area.

Project Hunting calls for widening and deepening 4 miles of Hunting Bayou from US 59 to just downstream of North Wayside Drive, replacing or modifying approximately 20 bridges, and excavating the Homestead Stormwater Detention Basin in several phases. Once all elements of Project Hunting have been constructed, homes and businesses along Hunting Bayou will have reduced risk of flooding. In the meantime, as each construction phase is complete, there will be incremental reductions to flooding risks and damages for homes and businesses along Hunting Bayou.

ABOUT THE HUNTING BAYOU WATERSHED

The Hunting Bayou watershed is located in central Harris County, northeast of downtown Houston, and within the city limits of Houston, Galena Park and Jacinto City. Hunting Bayou is the watershed’s primary drainage channel and runs 15 miles from its headwaters west of U.S. 59 to its confluence with the Houston Ship Channel. The watershed covers about 30 square miles and contains approximately 45 miles of open drainage channels, including Hunting Bayou and its tributaries.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Construction Starts on New Lidstone Bridge and Channel Widening at Brays Bayou

Work is part of Project Brays effort to reduce flooding risk and damages in south central Harris County

July 26, 2013

The Harris County Flood Control District began construction in July on a new two-lane bridge over Brays Bayou that will connect Lidstone Street to Old Spanish Trail in the Fonde Park neighborhood in south central Harris County.

In coming months, the Flood Control District will also widen Brays Bayou between Old Spanish Trail and Lidstone Street. To accommodate widening of the channel, it is necessary to build a higher and longer bridge at the Lidstone location. The new bridge will replace and be just upstream of the existing Wheeler Street bridge.

This is the eighth channel modification segment and 10th bridge replacement the Flood Control District has conducted as part of $350 million Brays Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project known as Project Brays, a cooperative effort between the Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Through a partnership effort with the Houston Parks Board and other groups supporting the “Bayou Greenways” initiative, the Lidstone Street at Brays Bayou project also will provide greenspace for connecting several Brays Bayou parks and pathways. The goal of the Bayou Greenways initiative is to develop connected green corridors with hike and bike trails along all major bayous of the greater Houston area, while also providing flood control and stormwater quality benefits.

On April 23, Harris County Commissioners awarded a $4.2 million contract for the Lidstone Street at Brays Bayou project (formally identified as D100-00-00-B040) to Lone Star Road Construction Ltd. Construction (including demolition of the Wheeler Street bridge) is expected to take approximately one year.

During construction and demolition, motorists who use Wheeler Street through the Fonde Park neighborhood should seek alternate routes as the bridge will be limited to one lane and open only to local traffic. Traffic will be detoured around the construction zone via Telephone Road, US 90A and South Wayside Drive, according to a phased schedule. Residents and motorists are encouraged to remain alert to changing conditions, and to pay attention to all posted lane closure and detour signs.

Project Brays, started in 1993, is the largest flood damage reduction initiative ever managed by the Flood Control District. It includes the widening of 21 miles of Brays Bayou in 13 separate channel modification project segments and the modification of 32 bridges. Project Brays also includes the construction of four stormwater detention basins with a combined capacity of 3.46 billion gallons.

When Project Brays is complete, it will remove the mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain from approximately 30,000 homes and businesses, and reduce flooding risks and damages for many more neighborhoods near Brays Bayou.

By leveraging Flood Control District property along bayous and stormwater detention basins for recreational use, and by partnering with other governmental entities and area non-profits such as the Houston Parks Board, Harris County benefits from more effective use of public land, as well as improved access and connectivity between parks and trails across the area.

“It is a shining example of being efficient and effective with resources,” said Roksan Okan-Vick, Executive Director with the Houston Parks Board. “It uses property amassed for flood control work for multiple purposes, and demonstrates that large projects can work well with public-private partnerships.”

The City of Houston and its Parks and Recreation Department was recently awarded a $15 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant, a part of which will be used to build approximately 1.6 miles of shared-use paths along Brays Bayou and under the Lidstone bridge. This section will unite the existing four miles of trails downstream with the nearly 15 miles of trails upstream. Once complete, Brays Bayou will have nearly 22 miles of connected shared-use trails running the length of the bayou, from near downtown to past Loop 610.
The Flood Control District will communicate construction, lane and bridge closure schedules to the public during the Lidstone Street at Brays Bayou project. During the project's first phase traffic plan, the Harris County Flood Control District will temporarily close one lane on Old Spanish Trail near the construction site. Lidstone Street north of the bayou and the Wheeler Street bridge will remain open, but will be limited to local traffic only. Construction crews will be on hand to direct local traffic (residents and business owners in the Fonde Park area) through the construction area at Lidstone and the Wheeler bridge. Possible alternate routes include Telephone Road, US 90A and South Wayside Drive. Residents and motorists are encouraged to remain alert to changing conditions, and to pay attention to all posted lane closure and detour signs.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.

ABOUT THE HOUSTON PARKS BOARD

The Houston Parks Board is a non-profit organization that leverages private dollars for the benefits of our region's parks. It is dedicated to creating, improving, protecting and advocating for parks in the Greater Houston region. As part of that mission, the organization is guided by four principles to (1) increase equitably distributed parks and trails for all Houstonians, (2) provide connectivity along the bayou corridors, (3) support the physical and biological diversity of Houston's park system including its bayou sand streams, and (4) increase resources available for parks and greenways. Houston Parks Board's signature project, Bayou Greenways 2020, meets those criteria by unifying seven of the major ten bayous that flow through Houston with urban greenspace and a single strip of all-weather trail, creating an urban park system like no other in the nation.
The Harris County Flood Control District has completed construction on a maintenance project in Jersey Village that restored the stability of the channel formally identified as HCFCD Unit E127-00-00, and improved its ability to convey stormwater.

This map shows the project limits, from the channel's confluence with White Oak Bayou upstream to Senate Avenue.

As part of the project, the Flood Control District repaired areas of erosion and replaced outfall pipes along the channel, which is formally identified as HCFCD Unit E127-00-00. The project also replaced failed concrete slope paving along White Oak Bayou, and installed a drop structure at the confluence of White Oak Bayou and the channel.

A drop structure helps prevent erosion by controlling the energy and velocity of water passing through the channel. Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soils and the movement of stormwater in a bayou or other channel. It can cause a channel's side slopes to degrade and eventually to fail.

This maintenance project restores the stability of the channel's slopes and protects surrounding infrastructure from erosion without increasing flooding risks for residents.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Harris County Flood Control District Completes Restoration of Cypress Creek at Meyer Park

New Educational Signs Describe Archeological Finds Near Construction Site

August 14, 2013

Harris County Flood Control District has completed the second and final phase of a channel restoration project on Cypress Creek, adjacent to Harris County Precinct 4’s Elizabeth Kaiser Meyer Park in northwest Harris County.

The goal of the channel restoration project was to repair and stabilize the severely eroded banks of the creek, along a half-mile stretch west of Stuebner-Airline Road. The project included the construction of gentle side slopes and adding a channel “bench” or plateau to help prevent and control future erosion.

The project was capped off in August with the posting of colorful new educational signs describing important Native American archeological finds made prior to construction. The signs are located near the pond in the southeast corner of the park.

During the first phase of construction, archeologists found evidence of pre-historic campsites along Cypress Creek, used by nomadic Native American hunter-gatherers. Beginning in late 2009, archeologists recovered more than 2,000 artifacts – including arrowheads, stone tools and pieces of broken pottery. Analysis of the artifacts determined that the site had been occupied repeatedly during the Early Ceramic (A.D. 100-800) and Late Ceramic (A.D. 800-1750) periods. Evidence of an earlier, more limited presence was suggested by a single Paleoindian artifact (8000-6000 B.C.)

Along with the new educational signs, information about these early Texas residents will be posted on the Flood Control District website, www.hcfcd.org. The artifacts themselves are now curated at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas in Austin. Although they are not available for public viewing, the artifacts will be used for research purposes. State and federal laws require that, if public areas containing cultural resources deemed worthy of research and valuable contributions to history cannot be avoided by a project, they must be excavated and their findings preserved, as regulated by the Texas Historical Commission.

The project to restore Cypress Creek was necessary to correct the effects of poor stormwater systems, and was impacting water quality and aquatic habitat by increasing the deposition of sediment into the creek. If left unchecked, the erosion could have continued to weaken the creek’s ability to move stormwater downhill.

Harris County Commissioners Court awarded a $1.4 million contract in April 2012 to BRH-Garver Construction LP for the second phase of construction. Work began in June 2012 and was completed in summer 2013. Total cost of both phases was more than $3 million.

In the final stages of the project, the Flood Control District planted grass to help stabilize the channel’s banks and reduce the risk of future erosion. The Flood Control District also plans this winter to plant trees and other vegetation to establish a canopy along the creek.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Final Phase of Construction Begins on S. Post Oak Road Bridge

Construction of the northbound bridge complete

August 21, 2013

Tomorrow, Thursday Aug. 22, the Harris County Flood Control District plans to close the two-lane southbound bridge that crosses Sims Bayou at S. Post Oak Road, between Heatherbrook Drive and Trafalgar Drive, for approximately five months.

Southbound traffic will detour to the newly-constructed two-lane northbound bridge that crosses Sims Bayou at S. Post Oak, which will run one lane in each direction while the southbound bridge is under construction. (See attached map.)

Please note: Road closures and construction schedules are subject to change. The Flood Control District will notify the public if there are modifications to this schedule.

The S. Post Oak bridge (northbound and southbound) is being reconstructed in two phases as part of a federal flood damage reduction project to widen and deepen Sims Bayou. The first phase of construction (from April 2012 through August 2013) replaced the two-lane northbound bridge. The southbound bridge will be replaced during this second and final phase of construction.

The Flood Control District will communicate construction and bridge closure schedules to the media and to the public in advance of each phase of the project. Motorists are encouraged to be alert, to pay attention to all posted street and lane closures and to follow traffic detours in the area.

For more information on the Sims Bayou bridge projects, including details on lane closures, major traffic switches, local detours, the anticipated schedule for construction on the remaining bridges, and the opportunity to sign up to receive regular e-mail updates, please visit the Sims Bayou Roadway Bridge Construction webpage at www.hcfcd.org/simsbridges or call the Sims Bayou Bridge Construction Information Line at (713) 684-4107.

In addition to finishing the first phase of construction on the S. Post Oak bridge project, the Flood Control District recently completed construction (that began in April 2012) on the Croquet Lane Bridge that crosses Sims Bayou, just west of South Post Oak Road, and reopened the bridge to traffic. The Flood Control District appreciates the community’s patience during the bridge closure project and regrets any inconvenience caused to residents, business owners and motorists in the area.

With the completion of the Croquet bridge, only two bridges that cross Sims Bayou remain under construction.

Construction on the Hiram Clarke Road Bridge is expected to be complete in September 2013, and construction on the South Post Oak-Road Bridge is expected to be complete in December 2013.

The bridge replacement projects are part of the $399 million Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the lead agency on this project, which includes the widening and deepening of 19.3 miles of Sims Bayou and adding environmental enhancements from the Houston Ship Channel to Croquet Lane, just west of South Post Oak Road. The project is supplemented by three stormwater detention basins that were excavated by the Flood Control District using local funds. The project also consists of the modification/replacement of 22 bridges, of which 20 are now complete.

This project launched construction in 1990 and is scheduled for completion in 2013. From the onset of this project, the Flood Control District, as the local sponsor, has been responsible for property acquisition, utility relocation and the modification/replacement of the bridges that cross Sims Bayou.

Upon the completion of the Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, the 1 percent (100-year) floodplain will be removed from approximately 35,000 homes and 2,000 commercial structures, meaning flooding risks will be greatly reduced for citizens residing in neighborhoods adjacent to Sims Bayou. For more information on this project and its benefits to the community, please visit the Flood Control District’s website at www.hcfcd.org.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
The Harris County Flood Control District is moving forward with a project that will create and restore approximately 95 acres of native wetland habitat on the Katy Prairie. The project area is near the intersection of Katy-Hockley and House Hahl roads in northwest Harris County.

The wetlands area will be created on Flood Control District property in the Cypress Creek watershed, near the intersection of Katy-Hockley and House Hahl roads in northwest Harris County. The property is adjacent to more than 10,000 acres of protected habitat preserved and managed by the Katy Prairie Conservancy. The wetlands creation and restoration project is required for mitigation as a condition of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Clean Water Act (Section 404) permits for unavoidable wetlands impacts related to two other Flood Control District stormwater detention basin projects in northwest Harris County.

On June 25, Harris County Commissioners Court awarded a $203,000 contract to Sonora Construction to perform the wetlands creation and restoration work. Construction began in late August 2013 and is expected to be completed in about four months.

The project plan includes the building of berms, or mounds of soil, and some minor grading of the site to create depressed areas in the earth adjacent to the berms. These provide a natural setting for the development of wetlands, which are defined as low areas that are saturated with moisture and provide habitat for a variety of water-loving vegetation and wildlife. The plan also calls for uncovering another depressional wetland - also known as a "prairie pothole" - that had been buried during many years of agricultural use.

Native wetland vegetation – such as bog rush, swamp smartweed, duck potato, powdered thalia and maidencane - will be planted and, in some areas, allowed to reestablish itself naturally.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Harris County Flood Control District Completes Construction on Cole Creek Erosion Repairs

October 16, 2013

The Harris County Flood Control District has completed construction of a maintenance project along a 3,200-foot section of Cole Creek in north central Harris County.

The project repaired and rebuilt eroded side slopes of Cole Creek from its confluence with White Oak Bayou southwest of the intersection of West Tidwell Road and T.C. Jester Boulevard, upstream to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe bridge east of Antoine Drive.

Harris County Commissioners Court awarded the approximately $576,000 construction contract to BRH-Garver Construction LP. Work began in October 2012 and was completed in October 2013.

The maintenance project, formally identified as E117-00-00-X012, repaired erosion that had caused damage to the slopes and various storm sewer and outfall pipes in the project area. Work included removing and replacing damaged outfall pipes and installing buried riprap on the creek’s slopes and toe line, which is the lowest point of a channel’s banks. Riprap in Harris County is typically recycled concrete that is processed to fit together like natural rock. It helps armor a channel’s banks to prevent future erosion.

Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soil quality and the constant flow of stormwater through a bayou, creek or other waterway. Unchecked erosion can wear away the banks of a creek and potentially affect its ability to move water downstream.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Harris County Flood Control District Completes Major Restoration Project on Carpenters Bayou

Construction Repaired Erosion and Bank Failures in the Channelwood Subdivision

November 25, 2013

The Harris County Flood Control District has completed the Carpenters Bayou Restoration Project, a major maintenance project to repair bank failures and erosion on Carpenters Bayou in east Harris County.

The project was designed to stabilize the bayou in the Channelwood subdivision, where significant erosion had degraded the bayou slopes over several decades. Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soils and the movement of stormwater in the bayou. Slope failures restricted the Flood Control District's access to perform maintenance at certain locations, and encroached into the backyards of some adjacent properties along what had been a sharp bend in the bayou upstream of Woodford Drive.

The $3 million project realigned the bayou for a gentler curve between Woodforest Boulevard and Woodford Drive, paralleling Overbluff Drive, and provided for improved maintenance access. Project costs included right of way acquisition involving 14 tracts of land totaling approximately 6 acres. This included the purchase of six full residential lots with homes. During the project, the Flood Control District provided relocation assistance for those whose homes were acquired and demolished.

Project costs also included an approximately $1.6 million construction contract with Serco Construction Group Ltd. Work began in July 2012 and was completed in October 2013.

The project restores the stormwater-carrying capacity of this section of Carpenters Bayou. It will not increase the risk of flooding for residents living in the project area.

As part of its work, the Flood Control District removed numerous encroachments (mainly fences) on its right of way; buried riprap (rocks or chunks of concrete) upstream of Woodford Drive to help armor the slopes; and repaired eroded and uneven side slopes along the entire project limits. Workers also replaced damaged stormwater outfall pipes and constructed interceptor swales along the top of the channel slopes. These swales, or shallow ditches, direct the flow of overland stormwater into the channel to prevent further erosion.

In the final stages of the project, the Flood Control District planted grass to help anchor the soil.

The completed project also provides opportunities for Open Space agreements between nearby residents and the Flood Control District. Open Space agreements allow residents or civic associations to "adopt" Flood Control District-owned vacant lots for maintenance or landscaping, or to use the land for individual gardens, recreation and other non-structural purposes. Flood Control District buyout lots are mowed eight times per year.
About Carpenters Bayou

Carpenters Bayou flows south from its headwaters west of Lake Houston to the Houston Ship Channel. The bayou parallels the East Sam Houston Tollway, crosses under State Highway 90 and Interstate Highway 10, and passes through the Channelview area. It is the primary waterway in the Carpenters Bayou Watershed, which covers approximately 25 square miles in east Harris County.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Harris County Flood Control District Begins Construction on Maintenance Projects in Northeast Harris County

Construction in Kingwood Area Will Restore Sections of Bens Branch and its Tributaries

December 02, 2013

The Harris County Flood Control District has begun construction in the Kingwood area on four maintenance projects aimed at repairing significant erosion and removing sediment from sections of Bens Branch and its tributaries. This work will restore the channels' ability to convey stormwater and help prevent future erosion.

The four project sites involve approximately 12,000 linear feet of channel, including:

- Bens Branch, formally identified as HCFCD Unit G103-33-00, from Woodland Hills Drive upstream to Northpark Drive.
- An unnamed Bens Branch tributary, formally identified as HCFCD Unit G103-33-01, from its confluence with Bens Branch upstream to Northpark Drive. This project site borders the Creekwood Nature Area.
- An unnamed Bens Branch tributary, formally identified as HCFCD Unit G103-33-02, from its confluence with Bens Branch upstream to Hidden Pines Drive.
- An unnamed Bens Branch tributary formally identified as HCFCD Unit G103-33-03, from its confluence with Bens Branch upstream to Hidden Pines Drive.

On September 10, Harris County Commissioners Court approved a $1.13 million contract with Lecon Inc. Work began in late November and is expected to be completed by the fall of 2014.

Depending on the specific site, the projects will repair severe to moderate erosion, remove silt that has built up in the channels, repair or replace approximately 50 damaged stormwater and interceptor outfall pipes, and replace failed concrete slope paving.

Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soils and the movement of stormwater in a bayou or other channel. It can cause a channel's side slopes to degrade and eventually to fail. It also can lead to a buildup of sediment in the channel, which can affect the channel's ability to convey stormwater.

Interceptor swales are shallow ditches located along the top of the channel slopes. These swales direct the flow of overland stormwater into the channel via outfall pipes, to prevent further erosion.

At some locations, to allow for maintenance repairs, it will be necessary to clear brush and remove encroachments such as fences from Flood Control District right of way. At Creekwood Nature Area – a community-owned wooded area with trails, located at the confluence of Bens Branch and G103-33-01 – workers will remove a 10- to 12-foot strip of brush that has grown into Flood Control District right of way. The goal is to restore maintenance access to the right of way, so that workers can replace failed interceptor structures and re-grade the backslope swales and maintenance berms.

As a safety precaution, a pedestrian bridge crossing G103-33-01 at the end of Park Garden Drive, between Christ the King Lutheran Church and Creekwood Middle School, will be closed temporarily during construction, to allow for erosion repairs under the bridge. During this period, trail users may cross the channel at Sandy Forks Drive.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
Sediment Removed from 10 Channels in Seven Watersheds

December 02, 2013

The Harris County Flood Control District has completed a series of maintenance projects to remove sediment and restore the stormwater carrying capacity of 10 drainage channels in seven watersheds throughout Harris County.

These channels are located in the Clear Creek, Sims Bayou, Brays Bayou, White Oak Bayou, Vince Bayou, Greens Bayou and Barker Reservoir watersheds.

Harris County Commissioners’ Court awarded a $527,960 contract to Complete Concrete to remove sediment that had accumulated over time in these channels. Work began in February 2013 and was completed in late 2013.

The Flood Control District launched work on this maintenance project as a regular part of its mission: In addition to providing flood damage reduction projects that work, with appropriate regard for community and natural values, the Flood Control District also maintains an extensive network of bayous, creeks and drainage channels. Local drainage channels that branch off from major bayous and creeks play an important role in capturing and moving stormwater away from neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Work sites for this project included:

1. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit T101-03-00, that carries stormwater into Mason Creek, from Katy-Fort Bend Road to 1,000 feet downstream, just north of Interstate 10.

2. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit D124-00-00, that carries stormwater into Brays Bayou, from Harwin Drive to Wilcrest Drive in the Westchase area.

3. A drainage channel, formally identified as HCFCD Unit I100-01-00, that carries stormwater into Vince Bayou, near the intersection of Strawberry Road and Genoa Red Bluff Road. The work site included the entire drainage channel.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
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 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.
RESIDENTS URGED TO MONITOR RAINFALL AND BAYOU LEVELS AT HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT’S FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM WEBSITE

(www.harriscountyfws.org)

January 9, 2012

When the weather forecast includes thunderstorm warnings and heavy rainfall it is important for Harris County residents to be aware of conditions near their workplace, schools and homes. The Harris County Flood Control District urges all residents to monitor rainfall and bayou levels on its 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. 24 hours a day and seven days a week, Real-time information is transmitted to the Flood Control District’s Flood Warning System team, which constantly monitors the information and works during severe weather events to advise the public and local officials of areas that are and could be affected by flooding.

“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 input 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.

The Flood Control District’s on-line Tropical Weather Center at www.hcfcd.org/tropicalwether/ has many tools to help individuals and families get prepared and stay prepared, including 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 flood events in Harris County occur outside a mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain.

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/farrnfloodprepare.html

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. 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.

*The data presented on this mapping tool and website may be delayed by approximately 5 minutes.*
NORTHWEST HARRIS COUNTY DRAINAGE CHANNEL’S ‘MAKEOVER’ FEATURES NEW TREES AND WILDFLOWERS

January 19, 2012

The Harris County Flood Control District recently planted 836 new trees and shrubs and a variety of wildflower seeds on a Langham Creek tributary south of FM 529 near Queenston Boulevard in northwest Harris County.

The drainage channel formerly identified by the Flood Control District as U119-00-00 was the first site selected for the Flood Control District’s 2012 Tree Planting Program, which has planted approximately 150,000 trees on Harris County right of way since 2001.

The plantings complement a November 2010 maintenance project in which the Flood Control District removed a large quantity of sediment and dead trees and brush from the bottom of the channel to facilitate the flow of stormwater. Crews also repaired eroded spots along the channel’s grass-lined banks and a section of damaged concrete lining.

Residents in the Stone Creek subdivision adjacent to U119-00-00 said the tree and wildflower plantings will go a long way toward beautifying a drainage channel that was affected by Hurricane Ike in 2008. As a result of the hurricane’s fierce winds, several adjacent trees and bushes were uprooted, fell into the channel and created blockages that impeded the flow of stormwater and collected trash. At that time, the Flood Control District was not authorized to maintain or repair the drainage channel because it did not have right of way.

“We formed a group of residents to clean up what we could,” said Carol Edwards, a Stone Creek resident. “We believed that if the dead trees could be removed that would help alleviate the trash collection problem and then we could move forward and beautifying the area.”

After meeting with residents about their concerns, the Flood Control District launched the process of acquiring right of way along U119-00-00. That step is required before a bayou, creek or tributary can be added to the Flood Control District’s system and included in the maintenance program. Enough right of way had been acquired by November 2010 to launch the maintenance project.

Edwards said she was thrilled to learn earlier this year that the drainage channel was scheduled for tree and wildflower plantings.

“What the Harris County Flood Control District has done has been nothing short of awesome,” she said. “We cannot praise them enough.”

Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman, said the District plants about 20,000 trees each year on project sites and maintains a tree nursery where there are about 6,000 trees in various growth stages. While the most visible reward gained from tree and wildflower plantings is the beautification of bayous, creeks and stormwater detention basins, there are a number of equally important environmental, structural and economic benefits, she said.

Tree plantings reduce the risk of erosion in drainage channels and lower maintenance costs, Saucier said. They also improve water quality, create a shade canopy that reduces mowing costs and provide wildlife habitat.

Wildflower plantings offset mowing costs and provide a varied root structure that helps prevent erosion and offers sustainable landscape and habitat for wildlife.

Saucier said the Flood Control District planted the trees on U119-00-00’s upper slopes so that they do not impede the flow of stormwater. The tree planting pattern was designed to enhance the existing walking trail constructed by a local municipal utility district, and a 15-foot maintenance easement that will be utilized by maintenance and watering vehicles. The District waters, mutes and fertilizes trees for a period of two years after a tree planting.

Saucier said the wildflowers – a mixture of Texas Bluebonnet, Prairie Verbena, Showy Phlox, Indian Blanket, Plains Coreopsis, Mexican Hat, Drummond Phlox, Lance-Leaf Coreopsis, Clasping Coneflower and Bird’s Eyes – will begin blooming in March.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, 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.
NORTHBOUND HIRAM CLARKE ROAD BRIDGE TO CLOSE FOR CONSTRUCTION
The Buxley Street Pedestrian Bridge is also closed for construction

January 20, 2012
HOUSTON - On Monday, the Harris County Flood Control District will close the two-lane northbound bridge that crosses Sims Bayou at Hiram Clarke Road, between West Orem Drive and West Fuqua Street, to start work on a bridge construction project that is part of a federal flood damage reduction project to widen and deepen Sims Bayou.

Harris County Commissioners Court awarded the approximately $3.3 million Hiram Clarke Road bridges construction contract to Mirada, Inc., in November 2011. The 14-month project will be carried out in three phases, and different sections of the bridges will close and reopen as construction progresses.

During the first construction phase, the two-lane northbound bridge will be closed and traffic will detour to the two-lane southbound bridge. Traffic will run one lane in each direction on the southbound bridge between Tiffany Drive and Simsbrook Drive for approximately six months.

When the first phase is complete, traffic will shift to the outside lanes of each bridge with one lane open in each direction between Tiffany and Simsbrook. The inside lanes of each bridge will be closed for approximately two to three months.

During the third and final phase of construction, the two-lane southbound bridge will be closed and traffic will detour to the newly-constructed northbound bridge. Traffic will run one lane in each direction on the northbound bridge for approximately six months.

The Flood Control District will communicate construction and bridge closure schedules to the media and to the public in advance of each phase of the project.

Motorists are encouraged to be alert, to pay attention to all posted street and lane closures and to follow traffic detours in the area.

On Jan. 17, the Flood Control District closed the Buxley Street Pedestrian Bridge located approximately .05 miles west of Hiram Clarke to start work on a $420,000 construction project. The 40-plus-year-old wooden pedestrian bridge crosses Sims Bayou at the end of Buxley Street, just south of the intersection of Buxley and Simsbrook. It will be replaced with a concrete and pre-fabricated steel bridge structure.

There will be no alternative pedestrian bridge crossing during the estimated three month construction phase. The Flood Control District is working with the Houston Independent School District to provide bussing for students who use the bridge for the duration of the project.

Millis Development and Construction, Inc. is the Flood Control District’s lead contractor on the Buxley Street Pedestrian Bridge project.

The bridge replacement projects are part of the $379 million Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the lead agency on this mega project, which includes the widening and deepening of 19.3 miles of Sims Bayou and adding environmental enhancements from the Houston Ship Channel to Croquet Lane, just west of South Post Oak Road. The project is supplemented by three stormwater detention basins that were excavated by the Flood Control District using local funds. The project also consists of the modification/replacement of 22 road bridges, of which 17 are now complete. This project launched construction in 1990 and is scheduled for completion in 2013. From the onset of this project, the Flood Control District, as the local sponsor, has been responsible for property acquisition, utility relocation and the modification/replacement of the bridges that cross Sims Bayou. Construction is expected to begin on the remaining two road bridges that cross Sims Bayou at Croquet and South Post Oak in 2012.

Upon the completion of the Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, the 1 percent (100-year) floodplain will be removed from approximately 35,000 homes and 2,000 commercial structures, meaning flooding risks will be greatly reduced for citizens residing in neighborhoods adjacent to Sims Bayou. For more information on this project and its benefits to the community, please visit the Flood Control District’s website at www.hcfcd.org.

Please note that all closures are subject to change. For more information on the Sims Bayou bridge projects, including details on lane closures, major traffic switches, local detours, the anticipated schedule for construction on the remaining bridges, and the opportunity to sign up to receive regular e-mail updates, please visit the Sims Bayou Roadway Bridge Construction webpage at www.hcfcd.org/simbbridges or call the Sims Bayou Bridge Construction Information Line at (713) 684-4107.
The Harris County Flood Control District provides 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.
THE WEATHER FORECAST CALLS FOR FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS – THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT HAS TOOLS TO HELP

January 24, 2012

The weather forecast predicts potentially heavy rainstorms Tuesday afternoon continuing into Wednesday, and with Harris County's flat topography there is always a chance for flooding.

The Harris County Flood Control District urges residents to be proactive and ACT NOW to protect their families and property by creating a family preparedness plan and staying put during a flood unless your life is threatened. The Flood Control District has a "Family Flood Preparedness" center at http://www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare.html with helpful, printable resources, including:

- A guide on how to create and implement a FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS PLAN and what to do before, during and after a flooding event.
- A FAMILY EMERGENCY KIT checklist that includes information on how to build a first aid kit, how much water to have for family members and pets, tools that could come in handy and a helpful guide on what types of documents to store in a waterproof, portable container.
- A FAMILY EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD printout – fill them out, give one to each family member and keep them close at all times.
- A "REPAIRING YOUR FLOODED HOME" guide (by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and American Red Cross) that provides vital step-by-step information on how to clean up, rebuild and get help after a flood.
- A "TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN" brochure (by the National Weather Service) that advises all residents to stay out of flooded roadways and waterways.

And, don’t forget one very important item: 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. Contact your insurance agent for more information about purchasing flood insurance, or visit the National Flood Insurance Program at www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-888-373-3631.

If the weather worsens, it is important for Harris County residents to be aware of conditions near their workplace, schools and homes. The Flood Control District urges all residents to monitor rainfall and bayou levels on its 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 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Real-time information is transmitted to the Flood Control District’s Flood Warning System team, which constantly monitors the information and works during severe weather events to advise the public and local officials of areas that are and could be affected by flooding.

Residents can input 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.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, 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.

* The data presented on this mapping tool and website may be delayed by approximately 5 minutes.
2012 ARBOR DAY TREE PLANTING COMPETITION RESCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 11

February 7, 2012

A forecast of heavy rain and lightning caused event planners to postpone the scheduled Feb. 4 Texas Urban Forestry Council’s 2012 Arbor Day Tree Planting Competition sponsored by the Houston Area Urban Forestry Council and the Flood Control District, but this race is on this Saturday, Feb. 11!

At 9 a.m., the clock starts ticking as 17 teams race to plant 1,700 trees on a Harris County Flood Control District stormwater detention basin site located south of Fallbrook Drive off the northbound West Sam Houston Parkway North feeder road.

The basin stores overflow stormwater on a Flood Control District drainage channel that serves as a tributary to White Oak Bayou in northwest Harris County.

Not only are the teams competing against each other to plant the trees as fast as possible, but they must plant them correctly so that they ensure a long and fruitful life for each tree. The Houston Area Urban Forestry Council will submit the final planting times of the top three teams in each category – professional, amateur and youth – and they will compete for the Texas Urban Forestry Council’s top award.

The Flood Control District will furnish the trees and maintain them for a two-year period while they establish root systems. The Houston Area Urban Forestry Council will supply volunteer judges and timers for the event.

Through this annual event, the Houston Area Urban Forestry Council is able to educate participants on proper tree planting and maintenance methods and the Flood Control District and taxpayers are the beneficiaries of trees on a formerly bare stormwater detention basin site. All participants have the opportunity to take part in an event that promotes tree planting in Harris County during a time when many trees have been lost to disease and drought.

Heather Saucier, the Flood Control District’s spokeswoman, said this stormwater detention basin site was selected for the District’s 2012 Tree Planting Program and the District was proud to have it serve as the site for the 2012 Arbor Day Tree Planting Competition. The competition lends an air of excitement to the District’s tree planting operations.

Saucier said the Flood Control District is the No. 2 tree-planting government agency in Harris County and plants approximately 20,000 trees every year through its Tree Planting Program. New tree plantings occur during planting season (typically October through March) on project sites throughout Harris County.

The Flood Control District also maintains a tree nursery where there are about 6,000 trees in various growth stages. While the most visible reward gained from tree plantings is the beautification of bayous, creeks and stormwater detention basins, trees also reduce the risk of erosion in drainage channels and lower maintenance costs, Saucier said. They also improve water quality, create a shade canopy that reduces mowing costs and provide wildlife habitat.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, 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.
FIRST PLACE TEAM PLANTS 100 TREES IN 20 MINUTES AT 2012 ARBOR DAY TREE PLANTING COMPETITION

Volunteers Collectively Plant 1,300 Trees at Stormwater Detention Basin Site off West Sam Houston Parkway

February 15, 2012

More than 130 volunteers braved frigid temperatures and muddy conditions Feb. 11 to plant 1,300 trees in less than two hours at the Texas Urban Forestry Council’s 2012 Arbor Day Tree Planting Competition sponsored by the Houston Area Urban Forestry Council and the Harris County Flood Control District.

The 13 teams that competed transformed the landscape of a Flood Control District stormwater detention basin site located south of Fallbrook Drive and east of the northbound West Sam Houston Parkway North feeder road. The basin stores overflow stormwater on a Flood Control District drainage channel that serves as a tributary to White Oak Bayou in northwest Harris County.

The top, and only, team in the professional category — BIO Landscape and Maintenance, Inc. — planted 100 trees in 20 minutes. That team’s planting time, along with the teams that placed first, second and third in the amateur and youth categories, will be submitted to the state level to compete for the Texas Urban Forestry Council’s top awards. The winners will be announced at the State Arbor Day Ceremonies on April 27.

The results of the Texas Urban Forestry Council’s 2012 Arbor Day Tree Planting Competition (by category):

Professional Category:
BIO Landscape and Maintenance, Inc. (20 minutes)

Amateur Category:
1st Place - Kinsley Architecture (1 hour, 11 minutes)
2nd Place - Houston Community College Team 3 (1 hour, 34 minutes, 2 seconds)
3rd Place - Houston Community College Team 1 (1 hour, 34 minutes, 3 seconds)

Youth Category:
1st Place - Memorial Outreach Bunch (MOB) Red Team – (1 hour, 35 minutes, 14 seconds)
2nd Place - Memorial Outreach Bunch (MOB) Blue Team – (1 hour, 50 minutes, 19 seconds)
3rd Place - Houston Community College Team 1 (1 hour, 34 minutes, 3 seconds)

“We are proud that we were able to plant 1,300 trees in less than ideal conditions with an amazing group of volunteers,” said Mickey Merritt, Bayou Region Urban Forestry Coordinator for the Texas Forest Service. “We were also able to demonstrate to volunteers the proper way to plant trees, which will carry over to future tree plantings.”

Through this annual event, the Houston Area Urban Forestry Council is able to educate participants on proper tree planting and maintenance methods and the Flood Control District and taxpayers are the beneficiaries of trees on a formerly bare stormwater detention basin site. The Houston Area Urban Forestry Council supplied volunteer judges and timers for the event. All participants had the opportunity to take part in an event that promotes tree planting in Harris County during a time when many trees have been lost to disease and drought.

The Flood Control District furnished the trees and will maintain them for a two-year period while they establish root systems. The District will also plant an additional 1,020 trees at the bottom and on the sides of the 10.2-acre stormwater detention basin site.

The Flood Control District is the No. 2 tree-planting government agency in Harris County and plants approximately 20,000 trees every year through its Tree Planting Program. New tree plantings occur during planting season (typically October through March) on project sites throughout Harris County.

The Flood Control District also maintains a tree nursery where there are about 6,000 trees in various growth stages. While the most visible reward gained from tree plantings is the beautification of bayous, creeks and stormwater detention basins, trees also reduce the risk of erosion in drainage channels and stormwater detention basins and lower maintenance costs, said District Spokeswoman Heather Saucier. They also improve water quality, create a shade canopy that reduces mowing costs and provide wildlife habitat.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT TO COMPLETE 150-ACRE STORMWATER DETENTION BASIN PROJECT ON HORSEPEN CREEK

February 16, 2012

This month the Harris County Flood Control District will launch the final phase of a 150-acre stormwater detention basin project in northwest Harris County that will result in an approximately $9.3 million cost savings to taxpayers.

The stormwater detention basin is located at the upstream end of Horsepen Creek approximately 0.5 miles east of Barker-Cypress Road. The basin is almost completely surrounded by residential neighborhoods, including Canyon Lakes at Stonegate on the basin’s north and west sides and Copper Lakes on the south side.

Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman, said the majority of the stormwater detention basin was excavated through an excavation and removal (E&R) agreement with Sprint, Sand & Clay, LLC.

“The company excavated and removed the soil from the site at very little cost to the District,” Saucier said. “We are now moving forward with the final phase of the project, which will complete the excavation and ensure that the stormwater detention basin is fully operational.”

The final phase of the capital project also includes constructing a weir structure and significant re-grading of the detention basin’s slopes.

NBZ Contracting, Inc. was awarded the approximately $1.3 million contract in November 2011. The project will take approximately 100 working days to complete.

When stormwater detention basins are used for flood damage reduction purposes, they are sometimes designed with a weir structure. The weir serves as a spillway whereby stormwater rising in a channel – in this case Horsepen Creek - can spill into the detention basin during times of heavy rain where it will be temporarily stored and slowly released back to the creek.

After the construction of the weir structure and regrading of the detention basin’s slopes, the basin will retain approximately 360 million gallons of stormwater that otherwise might flood homes and businesses and will help reduce flooding risks for those who live downstream along the creek’s banks.

This capital project is in addition to a Flood Control District maintenance project underway downstream on Horsepen Creek. That maintenance project is restoring a 3.25-mile section of Horsepen Creek from State Highway 6 to the Addicks Reservoir in west Harris County.

Work on the maintenance project started in late August 2011 and will be completed in 2012 depending on weather conditions. The Flood Control District’s project includes erosion repair work on Horsepen Creek’s upstream segment and the removal of sediment on the downstream segment that has naturally accumulated in the creek over the years.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, 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.
The Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin is 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 Rd. When completed, the basin will hold approximately 600 million gallons of stormwater that might otherwise flood homes and businesses, and provide 280 acres of greenspace.

Over the next 18 months, the contractor will excavate soil from Willow Waterhole’s Compartment 3 located northeast of the intersection of S. Post Oak and S. Main Street/U.S 90A. Compartment 4 located southwest of the intersection of South Willow Drive and Ricecrest Street, and Compartment 5 located off Dryad Drive and northwest of the intersection of US 90A and S. Post Oak.

“When this construction phase is complete, the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin will be approximately 70 percent excavated,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman. “Every phase completed delivers some level of relief and steadily reduces the risk of flooding.”

The basin is part of the Brays Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, known as Project Brays, that will remove the 1 percent (100-year) floodplain from approximately 30,000 structures. 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 approximately 3.5 billion gallons of water and replacing or modifying 32 bridges.

The Willow Waterhole basin has been designed by the Flood Control District to be environmentally friendly. 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 Flood Control District also has planted thousands of trees and native plants.

Since construction started on the Willow Waterhole basin in May 2004, the community and local government agencies have demonstrated support for the project. The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy is 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 a 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.

For example, the Willow Waterhole Conservation Reserve South Gazebo at the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin’s overlook off Dryad Drive serves as the stage for the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy’s “Sunday Music in the Park” series, which features musical performances by Houston Independent School District school bands. At the first two performances, Flood Control District officials were on hand to provide information about the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin excavation project and Project Brays. For more information, visit www.wwwwgc.org.

For more information on the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin project, please visit www.hcfcd.org. To ask a question or comment on the project, please call the Flood Control District’s Project and Study Information Line, which is monitored daily, at 713-684-4040.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides 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.
HERE COMES THE RAIN -- BE "FLOOD AWARE" AND REMAIN PREPARED

Harris County Flood Control District Urges all Residents to Have Flood Insurance Coverage

March 8, 2012

Harris County has received approximately 11 inches of rain so far in 2012 -- in 2011 we did not reach that point until September! Frequent rainfall is a welcome occurrence in our drought-ridden region, but with heavy rainfall comes the threat of flooding in Harris County.

The Harris County Flood Control District urges residents to take time during Texas' Flood Safety Awareness Week 2012 (March 12-16) to become informed about flood risks and to take steps to secure and protect their families' safety and property.

It is a fact that has been proven time and again since our founding fathers settled at the confluence of Buffalo and White Oak bayous in 1836. Flooding is at the top of the list of Harris County's natural disaster threats. 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).

The 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.

Flood insurance is available for all homeowners but is typically required for structures located in a mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Risk Map (FIRM) floodplain maps) 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. In fact, about half or more of all flooding events in Harris County occur outside a mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain. Residences and businesses can flood from other scenarios not captured on floodplain maps. In many cases, flooding is caused by water flowing overland trying to reach bayous and creeks. Flooding also occurs when floodwaters exceed the capacity of roadside ditches or underground storm sewers.

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 FIRM helps determine flood risk zones and associated rates for flood insurance policies.

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

All of Harris County is at risk of flooding to varying degrees, and all homeowners should have flood insurance to protect their investments. Having flood insurance will not keep you from flooding, but it will help you recover.

The Flood Control District monitors the county's bayous and creeks year round to make sure they are free from obstructions to the flow of stormwater and able to handle large amounts of rain. The Flood Control District also has several online tools that can serve as guides to severe weather preparedness.

The Flood Control District has a "Family Flood Preparedness" center at http://www.hcfcd.org/familyfloodprepare.html with helpful, printable resources, including a guide on how to create and implement a FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS PLAN, a FAMILY EMERGENCY KIT checklist and a "TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN" brochure (by the National Weather Service).

"Rainfall and Flooding Preparedness Tips" that will help you to be "FLOOD AWARE" include:

- Secure valuables and important documents.
- Be aware of water levels in bayous and creeks and of conditions in areas known to flood. Visit the Flood Control District’s Flood Warning System website at www.HarrisCountyFWS.org to monitor Harris County rainfall amounts and water levels.
- Avoid driving if possible and if you must venture out, avoid driving into water of unknown depth. Moving water can quickly sweep you and your vehicle away.
- Restrict children from playing in flooded areas.
- Remain in your home during the storm unless instructed to evacuate by local officials.
- Purchase a flood insurance policy. For information on flood insurance, visit the National Flood Insurance Program at www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-888-379-9531.
- Know your home’s risk of flooding. You can view Flood Insurance Rate Maps at the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Map Service Center (www.msc.fema.gov), or refer to the Harris County Flood Control District website at www.hcfcd.org.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT REPAIRING SEVERE EROSION NEAR FIRE STATION ON CYPRESS CREEK

March 15, 2012

The Harris County Flood Control District is restoring a severely-eroded section of Cypress Creek that runs adjacent to the Cypress Creek Volunteer Fire Department’s Station No. 23 on Cypreswood Drive in Harris County Precinct 4.

As part of the project, a stretch of Cypress Creek will be repaired along a sharp bend in the creek near the 3.9-acre property that is owned by the Prestonwood Forest Utility District and that houses a Cypress Creek VFD fire station and equipment. If left unchecked, the erosion could have continued to weaken the banks of the creek and encroach on the property. The erosion could eventually affect the creek’s ability to move water downstream.

“The erosion had not impacted the fire station, but it is wearing away the south bank of the creek and moving close to the property line,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman. “This project will help protect against erosion occurring at that location in the future.”

An approximately $280,000 erosion repair contract was awarded to Lecon, Inc. Construction started March 7 and will take about 45 days to complete.

Crews will reconstruct and stabilize the creek’s south bank by installing buried rock rip-rap and grass sodding.

This is the final phase of a project that has repaired channel bank failures on Cypress Creek between State Highway 249 to approximately 1 mile downstream near the fire station. Repairs have been completed in six locations along the Kickerillo-Mischer Preserve property, which is located north of the creek. This will be the seventh and final erosion repair made to the creek’s banks as part of this project.

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

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT OPENS NEIGHBORHOOD BRIDGE AFTER RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Croquet Lane Bridge closes as construction progresses on final phase of Sims Bayou project

April 9, 2012

In mid-April, the Harris County Flood Control District expects to open the new bridge that crosses Sims Bayou at Heatherbrook Drive, just west of South Post Oak Road.

With the completion of the Heatherbrook bridge, the Flood Control District will close the bridge that crosses Sims Bayou at Croquet Lane, just south of West Orem Drive, to begin the second phase of a $2.4 million bridge reconstruction project. Construction on the Croquet Lane Bridge is expected to last approximately four-to-five months. Traffic will detour around the construction zone via Heatherbrook, Amble Lane and Darlinghurst Drive. Motorists are encouraged to be alert, to pay attention to all posted street and lane closures and to follow traffic detours in the area.

Rozco Contracting, Inc. is the Flood Control District’s lead contractor for both bridge projects.

The bridge replacements are part of the $370 million Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project. The project, a partnership of the Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, includes 19.3 miles of bayou enlargements and environmental enhancements along Sims Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to Croquet, just west of South Post Oak Road. As the local sponsor, the Flood Control District is responsible for acquiring right of way, relocating utilities and modifying/replacing the bridges that cross Sims Bayou. The project also is supplemented by three stormwater detention basins that were excavated by the Flood Control District using local funds.

Construction on the overall project launched in 1990 and is scheduled for completion in 2013.

The project requires the replacement or modification of 22 roadway bridges, of which 17 are now complete. The remaining bridge replacement projects will all be under construction in 2012.

In addition to the Croquet bridge, construction recently started on the northbound bridge that crosses Sims Bayou at Hiram Clarke Road, between West Orem and West Fuqua Street, and the Buxley Street Pedestrian Bridge located approximately 0.5 miles west of Hiram Clarke. Construction is expected to begin on the final roadway bridge that crosses Sims Bayou at South Post Oak later this year.

Upon the completion of the Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, the 1 percent (100-year) floodplain will be removed from approximately 35,000 homes and 2,000 commercial structures, meaning flooding risks will be greatly reduced for citizens residing in neighborhoods adjacent to Sims Bayou. For more information on this project and its benefits to the community, please visit the Flood Control District’s website at www.hcfcd.org.

Please note that all bridge/lane closures are subject to change. For more information on the Sims Bayou bridge projects, including details on lane closures, major traffic switches, local detours, the anticipated schedule for construction on the remaining bridges, and the opportunity to sign up to receive regular e-mail updates, please visit the Sims Bayou Roadway Bridge Construction webpage at www.hcfcd.org/simsbridges.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT SUPPORTS COMMUNITY WEATHER COLLECTION EFFORT
Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network Recruiting Volunteers in Houston/Galveston Region

April 9, 2012
The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) is recruiting volunteers to help weather experts keep track of where and how much it rains across the United States. The Harris County Flood Control District relies on precipitation data collected by CoCoRaHS during and after rainfall and flood events and encourages residents in the Houston/Galveston region to be “data collectors” in their own backyards.

CoCoRaHS is a non-profit, community-based network of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow).

Volunteering for CoCoRaHS does not require a meteorology degree or list of credentials - just an interest in observing and reporting weather conditions and a desire to learn more about how weather can affect and impact our region.

What do CoCoRaHS volunteers do?
Utilizing an official CoCoRaHS rain gage in a strategic location, a volunteer is asked to take precipitation measurements each day at approximately the same time and then record those measurements on the CoCoRaHS website (www.cocorahs.org).

The data is organized and displayed on the website for the general public’s observation and use. The National Weather Service, meteorologists, hydrologists, emergency managers, public works managers (water supply, water conservation, stormwater), insurance adjusters, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, engineers, mosquito control, ranchers and farmers, teachers and students, and residents utilize the information to do everything from severe storm analysis to comparisons of how much rain fell in neighboring backyards.

CoCoRaHS’s volunteer network is a vital part of the overall weather data collection effort. Its volunteers’ precipitation reports help to fill in the gaps between official rainfall data collection sites in our region, such as the Flood Control District’s Flood Warning System (www.harriscountyfws.org) and the National Weather Service’s climate sites.

“The more volunteers and rainfall data we have during and after an event, the better we are able to define how much it has rained and the storm’s impact,” said Heather Saucier, spokeswoman for the District.

The Houston/Galveston Network
The Houston/Galveston Region (Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jackson, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Rusk, San Jacinto, Waller, and Wharton counties) has 200 volunteers and needs many more to better measure precipitation across the region.

To join, go to the CoCoRaHS website (www.cocorahs.org) and click on the “Join CoCoRaHS” emblem in the upper right corner of the homepage. The website also offers a wealth of information on the organization’s background, training and educational tools, where to purchase the required CoCoRaHS rain gage, how and where to set up the gage on your property, and much more.

About the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS)
In July 1997, a devastating flash flood dumped more than 12 inches of rain on sections of Fort Collins, Colo., resulting in $200 million in damages. In 1998, CoCoRaHS launched at the Colorado Climate Center at Colorado State University with the goal of making improvements in the mapping and reporting of intense storms.

As more volunteers joined the network, rain, hail, and snow maps were produced for storms of all shapes and sizes and the resulting data patterns caught the interest of scientists and the general public. By 2010, CoCoRaHS was a nationwide volunteer network. CoCoRaHS is supported nationally by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Partners in Texas include the Office of the State Climatologist (Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon) at Texas A&M University, the Lower Colorado River Authority, and the Department of Geography and the Environment at the University of Texas at Austin, the Harris County Flood Control District, and many other agencies.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, 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.
EAGLE SCOUT ASPIRES TO HELP CURB EROSION AND BEAUTIFY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT DRAINAGE CHANNEL

Harris County Flood Control District to Supply 150 Trees for April 21 Volunteer Tree-Planting Event

April 19, 2012

Eagle Scout Clayton Marshall, 17, has inspired approximately 50 fellow Cypress Ranch High School students and Boy Scout Troop 44 members to join him in his quest Saturday to plant 150 trees on a Harris County Flood Control District drainage channel in northwest Harris County.

The Flood Control District will furnish the trees and maintain them for a two-year period while they establish their root systems. District vegetation specialists will also lend a hand and educate participants on proper tree planting and maintenance methods. The event is expected to kick off at 8 a.m.

The volunteer tree planting event is the third of four conservation service projects Marshall has organized in pursuit of the William T. Hornaday Medal, a national level conservation award that can be earned by Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts and Venturers.

Marshall selected the drainage channel, which carries stormwater from the adjacent Wortham Grove subdivision and commercial areas to White Oak Bayou, because it is showing signs of erosion. He said the goal is to plant trees to reduce the risk of erosion in the drainage channel. The trees develop a root structure that helps anchor the soil and prevents future erosion.

“This is the second Flood Control District site that will benefit from project carried out by Eagle Scout Clayton Marshall and we thank him and his fellow Boys Scout Troop 44 members and Cypress Ranch High School students for the hard work they will do this Saturday,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman. “The trees beautify the area and perform an invaluable natural service in our ongoing quest to repair and prevent erosion in Harris County’s natural drainage network.”

In 2010, Marshall and Troop 44 members installed “bat boxes,” or man-made homes for bats, at the Flood Control District’s Fallbrook Stormwater Detention Basin at the corner of Jones Road and Fallbrook Drive. He worked with Diana Foss, an urban wildlife biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, to determine what type of nesting boxes to build and the right location to install them. He also created an instructional video on household composting, titled “COMPOSTING 101,” for the Houston Arboretum Society. His film is shown at the Arboretum’s biannual recycling seminars and is posted on YouTube.

Marshall said he wanted to do an erosion control project for his third Hornaday project and contacted the Flood Control District about a viable site. He took measurements and photographs of suspected erosion on Drainage Channel E131-00-00 – the White Oak Bayou tributary – and found signs of moderate to severe slip erosion along the channel’s banks. Satellite photographs from 2008 and 2010 indicated the erosion problem was growing worse with each passing year.

Marshall prepared a proposal and presented it to Flood Control District staff members. His plan included planting approximately 150 indigenous trees needed to cover the area and have interlocking root systems, but spaced far enough apart to prevent crowding. The site was previously selected for the District’s 2012 Tree Planting Program and the District was proud to have it serve as the location for Marshall’s Hornaday project, Saucier said.

Marshall then consulted with the District’s vegetation specialists and prepared a tree-planting plan tailored to the drainage channel’s environment. He also recruited volunteers for the April 21 event and created an educational sign that describes the project and its benefits. It will be installed on Saturday adjacent to a bridge on Wortham Boulevard.

Saucier said the Flood Control District is the No. 2 tree-planting government agency in Harris County and plants approximately 20,000 trees every year through its Tree Planting Program. New tree plantings occur during planting season (typically October through March) on project sites throughout Harris County.

The Flood Control District also maintains a tree nursery where there are about 6,000 trees in various growth stages. While the most visible reward gained from tree plantings is the beautification of bayous, creeks and stormwater detention basins, trees also reduce the risk of erosion in drainage channels and lower maintenance costs, Saucier said. They also improve water quality, create a shade canopy that reduces mowing costs and provide wildlife habitat.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and
creeks, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT MARKS MILESTONE WITH START OF FINAL BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ON SIMS BAYOU

South Post Oak Road Bridges Will Close in Phases as Construction Progresses

April 19, 2012

HOUSTON – The Harris County Flood Control District marks a milestone with the start of the 22nd and final roadway bridge reconstruction project as part of the Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project. On April 23, the Flood Control District will start construction on the bridges that cross Sims Bayou at South Post Oak Road.

Harris County Commissioners Court awarded the approximately $5.1 million construction contract to Tom-Mic, Inc., in February. The approximately 14-month project will be carried out in two phases, and different sections of the bridges will close and re-open as construction progresses.

During the first construction phase, the two-lane northbound bridge will be closed and traffic will detour to the two-lane southbound bridge. Traffic will run one lane in each direction on the southbound bridge between Heatherbrook and Trafalgar drives for approximately seven to eight months. The intersection of Simsbrook Drive and South Post Oak located north of Sims Bayou also will be closed during the first phase of construction.

When the first phase is complete, the two-lane southbound bridge will be closed and traffic will detour to the newly reconstructed northbound bridge. Traffic will run one lane in each direction on the northbound bridge for approximately seven to eight months.

The Flood Control District will communicate construction and bridge closure schedules to the media and to the public in advance of each phase of the project. Motorists are encouraged to be alert, to pay attention to all posted street and lane closures and to follow traffic detours in the area.

The bridge replacement projects are part of the $379 million Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the lead agency on this mega project, which includes the widening and deepening of 19.3 miles of Sims Bayou and adding environmental enhancements from the Houston Ship Channel to Croquet Lane, just west of South Post Oak Road. The project is supplemented by three stormwater detention basins that were excavated by the Flood Control District using local funds. The project also consists of the modification/replacement of 22 road bridges, of which 18 are now complete.

Construction on the project began in 1990 and is scheduled for completion in 2013. The Flood Control District, as the local sponsor, is responsible for acquiring right of way, relocating utilities and modifying/replacing bridges that cross Sims Bayou.

Upon the completion of the Sims Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, the 1 percent (100-year) floodplain will be removed from approximately 35,000 homes and 2,000 commercial structures, meaning flooding risks will be greatly reduced for citizens residing in neighborhoods adjacent to Sims Bayou. For more information on this project and its benefits to the community, please visit the Flood Control District’s website at www.hcfcd.org.

Please note that all closures are subject to change. For more information on the Sims Bayou bridge projects, including details on lane closures, major traffic switches, local detours, the anticipated schedule for construction on the remaining bridges and the opportunity to sign up to receive regular e-mail updates, please visit the Sims Bayou Roadway Bridge Construction webpage at www.hcfcd.org/simsbridges or call the Sims Bayou Bridge Construction Information Line at 713-894-4107.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
SEVERE WEATHER FORECASTED: HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT IS MONITORING BAYOUS AND CREEKS

May 10, 2012

The Harris County Flood Control District’s Flood Watch team will be monitoring rainfall trends resulting from forecasted thunderstorms Thursday through Saturday. The team is checking the gages that measure rainfall amounts and water levels in bayous and creeks and will continue to do so over the next several days.

With heavy rainfall comes the threat of flooding, so it is important for Harris County residents to be aware of conditions near their workplaces, schools and homes. The Flood Control District urges all residents to monitor rainfall and bayou water levels on its Flood Warning System website at http://www.harriscountyfws.org. The District’s Flood Watch team constantly monitors the data and works during severe weather events to advise the public and local officials of areas that are and could be affected by flooding.

The Flood Control District has a “Family Flood Preparedness” center at http://www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare.html with helpful, printable resources, including a guide on how to create and implement a FAMILY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS PLAN, a FAMILY EMERGENCY KIT checklist and a “TURN AROUND, DON’T DROWN” brochure (developed by the National Weather Service). Additional flood preparedness tips:

- Secure valuables and important documents.
- Avoid driving, if possible. If you must venture out, avoid driving into water of unknown depth. Moving water can quickly sweep you and your vehicle away.
- Restrict children from playing in flooded areas.
- Remain in your home during the storm unless instructed to evacuate by local officials.
- Have a flood insurance policy. For information on flood insurance, visit the National Flood Insurance Program website at http://www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-888-379-9531.
- Know your home’s risk of flooding. You can view a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM or floodplain map) at the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Map Service Center (http://www.msc.fema.gov), or refer to the Flood Control District website at http://www.hcfcd.org.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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 http://www.hcfcd.org.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY ON MAY 15

Devastating Floods and Public Support Paved the Way for the Flood Control District’s Creation

May 14, 2012

On May 15, the Harris County Flood Control District celebrates its 75th Anniversary and the strides it has made to help reduce flooding risks and damages for Harris County.

Long before the Flood Control District was created, pioneers who settled in Harris County accepted flood damage as one of the risks associated with life in an otherwise abundant and economically promising land. Not surprisingly, the county’s history is peppered with tales of great floods and rainstorms that have wreaked havoc on residents’ lives and properties. However, it was one flood event in particular that brought about a call for action that resulted in the District’s creation in 1937.

The torrential downpour started on Dec. 6, 1935 and, by the time the skies cleared two days later, approximately 100 blocks of the City of Houston’s business and residential districts were inundated with floodwaters from Buffalo and White Oak bayous. Eight residents lost their lives and property damage was estimated at $2.5 million (approximately $42 million in 2012 dollars). The Houston Ship Channel was crippled for eight months.

The Great Flood of 1935 caused devastation, but at the same time spurred Houston and Harris County public officials, business leaders and residents to take action. Many were grappling with still-vivid memories of the Great Flood of 1929, which also overwhelmed the city and county. A groundswell of support emerged for improvements to the open channel drainage infrastructure that would protect lives, property and the economy.

Houstonians’ voices combined with others across the United States to urge the federal government to finance and implement flood damage reduction projects. In response, the U.S. Congress passed the Flood Control Act of 1936—the bill that assigned oversight responsibility for flood damage reduction measures to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and authorized funding for more than 200 flood damage reduction projects and surveys (studies). A survey of Harris County’s Buffalo Bayou was on that initial list.

Houston Mayor R. H. Fonville and Harris County Judge Roy M. Hofheinz led a campaign to persuade the Texas legislature to pass a statute that created a single local entity that had the authority to partner with the federal government on flood damage reduction projects that qualified for federal financial assistance. Five days after the Texas House and Senate approved the bill creating the Harris County Flood Control District, Governor James Allred signed the new law on May 15, 1937.

The ensuing 75 years have been marked by rapid development in Houston and Harris County, changes in engineering practices, the growth of environmental concerns and policy, and advancements in technology. One thing that has remained constant through time is the overwhelming fact that our region’s relatively flat terrain, impermeable clay soils, and average annual rainfall of 48 inches (4 feet) have, and always will, make us vulnerable to flooding.

The District implemented key flood damage reduction projects in partnership with the Corps in its first 30 years of existence from the construction of the Addicks and Barker reservoirs in the 1940s to the channelization of White Oak Bayou and Brays Bayou in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Proposed plans for channelization of Buffalo Bayou were cancelled because environmental activities lobbied against the project.

In 1979, Houston and Harris County suffered seven separate flooding events that prompted an evolution of the District’s flood damage reduction strategies and policies. Harris County Commissioners Court approved changes to those policies that allowed the construction of stormwater detention basins, which was a departure from the previous focus on channel improvements to reduce flooding risks.

In the 1980s, the Corps and the Flood Control District launched comprehensive flood damage reduction projects on
Sims Bayou and Brays Bayou that combined an effective mix of channel improvements, stormwater detention basins and environmental enhancements. In 1984, Commissioners Court approved the White Oak Bayou Regional Flood Control Plan, which included the excavation of 10 stormwater detention basins along White Oak Bayou, widening the bayou from Tidwell Road to Beltway 8 and constructing the Jersey Village Channel, which carries 30 percent of the flows of White Oak Bayou around the flood-prone city during times of heavy rain.

In 2001, just before Tropical Storm Allison unleashed 35 inches of rain over parts of Houston and Harris County, the Flood Control District entered into a financial 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 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.

Several significant milestones have been achieved in the aftermath of Allison. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Flood Control District took advantage of brand new technology developed by NASA to produce a new Flood Insurance Rate Map for all 22 watersheds of Harris County. The multi-year effort was called the Tropical Storm Allison Recovery Project. FEMA and the District also implemented the Tropical Storm Allison Voluntary Home Buyout Program. The program enabled residents whose homes were substantially damaged during the storm or that have flooded repeatedly to move to higher ground. The Flood Control District continues similar voluntary home buyout programs today, and has purchased close to 3,000 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.

As the Flood Control District's 75th anniversary approaches, the agency is pursuing 191 capital projects in 17 watersheds, moving about 18,000 acres of land three times a year, and moving nearly 8,000 miles of bayou banks a year. The District’s web of infrastructure, built with local and federal funds, includes 61 regional detention sites either existing or in development, totaling nearly 8,400 acres. Along with reducing flooding risks and damages, many of these sites provide wetlands mitigation, habitat for wildlife, and green space for all to enjoy. And as the District builds, it also looks ahead through its Frontier Program at areas like the Cypress Creek watershed that are poised for major development. By acquiring land for conservation, flood storage and other multi-use projects, the District is ensuring an effective blueprint for flood damage reduction, now and in the future.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
COMMUNITY RAIN DATA COLLECTOR TAKES “SURPRISING” 11.19-INCH RAINFALL MEASUREMENT AFTER MAY 11-12 STORM

Harris County Flood Control District Supports Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS)

May 15, 2012

Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) civilian volunteer Michael Chance made a startling discovery when he checked his official CoCoRaHS rain gage after the May 11-12 rainfall event and found it near the rim. The rain gage registered 11.19 inches – the fourth highest report submitted this year to the CoCoRaHS network.

“I was surprised at that amount - we’ve had some heavy rains,” said Chance, who lives in the Pecan Grove neighborhood in Fort Bend County and has a gage in his back yard. “When I first looked at it, it looked like there wasn’t any water in it. But it was almost to the very top if it. I have never seen that high before.”

CoCoRaHS is a non-profit, community-based network of volunteers of all ages and backgrounds working together to measure and map precipitation (rain, hail and snow). Volunteers take precipitation measurements each day at approximately the same time and then record those measurements on the CoCoRaHS website (www.cocorahs.org) in order to help weather experts keep track of where and how much it rains across the United States. The Harris County Flood Control District relies on precipitation data collected by CoCoRaHS during and after rainfall and flood events and encourages residents in the Houston/Galveston region to be “data collectors” in their own backyards.

Radar and reports from the Flood Control District’s Flood Warning System (131 strategically-placed gages that measure and electronically report in real time rainfall amounts and water levels in bayous -- www.harriscountyfws.org and from Sugar Land indicate that on May 11-12, approximately 8-10 inches of rain fell over central Fort Bend County from north of Beasley to Sugar Land. Approximately 4-7 inches fell over southern Harris County from Friendswood to Missouri City. The result was extensive and widespread flooding over much of Fort Bend and south/southwest Harris counties.

“Even with the Flood Control District’s extensive network of gages, the data provided by the CoCoRaHS volunteer network is extremely helpful in compiling data,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman.

Fort Bend County has only one automated reporting station at the Sugar Land airport (8.25 inches was recorded after the May 11-12 rainfall event). It is common in this region for thunderstorms to produce small, localized and intense rainfall events that cover only a few miles in size. For example, during the May 11-12 storm other CoCoRaHS sites located within 5 miles of the Pecan Grove station only recorded 4-5 inches of rain.

“The CoCoRaHS data are critical for showing how much rain fell, especially in cases where the rain is from thunderstorms, and measurements can vary just a few miles apart,” said Dan Reilly, warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service. “The National Weather Service River Forecast Centers use this data in their hydrologic models to make crest forecasts on area rivers and to determine if river flood warnings may be necessary.”

CoCoRaHS data helps fill in the gaps between official rainfall data collection sites in our region, such as the Flood Warning System and the National Weather Service’s climate sites.

Chance is one of several volunteers who record rainfall data in CoCoRaHS’s Houston/Galveston Region (Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jackson, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Polk, San Jacinto, Waller, and Wharton counties). He said he heard about the CoCoRaHS network several years ago through his volunteer efforts with the Texas State Guard and wanted to be a part of the effort. He signed up to be a volunteer, ordered an official CoCoRaHS rain gage and installed it in a strategic location in his backyard.

“I feel good about volunteering and I like to be able to help wherever I can,” said Chance, who is a data analyst at Texas Children’s Hospital in the Texas Medical Center. “It doesn’t take a lot of time and it’s a good service that I can provide.”

Data submitted by CoCoRaHS volunteers is organized and displayed on the CoCoRaHS website for the general public’s observation and use. The National Weather Service, meteorologists, hydrologists, emergency managers, public works managers, water supply, water conservation, stormwater, insurance adjusters, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, engineers, mosquito control, ranchers and farmers, teachers and students, and residents utilize the information to do everything from severe storm analysis to comparisons of how much rain fell in neighboring backyards.

About the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS)

In July 1997, a devastating flash flood dumped more than 12 inches of rain on sections of Fort Collins, Colo., resulting in $200 million in damages. In 1998, CoCoRaHS launched at the Colorado Climate Center at Colorado State University with the goal of making improvements in the mapping and reporting of intense storms.

As more volunteers joined the network, rain, hail, and snow maps were produced for storms of all shapes and sizes and the resulting data patterns caught the interest of scientists and the general public. By 2010, CoCoRaHS was a nationwide volunteer network. CoCoRaHS is supported nationally by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Partners in Texas include the Office of the State Climatologist (Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon) at Texas A&M University, the Lower Colorado River Authority, and the Department of Geography and the Environment at Texas A&M University.
To join, go to the CoCoRaHS website (www.cocorahs.org) and click on the “Join CoCoRaHS” emblem in the upper right corner of the homepage. The website also offers a wealth of information on the organization’s background, training and educational tools, where to purchase the required CoCoRaHS rain gage, how and where to set up the gage on your property, and much more.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
FLOOD CONTROL MAINTENANCE PROJECTS TARGET 11 DRAINAGE CHANNELS IN GREENS BAYOU WATERSHED

May 24, 2012
The Harris County Flood Control District is working on a series of maintenance projects that will remove sediment and restore 11 drainage channels in the Greens Bayou watershed to their original carrying capacities. The Greens Bayou watershed spans sections of north Harris County from Texas 249 to U.S. 59.

In addition to building flood damage reduction projects, the Flood Control District regularly maintains Harris County’s extensive and complex drainage network. The drainage ditches that branch off from major bayous and creeks play a vital role in capturing and moving stormwater away from neighborhoods and commercial areas.

“Our Property Management Department performs regular inspections of our drainage infrastructure and determines whether or not repairs and maintenance are needed,” said Heather Saucier, Flood Control District spokeswoman. “Our maintenance engineers design and prioritize the projects. The District’s maintenance program is a continuous effort.”

In late April, the Flood Control District completed work on seven concrete-lined channels that required special equipment to remove sediment that had accumulated over time. The District’s contractor, Terbo Construction, L.P., utilized bobcats, skid steers and track hoes to perform the work.

The drainage channels included (please refer to map for project locations):
- A Greens Bayou segment (formally identified by the Flood Control District as P100-00-00) that runs from Cypress-North Houston Road/Louedd Road to Milwood North Drive in the Milwood North and Minkwood neighborhoods near Texas 249.
- A Halls Bayou tributary (formally identified as P118-13-02) that runs through the Scenic Woods Phase neighborhood east of U.S. 59 and south of East Little York Road.
- A Greens Bayou tributary (formally identified as P127-00-00) that runs through the Kinglake Forest, Village of Kings Lake and Greensbrook neighborhoods at North Lake Houston Parkway and Lockwood Road.
- A Greens Bayou tributary (formally identified as P137-00-00) that runs through commercial areas near Ella Boulevard in the north-east corner of the Interstate 45/Beltway 8 intersection.
- A Greens Bayou tributary (formally identified as P144-01-00) that runs between the Imperial Valley and Greensridge North neighborhoods south of Aldine-Bender Road in Aldine.
- A Greens Bayou tributary (formally identified as P144-02-00) that flows behind a commercial area located southwest of the Hardy Toll Road/Beltway 8 intersection.
- A Greens Bayou tributary (formally identified as P147-00-00) that runs through a commercial area east of Veterans Memorial Drive near Beltway 8.

In mid-June, the Flood Control District will repair erosion on a grass-lined channel (formally identified as P145-03-01) that drains to a Greens Bayou tributary located south of the Darbydale Crossing neighborhood off Ella Boulevard just east of Interstate 45.

This summer, the Flood Control District will also remove sediment from two grass-lined Halls Bayou tributaries (formally identified as P118-19-00 and P119-19-04) near Keith-Wess Park east of U.S. 59, and one grass-lined Greens Bayou tributary (formally identified as P133-02-00) in the north-west corner of the U.S. 59/Beltway 8 intersection south of the George Bush Intercontinental Airport property. The District will repair eroded sections of the Halls Bayou tributaries.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
HURRICANE SEASON BRINGS FLOODING RISKS THAT CAN COST YOU

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

May 29, 2012

Tropical storms Alberto and Beryl have already made pre-hurricane season appearances in the Atlantic. The Harris County Flood Control District advises residents to ACT NOW and create preparedness plans and purchase flood insurance if they do not have coverage for their homes and valuables. Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30.

With our region’s relatively flat terrain and impermeable clay soils, flooding is a risk residents face when a tropical storm or hurricane targets the Gulf Coast. While securing your family’s safety is the top priority in preparedness efforts, also important is understanding the potentially high cost of repairing flood-damaged structures without flood insurance. According to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)’s official website (http://www.floodsmart.gov), just 1 inch of water inside a 2,000-square-foot home could result in approximately $21,000 in damages. Six inches inside the same home could cost approximately $40,000. Those costs continue to rise with the size of the structure affected and the depth of flooding.

Many do not realize until too late that flooding is not covered by their standard homeowner’s policies. When weighing the decision to purchase flood insurance, consider this: Repaying a $50,000 flood-related loan (at a 4 percent interest rate) from the Small Business Administration costs about $240 a month for 30 years, while the average flood insurance policy usually costs $400 annually. Having flood insurance will not keep you from flooding, but it will help you recover.

KNOW YOUR FLOODING RISKS

All residents of Harris County are vulnerable to flooding to varying degrees. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)’s Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs or floodplain maps) help determine areas at risk for flooding from bayous, streams and their tributaries overflowing. However, FIRMs do not show:

1) Risks for flooding when roadside ditches and storm sewers exceed their capacity, or from sheet flow, which is stormwater traveling over land to reach the bayous.
2) Risks for flooding from bayous and streams that have not been studied for floodplain identification and delineation. Of the more than 2,500 miles of bayous and creeks in Harris County, only about half have been studied.
3) Risks for flooding events that exceed the magnitude of a 0.2 percent (500-year) flood, such as Tropical Storm Allison, which dropped 28.5 inches of rain in 12 hours in some areas of Harris County in 2001. Sixty-five percent of the area that flooded during Allison was not in a mapped floodplain.

Contact your insurance agent for more information about purchasing flood insurance, or visit the NFIP at http://www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-888-379-9531.

HELPFUL SITES

You can view a FIRM at FEMA’s Map Service Center (http://www.msc.fema.gov), or refer to the Flood Control District’s website at www.hcfcd.org.

The Flood Control District has a “Family Flood Preparedness” center at www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare with helpful, printable resources.

In addition, 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 during hurricane season, 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 that pulls together a wide range of information about the anatomy of a hurricane, the destructive forces hurricanes can unleash and how Harris County residents can prepare for a tropical storm or hurricane. The Hurricane Guide is available at www.hcfcd.org/tropicalweather/hurricaneguide.
- For residents who want to track the progress of tropical storms and hurricanes, the Flood Control District’s Hurricane Guide features a Quick-Response (QR) code that when scanned by a mobile phone will take users to its on-line hurricane tracker tool at www.hcfcd.org/hurricanetracker.
- Residents can monitor rainfall and bayou water levels on the Harris County Flood Warning System website at www.hcfcd.org/hcfws. The Flood Control District’s FloodWatch team regularly monitors the data and works during severe weather events to advise the public and local officials of areas that are and could be affected by flooding.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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 http://www.hcfcd.org.
June 25, 2012

The Harris County Flood Control District was recently awarded a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hurricane Ike Hazard Mitigation Grant that will reimburse up to 75 percent of construction costs to complete the Jersey Meadows Stormwater Detention Basin.

The basin is located on a 42-acre site, formerly a part of the Jersey Meadows Golf Course, adjacent to a White Oak Bayou tributary in northwest Harris County.

Harris County Commissioners Court awarded an approximately $3.6 million construction contract to Serco Construction Group, Ltd. on May 8. The 30-month project includes removing approximately 432,000 cubic yards of soil, constructing a weir spillway structure and regaining the detention basin’s slopes.

Construction began in June.

The Flood Control District has already excavated approximately 164,100 cubic yards of soil from the site.

The project contractor also will construct a 1.6-mile trail around the stormwater detention basin. The city of Jersey Village will fund construction of the trail through an interlocal agreement with the Flood Control District.

The Jersey Meadows Stormwater Detention Basin will hold about 114 million gallons of water when completed.

“The Jersey Meadows Stormwater Detention Basin is one of 10 stormwater detention basins included in the Flood Control District’s White Oak Bayou Regional Flood Control Plan to reduce flooding along White Oak Bayou,” said Mike Talbott, Flood Control District director. “To date, we have purchased a total of 490 acres for those 10 detention basin sites and completed nine stormwater detention basins, which collectively hold 1.4 billion gallons of stormwater. This will be the final basin completed as part of the regional plan.”

Since the White Oak Bayou Regional Flood Control Plan was approved by Harris County Commissioners Court in 1984, the Flood Control District has spent $81 million on White Oak Bayou flood damage reduction projects.

In addition to the regional stormwater detention basins, the District has completed 7.5 miles of channel conveyance improvements along White Oak Bayou from Beltway 8 to Tidwell Drive and improvements to the 2-mile Jersey Village Channel, which carries 30 percent of White Oak Bayou flows around the city of Jersey Village during times of heavy rain.

About the White Oak Bayou Watershed

The White Oak Bayou watershed is located in central and northwest Harris County. White Oak Bayou originates north of FM 1960 near U.S. 290 and flows southeast to its confluence with Buffalo Bayou in downtown Houston. The bayou drains areas in northwest Harris County as well as the city of Jersey Village and portions of the city of Houston. The watershed includes five primary streams: White Oak Bayou, Little White Oak Bayou, Brinkhouse Gully, Cole Creek and Vogel Creek. Over time, much of White Oak Bayou has been modified and enlarged. The most prominent enlargement occurred between 1964 and 1978, when the lower 10.7 miles of the bayou was modified as part of a federal flood damage reduction project carried out by the Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work 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.

This 2005 aerial view of the Harris County Flood Control District’s 42-acre Jersey Meadows Stormwater Detention Basin site in the city of Jersey Village shows the results of excavation work completed to date. In June, the Flood Control District started the final phase of excavation of the stormwater detention basin. A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hurricane Ike Hazard Mitigation Grant will reimburse up to 75 percent of construction costs.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT INITIATES FINAL EXCAVATION PHASE OF ELDRIE STORMWATER DETENTION BASIN PROJECT

July 9, 2012

In July, the Harris County Flood District celebrates a landmark event with the launch of the final phase of excavation on the 340-acre site near the intersection of State Highway 6 and the Westpark Tollway in west Houston. The Flood Control District started excavating the Eldridge Stormwater Detention Basin on Brays Bayou approximately 10 years ago.

Once the Eldridge Stormwater Detention Basin project is finished, it will be the third of four stormwater detention basins completed as part of the Brays Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, known as Project Brays.

Harris County Commissioners Court awarded the approximately $12.4 million construction contract to Williams Equipment Services, LLC in May. The 24-month project includes the removal of approximately 2 million cubic yards of soil from the Eldridge Stormwater Detention Basin. This is the ninth and final phase of construction.

When the stormwater detention basin project is complete, the basin will retain approximately 1.5 billion gallons of stormwater that otherwise might flood homes and businesses and help reduce flooding risks for those who live downstream along the banks of Brays Bayou.

The Eldridge basin also has 340 acres of usable greenspace for nearby communities. Harris County Precinct 3's Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza Park is located at the southeast corner of the basin site and features a jogging/walking trail, playground and pavilion/gazebo facility.

The basin has been designed by the Flood Control District to be environmentally friendly and to promote habitat for wildlife. The eco-system continues to develop and supports a sizeable variety of birdlife.

The approximately $530 million Project Brays is a cooperative effort between the Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Project Brays 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. The project also includes excavating four stormwater detention basins that when completed will hold the equivalent of seven Asterodomes of water, and replacing or modifying 32 bridges.

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

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY RESIDENTS URGED TO REPORT FLOODED HOMES, BUSINESSES AT WWW.READYHARRIS.ORG COUNTY OFFICIALS NEED ACCURATE COUNT TO ASSESS FLOOD DAMAGE

July 14, 2012
Harris County residents are urged to report house flooding by completing a Flood Survey as soon as possible at the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management’s website at www.readyharris.org/go/survey/1829/1531/.

Heavy and persistent rainfall that produced 11-15 inches of rain in northwest Harris County July 11-13 resulted in high water levels in bayous and creeks and house flooding in subdivisions along Cypress Creek, Little Cypress Creek, Willow Creek, and Spring Creek, in Harris, Waller, and Montgomery Counties.

Harris County employees are currently in affected neighborhoods collecting information from residents whose homes flooded and investigating the impacts of the storms. Your help in reporting flooded structures online is vital to assessing areas impacted and the full extent of flood damage.

Though flooded bayous and creeks in those areas are receding, additional rainfall is forecasted Sunday through next week and residents should remain vigilant of water levels.

With heavy rainfall comes the threat of flooding, so it is important for Harris County residents to get and stay prepared. The Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has disaster preparedness resources and the latest information about conditions in Harris County at www.readyharris.org. The Harris County Flood Control District has a “Family Flood Preparedness” center at www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare.html with helpful, printable resources and flood preparedness tips. The flooding over the past 3 days is another reminder that all residents in this area should carry flood insurance. 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.

Residents should be aware of conditions near workplaces, schools and homes. The Harris County Flood Warning System allows residents to monitor rainfall and bayou water levels at www.harriscountyfws.org. The Flood Control District’s Flood Watch team continues monitor data and is working to advise the public and local officials of areas that are and could be affected by flooding.

About the Harris County Flood Control District
The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Kim Jackson, Harris County Flood Control District Media Coordinator 713-582-5124 kimberlye.jackson@hcfcd.org
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT TO RESTORE CYPRUS CREEK ALONG MEYER PARK

August 1, 2012

The Harris County Flood Control District has launched the second phase of a channel restoration project on Cypress Creek along Harris County Precinct 4’s Elizabeth Kaiser Meyer Park in northwest Harris County.

This is the second phase of a Flood Control District project. The first phase was completed in 2006 and transformed a quarter-mile segment of Cypress Creek adjacent to Meyer Park west of Latson Road. The limits of the second and current phase of the maintenance project will extend from Latson to Stuebner-Airline Road.

Project Will Shore Up Creek’s Banks

Throughout time, floodwater has severely eroded the banks in sections of the creek along Meyer Park upstream of Stuebner-Airline. Erosion also has killed a number of trees by wearing away the soil under the trees’ root systems and has increased the deposition of sediment into the creek. Sediment deposition can impact water quality, which affects habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The project includes the construction of gentle side slopes and a channel bench or plateau into the banks along an approximately half-mile stretch of the creek east of Stuebner-Airline. Both design measures will help prevent and control future erosion. Harris County Commissioners Court awarded a $1.4 million contract in April to BRH-Garver Construction, LP, and construction began on June 18.

“Construction vehicles will need to cross an existing asphalt trail within Meyer Park, but pedestrian traffic will be maintained and protected,” said Mike Talbott, Flood Control District director. “If the trail is damaged during construction, we will make repairs to the trail to its original condition.”

After this phase of the project is completed, the Flood Control District will plant grass, trees and other plants to establish a canopy along the creek. Vegetation helps stabilize a channel’s banks to help reduce the future risk of erosion.

Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soil quality and the continual flow of stormwater through the creek. In Harris County, soils are often sandy in texture and can easily wear down, particularly with a constant flow of water through a bayou, creek or other waterway. If left unchecked, the erosion could have continued to weaken the banks of the creek and eventually affected the creek’s ability to move water downstream.

Where are They Now? An Update on Archeological Site Discovered in Project’s First Phase

In late 2006, archeologists excavated portions of a Native American composite during the cultural resources investigation for this phase of the maintenance project. They recovered more than 2,000 artifacts, mostly stone tools and broken pieces of pottery, from the banks of Cypress Creek. Analysis of the artifacts determined that the site had been occupied repeatedly by Native American tribes during the Early Ceramic (A.D. 100-800) and Late Ceramic (A.D. 800-1750) periods.

State and federal laws require that public areas containing cultural resources deemed worthy of research and valuable contributions to history must be excavated and their findings preserved if they cannot be avoided by a project, as regulated by the Texas Historical Commission.

The discovered artifacts were washed, analyzed, labeled, catalogued and bagged, and their paperwork duplicated on acid-free paper. The items are curated at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas in Austin, and, though not available for public viewing, are used for research purposes.

About the Harris County Flood Control District

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT’S INAUGURAL FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM MOBILE WEBSITE GOES LIVE
Residents Can Monitor Harris County’s Rainfall and Bayou Levels on Mobile Devices

September 17, 2012

The Harris County Flood Control District has launched its inaugural Flood Warning System mobile website designed for quick and easy access to the Harris County Regional Flood Warning System www.harriscountyfws.org. Residents can monitor rainfall and bayou/stream levels near their homes, places of work and daily commute routes on their mobile devices anytime and anywhere by accessing the mobile application.

The Flood Control District urges the public to utilize the mobile website and the information it provides to prepare and take appropriate precautions during periods of heavy rain and flooding.

The Flood Warning System draws information from a network of gages that measure rainfall data and water levels in bayous and major streams throughout Harris County 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The real-time information is available on the Flood Warning System mobile application and website through a user-friendly interactive map. The District’s Flood Watch Team constantly monitors the data and works during severe weather events to advise the public and local officials of areas that are and could be affected by flooding. This reliable, 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 also is critical during winter weather and hurricane events.

How the Harris County Regional Flood Warning System Mobile Website Works:

By inputting www.harriscountyfws.org users access the mobile website home page where they can:

- Search for and view a specific address location on the map
- Navigate (zoom in/out, pan, etc.) around the map in a mobile-device-friendly manner
- View a specified gage site location on the map and summary details for that site (bayou/stream levels and rainfall data)
- Specify the time period (e.g. 1 hour, 24 hours, 2 days, 7 days, etc.) for bayou/stream level and rainfall data
- View a gage station’s changes in bayou/stream elevation and rainfall accumulation over time (chart, table)
- View gage station sites on the base map for partner agencies (Harris County is the default selection)
- View a map of Harris County and surrounding areas, and watershed boundaries
- View current weather information (air temperature, wind direction/speed, etc.)

The mobile website also allows users to link to the Flood Warning System’s full (desktop) site, which was launched in June 2011. The desktop site has an address input feature that allows users to access current and historical rainfall and stream levels on a county scale or at an individual gage location, to export that information to Excel, and to print information displayed on the screen.

HOW THE FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM WORKS

Real-time information from gages strategically located near bayous and streams throughout the county is transmitted to the Flood Control District’s Flood Warning System and Flood Watch teams.

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 – .04-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.

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 new 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 (HOSEM), which operated and maintained the gages until 2009 when the system was transferred back to the Flood Control District.

From 1983 to 2007, the number of gage stations increased more than tenfold from 13 to 132. The stations were strategically positioned across Harris County to maximize rainfall coverage and obtain water level information at critical locations. Today the gage network is part of a larger regional gage network that gathers information from...
selected bayous, streams, and roadways within and adjacent to Harris County. 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

The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.

* The data presented on this mapping tool and website may be delayed by approximately 5 minutes.
The Harris County Flood Control District will launch the final phase of the Stormwater Detention Basin at Cypress Park project on Cypress Creek in August.

The areas shaded in blue (K500-01-00) on the map designate the Harris County Flood Control District's Stormwater Detention Basin at Cypress Park. Crews will excavate approximately 150,000 cubic yards of soil from these areas over the next 5 months.

Current News
September 20, 2012
The Harris County Flood Control District will start work on the final phase of the 50-acre Stormwater Detention Basin at Cypress Park project in October.

Harris County Commissioners Court awarded the approximately $1.4 million excavation and construction contract to Lindsey Construction, Inc. on August 21. The approximately 5-month project includes the excavation of approximately 150,000 cubic yards of soil for onsite fill, an outfall structure modification and re-grading and stabilizing the detention basin's slopes.

The Stormwater Detention Basin at Cypress Park is located on the north bank of Cypress Creek near North Eldridge Parkway. The site is adjacent to the Parc Lake Estates on North Eldridge subdivision, which is located on North Eldridge between Grant Road and Cypress North Houston Road.

The basin will hold about 80 million gallons of water when completed.

The Stormwater Detention Basin at Cypress Park is one of numerous Flood Control District regional detention sites completed or under development. That equates to approximately 8,600 acres of land used to reduce flooding risks and damages, and many of these detention sites provide wetlands mitigation, habitat for wildlife and greenspace for all to enjoy.

About the Harris County Flood Control District
The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON COLE CREEK EROSION REPAIRS

October 25, 2012
The Harris County Flood Control District began construction of a maintenance project along a 3,200-foot section of Cole Creek in north central Harris County in October.

The project will repair and rebuild eroded side slopes of Cole Creek from its confluence with White Oak Bayou southwest of the intersection of West Tidwell Road and T.C. Jester Boulevard upstream to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe bridge east of Antoine Drive.

On August 21, Harris County Commissioners Court awarded the approximately $576,000 construction contract to BRH-Garver Construction, LP. The project will take approximately 80 working days to complete, weather and schedule permitting.

Erosion has occurred and resulted in damage to the slopes and various storm sewer and outfall pipes in the project area. The maintenance project, formally identified as E117-00-00-X012, will include removal and replacement of damaged outfall pipes and installation of buried riprap on the creek's slopes and toe line, which is the lowest point of a channel's banks. Riprap in Harris County is typically recycled concrete that is processed to fit together like natural rock. Riprap is usually buried and helps armor a channel's banks to prevent future erosion and provides habitat for wildlife.

Erosion is caused by a combination of poor soil quality and the constant flow of stormwater through a bayou, creek or other waterway. Unchecked erosion can wear away the banks of a creek and potentially affect its ability to move water downstream.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT BEGINS 2012-13 TREE PLANTING SEASON APPROXIMATELY 20,000 TREES WILL BE PLANTED BY SPRING

October 30, 2012
The Harris County Flood Control District recently planted 344 oaks, pines, sycamores and other native trees and shrubs along a South Mayde Creek tributary north of Franz Road in northwest Harris County. The Katy-area drainage channel formally identified as U101-05-00 was the first site selected for the Flood Control District’s 2012-13 tree planting program.

The Flood Control District’s goal is to plant up to 20,000 trees this tree-planting season, which runs through the end of March at 17 Flood Control District project locations countywide. Tree species that will be planted include pine, sycamore, green ash, cedar elm, pecan, and bur, shumard and water oaks.

The Flood Control District begins its planting season in the early fall when temperatures are cooler and trees require less water. Trees are planted in groups along the upper half and top of channel slopes to avoid impeding the flow of stormwater. Planting sites avoid drainage outfall pipes and other structures and allow access for maintenance vehicles.

Since 2001, the Flood Control District has planted 160,000 trees along the banks of bayous, creeks and stormwater detention basins throughout Harris County. Along with beautifying the sites, the trees provide environmental, structural and economic benefits.

Mature trees and their web of roots help reduce the risk of erosion in drainage channels. Trees also create a shade canopy that reduces mowing costs, improves water quality by dissipating erosion-causing rainfall, and provides wildlife habitat.

The trees come from local suppliers and the Flood Control District’s tree nursery, which was created in 2003 to augment local suppliers and to ensure a source for hard-to-find species that thrive in wet conditions such as overcup oak and water tupelo. The nursery usually has 6,000-10,000 trees in various growth stages.

The Flood Control District waters, mulches and fertilizes trees for a two-year period while they establish their root systems. The District currently maintains approximately 25,000 trees on 40 sites in Harris County.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT CAUTIONS BUFFALO BAYOU KAYAKERS,
CANOEISTS
Avoid Construction Areas, Respect Warning Signs

November 26, 2012
Harris County Flood Control District officials are reminding Buffalo Bayou Park visitors – especially canoeists and
kayakers – to avoid construction areas along Buffalo Bayou and to respect construction signs and fences.

The Flood Control District recently launched construction on a 7-phase, $5 million project that will restore a 2-mile
section of Buffalo Bayou from Sabine Street near Interstate 45 west to Shepherd Drive. As part of the project, the
Flood Control District has posted warning signs, instructing all watercraft coming from upstream of the project area
to pull out at the Montrose Street Bridge. Please be aware: The Montrose Street Bridge is not a designated put-in/take-
out location but is the last viable exit before entering the construction zone.

The warning signs include the words “Danger” or “Warning” and cite “Hazardous Conditions.” As many as 15 signs
have been posted at designated put-in locations along the bayou; on the Shepherd, Waugh, Montrose and Rosemont
bridges; and both upstream and downstream of the construction zone.

The first phase of the Flood Control District’s Channel Conveyance Restoration at Buffalo Bayou Park project started
Aug. 6 on the section of Buffalo Bayou located directly north of the Houston Police Officers Memorial on Memorial
Drive west of Sabine. The Flood Control District is realigning this section of the channel to lengthen the bayou’s
meander and is performing other work aimed at reducing erosion and stabilizing the bayou’s banks.

As part of the restoration project, construction crews will be working within the channel during some periods, with
equipment and conditions that could put the health and safety of kayakers and canoeists at risk. This work is
expected to continue for several months, at least through the end of the year, depending on weather and other
conditions.

During all construction phases, park visitors, canoeists and kayakers are advised to be alert, to
respect the flagmen, construction signs and construction fences, and to abide by temporary trail and
bayou closures.

The Channel Conveyance Restoration at Buffalo Bayou Park Project
The Channel Conveyance Restoration at Buffalo Bayou Park project started Aug. 6 on the section of Buffalo Bayou located directly north of the Houston Police Officers Memorial on Memorial Drive west of Sabine. The Flood Control District is realigning this section of the channel to lengthen the bayou’s meander and is performing other work aimed at reducing erosion and stabilizing the bayou’s banks.

As part of the 7-phase project, the Flood Control District will remove sediment that has built up over the years in
Buffalo Bayou and repair existing erosion along the channel’s slopes. Bankfull benches will be created on the inside
bends of the bayou and graded into gentle slopes that can serve as launch areas for canoes and kayaks. The District
will clear invasive vegetation species in order to allow the removal of sediment and to promote a healthier native
ecosystem. The District will make an effort to preserve as many existing native trees as possible and will replant the
cleared area with native vegetation and trees.

About the Harris County Flood Control District
The Harris County Flood Control District provides flood damage reduction projects that work, 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.
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT COMPLETES STORMWATER DETENTION BASIN PROJECT ON HORSEPEN CREEK

December 17, 2012
The Harris County Flood Control District has completed the final phase of a stormwater detention basin located on a 175-acre site along Horsepen Creek in northwest Harris County.

The Upper Horsepen Creek Stormwater Detention Basin, formally identified as U506-05-00, is located at the upstream end of the creek, approximately 0.5 miles east of Barker-Cypress Road and north of West Road. The basin is almost completely surrounded by residential neighborhoods, including Canyon Lakes at Stonegate on the basin’s north and west sides, and Copper Lakes on the south side. It is east of Lone Star College-CyFair.

The final phase included significantly re-grading the detention basin’s slopes and adding a weir structure. Stormwater detention basins adjacent to bayous, creeks or other waterways often are designed with a weir structure. The weir serves as a spillway that allows stormwater rising in a channel— in this case, Horsepen Creek—to spill into the detention basin during times of heavy rain. Stormwater is temporarily stored in the basin and slowly released back to the creek, thus helping to reduce out-of-banks flooding.

N&Z Contracting Inc. was awarded the approximately $1.3 million construction contract for the final phase in November 2011 and completed their work in October 2012. The completed basin can retain approximately 360 million gallons of stormwater that otherwise might flood homes and businesses. It will help reduce flooding risks for those who live downstream along Horsepen Creek.

Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner Steve Radack has announced plans to develop a county park with a trail, playground, parking lot, picnic tables, exercise areas, water fountains and restroom on the south side peninsula of the basin. Precinct 3 is also planning a dog park on the north peninsula, along with trails and additional parking.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
The Harris County Flood Control District provides projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, 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.