

Project Partners:

Harris County
Flood
Control/Project
Brays

Houston Parks
and Recreation
Department

Texas
Cooperative
Extension/Texas
Sea Grant

Texas Parks and
Wildlife
Department

Texas Master
Naturalist

Cesar E. Chavez
High School

Stephen F. Austin
High School

NRCS

US Fish and
Wildlife

US
Environmental
Protection
Agency

Galveston Bay
Estuary Program

National Oceanic
and Atmospheric
Association
/Texas Coastal
Management
Program

NRG, Inc.

Urban Wetland at Mason Park: Four Years of Collaboration

Over the past four years, a unique collaboration has been working hard to improve Brays Bayou with the creation of a stormwater treatment wetland at Mason Park. This project was coordinated between 12 partners, each with unique and important roles.

The wetland at Mason Park started as a suggestion to lower the new channel elevations for Brays Bayou. The larger Project Brays Flood Damage Reduction project intended to lower the bank levels on either side of the channel. The proposed elevation was high enough to maintain a grassy, mowable area. Andy Sipocz, with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, suggested that the proposed federal project should consider lowering the banks to achieve appropriate wetland elevation. This would create significant amount of wetlands without significantly increasing the proposed cost.

Harris County Flood Control, under the direction of Mike Talbott, agreed that the project fit well within the project scope, which would now include a demonstration stormwater treatment wetland, in addition to the revetments to reduce flood damage in the channel.



At the same time, Texas Cooperative Extension/Texas Sea Grant received funding from the Galveston Bay Estuary Program to build/create a stormwater BMP. Our original proposed site did not meet the final criteria, at which time, the Brays Wetland project was identified. The project was a good fit as the site was on a City of Houston park and had stormwater culverts feeding into the system. After the major partners, including Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD), agreed to collaborate, TCE/TSG funded the original design for the wetland, which would eventually be converted to the final engineering and construction plans by HCFCD.

Now, after several thousands dumptruck loads of excavated dirt and an amazing construction effort from HCFCD, TCE/TSG, with access from HPARD, planted the site with native wetland vegetation, including up to 35 species of plants native to the region. While our major focus is water quality abatement/treatment, we are equally concerned with aesthetics. We have included many native flowering plants to enhance the beauty of the wetland, such as the iris shown to the right. Plus, these same flowering plants have the added advantage of being rather “unsavory” to herbivores dominating the area, such as nonnative



nutria. With the volunteer effort from the Texas Master naturalist Program, 2 area high schools (Stephen F. Austin and Cesar E. Chavez High School) and other dedicated groups, we completed planting in September 2006. The dedication ceremony officially opening the site to the park and the community will be held on Friday, October 27th at 10am.

If you are interested in helping establish this wonderous urban wetladn, contact Marissa Sipocz [m-sipocz@tamu.edu](mailto:msipocz@tamu.edu) or Charriss York, cyork@tamu.edu