



Willow Waterhole Prairie Management Area STATUS UPDATE – December 2014

The Harris County Flood Control District is committed to keeping you informed as we progress through the plans to establish a 15-acre native coastal prairie management area in the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin's Compartment 3 located northeast of the intersection of South Post Oak Road and South Main Street. Following is an update about recent and upcoming activities related to the Willow Waterhole Prairie Management Area.

PRAIRIE PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN DEVELOPMENT – FINAL REPORT AVAILABLE!

Over the past eight-plus months, the Flood Control District has worked with the community and partners in the development of a public access plan for the Willow Waterhole Prairie Management Area. Asakura Robinson, a planning/landscape architecture company, guided development of the plan through three public workshops (the first included a site visit), and we are excited to say that the final Willow Waterhole Prairie Management Plan Public Access Plan report is available! The PDF version is attached to this file, and you can purchase soft-cover, book-bound copies at: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/harris-county-flood-control/willow-waterhole-public-access-plan/paperback/product-21913787.html>

The Flood Control District would like to thank all residents and groups that participated in the plan development process. Your participation and input played a vital role in shaping this plan, which will guide the development of educational and appropriate recreational amenities in the Prairie Management Area.

The Flood Control District continues to meet with agencies and groups that could serve as potential partners in the Prairie Public Access Plan development process.

HCFCF ACTIVITIES IN PRAIRIE MANAGEMENT AREA

The Flood Control District's current activities include:

- The continued removal of trees and shrubs in the Willow Waterhole Prairie Management Area's North Sector directly south of the Willowbrook and Post Oak Manor neighborhoods. *This removal activity includes:*
 - **All invasive trees and shrubs located in the forested buffer directly south of the Willowbrook and Post Oak Manor neighborhoods (all other native trees and vegetation will remain).** All exotic, or non-native, vegetation is being removed from the forested buffer (the area marked in light green on the map below).
 - **Trees and shrubs NOT marked with a large green "X" located outside of the forested buffer.** In total, 40 trees will be included in proposed mottes, which are groupings of trees in the native coastal prairie area. The identified trees are marked in the field, and each individual tree is shown on the map below (1 green dot = 1 tree). Tree species include Water Oak, Willow Oak, Live Oak, Eastern Red Cedar, Loblolly Pine, Deciduous Holly and Sweetgum. All other trees will be removed, as grasses, flowers and other vegetation found in native coastal prairie environments require open space, sunlight and minimal shade to survive. In order to aid in seedling germination, the Flood Control District's contractor will continue to rake the mulch created from trees cleared at the site, and will place it around the mottes and in the forested buffer.





Willow Waterhole Prairie Management Area STATUS UPDATE – December 2014

- High-deck mowing of the Prairie Management Area's North Sector and the Beren Ditch, which is the 100-foot-wide drainage ditch located along the Prairie Management Area North Sector's northern boundary that provides drainage outfall for the Beren Academy property located east of the Prairie Management Area. This mowing activity is conducted twice a year to remove debris and stimulate a diverse palette of native prairie plants.

The Flood Control District's planned future activities include:

- The creation of a Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) garden area near the Prairie Management Area's pedestrian entrance at Windwood Drive. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Monarch butterfly population is declining due to habitat destruction, urbanization, herbicide use, and a reduction of milkweed populations. Monarch larvae feed exclusively on the leaves of milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.), and adults feed on a variety of flowers, flower nectar, and water. The District has been asked to create habitat with host milkweed plants, and other flowering and nectar-producing local plants to support the success of the Monarch population. Antelope horns and Green milkweed plants exist within the Prairie Management Area, so the District will expand that existing habitat by planting additional milkweed and other plants favored by Monarchs.
- The continued removal of marked invasive trees within the forested buffer.
- After the removal of the invasive trees and shrubs is complete, the Flood Control District team will analyze the effect the removal activities has had on the forested buffer, and will determine the number and species of native trees and shrubs that need to be planted in order to maintain it. The result will be a planting plan for the forested buffer. The Flood Control District does not have dates set for planting activities at this time.
- Continued clean-up and prairie reclamation activities in the Prairie Management Area's South Sector.

WILLOW WATERHOLE PRAIRIE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The current Willow Waterhole Prairie Management Plan (a living document that is revised as needed) is available for viewing and/or download on the Flood Control District's Project Brays website at <http://www.projectbrays.org/willow.html>.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Flood Control District appreciates the community's interest in our projects and welcomes questions and comments. Residents can sign up for monthly project status updates by contacting Kim Jackson, Harris County Flood Control District communications department manager at Kimberlye.jackson@hcfcd.org.

Residents who have questions or need additional information can contact the Harris County Flood Control District's Project and Study Information Line at 713-684-4040 or the Project Brays Information Hotline at 713-316-4820.



Willow Waterhole Prairie Management Area STATUS UPDATE – December 2014

2014 HAS BEEN A YEAR OF CHANGE AND GROWTH IN THE WILLOW WATERHOLE PRAIRIE MANAGEMENT AREA - FOR THE FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT AND THE COMMUNITY.

WE HAVE NOT ALWAYS AGREED, BUT WE AT THE DISTRICT APPRECIATE THE EFFORT THAT OUR NEIGHBORS HAVE DEDICATED TO DISCUSSION WITH OUR TEAM ABOUT PRAIRIE MANAGEMENT AREA ACTIVITIES AND YOUR EFFORTS TO LEARN ABOUT NATIVE PRAIRIE HABITAT.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING TOGETHER IN 2015 AND BEYOND!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



PHOTO OF THE "COYO-DEER" IS COURTESY OF VAL RUNGE - THANK YOU VAL ☺!