

Buffalo Bayou Park Master Plan Developed

Dear Friends:

As the year comes to an end, it is time for all of us at Buffalo Bayou Partnership to appreciate all that we have accomplished and anticipate all that lies ahead. In 2010, we laid the foundation for many future projects and activities. Two major initiatives – Buffalo Bend Nature Park and Buffalo Bayou Park Shepherd-to-Sabine Master Plan – are highlighted in this newsletter issue. As these projects demonstrate, BBP is committed to redevelopment throughout the bayou corridor – from Shepherd Drive on the west to the Port of Houston Turning Basin on the east.

Please join us on our exciting journey to restore Buffalo Bayou, Houston's greatest natural resource. We hope you will consider making a year-end contribution that will ensure that our efforts continue in the years ahead. Happy Holidays.

Sincerely,



Chuck Carlberg
CHAIRMAN



Anne Olson
PRESIDENT

RESULTING FROM a bold century-old civic vision to develop a greenway from downtown to a regional park (now known as Memorial Park), the Shepherd to Sabine stretch of Buffalo Bayou is Houston's most iconic landscape. While lush and green at first glance, this 158-acre, 2.3 mile stretch of park land has been suffering from underfunded maintenance and the absence of a master plan to guide restoration.

In 2010, Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) joined with the City of Houston and Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) to develop a master plan for this important bayou segment. The current planning initiative builds off BBP's 2002 *Buffalo Bayou and Beyond*, a 20-year visionary plan that includes wide-ranging proposals for the West, East and Downtown stretches of the bayou.

Since releasing the *Buffalo Bayou and Beyond* plan eight years ago, significant progress has been made in implementing the plan's recommendations in the East and Downtown sectors including:

- Assemblage of approximately 45 acres for future creation of parkland
- Construction of four miles of hike and bike trails in the East End
- Phases I and II of historic Allen's Landing, including expansion of the park, rehabilitation of the wharf, and addition of a grass lawn, public art and amenities
- Development of the 23-acre, award-winning Sabine Promenade

With significant progress being made in the East End and Downtown, there is a great deal of momentum to transform the Shepherd to Sabine bayou segment into one of Houston's premier green spaces. In addition to the growing interest in restoration of the bayou area, there is an urgent need to address natural processes (erosion, silt buildup, etc.) that if not addressed, will cause long-term ecological harm.

Harris County Flood Control District Plan

At BBP's invitation and with the support of the City of Houston Parks & Recreation Department, the park-



land owner, HCFCD has been conducting a preliminary engineering study to investigate how the agency might restore the bayou channel. Committed to an environmentally sensitive approach, the HCFCD team includes archaeologists, biologists, and a fluvial geomorphologist, who is applying lessons from natural stream systems to repair damage done to Buffalo Bayou when it was channelized. Key goals of the HCFCD study include:

| continued

TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS of the TPWD Urban Outreach Grant Program, BBP must provide 1:1 matching funds for the \$997,000 grant. Fundraising for this exciting East End project is now underway. For information on funding opportunities, please contact Jennifer Gaines, BBP Director of Development, at 713-752-0314, ext. 5 or jgaines@buffalobayou.org.

- Cistern
 - Native wetland plants and trees
- With the recently-awarded TPWD grant, the following enhancements will be incorporated into the park:
- Wetland boardwalk and observation deck
 - Hike and bike trails
 - Bayou overlook and shelter
 - Interpretive and wayfinding signage

Another component of the project is the acquisition of easements and adjoining properties to create a continuous connection to the City of Houston's nearby Hidalgo Park. By acquiring easements and parcels, more than 23 acres of green space will be created.

"These acquisitions highlight our on-going efforts to address the recreational needs of East End residents by expanding Hidalgo Park," said Joe Turner, Director Houston Parks and Recreation Department

In 2011, Buffalo Bayou Partnership and Harris County Precinct Two will complete design and fundraising for the park. Construction will commence in 2012. Look for updates on the County's and BBP's effort to transform this once abandoned property into a showcase for environmental education and passive use park activities.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Awards Grant for Buffalo Bend Nature Park



A \$997,000 TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE Department (TPWD) Urban Outdoor Recreation Grant will transform Buffalo Bend Nature Park in Houston's East End into one of the bayou's most visible and ecological destinations.

Located on Sgt. Macario Garcia Drive south of the Port of Houston Turning Basin, the park land was purchased in 2004 through a collaborative effort of Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Harris County Flood Control District, Harris County Precinct Two, Congressman Gene Green and the Trust for Public Land. While the park is now owned by Harris County Precinct Two, Buffalo Bayou Partnership is leading the development of the 10-acre site.

"This is a very prestigious grant and we are honored that Buffalo Bend Park was awarded these highly competitive and sought after funds," says Sylvia Garcia, Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner.

With a \$145,000 Texas General Land Coastal Management Program grant and \$110,000 in matching funds raised by Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Phase I park improvements were completed in 2009, including:

- Three wetland ponds that treat diverted stormwater
- Amphitheater mound created from the park's pond fill
- Rock walls and weir

Buffalo Bayou Park Master Plan continued

- Restoring the channel's stormwater capacity
- Enhancing the ability of the natural systems to maintain themselves naturally and affordably
- Removing silt that has built up over the past 50 years
- Preserving existing high quality trees
- Reintroducing native trees and vegetation

Buffalo Bayou Partnership Plan

BBP's master planning work focuses on the site's parkland from Allen Parkway to Memorial Drive. In addition to integrating the recently completed neighborhood trail connections and Rosemont Bridge now under construction, the plan's key goals include:



- Restoration of natural landscapes: trees, native grasses and understory, including reduced mowed grass in areas not used for recreation
- Provision of areas to walk and hike away from speeding bicycles, opportunities to enjoy nature, and locations for canoes and kayaks to land
- Safer pedestrian crossings over the bayou away from dangerous roadway bridges



Discussion during a Master Plan community meeting.

- Improved comfort – additional benches, shade, places to picnic and drinking fountains, generally “up high” while still preserving the parkland as a place people can go to get away from the city “down low”
- Improved safety lighting along the trails at street level while avoiding lighting in more natural areas closer to the water's edge
- Restoration of historic ravines, outfalls, and other secondary water features
- Improved access from surrounding neighborhoods

Through a series of community meeting and focus group sessions held over the past six months, exciting ideas were put forth that are beyond the scope and financial means of the current plan's anticipated funding and timeframe. Activities such as pedestrian access along Allen Parkway, a restaurant or café have been identified as projects that could occur in the future.

It is important to note that the Buffalo Bayou Park Master Plan is being designed to serve the current and projected Houston population and to be maintainable over the long term. Towards that end, a consultant was hired to develop a comprehensive maintenance plan and budget for the park.

Upon approval by Houston City Council and Harris County Commissioners Court, the Buffalo Bayou Park Master Plan will be released in early 2011.

Buffalo Bayou Partnership extends its sincere thanks to the following Buffalo Bayou Park Master Plan funders.

- CATALYST:**
- KINDER FOUNDATION**
 - THE CARRUTH FOUNDATION**
 - CENTRAL HOUSTON CIVIC IMPROVEMENT INC.**
 - HOUSTON ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION**
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 - THE POWELL FOUNDATION**

Projects in the Works

The Buffalo Bayou Park Master Plan builds upon recently completed, current and future projects in the area.

- Rosemont Bridge and neighborhood connector trails, funded by the City's Memorial Heights Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ #5), to be completed in early 2011



- Jaeme Plensa artwork at the Rosemont Bridge's south approach just east of Studemont, to be completed in early 2011
- Reconstruction of the Sandy Reed Memorial Trail by the City of Houston and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), scheduled for construction summer 2011

- Harris County Flood Control District's recently completed stream restoration pilot project to increase flood water conveyance by removing silt buildup and restoring native vegetation, completed in fall 2010



Eleanor Tinsley Park boat launch is now revealed, thanks to HCFC's pilot project.

These projects were highlighted in detail in BBP's spring 2010 newsletter.

Managing the Buffalo Bayou Park Master Plan Process



Leading the Buffalo Bayou Park Master Planning process is Guy Hagstette, immediate past president of Discovery Green Park. Guy has a long history of involvement with Buffalo Bayou dating back to the mid-1980s when he and a team of architects won a national design competition to design

Sesquicentennial Park. For the past 25 years, Guy has been at the forefront of major Houston urban design initiatives while serving as Director of Planning and Development for the Downtown Management District and as Special Assistant for Urban Design to Mayor Bill White.

Oversight is key to the master planning work and a capable steering committee has been formed, comprised of the following individuals: Chair Nancy Kinder (Kinder Foundation), Gary Dudley (Kinder Foundation), Andy Icken (City of Houston), Mike Talbott (Harris County Flood Control District), and Brady Carruth (Buffalo Bayou Partnership). A Buffalo Bayou Partnership Projects Committee also was recently created to provide oversight and decision making for the Buffalo Bayou Park master planning effort and other BBP projects. The committee includes BBP board members: Mark Cover, Mike Garver, Shannon Sasser and Jeff Taylor.



Happy Trails to You

LYRICS BY DALE EVANS ROGERS

Happy trails to you, until we meet again.
Happy trails to you, keep smilin' until then.
Who cares about the clouds when we're together?
Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather.
Happy trails to you, 'till we meet again.

Some trails are happy ones,
Others are blue.
It's the way you ride the trail that counts,
Here's a happy one for you.

Happy trails to you, until we meet again.
Happy trails to you, keep smilin' until then.
Who cares about the clouds when we're together?
Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather.

Happy trails to you, 'till we meet again.



Photos by Michelle Watson/michelle@lastnightpics.com

2010 Buffalo Bayou Ball - Happy Trails to You

A very special THANKS to those new Buffalo Bayou Ball underwriters and our loyal Buffalo Bayou friends who continue their support of this event, helping fund BBP's projects and operations revitalizing Buffalo Bayou.

Buffalo Bayou Ball- Happy Trails to You

Buffalo Bayou Partnership's 6th annual Buffalo Bayou Ball, with this year's theme "Happy Trails to You," was truly a magical evening with a record-setting crowd of almost 600.

Central Houston's President **Bob Eury** and Greater East End Management District's former decade-long chair **Sonny Flores** were honored for their collaboration with BBP to develop hike and bike trails along the Bayou from Downtown to the East End (eventually to extend all the way to the Port of Houston).

Deservedly proud gala chairs, **Lorraine and Ed Wulfe**, described as the 'dynamic duo' for having been involved in every aspect of the event, were among the many guests who got into the swing of things with their 'ranch dressing' attire. Sonny Flores displayed his ranch dressing proudly - complete with chaps!

Guests strolled along the Buffalo Bayou trails with the backdrop of the downtown skyline, before going up for dinner in an impressive block-long tent on historic Sabine Street Bridge.

The evening ended with everyone singing along to *Happy Trails to You* with 'till we meet again' providing the perfect ending for a fun-filled evening and a successful event which brought in over \$400,000.

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New Pontoon Boat has Arrived!

Many thanks to the generous donors who contributed to *The Osprey* boat fund to replace our vandalized boat, a victim of arson this past summer.

Let us introduce you to our new tour boat, the "Spirit of the Bayou"!

Photo by Michelle Watson, courtesy of CultureMap.



PRIVATE CRUISES

If you are looking for a unique Houston experience with your friends and family, hop aboard the "Spirit of the Bayou" pontoon tour boat for a private cruise on Houston's historic waterway, Buffalo Bayou

The 90-minute tour, sponsored by Buffalo Bayou Partnership, offers a unique perspective of our city. You will visit downtown landmarks including historic Allen's Landing-Houston's birthplace, ride past lushly landscaped Sabine Promenade and Sesquicentennial Park, and continue winding westward through the bayou's wilderness. East of downtown, you will experience historic railroad bridges, barge docks, and other remnants of Houston's industrial past.

Weekend and weekday evening cruises are available. You are welcome to bring along your own food and beverages. **Cost: \$20 per person with a 15-person minimum, 21-person maximum.**

Look for a new schedule of Buffalo Bayou boat tours early in 2011.

Reservations need to be made two weeks in advance by calling Jessalyn Ballard at 713.752.0314, ext. 4 or e-mail at jballard@buffalobayou.org.

Kayaking Buffalo Bayou – Urban Adventure



Celebrate Houston in a whole new way! Paddle historic Buffalo Bayou through downtown. Join the Buffalo Bayou Partnership for a kayak adventure through Houston's stunning urban wilderness.

Saturdays: January 15, February 19, March 26, April 16, May 21, and June 18.

You show up and we take care of the rest! \$60 per person includes kayak rental

(tandem 2-person), paddles, life jackets, shuttle back to your car, and a guided tour by outfitter North Lake Conroe Paddling Company.

For reservations, please contact Trudi Smith at tsmith@buffalobayou.org or 713.752.0314 ext. 3.

SAVE THE DATE

39th Annual Buffalo Bayou Regatta

Saturday, March 12, 2011

Texas' largest canoe and kayak race: **The Buffalo Bayou Regatta.** Houstonians of all ages are encouraged to participate in the 15-mile USCA-sanctioned race along the scenic Buffalo Bayou. Whether you are entering competitively or paddling for pleasure, we encourage you to join in the Regatta.

Those not wanting to paddle can catch the outdoor fun and cheer on the racers. **Free** live music, awards ceremony, and food and drinks will be available for sale at the finish line at downtown's Sesquicentennial Park.

Registration available in mid-January 2011.



CORPORATE NEWS

Thank you to **Tenaris** for selecting Buffalo Bayou for the company's annual Family Day this fall. Over 900 employees and family members enjoyed boat rides, live music, nature activities, food, and fun along the banks of Buffalo Bayou.

Tenaris is a corporate donor for Buffalo Bayou Partnership's ongoing revitalization efforts.

Many thanks to **Enbridge** for securing and planting trees and understory at Tapley Tributary! The newly planted vegetation marks the final step in the restoration of the urban tributary, originally designed by Charles Tapley in the seventies.



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The Bayou & Beyond

A Newsletter of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership

December 2010

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Houston, TX 77002
713-752-0314

www.buffalobayou.org

Happy Holidays!



BUFFALO BAYOU PARTNERSHIP

MISSION STATEMENT Buffalo Bayou Partnership is the non-profit organization revitalizing and transforming Buffalo Bayou, Houston's most significant natural resource.

The Partnership coordinates the integration of major amenities into the bayou greenbelt and seeks ways to increase community involvement through pedestrian, boating and biking amenities, permanent and temporary art installations, and other natural and built attractions.

www.buffalobayou.org



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With all of the exciting developments along Buffalo Bayou, we need your support more than ever.

To become a Buffalo Bayou Partnership supporter, please fill out this form below and send it to:

Buffalo Bayou Partnership
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