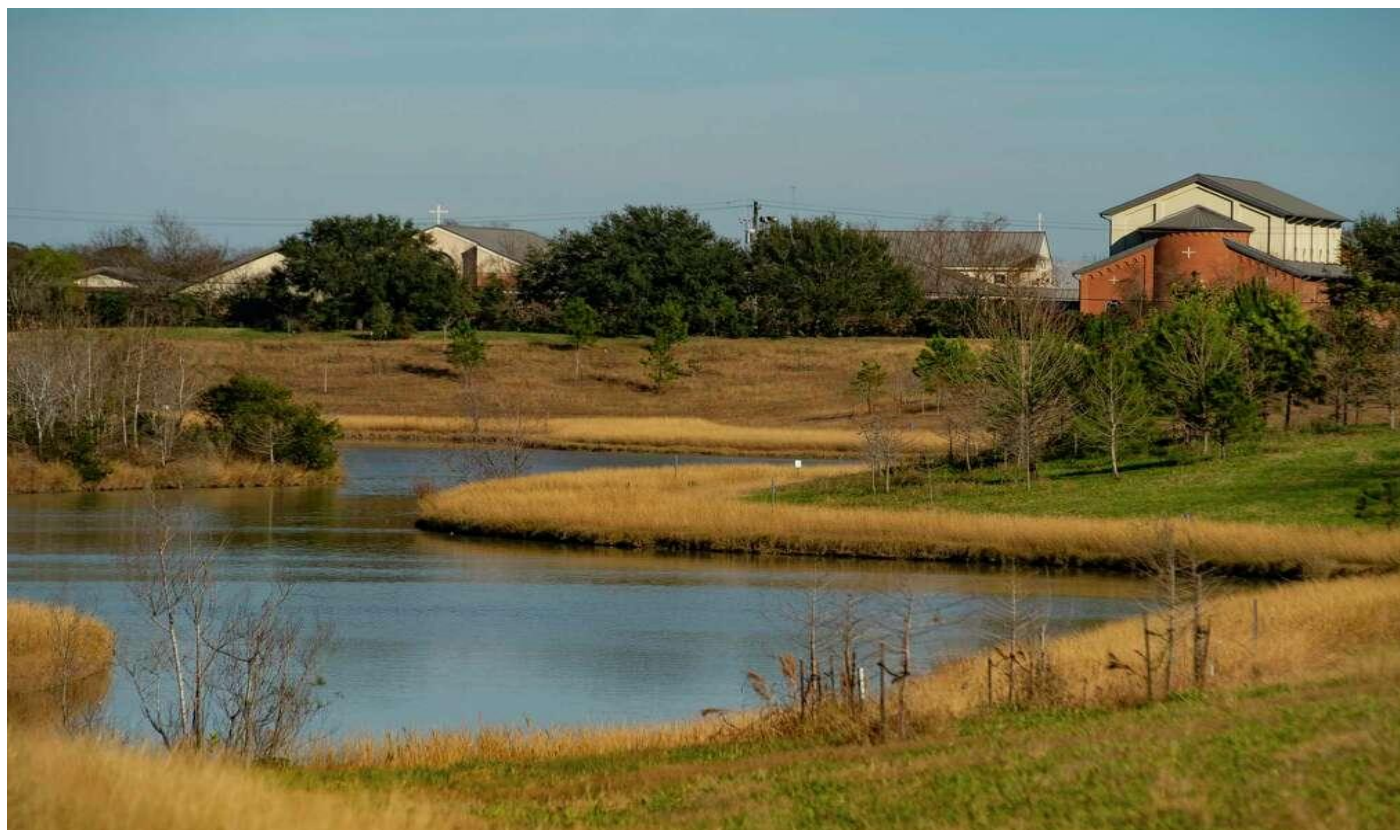


# The Watering Hole

*The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy Quarterly Newsletter*



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## Gratitude for continued progress

We are pleased to announce that the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy has received grant funds from the Brown Foundation and Cullen Foundation to further its capital project improvements and make the greenspace a destination for our neighbors and residents from all over the Houston area.

Thursday, July 28, at 7:00 p.m. is the date for our annual meeting. Please email [barbararichards90@gmail.com](mailto:barbararichards90@gmail.com) to register for the Zoom link. All are welcome!

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## Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy receives grants from The Brown and Cullen Foundations

As part of a \$12 million capital campaign to improve the Willow Waterhole Greenway, The Brown Foundation, Inc. awarded a \$1.5 million grant in May and The Cullen Foundation awarded a \$1.0 million grant in June to the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.

In November 2021, the Kinder Foundation made a gift of \$2 million to the campaigns with a commitment to match an additional \$2 million on a dollar-for-dollar basis. With the match, the cumulative total from the three foundations equals \$6.5 million.

The capital campaign will fund construction of eight miles of trails around the six Willow Waterhole lakes, additional parking, construction of a pier, purchasing of additional acreage, and developing a 15-acre native coastal prairie where endangered plants have been identified.

Connections will also be added to the Greenway hike and bike system via easements. Construction on the trails will begin this year and go through 2023.

“We are incredibly grateful to the foundations for these monumental gifts. The Greenway is a refuge for all Houstonians and their support will help transform the Greenway,” said Bill Burhans, the Conservancy’s president.

For more information, visit [willowwaterhole.org](http://willowwaterhole.org) or contact Bill Burhans at 713-906-3254.



**Announcing more grants**

**Thank you to the  
Brown Foundation  
and the Cullen  
Foundation**

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## The pier is “near-er:” Watch a video rendering of the new pier design and location

In the spring 2022 issue of *The Watering Hole*, we discussed the fundraising for the Westbury Lake Recreational Pier. Today, we can finally state that the pier is “near-er.”

In early June, bids for the pier were accepted and we are pleased to announce a contract has been awarded. Millis Development & Construction Inc., Missouri City, TX was awarded the construction contract for the pier as designed by Cobb Fendley & Associates Inc., Houston, TX.

The Pier will extend 46 feet into Westbury Lake, make a 90 degree turn toward the Westbury Little League facility and then extend another 32 feet. The walkway will be 8 feet wide, and the entire structure will be enclosed with a safety railing.

Construction should begin in late July with an estimated completion time of four months. Thank you to all those who funded this fantastic and much anticipated addition to the park.

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Rendering by Brett Byers

**WATCH A VIDEO RENDERING OF THE NEW PIER ON THE WILLOW WATERHOLE WEBSITE**

[www.willowwaterhole.org/news/2022/6/20/the-pier-is-near](http://www.willowwaterhole.org/news/2022/6/20/the-pier-is-near)



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## Dabney Kennedy's impact on Willow Waterhole Greenway

Our dear friend Dabney Kennedy passed away in June. In remembrance of him, we're sharing about his impact on the Willow Waterhole.

From 1997 to 2000, as President of the Westbury Civic Club, Dabney was a leading advocate for a stormwater detention facility to be built at the current site. He was also the main voice on the Project Brays Citizen Advisory Committee lobbying the Harris County Flood Control District for a landscape architectural design.

Additionally, Dabney was chairman of the Brays Bayou Association's committee that set up the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy in 2001 and served as the Conservancy's first vice president. He was its chief fundraiser for over a decade raising over \$100,000.

HCFCD's design manual at the time called for detention basins to be designed as fenced-in rectangular holes in the ground. Dabney's mantra was: "Westbury does not want a hole in the ground with a fence around it". Because of this, the BBA commissioned landscape architect, Kevin Shanley, and he created the design with curvilinear shorelines, islands, and elevation changes as seen today.

Dabney was the main contact with the management at the Shell Gasmer Research Facility, which led to nine annual \$10,000 Shell Oil grants over the years.

In honor of his love for Willow Waterhole, his family requested that donations in his memory be made to the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.

Thank you to Dabney and his family.

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**Thank you Dabney**

# Join Willow Waterhole for the dedication of a new Naturescape Sculpture on July 16

Ann Lee was a founding member of the Brays Bayou Association and its first president. The BBA was established in 1984 by a group of residents from Southwest Houston (Ann is a Maplewood resident) with a goal of reducing flooding in the Brays Bayou Watershed.

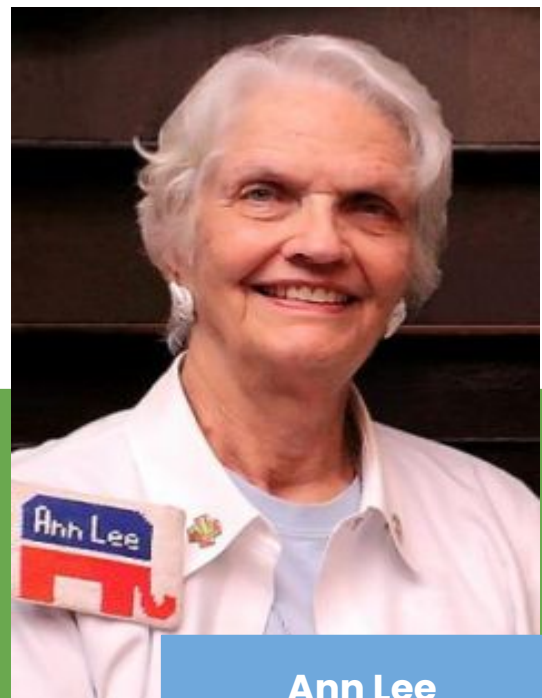
Their efforts led to the \$500 million Project Brays funded by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers that has resulted in many improvements completed by the Harris County Flood Control District over twenty-five years.

The \$75 million Willow Waterhole stormwater detention facility was among the improvements. Project Brays will be completed in 2022 with the completion of several new bridges over the Bayou.

Thirty-eight years after the BBA was founded, it is time that we honor Ann Lee for her invaluable contributions. Two donors provided funds for a new Naturescape sculpture made in her honor.



**New sculpture**



**Ann Lee**

## **Naturescape Dedication**

Willow Waterhole  
5300 Dryad  
Saturday, July 16, 2022  
10:30 a.m.



# Levitt Pavilion Houston/Gasmer Redevelopment to become “Energy Capital Park”

The Friends of Levitt Pavilion Houston (FOLPH) Design Committee has worked closely with Studio RED Architects to develop the latest renderings.

Located on three acres, Levitt Pavilion Houston will feature 40 free, professional, and diverse musical concerts annually with seating capacity for 5,000.

Next steps are final design, budgeting, and launch of the capital fundraising campaign.

Located on the 29-acre site of the former Shell Oil Technology Center and next to the Willow Waterhole Greenway, the Pavilion will be part of a transformative community redevelopment project.

Brays Oaks Management District leads the master planning phase, per site owner, City of Houston’s request.

The property contains oilfield structures used by Shell since the 1950s to test processes and train employees. Nowhere else are so many different energy related structures contained on one small site.

The facility will be repurposed to become Energy Capital Park, further showcasing Houston’s position as the energy capital of the world. Besides Levitt Pavilion, there will be a community center, performance theater, artist workshops, an oil industry museum, a café, outdoor movie viewing, children’s playground, and ample restrooms and parking.



## Board member profile: Barbara Richards

Barbara was born and raised in Concord, New Hampshire. She moved to Houston in 1977, lived in Westbury for twenty years and now resides in Braeburn Valley with her husband, Robert, and dog, Brandi. She retired from MD Anderson Center in 2013 and is an active member of the MD Anderson Retiree Association.

She learned love of the land and the importance of conservation from her parents. As her dad wrote in the *History of Warren and Betty Richards Community Forest*, "I feel it is important to preserve some of our natural resources for the benefit of the wild birds and animals, to give humans a place where they can commune with nature, and to unwind."

Therefore, when Barbara attended a Braeburn Valley HOA meeting in 2018 where Howard Sacks was the guest speaker about the Willow Waterhole and asked for volunteers, Barbara was hooked and has been very involved on the WWGC Board as recording secretary since 2018. Howard also recruited Barbara to be the recording secretary for Levitt Pavilion Houston.



Barbara loves to do family research, both for her own family and friends. She is a board member of Clayton Library Friends and the Houston Genealogical Forum.

Barbara is honored to be a member of the board of Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy. She has made many new and valued friends.

**Naturescape sculpture  
in memory of  
Betty and Warren  
Richards**

"Wildflowers"





## Our greenspace is powered by volunteers

We love our volunteers at Willow Waterhole, and one that always puts a smile on your face is Paul Shaw.

He is there almost every time we are planting trees, shoveling mulch, setting and breaking down events, and helping with security. He is our go-to guy whenever the need for muscle arises.

Paul was first introduced to Willow Waterhole by Bill Burhans about eight years ago when they met at The Gathering Place. Since that time, he has volunteered so many hours that in 2017 he was the volunteer of the year. Our mayor, Sylvester Turner, presented him with an honorary plaque and it was quite a special treat for Paul.

When asked why he loves Willow Waterhole, his response was the calmness he enjoys being by the water and riding his bike on the trails.



Super volunteer: Paul

His favorite lake is Scout Lake, and the reason why is the shade! We can all relate to that.

If you see him riding the trails on his wide-tire bike, please say hello and share a big thank you for helping to maintain our favorite greenspace.

## MusicFest October 2022: Save the date!

The next MusicFest 2022 will be held on **Saturday, October 29, 2022.**

Once again, there will be live music, food, fun, and Halloween activities including a haunted house maze and trunk or treat. If you're interested in sponsoring the event or volunteering, please contact Events Chair, Howard Sacks, at [sackshow@aol.com](mailto:sackshow@aol.com).





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## Getting to know the trees of Willow Waterhole: Loblolly Pine

As you walk around Willow Waterhole, you will see multiple loblolly pines.

The loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) is a large, fast-growing tree, reaching heights of 125 feet and a trunk up to four feet in diameter, with a dense, rounded crown of dark, blue-green foliage.

The needles are borne in bundles of 3, mostly 5 to 10 inches long. In the spring, bright green clumps of needles grow at the end of branches and give the tree a luxuriant appearance.

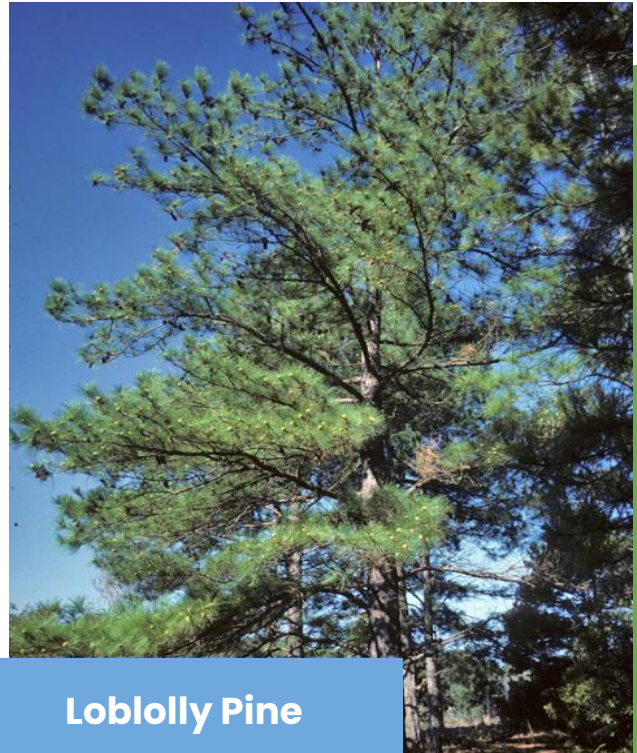
Male conelets are yellow-green to purple, about 2 inches long, appearing in spring at the tips of branchlets. They produce the pollen which is carried by the wind to the female cones.

The fruit is the woody, female cone, 3 to 5 inches long, oval, reddish brown, armed with prickles on the tips of the scales. They require two years to mature. The winged seeds are shed during the fall and early winter after the cones fully open.

The resinous wood is coarse-grained and there is a marked contrast between the bands of springwood and summerwood.

The name “loblolly” comes from a slang word used by English seamen for the lumpy gruel they were served at sea. The term came to be associated with the baygalls and wet areas in the low country of the Carolinas where the first settlers arrived in the 1600’s.

**Source:** Trees of Texas database, Texas A&M Forest Service



**Loblolly Pine**



**Male cone**

# Conservation updates

## April 2022

- **Trees for Houston:** Tribute tree planted.
- **Bench Plaque:** Al Campbell's plaque replaced.
- **Interfaith and Arcadis employees:** Painted gates behind the convent and the Zider residence, cleaned out the bridge at the arboretum, water sealed and painted bat houses, redistributed mulch from city tree trimming at Westbury Lake.

## May 2022

- **Schwartz Gazebo:** Tables were painted.
- **Birds Mural:** Conservancy painted concrete panel with murals created by scouts at 11350 Ricecrest.
- **Scout Trail:** Tree straps were removed from pines along the trail.

## June 2022

- **Chimney Swift Area:** City of Houston arborist contacted about broken Arizona ash limbs.
- **Drought:** Girl Scouts, Ranchwood Apartment employee, and WWGC Board members are watering trees planted in the past year.

## Bird Watching

More than 40 species spotted each month this quarter:

Sora  
Catbirds  
Scissor-tails  
Herons  
Sandpipers  
Stilts  
Terns  
Flycatchers  
Loggerhead shrikes  
Cooper's hawk  
Caracara  
Mississippi kites  
Spoonbill  
Night heron





# Thanks to our newest Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy members and continuing donors

Thank you to our local community members whose yearly contributions keep Willow Waterhole a beautiful urban greenspace. The list below reflects new members and donors from April to June 2022.

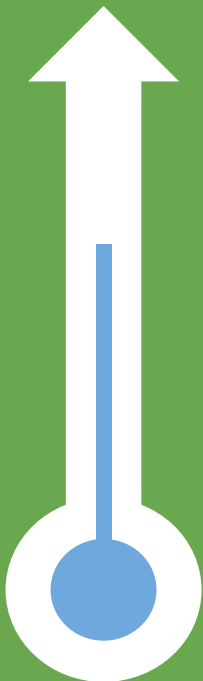
Individual Members	Supporting Members	Sustaining Members
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- Aubry Vonck
- Barb Szopa
- Becky Schufreider
- Judy Myers
- Migel Navarro
- Roger Thompson

- Al & Ida Bathey
- Andrew & Jean Wilrich
- Andrew M III, M.D.
- Connie Dupuis
- David Melbourne
- Doug & Jo Mary Beagle
- Edward Devries
- Esmerelda Galvan
- Guy Hagstette
- H. Newcomb
- Helaine Gordon
- Kelly Reynolds
- Mary Warwick
- Matthew Hill & Jessa Thiel
- Mindi Stanley & Bill Ehrenstrom
- Monte & Katy Shullenberger
- Robert Park & Gloria Pereira
- Sarah & Randal Morris
- Scott Schaefer & Miguel Romo
- Suzanne Wray & Brian Smith

- Barry & Gill Rittman
- Dr. Theis Clark & Catherine Lee
- Richard & Sarah Ball
- Steve & Ann Magoon
- Steve Radack
- Albert & Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation
- Canal Cartage Company

**Yearly Goal:**  
200 members



**Current Count:**  
150 members

## THANK YOU!

We are grateful for every member of the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy. Your membership helps support conservation and maintenance projects!

# Furthering Your Support

Supporters of Willow Waterhole may have several options to increase the impact of their gifts. Multiply your gift to WWGC through programs offered by your employer!



## Employer matching programs

Employer programs may match your contribution to 501(c)3 non-profits, many dollar for dollar. Your employer (or former employer if a retiree) may provide a link to a website where you record your donations.

Your contribution may be verified with Willow Waterhole by the employer prior to being matched. Program requirements will vary. For example, if your spouse is the employee/retiree the contribution might need to be in their name.



## Employee volunteer hours and grants

Some employers recognize the positive impact to the community when their employees volunteer at 501(c)3 nonprofits. In recognition, some employers provide paid philanthropy days while other employers offer cash grants or donations directly to the nonprofit after the employee volunteers a certain number of hours annually.

Typically, the hours are self-reported by the employee on the employer-sponsored website. We have seen programs where volunteering 20 hours generates a grant of \$500 for Willow Waterhole!

Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and is registered on online websites that support these programs. If you have questions or wish to receive confirmation your matching gift was received, please contact us at [info@willowwaterhole.org](mailto:info@willowwaterhole.org)

## WILLOW WATERHOLE ANNUAL MEETING

Celebrate this year's accomplishments and hear future plans for the Greenspace during our online annual meeting on July 28 at 7:00 p.m. Email [barbararichards90@gmail.com](mailto:barbararichards90@gmail.com) to register.



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## Snapshots: Leaping Anna Lillig

Dorothy Lillig and her daughter, Anna, were caught in a rainstorm while at the Greenspace and rather than run for the car, mom decided to take a few shots in the rain. Anna started posing as well as doing a few leaps and jumps. Everyone was soaked; however, this single pose was worth the effort. The Medusa-like hair and calm expression while gracefully leaping on a wet and slippery bridge, made this a second place winner in the 2022 *Bellaire Buzz* Photo Contest (Reader's Choice).



## A final word: Send us your photos!



We'd love to feature your photos in The Watering Hole newsletter. Clear, simple snapshots of landscapes, wildlife, and the lakes are ideal. Email photos to [volunteer@willowwaterhole.org](mailto:volunteer@willowwaterhole.org) or tag us on Facebook.

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### Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy

Park Address:  
5300 Dryad Drive, Houston, TX 77035  
Email: [info@willowwaterhole.org](mailto:info@willowwaterhole.org)  
[www.willowwaterhole.org](http://www.willowwaterhole.org)

