



Spring 2024 Volume 2 | Issue 1

The Watering Hole

The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy Quarterly Newsletter



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Spring is here!

As always, the Waterhole was impressive this spring, but it wasn't just the flowers that were dazzling. Visitors were impressed with the paved trails, signs, benches and more. We thank everyone for their support during construction and for the help to maintain this new "gem" of southwest Houston.

Cover photo by: Barbara Richards 1



Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy has been awarded a sustainability grant for **\$108,847**

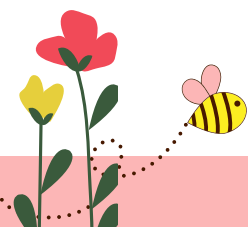
from the Green Mountain Energy Sun Club to fund the purchase of two electric all-terrain vehicles, a golf cart, a rider mower, and several electric tools. These will be utilized for conservation and maintenance workdays, shuttling volunteers and visitors, and daily surveillance at the 291-acre Greenway. Conservancy volunteers have been using their own personal gas-powered vehicles for these activities.

Green Mountain Energy is the nation's longest serving renewable energy retailer, on a mission to inspire hope and motivate action through the use of clean energy. In 2002, they created a charitable giving program with the purpose of advancing sustainable communities. Since its founding, Green Mountain Energy Sun Club has donated more than **\$14 million** for sustainability projects focusing on renewable energy, energy efficiency, resource conservation and environmental stewardship in numerous communities throughout Texas and the Northeast.

“We are so appreciative of Green Mountain Energy Sun Club providing us with this sustainable project grant. The Conservancy’s success depends on generous community donors like Sun Club.” said Bill Burhans, the president of the Conservancy, ‘ The Greenway’s trees convert huge amounts of carbon dioxide to oxygen, the native prairies and lakes hold stormwater, and together, they support diverse natural habitats. Now, we will add more sustainable operations to the Greenway’s list of environmental attributes. On behalf of the community, thank you Green Mountain Energy Sun Club!”

“It’s an honor to help the Conservancy reduce their environmental impact by incorporating all electric equipment into their operations. The Greenway is an exemplary model for Houston in combining flood prevention, recreational greenspace and natural habitats. We’re thrilled to support this outstanding likeminded organization and their dedicated volunteers.”

Johnny Richardson,
Program Manager, Green Mountain Energy Sun Club





Board Member Profile - Danny Haskin

Danny's family moved from Lafayette, Louisiana to Houston when he was 3 years old. He comes from a large family of eight, including a twin brother, a sister, and three younger brothers. Growing up in the South Park neighborhood on the southeast side of the city, Danny's upbringing instilled values of family, community, and ambition.

He attended schools in the Houston Independent School District. Following high school, Danny enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin, where he met his college sweetheart, Angele. He earned his degree in business from the University of Houston in 1990.

He currently holds the position of Director of Mid-Marketing and Origination for the Texas ERCOT Region. Additionally, in 1998, Danny and his twin brother and friends opened a successful bar.

Danny is a father of five, with three of his children currently attending college. He is also a proud grandfather of four, with one grandchild already in college.

Apart from his professional pursuits, Danny is deeply passionate about community service, mentorship, and fostering a positive attitude. He has spent 13 years coaching and serving on the board of Westbury Little League and Bellaire Bears Youth Football. He also mentors students through the Atlas Scholars Foundation and Next Gen Energy X programs.

Additionally, he serves on the board of the Northfield West Homeowners Association and Calpine's Charity Golf Tournament.



Danny Haskin

Danny's involvement with the Wind Water Houston (WWH) organization began when Bill Burhans recognized his passion for working with youth and asked him to assist with the scholastic cross-country events held at the Greenway,

He enjoys activities such as chess, tennis, golf, dancing, reading, and attending live music performances in his leisure time. Danny also possesses some fun skills, including scoring a touchdown in the Astrodome, solving a Rubik's Cube, and being renowned for boiling the best crawfish in town. Overall, his mission is to give back to the world more than he has taken.





More Grants for the Willow Waterhole Greenway Conservancy



A **\$7500** grant has been awarded by the **Bellaire Rotary Club** for the installation of two park benches at the pier.

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A grant of **\$25,000** has been awarded by the **River Oaks Garden Club** to support the environmentally sensitive development of the Coastal Prairie Preserve.



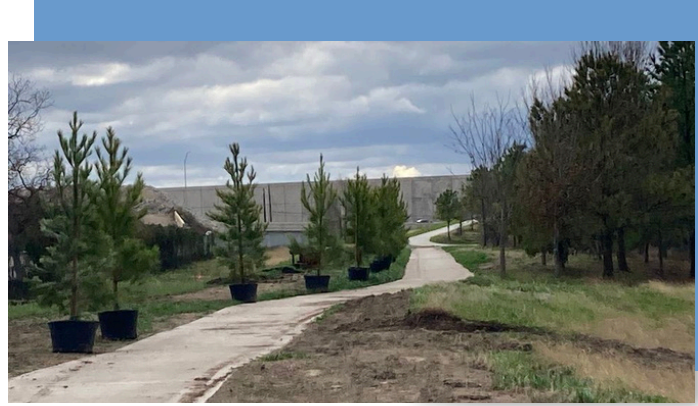
Trees, Benches, and Wayfinding

Now that trails have been completed in sections of the Greenway, you will start seeing the next steps in the progression: trees, benches, and wayfinding signage along the trails.

Tree planting is the most timed boxed as the window for planting in Houston closes in March. The adjacent photo is at Westbury Lake where trees were planted along the fence line with the concrete crushing plant.

There were also trees planted along trails on the South Post Oak corridor, on South Willow, and on the Highway 90 berm. In total there were 300 trees planted this winter season.

Thanks to Conservancy partners Trees for Houston and the multiple private foundations supporting the Discover Your Greenway Capital Campaign.



Two happy WWG supporters enjoying one of the 30 plus new benches.





Going, Almost Gone, and Probably Gone - Spring Flowers

The beloved bluebonnets were in abundant bloom at Willow Waterhole this spring. We hope you were able to schedule a visit. Masses of flowers could be found at most of the lakes.

The Native Prairie Plant Gardens at 5455 South Willow Drive, across from StoreSpace, are still currently in bloom with pink evening primrose, bluebonnets, and Indian paintbrush. Enjoy this floral pageant at Triangle Lake before the heat chases them away.

Get your camera or phone and download the free I Naturalist app to record and identify this season's flowers.

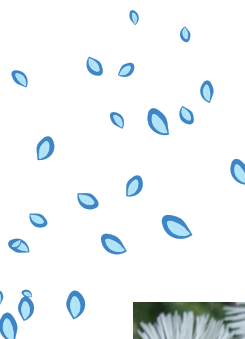
Look for bees, birds, and butterflies who are also enjoying this bountiful season.



-Bluebonnets



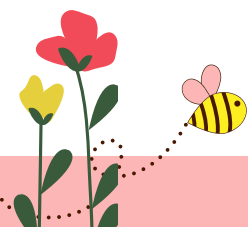
-Prairie nymph



-Philadelphus fleabane



-Indian paintbrush



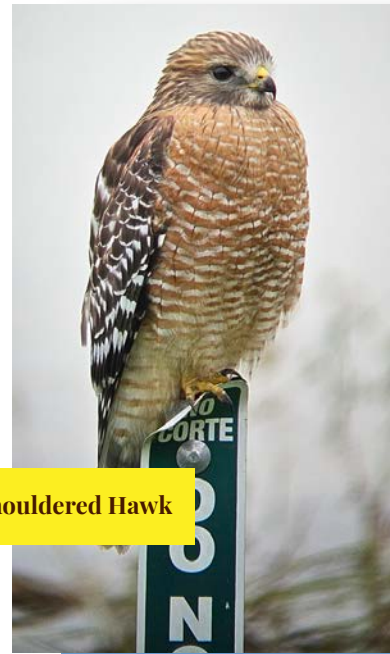


The Majestic Red-shouldered Hawk

The Red-shouldered Hawk is a year-round resident in our area. This adult was on Scout Trail.

Usually found near water, this raptor hunts mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. You can frequently see them perched in trees scouting for their next meal.

Red-shouldered Hawks can also be seen cruising through our neighbourhoods, often in search of tasty doves.



Red-shouldered Hawk

Photo by Mark Meyer

Please Don't Step on Me!

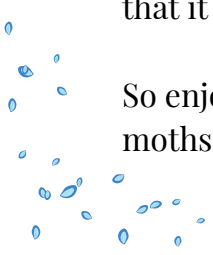
While out on the trails this spring, it's difficult not to see a woolly caterpillar scurrying across the path. These are our resident saltmarsh or woolly bear caterpillars. They pose no threats to humans and do not sting. If left alone and survive, they will emerge as tiger moths.

Their life cycle includes egg, larva, pupa, and adult. The caterpillar is the larva stage and its mission in the spring is to find a meal and seek out a place for pupation. During this stage, the caterpillar will form a loose net-like cocoon with silken hairs that it builds around its body.



Woolly bear caterpillar

So enjoy the caterpillars now and wait for moths soon!





Volunteering



Students from Kempner High School

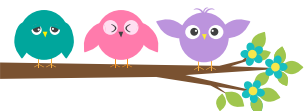
The National Honor Society students from Kempner High School in Sugar Land helped with spring cleaning at the Waterhole. Their dedication and eagerness to participate in any assignment was truly appreciated,

We look forward to their visit again next year.



One highlight on the March survey was a pair of Eastern Bluebirds with the female entering a nest hole in a tree while we watched! A couple of Barn Swallows were spotted and a female Ring-necked Duck and male Blue-winged Teal were seen at Willow Lake. Cooper's Hawks are nesting again and both a Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk were spotted that day.

Many thanks to all who were able to come and help out with the March survey!!





Thanks to our newest Willow Waterhole Greenway Conservancy members

Thank you to our local community members whose yearly contributions keep Willow Waterhole a beautiful urban green space.

The list below reflects new members and donors for the months of [January - March 2024](#).

Family Members

- Philip & Bette Kraus
- John & Maureen McIntosh
- Suzanne & Jim Phillips

Sustaining Members

- Dan & Allison Ownby
- Kathleen & David Ownby

Scout Projects

Lucas Lopez and John Paul Griggs are the 20th and 21st Scouts from Troop 99 to complete their projects at the Greenway! Congratulations for achieving Eagle Scout.



Lucas Lopez and John Paul Griggs

Troop 601 from New Faith Church volunteered on February 10th for community service. They helped the Conservancy install eight signs along trails. Each sign required digging a two foot deep hole in thick gumbo which is no easy task. Thank you Scouts!



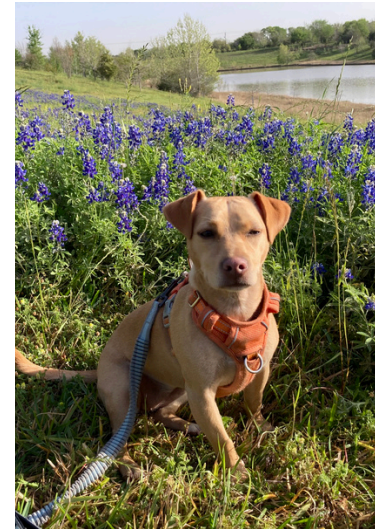
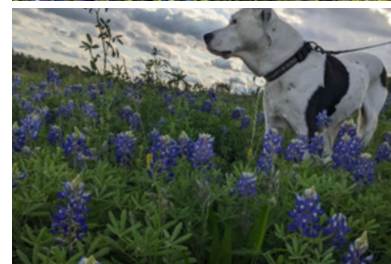
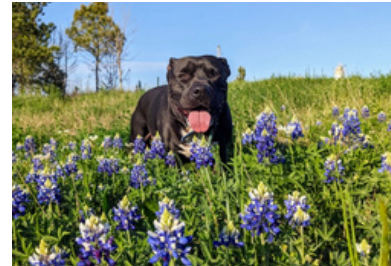
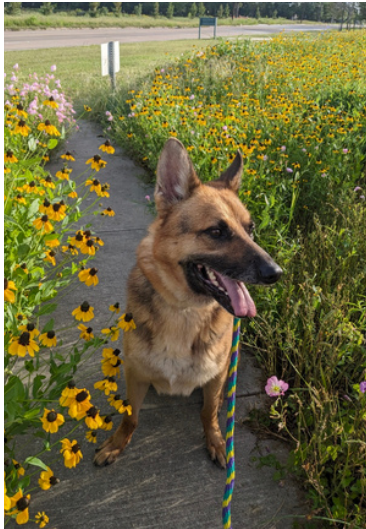
Troop 601 - New Faith Church





Everyone Loves our Wildflowers

Visitors love to walk the Greenway with their dogs especially during wildflower season. While enjoying the area please remember to leash your pets for everyones safety. Some of the dogs shown here are with Houston Cares Animal Rescue and would love to be part of your forever family.



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 or tag us on Facebook.



Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy

Park Address:
5300 Dryad Drive, Houston, TX 77035
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