

The Watering Hole

The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy Quarterly Newsletter



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Reaching out to our community

Many of us have been exploring our neighborhood more lately and reaching out to our neighbors. Here at the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy, we want to do the same. We're starting a newsletter to share more with the local community and, hopefully, reach a broader audience.

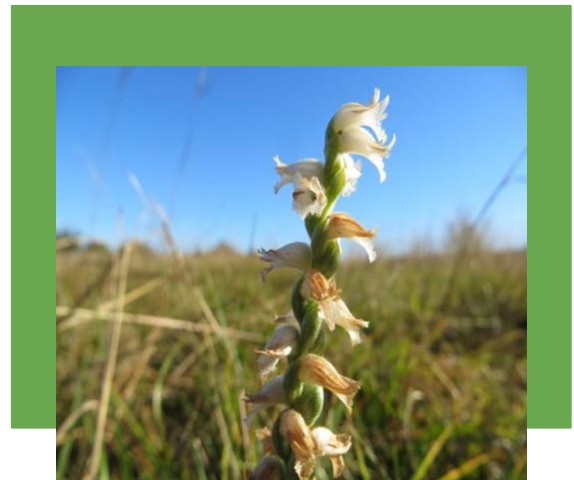
We're starting small, but we want to hear from you -- what you'd like to know and why you visit the Willow Waterhole Greenway. Not everyone gets to be part of creating a local greenspace, so join us for this unique journey.

Making it happen: Meet the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy Board

The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy (WWGC) board has grown over the past several years to include more members of the Southwest Houston community. They're all neighbors, just like you, interested in getting outside, preserving nature, and improving the local landscape. Each time, we'll introduce a member of the board, so please don't hesitate to reach out or say "hi" when you see us around the Waterhole.

President	Ralph Rieger
Vice President/ Conservation Chair	Bill Burhans
Secretary	Barbara Richards
Corresponding Secretary	Tony and Donna Roberts
Treasurer	Valerie Runge
Community Liaison	Cindy Chapman
Community Liaison	Becky Edmondson
Community Liaison	Bruce Krewinghaus

Education Chair	Trudy Holmes
Fishing Chair	Bill King
Events Chair/ Past President	Howard Sacks
Emeritus	Russell Schexnayder



Board Member Profile: Bill Burhans



Bill Burhans has been a Westbury resident for thirty five years. He is vice president of the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy and chairs the conservation committee.

Bill grew up in rural Iowa, so he truly enjoys all the planting options available in Houston's sub-tropical climate. His passion lies in managing conservation workdays at the Greenway with volunteers - students, scouts, faith organizations, corporate groups, and community residents.

Bill has a BSBA degree from University of Arizona and a MBA from University of Houston. He is retired after a thirty-three year career with Shell Oil Company. Bill has been a Big Brother, a coach for Special Olympics and Westbury Little League, and a volunteer on the congregational care committee at his church.

Conservation Report: Taking the lead in trail building

The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy relies upon a variety of volunteers to support its conservation efforts. This summer, Faris Joseph from Boy Scout Troops 1881/740 completed his Eagle Project on August 1, 2020, while working on the Greenway's nature trails.

Along with his father and brother (pictured), Faris constructed and installed 15 tree identification signs for several native tree species. The project contributed to the Conservancy's plans to provide more educational signage and outreach.

The Conservancy only plants native trees, including a variety of oaks, cypress, birch, pecan, hickory, sweetgum, elm, cedar, and sycamore, among others.



More Conservation Updates

- Tree trimming on Westbury Lake and placement of logs around beds near Kennedy Pavilion
- Installation of three fishing area signs
- Update on Nutria trapping requested from Harris Co. Flood Control District
- HCFCFD currently expanding detention at two locations: old Levitt Pavilion site and at S. Post Oak/ South Willow
- One new speed limit sign (by City of Houston) and two drive slow pedestrian signs (by Conservancy) installed on South Willow
- Address number installed on Kennedy Scout Pavilion

Conservancy Project Updates

Project managers needed: Opening up Prairie Lake to the public

The Conservancy is looking for project managers for its Prairie Lake master plan, which include trails and other infrastructure updates to open the area to public use. Currently, you can follow a man-made ground path along the lake, but access is limited.

Harris County Flood Control commissioned a master plan for Prairie Lake, which was created by the architectural firm of Asakura Robinson and included input from the community. The Master Plan projects include:

- Basin and Prairie Preserve trails
- Benches and trash receptacles along the trails
- Trailheads with signage, bike racks, trash receptacles at Windwood and Gasmer
- Footbridge over Windwood Trailhead ditch
- Four viewing areas with picnic tables – two along Basin and two in the Prairie Preserve
- Outdoor classroom in the Prairie Preserve
- Restrooms
- Parking at Gasmer Trailhead

Project managers would be responsible for:

- Getting approval from the Harris County Flood Control District
- Fundraising
- Procuring materials and labor
- Supervising construction

If interested, email info@willowwaterhole.org.



Aerial view of Prairie Lake, which is located near S. Post Oak and Gasmer Dr.



North and south of the lake are two “prairie management areas,” which include native grasslands and a future outdoor classroom to teach about conservation efforts

Conservancy Project Updates

Woof, woof, hurray: Ramping up dog park fundraising

Many dog lovers are excited about the future dog park planned for Willow Waterhole.

At this stage, the Harris County Flood Control District and the City Parks Department have approved the site for a dog park on South Willow Drive near Clematis Lane. The park will have areas for small dogs (1 acre) and large dogs (2 acres).

A preliminary estimate for construction is \$500,000, which includes necessary parking for visitors, gated areas, ground cover, agility courses, and shelters. The Conservancy has conceptual drawings for the project and needs help fundraising and grant writing.



We're optimistic about the project and eager to move forward on behalf of our four-legged friends. If you'd like to support the project or have ideas about donors, please email info@willowwaterhole.org.



FAQs: You asked, we've got answers

We often hear from local residents, “How can I get more involved?” or “What all can you do at Willow Waterhole?” We're starting a FAQs section to address some of our most popular questions. Send in questions via email at info@willowwaterhole.org or on our [Facebook page](#).

Your questions might be helpful to someone else, or help us develop new projects or partnerships for the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.



Q: Can I hold an event at Willow Waterhole?

A: Currently, large gatherings are limited by state and local regulations. **Please review COVID-19 guidelines published by the City of Houston before planning your event.** The Houston Parks and Recreation Department regularly provides updates on its website: www.houstontx.gov/parks.

Typically, if any event is **under 50 people**, no reservation is needed, and first come, first served rules apply. The Rafferty Memorial Area at 11350 Ricecrest Street. or the Schwartz Gazebo area at 5300 Dryad Drive are available for use.

In the future, if you have **more than 50 persons**, the event must be held at Schwartz Gazebo area at 5300 Dryad Drive. A city reservation, permit, and fee are required. When reservations are re-opened, you will make a reservation through the city at <https://apm.activecommunities.com/houstonparks>.



Q: Can I fish at Willow Waterhole?

A: Yes, fishing is allowed with the proper license. In the past five years, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has stocked the lakes with stocked bluegill, catfish, and bass.

We are governed by the Harris County Flood Control District in regards to access to water. Per the rules, you can use any of the bridges and culverts to fish off or from a canoe. A pier is in the plans, pending future funding. We are excited more users want to enjoy the property.



Q: Can I kayak at Willow Waterhole?

A: Yes, kayaking is permitted. As mentioned above, we hope to have a pier installed in the next couple years to facilitate launching. Most people kayak at Westbury Lake and launch down the service road near the Little League field, also the site of the future pier.

FAQs: You asked, we've got more answers



Q: How can I volunteer at Willow Waterhole?

A: We are always seeking to add members who are passionate about fishing, biking, and the outdoors. Currently, our greatest need is **grant writing and fundraising skills** to support our future infrastructure, including trails, Levitt Music Pavilion, pier, and a dog park. Other opportunities include:

- **Volunteer days:** Participate in conservations days, Scout projects, and the annual MusicFest
- **Biking and fishing advisors:** Recommend and implement projects to promote biking and fishing activities
- **Volunteer coordination:** Track time, data, and volunteers for grant applications
- **Photography:** Capture photos and videos of the Greenway
- **Community outreach:** Continue to help us get out the word about WWGC through social media and local community meetings

To learn more, contact volunteer@willowwaterhole.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



Q: Can I be a member of the WWG Conservancy?

A: Yes, we now offer annual memberships. The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy invites individuals, families, and small businesses to support us in effort to maintain and rejuvenate our 290+ acre park through free recreational events and environment improvement projects.

Membership donations provide general operations funding to help maintain our park and programming; when you join us, you become a partner in keeping the Willow Waterhole a beautiful urban green space.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- **Individual** – \$50 (Veterans \$40)
You will receive a Willow Waterhole bumper sticker upon joining and be given a tote bag
- **Supporting** – \$100
Along with the above items, you will receive a T-shirt
- **Sustaining** – \$500
Along with the above items, you will be recognized on a banner at our annual MusicFest

The WWGC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and donations are fully tax-deductible to the extent of the law. To join, visit www.willowwaterhole.org/membership.

Snapshots: Appreciating the view

We love receiving snapshots of Willow Waterhole from family gatherings to beautiful sunset images. Feel free to tag us on Facebook or email your photos to info@willowwaterhole.org.

Manny Vas, a regular runner at the Greenway, often takes photos along the way. He captured a unique view of the oil derrick with the sun setting perfectly behind it. The derrick is situated on the old Shell Research property, a few feet from the walking trails.

This Houston icon will be retained and become a beacon for the future Levitt Music Pavilion.



A final word: MusicFest 2020 cancelled



Dear friends of MusicFest, MusicFest 2020 has been cancelled due to Covid-19. We're excited and look forward to making MusicFest '21 (dates TBA) the most fun and impactful in our nine-year history. Thank you for your understanding and continued support!

Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy

Park Address:

5300 Dryad Drive, Houston, TX 77035

Email: info@willowwaterhole.org

www.willowwaterhole.org

