



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 12, 2022

CONTACT: Joseph Williams

Work: (832) 395-7016

Cell: (281) 409-2069

HOUSTON CITY COUNCIL PASSES NATURE PRESERVE ORDINANCE

Measure will protect 7,423 acres of natural habitat in city parks.

Houston City Council has approved an ordinance designed to protect 7,423 acres of natural habitat in City of Houston parks. The ordinance preserves land within 26 parks with a focus on habitat protection and passive recreation. The nature preserves will ensure the preservation of habitat for native wildlife and for the ecosystem services they provide to the citizens of Houston. The areas will help mitigate flooding, store carbon, reduce urban heat island effects, improve air and water quality, and provide educational opportunities for the public.

“This nature preserve ordinance is an outstanding conservation effort to make Houston a greener city. It aligns with Resilient Houston by conserving city parkland as nature preserves and the Houston Climate Action Plan to restore, protect, and enhance Houston’s natural ability to capture and store carbon,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “This measure makes it a priority to protect this land from future development and take advantage of the numerous benefits that go along with doing that – from flood mitigation to improved air quality.”

Most of the parks included in the ordinance have both developed areas and nature preserve sections. Nature preserve boundaries will be clearly marked.

“This is one of the most significant land preservation actions ever undertaken by the City of Houston,” said Kenneth Allen, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “The Parks and Recreation Department recognizes the importance of protecting the City’s natural habitats that will have multiple benefits for all Houstonians.”

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department’s Natural Resources Management Program will be responsible for creating oversight objectives at the sites.

“This ordinance protects the best of Houston’s remaining forests, prairies, and wetlands across the city for both wildlife and for people,” said Kelli Ondracek, Natural Resources Manager, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “The Natural Resources team will be working on creating habitat management plans for each location and prioritizing habitat restoration projects in these sites.”

The ordinance applies only to city-owned nature preserves within the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, or city-owned nature preserves managed by Harris County, or other metropolitan county. For a list of the 26 parks included in the nature preserve ordinance, please visit www.houstonparks.org. Video clips of Houston nature preserves: <https://youtu.be/8hcsuapcCfE>.

About Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages 382 parks and over 39,501 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all ages and abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.