

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WILLOW WATERHOLE STORMWATER DETENTION BASIN SERVES AS A STAGE FOR COMMUNITY EVENT**

The Harris County Flood Control District's Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin in southwest Houston is shining example of a flood damage reduction project that is benefitting from the support of multiple organizations dedicated to making it a recreational hub for the surrounding community.

Recently the south gazebo at the Willow Waterhole's overlook off South Post Oak Road served as a stage for the Westbury High School Jazz Band, which entertained local residents at the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy's first "Sunday in the Park." Houston Independent School District Superintendent Terry Grier was recognized at the event for his leadership and support of a future expansion of the Westbury High School campus to the edge of Willow Waterhole.

"We strive to design our flood damage reduction projects for maximum functionality, but also to look beautiful and to serve as a community amenity," said Raouf Farid, P.E., the Flood Control District's Project Brays Program Manager. "Nothing pleases us more than to see Willow Waterhole utilized for that purpose – to honor Terry Grier as an educational and community leader, to showcase the talents of the Westbury High School Jazz Band and to provide a gathering place for an enjoyable event courtesy of the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy."

Flood Control District officials were on hand to provide information about Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin, which is part of the Brays Bayou Federal Flood Damage Reduction Project, known as "Project Brays." The \$500 million federal project is a cooperative effort between the Flood Control District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and includes the widening 21 miles of Brays Bayou from the Houston Ship Channel to Fondren Road and from Old Westheimer Road to State Highway 6, excavating four stormwater detention basins that when completed will hold the equivalent of seven "Astrodomes" of water, and replacing or modifying 32 bridges.

One of those four stormwater detentions basins is the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin - an interconnected set of six compartments on 280 acres near Willow Waterhole Bayou, South Main Street/U.S. Highway 90 A and South Post Oak Boulevard. When completed the basin will hold approximately 600 million gallons of stormwater and offer 280 acres of usable greenspace.

The Willow Waterhole basin is being constructed to reduce flooding risks and damages in the Brays Bayou watershed and it has been designed by the Flood Control District to be environmentally friendly. Almost three of its six stormwater storage compartments have been excavated. The compartments retain a permanent pool of water year-round and they have been planted with thousands of specifically chosen wetlands plants that attract many types of birds. The District has also planted thousands of trees and native plants.

In addition to the stormwater detention basin project, community groups such as the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy are spearheading the Willow Waterhole Greenway Project, which is a local initiative to provide recreational and aesthetic amenities along the Willow Waterhole basin and bayou. Through a \$750,000 Texas Parks and Wildlife grant, the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department was able to fund construction of the pavilion, walking paths and bridges, bike trails, playgrounds and picnic areas throughout the Willow Waterhole basin area. The amenities are designed to provide a place for families and neighbors to gather and enjoy.

#### **About the Harris County Flood Control District**

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages, with appropriate regard for community and natural values. With more than 1,500 bayous and creeks totaling approximately 2,500 miles in length, the Flood Control District accomplishes its mission by devising flood damage reduction plans, implementing the plans and maintaining the infrastructure. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit [www.hcfdc.org](http://www.hcfdc.org).

#### **Photo Captions:**

##### **Willow Waterhole Event Display\_HCFCD.jpg –**

The Harris County Flood Control District's Project Brays team talked with residents about the Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin project at the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy's first "Sunday in the Park" event at the basin's pavilion area near Dryad Drive.

##### **Willow Waterhole Event Community\_HCFCD.jpg –**

Residents who attended the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy's first "Sunday in the Park" enjoyed the wide open space and water views in Willow Waterhole Stormwater Detention Basin, which served as a stage for the Westbury High School Jazz Band.