

WHITE OAK BAYOU

Representative: Bob Lee / Tom Gall

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Planning and Policy Activities

- *WOBA to Partner in Rice University Houston Action Research Team (HART) Program:* The White Oak Bayou Association (WOBA) will partner in a student research study, funded through Rice University, to assess whether there is statistically-significant evidence that water quality data improves or is better overall in an unlined vs concrete-lined channel. The study will evaluate existing water quality data, collect additional data where necessary, and analyze the data for statistically significant trends and/or patterns between lined and unlined channels to test the hypothesis that more natural bayous have a greater ability to regulate water quality. The analysis will compare data from lined and unlined segments of White Oak Bayou and other waterways in Harris County. The partnership builds upon WOBA's recent participation in the Rice U Civic Innovation Incubator Program (see below).
- *WOBA Participation in Rice University Civic Innovation Incubator (CII) Workshop Program.* Rice history major Ben Jones presented the results of his research as a summer intern for the White Oak Bayou Association at the WOBA Annual Meeting in November. Ben conducted his research with funding from Rice University's Civic Innovation Incubator program. His presentation can be viewed on the WOBA website at: http://whiteoakbayou.org/uploads/3/4/9/1/34911613/final_final_presentation.pdf
- *HCFCD Channel Restoration Study:* Harris County Flood Control District, with approximately \$275,000 in funding from the Memorial Heights Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ 5), has commenced to study potential channel restoration and flood reduction alternatives, including removal of portions of the concrete channel liner. Freese and Nichols, Inc., is HCFCD's consultant for the study and is tasked with identifying and evaluating "three constructible alternative channel restoration concepts." More information is available on the HCFCD website at: <https://www.hcfcd.org/projects-studies/white-oak-bayou/lower-white-oak-bayou-channel-restoration-study/>.

On-the-Ground Projects

- *White Oak Bayou Greenway Trail:* The White Oak Bayou Greenway Trail segment on the south side of the bayou, from the Moy Street Bridge (near TC Jester South of 11th Street) to downstream where it connects back into the existing Heights Hike and Bike Trail near Studewood Street, is fully open, including the crossing under the new Yale Street Bridge. The TXDOT project management team allowed the Houston Parks Board contractor access to work under the bridge as soon as the major overhead work was completed in Mid-December, and on Friday, January 13th, the final connection to the new Yale Street Sidewalk was poured, as well as a small missing piece along the main undercrossing trail.

Work continues to connect the WOB Greenway trail connector around U of H Downtown directly to the Buffalo Bayou Trail on the north side of the Buffalo Bayou. That is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2017. Also, as part of that same contract, the Houston Parks Board's contractor has already completed a new connection to the existing trail north of downtown directly to the Leonel Castillo Community Center, located on South Street just a short distance to Quitman Street.

On the north end of the WOB Greenway trail, work is wrapping up on the final segment of the BG 2020 system, from the new bridge at Alabonson Rd (opened last year) to the city limits just short of the HCFCD detention basins located at Hollister Street and W. Little York Road. The HPB contractor is working on the undercrossing of the BASF railroad line between Alabonson and N. Houston Rosslyn Rd. HPB expects that segment to open this spring.

The missing link segment on the north side of the WOB, connecting the dead end trail under Studewood Street across to the existing Heights Hike and Bike Trail, is under the control of the City of Houston PWE. There continue to be permitting issues with the USCOE, but hope springs eternal with a new year, and hopefully additional design funding to make the requested design revisions that could allow this

critical neighborhood connection to the system to proceed. Without this connection, it's not possible to access the system going north from the Stude Park area without riding on and crossing very busy streets.

- *HCFCD Maintenance Projects:* HCFCD has multiple active maintenance projects ongoing along the WOB at this time. They appear to be clearing out accumulated silt from side channels in several areas as well as performing concrete inlet and bayou inlet repairs, in particular from 610 North to downtown. A major project, to re-build the bottom of the concrete channel on the north side of the bayou under and downstream of the WOB Trail Bridge off of Moy Street (noted earlier), is scheduled to be underway later this year. This project should not impact Greenway users but if you have plans to kayak that concrete section of the WOB into downtown, you need to check on that project first.

Users of the White Oak Bayou Greenway system in this area should be aware that the trail is designed to be utilized as a maintenance access road and to look for equipment and haul trucks on a regular basis during this time.

Meeting the Rep Goals and Objectives

- *Interface / Networking / Know Your Watershed:* See whiteoakbayou.org for White Oak Bayou Association news and information about recent and upcoming activities and events.