



WATERSHED REPORTS for the BAYOU PRESERVATION BOARD

September 2017

WHITE OAK BAYOU

Representative: Bob Lee / Tom Gall

Date: 9/20/2017

Harvey Flooding Items

- *Flooding Observations:* Like most of Houston's watersheds, White Oak Bayou experienced significant flooding, from the upstream reach near Jersey Village to the confluence with Buffalo Bayou. However, based on FEMA mapping [<http://fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=72cc759f4bdd4ac395314e7754eb358f >](http://fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=72cc759f4bdd4ac395314e7754eb358f) (see Section 6), damage was less severe than in many other watersheds, in terms of the number of structures with "major" damage. It is not known at this time to what extent post-Allison property buy-outs in upper and middle reaches of the watershed limited the amount of structural flooding. Observations by WOBA members included over-topping of the Heights Blvd. and Yale St. bridges, which was last seen in Tropical Storm Allison in 2001. Significant flooding was also observed in the Woodland Heights in and near Stude Park and around the intersection of White Oak Blvd. and Taylor St. The USGS Gaging station #08074500, located at the Heights Blvd bridge recorded in excess of 20,000 cubic feet/second, before being disabled early on Sunday morning, August 27. [<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/inventory?agency_code=USGS&site_no=08074500 >](https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/inventory?agency_code=USGS&site_no=08074500)

WOBA President Tom Gall reports that all of the Hidden Lakes Condominium community south of 11th street flooded for the first time since Allison. (Note: the units along the back side flooded for the third time in three years as they are approximately 4 feet lower than the front side units and subject to the oddity of the bayou bank dropping some 5 feet for no explainable reason other than that's just how the USACE built it). Tom also observed home flooding north of 11th street on both sides of the WOB for much of the Timber Grove area. Finally, he noted that, due north of that area, around the Turkey gully tributary, there was street flooding along Bevis Street from 21st to 25th street, but it never exceeded the 500-year. flood elevation, which is around 26th St.

- *Trail System Impacts:* Overall, the WOB trail system suffered no significant structural damage from Harvey. Silt and trash removal started immediately, by the Houston Parks Board. It was noted that in several locations citizens took it upon themselves to clean and bag trash following the storm. Specifically, the WOB Greenway trail connector around U of H Downtown directly to the Buffalo Bayou Trail on the north side of the Buffalo Bayou suffered NO damage due to Harvey, even through it was completely submerged for days.

Planning and Policy Activities

- *Ongoing HCFCD Channel Restoration Study Update:* Harris County Flood Control District has essentially completed its study of potential channel restoration and flood reduction alternatives in lower White Oak Bayou, including removal of portions of the concrete channel liner. HCFCD's consultant, Freese and Nichols, Inc., has conducted the study with approximately \$275,000 in funding from the Memorial Heights Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ 5). Release of the report has been delayed in the aftermath of Harvey, but is expected sometime in the fall of 2017. 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:* As noted previously, the White Oak Bayou Greenway trail has been completed from Alabonson Road northwest of the Houston City Limit (as far as Bayou Greenways 2020 can go), near the Hollister Detention basin. Watch for the official grand opening in the next month or so at the Houston Parks Board website. The Opening is planned for late fall or early winter, although the Buffalo Bayou Trail it connects with on the north side of the Buffalo Bayou is covered in 6' of silt, and further upstream is almost totally washed out beneath. No word at this time on when that trail will be re-opened.
There is still no official word on 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. This segment is under the control of the City of Houston Public Works and Engineering.
- *White Oak Bayou Clean-up Planned:* WOBA is in the pre-planning stages of a trash clean up along a segment of White Oak Bayou to be determined. Initial plans are being reassessed in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Harvey. An announcement is planned for the Annual Meeting on November 14, with more information soon to be available on the WOBA website: www.whiteoakbayou.org

Outreach/Publicity

- *White Oak Bayou Association Annual Meeting:* The public is invited to WOBA's annual meeting on Tuesday, November 14, beginning at 6:30 PM at the Heights Fire House, 107 West 12th St. 77008, between Heights Blvd and Yale St. Featured speaker will be Gary Zika, Harris County Flood Control District, Federal Projects Department Manager. Topic: Status of Federal projects administered by HCFCD. For more information, visit the WOBA website: www.whiteoakbayou.org

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.