

H-GAC Parks & Natural Areas Awards

2008 Honoree Descriptions

Planning

Lake Houston Wilderness Park Master Plan (Trophy Winner)

The City of Houston commissioned a master plan to meet two key challenges: to enhance the wilderness features of this 4,986-acre park and to make the park economically and ecologically sustainable. The plan offers an innovative model for management practices that both increase the qualities of the park's ecosystems and capitalize on those enhancements to generate revenue.



Wharton County Parks and Open Space Master Plan (Honorable Mention)

Spurred by the donation of 52 acres for a park and the creation of a mountain and a fishing pond thereon, Wharton County commissioned a master plan for the County and to help develop the new parksite. Elements of the plan include an inventory, a needs assessment, prioritized plans for active and passive recreational facilities, and a strategy for implementation.

Parks and Pathways Master Plan, City of Shenandoah (Honorable Mention)

This small community in southern Montgomery County commissioned a parks and pathways master plan to address minimal facilities in a growing community. Developed with significant stakeholder involvement, the plan identifies development of trails, parks, swim facilities, wetlands, and woods as a means to preserving habitat, improving water quality, and providing connected facilities for residents.

Seabourne Creek Regional Sports Park, City of Rosenberg (Certificate of Recognition)

Voters in the City of Rosenberg, a rapidly growing city in central Fort Bend County, approved \$2.5 million in bond funds for improvements to Seabourne Park. Developed in consultation with both the City's and the County's park master plans, the proposed park improvements will meet many needs of area residents, particularly youth sports and access to natural areas.

Campus Master Plan, St. Catherine's Montessori School (Certificate of Recognition)

This school recently became the first K-12 school in Texas to be awarded LEED certification, and the Campus Master Plan was commissioned to incorporate sustainable landscape practices and the school's hands-on learning philosophy. The plan, which may serve as an example for other schools' outdoor areas, incorporates composting, rainwater tanks, a stormwater wetland, and a natural play area, among other features.

Policy

Agency Accreditation and Park Set-aside Ordinance (Trophy Winner)

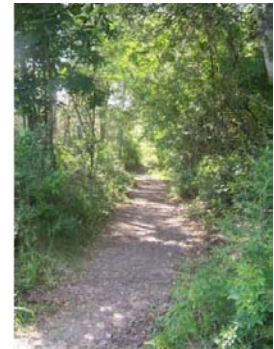
The City of Houston recently became the largest city in the country to be accredited by the National Parks and Recreation Association. In the same year, the city passed an ordinance that requires developers to provide adequate parks and open spaces in their developments or pay an in-lieu fee for all new residential development areas in the city.



On-The-Ground Projects Under \$0.5M

Cypress Creek Hike and Bike Trail, Timber Lane Utility District (Trophy Winner)

Timber Lane Utility District was recognized in last year's program for its planning of the Timber Lane Master Plan, which was coordinated with the Cypress Creek Greenway Project. This first executed project from the plan includes 5.2 miles of natural-surface trails and is exemplary in its use of collaboration and volunteers.



East End Park, Kingwood Service Association (Honorable Mention)

East End Park, owned by the Kingwood Service Association, is a 158-acre park with a 5.5 mile network of trails and one of the richest remaining vestiges of the Big Thicket bio-system in Harris County. This highly-visited and very popular park was carefully crafted and built to incorporate natural features and to work with other agencies to tie into a plan for one of the most extensive greenbelt trail systems in the region.

The Park People's Trail Map (Honorable Mention)

The second version of this important map shows 800 miles of trails, parks over five acres, paddle trails, and proposed trails in Houston, Harris County, and surrounding areas. This map is notable for its partnerships, the GIS inventory that was compiled, and its ability to promote parks and natural areas in our region.

Ridgeview Park, City of Missouri City (Certificate of Recognition)

The City of Missouri City hired its first forester in 2008, and one of the forester's first projects was to develop improvements to Ridgeview Park. The project is notable for its partnership with CenterPoint Energy to develop an arbor trail that demonstrates the compatibility of appropriate trees and overhead powerlines.

On-The-Ground Projects Over \$0.5M

Keith-Wiess Park, City of Houston (Trophy Winner)

This facility developed part of an existing COH park property to meet flood control, water quality, and recreation (fishing, trails, and sports fields) objectives. The scope of the project and the 15-year, complex planning effort are exemplary, along with specific elements of the facility design such as signage and plant installation techniques.

Camp Mohawk, Brazoria County (Honorable Mention)

Camp Mohawk became a Brazoria County Park when the 56-acre old meeting ground was donated to the County in 2001 and subsequently and substantially renovated to provide a facility for recreation, nature exploration/education, and a gathering place. The focus on minimizing direct cash costs to the county by using grant funds, in-house labor, and substantial volunteer efforts is commendable.

Clear Creek Nature Park, League City (Certificate of Recognition)

This 148-acre nature park was established in 2002 by the City of League City and features nature trails, bird blinds, golf-cart bird tour programs, and invasive eradication programs. The project is notable because it was developed to set an example for the preservation of Texas coastal wetland, forest, and prairie through partnerships at the city, county, state, and federal levels.

McClendon Park, Harris County MUD 120 (Certificate of Recognition)

Initially purchased for floodwater detention purposes, this 122-acre facility contains detention; active recreation elements such as ball fields, a splash park, an exercise trail, and an amphitheatre; and habitat and water conservation features including signage. The park is notable for the extensive variety of facilities, and especially for its wetland, which filters off-site water that is then used to irrigate the entire site.

Park on the Bend, Reid Road MUD #1 (Certificate of Recognition)

This 7.7-acre park was initially developed strictly for flood control purposes, but was redeveloped to provide park facilities such as trails, developed wetlands, bird observation stations, playground, and picnic areas. The application states that this is the first Outdoor Grant awarded by TPWD to develop a multi-objective park.

Special Award/“Best-in-Show”

Mason Park, City of Houston (Trophy)

This 3.5-acre facility developed part of an existing City of Houston park to provide additional park amenities, flood control elements, and stormwater quality treatment. The project serves as an example because of the *evidence* that the facility meets its water quality objectives, especially by documenting water-quality improvements as a result of the wetland.

