

H-GAC Parks & Natural Areas Awards 2010 Honorees

Planning Category

Ida Gaye Gardens

Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition/ The Greenspoint District

Ida Gaye Gardens is a 3.2 acre park development designed to encourage an active, healthy life style in senior citizens to extend independence. The project is a result of negotiations with multi-family housing developer, Chernio Nije, to reduce the unit footprint and create greenspace in the Greenspoint area.

Winner



Gannoway Park Master Plan

City of Sugar Land

The Gannoway Park Master Plan provides a conceptual framework for the development of a 70-acre passive recreation park. The property's potential connection to a hike/bike trail network and Cullinan Park, proximity to several residential developments, and its abundance of natural features made it a perfect candidate for a nature-based passive recreation facility. In addition to the educational elements, preservation of the lake and associated existing vegetation were identified as key elements to be included in the park's design. In addition to the recreational possibilities, the Client recognized that the park's design must respond to the proposed adjacent surface water treatment plant.

Honorable Mention



2010 PNA Award Honorees

Memorial Tree Program

City of Missouri City

This innovative program gives Missouri City residents that chance to create a living memorial for a lost loved-one in our city parks. Utilizing web technology, a customized memorial page is created for the participating family, which includes a personalized message, picture of individual, and picture of the tree. This enables out-of-town participation and minimal participation cost and maintenance concerns associated with on site plaques and benches. Participants are given several planting options and even the opportunity to plant the tree along with the City Forester. This program was launched Summer 2010. project details can be viewed at: www.missouricitytx.gov/Government/Parks-and-Recreation/Forestry

Planning Category

Recognized



Fort Crockett Park

City of Galveston

Enhancements, funded partially by a \$1 million donation from Frito-Lay®, to historic Galveston Fort Crockett Park will create an urban setting with native plantings, benches, picnic tables and shade structures. Special plaques that tell the story of the Seawall, the Fort and Galveston's record of surviving storms will be part of the interpretive graphics. The park begins just west of 45th Street, in Hampton Battery and stretches west to 51st Street, stopping at Izard Battery. The battery areas, which jut out toward the surf, are part of the original military installations at Fort Crockett.

Recognized



Mandolin Gardens

Harris County MUD No. 230

Mandolin Gardens is a project that incorporates a relatively new concept of multi-purposing land in fully developed areas to provide additional green space, recreational usage or trail systems both within and passage through. This particular project is based on an existing 11-acre detention basin that has now been designed with a park overlay that will be reshaped to allow for a wet bottom with deeper areas that provide settlement basins for silt that passes through as well as deepened areas for fish habitat. The reshaping has added approximately 12 % more detention capacity with wetland plantings planned that will greatly improve the water quality.

Recognized



2010 PNA Award Honorees

Planning Category

Sam Houston Park Master Plan and Cell Phone Audio Tour program

Recognized

City of Houston

Sam Houston Park combines living history and green open space. It is the home of the Heritage Society and of major outdoor events and civic celebrations. The Master Plan aims to enhance the Society's mission while addressing current and future demands on the park's usage. The plan identifies a number of constraints inhibiting the optimum functioning of the park and provides solutions to these constraints by focusing on distinct zones within the park. The cell phone audio tour program provides an educational experience to the many people who use the park for daily recreation and special events.

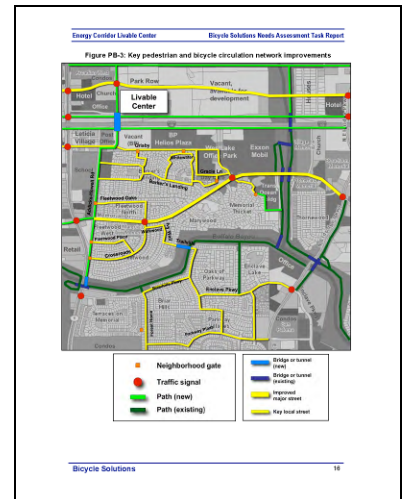


The Energy Corridor District Bicycle Master Plan

Recognized

Energy Corridor District

The Energy Corridor District Bicycle Master Plan is a comprehensive document promoting bicycle facilities, improved bicycle access, education and safety in the Energy Corridor District in Houston, Texas.



Policy Tools

Conservation Posse

Hermann Park Conservancy

Conservation Posse is a two week summer program offered free by Hermann Park Conservancy to teens with an interest in conservation and the environment. This year, a dozen students were selected to participate in the program, which ran from 9am until 4pm on weekdays.

Conservation Posse educates participants about the importance of parks, natural areas, and community activism. Through a speaker series, educational activities, and volunteer projects in Hermann Park, the students gain a wide range of knowledge and skills. The program encourages its participants to connect with nature and understand the importance of urban green space while learning responsible conservation habits..

Winner (tie)



J.T. Trotter Park

Houston Parks Board

The Houston Parks Board (HPB) uses a variety of policies to analyze potential projects. Recent research has quantified that parks facilitate active living and provide activities that improve public health, such as walking and engaging with nature. HPB has added this criteria to its site acquisition assessment analysis.

The policy was implemented in 2009, when HPB purchased a 14 acre wooded site adjacent to an existing youth sports-oriented park. Plans for the site adding a walking trails, creating a nature area, and adding picnicking facilities to attract a broader age and fitness range of park users.

Winner (tie)



2010 PNA Award Recommendations

Junior Arborist Program

City of Missouri City

Going on four years, the Missouri City Parks Department has successfully implemented its Jr. Arborist Program in partnership with the Southminster Elementary School and Texas Tree Service. This program, held annually during Earth Week, gives 4th & 5th grade students a chance to learn about the various elements of arboriculture and plant trees on their campus. So far, the project has touched the lives of 3 graduating classes and resulted in planting 5 trees on campus. Students also have the opportunity to learn from the City Forester and become “tree detectives” by learning basic tree diagnostics. In 2010, Missouri City partnered with Texas Tree Service arborist to provide a climbing demo and teach student how to tie arborist knots. This has also provided a great opportunity for Missouri City’s elected officials to interact with Parks Department staff and schools children and staff.

Policy Tools Category

Recognized



2010 PNA Award Recommendations On-The-Ground Projects < \$0.5M

On-The-Ground Projects under \$0.5M

Buffalo Bayou Paddling Trail

Bayou Preservation Association

The Bayou Preservation Association (BPA) spearheaded the preparation of Buffalo Bayou Paddling Trail for its designation as an official state paddling trail by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in April 2009. The longest such trail in the state of Texas, the Buffalo Bayou Paddling Trail is 26 miles long with nine segments, beginning at Highway 6 in Terry Hershey Park and flowing downstream to Allen's Landing downtown.

Work included trash and debris removal, invasive plant removal, native plantings, interpretive kiosks, and preparation of water access points.

BPA is responsible for maintaining put-in and take-out locations with assistance from Buffalo Bayou Partnership.

Winner



Wetland Reforestation Projects

City of Missouri City

In 2008, a parks maintenance worker was severely injured while mowing in a highly eroded area adjacent to a water retention pond. As a result, the Parks Maintenance Department has partnered with the Forestry Division to create re-forestation projects in 3 major city parks in an endeavor to avoid future catastrophes. The result has extended much beyond this original intent, and 5 major reforestation and wildlife habitat projects have resulted in 875 planted trees along approximately 20 acres of shoreline, at Buffalo Run Park, Independence Park, and Sta-Mo Park. Each project utilized donated trees from local nurseries and Apache Foundation, and was collectively planted by approximately 140 volunteers logging close to 450 hrs. This project has resulted in several Boy Scouts completing their Eagle Scout status, and several civic organizations completing community service projects. These projects have received great public response and will be continued in the future. In three years, the total direct cost to the city has been less than \$3,000.

Honorable Mention



2010 PNA Award Recommendations On-The-Ground Projects < \$0.5M

Liberty Community Garden - Helping the Community Grow Together *City of Liberty*

The new Liberty Community Garden Project is off to a good start! The community garden is a space open to the community, where individuals can rent a garden plot for a small annual fee (\$50 annually) to grow either vegetables or flowers as they desire. There is also a \$25 security deposit. The garden board offers soil and water only to the renters. Seeds and plants are to be provided by renter.



Get Hip to Habitat *Galveston Bay Foundation*

The Hip to Habitat program intermingles marsh restoration with environmental education initiatives. GBF works closely with schools to establish salt marsh nurseries on their campus grounds. Students harvest smooth cordgrass stems from an existing wetlands nursery, transplant into pots, and cultivate plants in shallow pools at their schools. Students carefully monitor and maintain salinity, pH, and overall plant health in their mini-marsh nurseries. After 7 to 8 months of growth, GBF assists students in planting the matured plants at carefully selected marsh wetland sites around Galveston Bay, such as creating over 3,000 square feet at The Peninsula in Nassau Bay.

Recognized



Project Blazingstar *Hermann Park Conservancy*

In 2009, Hermann Park Conservancy and a number of other nonprofit organizations teamed up for an unprecedented, multi-year collaboration called Project Blazingstar. The project's goal is to restore areas in Hermann Park by replacing non-native plants with native prairie species.

Recognized



2010 PNA Award Recommendations On-The-Ground Projects < \$0.5M

AmeriTrail at Lake Houston Wilderness Park

City of Houston

A new 4.5 mile nature trail opens up segments of Lake Houston Wilderness Park, expanding access to visitors as it crosses heavily forested areas alongside Caney Creek and winds past a cypress bog. Through a national partnership with AmeriCorps NCCC, three separate teams performed on the ground clearing, stump removal, erosion prevention techniques, and built bridges and trail signs. Thirty-nine young adults put a total of 11,180 hours of community service, constructing this new trail at no cost to the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, increasing hiking, biking and horseback riding opportunities for visitors.

Recognized



The Westbury Community Garden

Westbury Civic Club

The Westbury Community Garden uses fruit, vegetable and habitat gardens to bring the entire community together and improve the health, nutrition and quality of life for Westbury residents. The garden serves to educate adults and children about good nutrition and ecology, strengthens community spirit, provides organic food and serves as a gathering place for community events. Our slogan is "Growing Community through Gardening."

Recognized



2010 PNA Award Recommendations On-The-Ground Projects > \$0.5M

On-The-Ground Projects over \$0.5M

Sylvan Beach Shoreline Protection and Beach Nourishment Project **Winner**

Harris County Pct 2 and City of La Porte

The project is a three-way joint venture between the Texas General Land Office, Harris County Precinct Two, and the City of La Porte, that has required many hours of work by employees of all three entities to bring to fruition. It is exemplary of how a good idea can be worked with, in a spirit of cooperation, for the good and benefit of all the citizens of the three entities involved.

The every-day attendance at the park, the only public beach in Harris County, has more than tripled as people come back to enjoy the sun and the sand. Inquiries regarding new business opportunities, property value increases, and increased merchandise sales at local businesses have all been evident in the short time that the restored beach has been open to the public. In addition, there are environmental components of the project that add to its desirability.



2010 PNA Award Recommendations On-The-Ground Projects > \$0.5M

Robert C. Stuart Park

City of Houston & Houston Parks Board

The Houston Parks Board (HPB) purchased the 27 acre Stuart Park along Sims Bayou to maintain it as habitat and green space. It includes portions of the prairie, woodlands and wetlands habitat that historically lined bayous in the Houston Region, and is contiguous with a 48 acre conservation area.

HPB insured the permanent preservation of the land by gifting it to the City of Houston. Conditions of the transfer includes its permanent use as a public park, that the existing habitat be enhanced and that development will be restricted to trails, a canoe launch, and limited environmental education facilities.

The new park features a ¾-mile interpretive nature trail, outdoor teaching stations, demonstration garden, enhanced wetlands, restored prairie and woodland areas, bird blinds, and canoe launch zone. The project was initiated at the grass roots level. Evelyn Merz, an area resident and member of the Sims Bayou Coalition, championed this project from the start and keeps the community involved through clean-ups and connections with area schools.

Honorable Mention



Cypress Creek Nature Trail

Bridgeland

General Growth Properties' 11,4000 acre master planned community of Bridgeland in northwest Houston is bordered on the north by Cypress Creek. The master planned development has reserved 1,000 acres to devote to the Cypress Creek nature area. The concept for the 6.5+ mile multi-use trail system is based on three distinct eco-zones. Each zone reinforces the themes of Woods, Lakes and Prairie through signage, education, and existing character. The trial head for the Cypress Creek Trail is Oak Meadow Park, a 30-acre wooded park that offers a picnic area, an 18-hole disc golf course, a fishing pier on a stocked lake and a covered pavilion with restrooms, as well as convenient parking for residents.

Recognized



2010 PNA Award Recommendations On-The-Ground Projects > \$0.5M

Magnolia Park at Altamira

Mission Bend Municipal Utility District No. 2

The Mission Bend MUD No. 2's Board charged TBG Partners with designing Magnolia Park at Altamira with the vision of promoting community interaction and encouraging outdoor awareness. Starting with a flat, 4.4-acre parcel of undeveloped field that was primarily used as a neighborhood access corridor by children to two adjacent Alief schools, the project team sought to create a useful, safe and peaceful destination for neighborhood residents to gather, socialize, play and learn as a community. The TBG team developed an engaging and completely accessible park environment serving all varieties of users, greatly enhancing the community's quality of life.

Recognized



Riva Row Boathouse

The Woodlands Township

Riva Row Park is conveniently located near all of the major attractions of Town Center, including Market Street, the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion and the Woodlands Mall in The Woodlands, Texas. The cornerstone of Riva Row Park is a 1,800 square foot Boat House with a restroom, office, lockers and rental boat storage facilities. The goal of Riva Row Boat House and Park is to provide a focal point for residents, non residents and tourists alike to enjoy The Waterway and serve as a conduit for outdoor recreation enthusiasts via a kayak experience.

Recognized



Bane Park

Harris County Precinct 4

A Harris County Pct.4 park, located at 9600 West Little York Road in northwest Harris County was a 15-acre park with only part ownership of the lake. Acquiring an additional 5.87 acres gave them full ownership of the lake. It also added a forested natural area that helped relieve dense development in other parts of the park. Bane Park is the only community park within a 2-mile radius and is popular with the public.

Recognized



2010 PNA Award Recommendations On-The-Ground Projects > \$0.5M

Westpark Tollway Corridor Enhancements from SH 6 to FM 1464 Recognized

Harris County Toll Road Authority

The objective of the project was to beautify the available open space, adding to the quality of life for residents and drivers. The improvements included planting 7,100 trees throughout a combined 15 acres of open space occupied by four detention ponds. The improvements included removing a chain link fence from the perimeter of a detention pond and installing a 5' wide walking trail. A new 5' wide sidewalk was installed which ties into the walking trail and an existing sidewalk that terminates at the Mission Bend North subdivision. The slopes of the detention ponds were also improved to prevent erosion.

