



Houston-Galveston
Area Council

Parks and Natural Areas Roundtable

September 11, 2023

AGENDA

2:00 p.m. Welcome, Parks and Natural Areas Awards and Fall Field Trip Updates
Andrea Tantillo, Houston-Galveston Area Council

2:05-p.m. Prairie Panel Expert Presentations
Mary Anne Piacentini, Coastal Prairie Conservancy
Royce Daniels, Harris County Commissioner Precinct One
Cassidy Kempf, City of Houston
Garry Stephens and Schyler Rhea, Wildlife Habitat Federation
Jaime González, The Nature Conservancy

2:55 p.m. Prairie Panel Discussion and Questions

3:25 p.m. Interactive Activity and Break

3:45 p.m. Roundtable/Networking/Continued Discussions

4:00 p.m. Adjourn

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be our fall field trip on Friday, November 17. We will meet at East Beach (R.A. Apffel Park) at 1923 Boddeker Road, Galveston, at 10 a.m. Learn more at conta.cc/45zJHz8.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, H-GAC provides for reasonable accommodation for persons attending H-GAC functions. Requests should be received by H-GAC 24 hours prior to the function



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TODAY'S PANELISTS



MaryAnne Piacentini

Mary Anne Piacentini, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, coordinates the Conservancy's land protection programs and conservation assistance to private landowners, establishes community partnerships and relationships with diverse stakeholders, and oversees the agency's operations and programs. Mary Anne received a Master of City Planning from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of New Hampshire. She serves on Houston Galveston Area Council of Government's Natural Resources Advisory Committee, on the steering committee for the Coalition for Environment, Equity and Resilience, on the Harris County Community Flood Resilience Task Force (and is chair of the task force's Approach Committee), chair of the Conservation Flood Mitigation Group and chair of the Stream Corridor Restoration Committee of Bayou Preservation Association.



Royce Daniels

Royce Daniels is the Environmental Field Operations Coordinator in the Environmental Management section of Harris County Commissioner Precinct One. A key priority for Environmental Management is the protection of high-quality natural resource areas with Precinct One Parks. Prior to his employment with Harris County, he worked for the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands on the Big Island of Hawai'i. There he was responsible for monitoring, mapping, and preventing the expansion of invasive plants on a large scale at a 104,000-acre military installation. Royce received his Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Management from The Ohio State University.



Cassidy Kempf

Cassidy Kempf is the Habitat Restoration Manager in the Natural Resources Division of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department. The Natural Resources Division manages five prairie restoration sites, over 7,400 acres of Nature Preserves, and the City's Riparian Restoration Initiative. Cassidy's role is to provide project and grant management of habitat restoration projects throughout the City of Houston. Prior to her employment with HPARD, she worked for the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Galveston Bay Estuary Program. She holds both a Bachelor of Science in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and a Bachelor of Arts in Policy Studies from Rice University.



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Garry Stephens

Garry Stephens is president of the Wildlife Habitat Federation (WHF). Serving in a leadership role since 2016, Garry works closely with landowners, local governments, and partner organizations to optimize the benefits of conservation management and restoration of wildlife habitats. Prior to joining WHF, Garry served the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for nearly 30 years, both as a district conservationist, responsible for all conservation programs within a 4-county area, as well as a wildlife biologist for a 52-county work area in south Texas. He represents WHF on the NRCS State Technical Advisory Committee to the state conservationist, is a member of the NRCS State Technical Committee Wildlife sub-committee and serves on the Audubon Texas Conservation Ranching Committee advisory committee. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University.



Schyler Rhea

Schyler Rhea is a conservationist at the Wildlife Habitat Federation where she plans, inventories, implements, monitors and accelerates conservation planning efforts in the upper Texas Gulf Coast region, with a focus on the greater Houston area. Prior to joining WHF, she assisted with habitat management at Coastal Prairie Conservancy, managed natural areas as conservation intern with Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and participated in habitat conservation along riparian corridors and related Monarch butterfly pathways as an intern with the City of San Marcos. Schyler holds a Professional Science Master's degree in Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resource Management from Texas Tech University and a Bachelor of General Studies in Nature and Heritage Tourism, Animal Science, and Criminal Justice from Texas State University.



Jaime González, M. Ed.

Jaime González is the Community and Equitable Conservation Director for The Nature Conservancy in Texas. He is an interdisciplinary conservationist, environmental educator, and network weaver who works to better ensure that the practice and benefits of conservation are more equitable and inclusive in Greater Houston and Texas. Jaime has won numerous awards for his work, including the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Houston's College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Prairie Champion Award from the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, and the Elizabeth Hull Abernathy Award from the Garden Club of America for outstanding contributions to environmental education of youth. He earned a Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction-Science Education and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Houston.



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