



Houston-Galveston
Area Council

Parks and Natural Areas Annual Awards Celebration

February 6, 2026



Parks and Natural Areas Awards Celebration Agenda

9:30 a.m. Check In and Registration

10:00 a.m. Remarks and Acknowledgements
Hon. Lesley Briones, Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner and
H-GAC Board Member

**10:10 a.m. Welcome and Presentation:
H-GAC's Parks and Natural Areas Awards: 20 Years of Celebration**
Justin Bower, H-GAC Director of Community and Environmental Planning

10:25 a.m. The Next 20 Years of Parks Activity
Petra Hsia, H-GAC Planner

10:30 a.m. Awards Celebration
Justin Bower, H-GAC Director of Community and Environmental Planning

11:55 a.m. Awards Introduction of Judges and Closing Remarks
Andrea Tantillo, H-GAC Principal Communications Coordinator

12:00 p.m. Announcements, Networking and Light Snacks, and Adjourn
Andrea Tantillo, H-GAC Principal Communications Coordinator

Award-winning projects serve as models for planning and project implementation for parks and natural areas in the region.

Learn more at h-gac.com/parks or contact Andrea Tantillo at andrea.tantillo@h-gac.com

Food and decorations generously sponsored by H-E-B



Parks and Natural Areas Awards Next 20 Years Activity Instructions

THE NEXT 20 YEARS OF PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS

1. TAKE A LEAF

Pick up a paper leaf from the table

2. SHARE YOUR VISION

Write one change, improvement, or project you hope to see in parks and natural areas over the next 20 years

Examples: new trails, restored habitats, youth programs

3. ADD IT TO THE TREE

When you're finished, place your leaf on the tree display labeled "The Next 20 Years of Parks and Natural Areas"

**Thank you for contributing your ideas and
helping shape the future of parks and natural
areas in our region!**



Parks and Natural Areas Awards Order of Awards Presentations

Winners

- Projects Over \$500K---Club Creek Park & Houston Vietnam Veterans Memorial (TIRZ 20)
- Projects Under \$500K--Green Up Greens Bayou (Colleen Gilbert)
- Planning Process / Policy Tools--Burnett Bayland and Bayland Park Master Plans: Anchoring Revitalization in Gulfton and Sharpstown (Harris County Precinct 4 - Commissioner Lesley Briones)
- Programming--Beyond Bees at Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens (Harris County Precinct 3 - Commissioner - Tom S. Ramsey, P.E.)

Honorable Mentions

- Projects Under \$500K--Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center - Fuel Reduction and Mulching Project: Phase I (Harris County Precinct 3 - Tom S. Ramsey, P.E.)
- Projects Over \$500K--Camden Park (Westchase District)
- Planning Process / Policy Tools-- Deer Park Comprehensive Master Plan For Park, Recreation, and Open Space: 2024-2034 (City of Deer Park)
- Programming-- Baytown and GCCISD Nature Education Programs (City of Baytown Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department)

Certificates of Recognition

- Projects Over \$500K--Louie's Together Playground (City of Tomball)
- Sustainability Initiative Program--City of West University Place)
- Projects Under \$500K--Alief Pocket Prairie (AliefVotes)
- Projects Over \$500K--Lockwood Park with Buffalo Bayou Partnership: Guiding Ecological Renewal (Buffalo Bayou Partnership)
- Programming--Rally on the River (City of Bay City)
- Projects Over \$500K--Jenkins/ Holloway Perfect Trail Improvements Project (City of Baytown Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department)
- Projects Over \$500K--The Kraken at Carol Fox Park (City of Jersey Village)
- Projects Over \$500K--57 Acre Nature Facility (City of Kemah)
- Projects Under \$500K--James Foster Park Renovation (City of Kemah)
- Planning Process / Policy Tools--Kemah Beacon at Betty Joann Blackledge Park (City of Kemah)
- Planning Process / Policy Tools--Arts in the Parks: Sensory Sidewalk Project (City of LaMarque)
- Projects Under \$500K--Highland Bayou Park All-Inclusive Playground (City of LaMarque)
- Projects Over \$500K--Mahan Park Boat Ramp Expansion (City of LaMarque)
- Projects Under \$500K--Cherry Point Park (City of Mont Belvieu)
- Projects Over \$500K--Joe Matthews Park (City of Mont Belvieu)
- Projects Over \$500K--Colonel James Morgan New Washington Prairie (City of Morgan's Point)
- Programming--Texas Horned Lizard Conservation Program (City of Pearland)
- Projects Over \$500K--Bayside Park (City of Seabrook)

Parks and Natural Areas Awards Order of Awards Presentations

Certificates of Recognition (Continued)

- Projects Over \$500K--Cullinan Park Phase II (City of Sugar Land)
- Projects Under \$500K--Sugar Land Memorial Park Butterfly Garden Pavilion (City of Sugar Land)
- Planning Process / Policy Tools--Housing and Opportunity Toolkit (Friends of Columbia Tap, Community Design Resource Center (University of Houston), and Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice (Texas Southern University))
- Planning Process / Policy Tools--Columbia Tap Trail: Action Plan (Friends of Columbia Tap and Community Design Resource Center (University of Houston))
- Projects Under \$500K--Dakota's Peace Grove (Friends of Columbia Tap and Rotary District 5890)
- Programming--Beach Heroes of Galveston County (Galveston Bay Chapter Tx Master Naturalist)
- Projects Over \$500K--Stephen Woodring Park (Harris County MUD 71)
- Projects Over \$500K--Challenger 7 Memorial Park (Harris County Precinct 2 – Commissioner Adrian Garcia)
- Projects Under \$500K--Deputy Tommy Berry Pocket Park Renovation (Harris County Precinct 2 – Commissioner Adrian Garcia)
- Programming--Harris County Precinct 2 and Texas 4-H Programming (Harris County Precinct 2 – Commissioner Adrian Garcia, Carly Martin)
- Programming--Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center - Events, Education, and Engagement in Our Communities (Harris County Precinct 3 – Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey, P.E.)
- Projects Over \$500K--Bayland Health and Wellness Hub Initiative: Transforming Community Wellness Through Integrated Park Programming (Harris County Precinct 4 - Commissioner Lesley Briones)
- Projects Under \$500K--Pitner Pocket Park Community Mural (Harris County Precinct 4 - Commissioner Lesley Briones)
- Projects Over \$500K--Wussow Park Renovation (North Houston District)
- Programming--Programming for Park Visitors at Evelyn's Park (Terry Leavitt-Chavez)
- Projects Under \$500K--The Lookout a.k.a. The Bird Blind (The Woodlands Township)

Parks and Natural Areas Awards

Honorees by Category

Winners

Projects Over \$500,000

- Club Creek Park & Houston Vietnam Veterans Memorial (TIRZ 20)

Projects Under \$500,000

- Green Up Greens Bayou (Colleen Gilbert)

Planning Process / Policy Tools

- Burnett Bayland and Bayland Park Master Plans: Anchoring Revitalization in Gulfton and Sharpstown (Harris County Precinct 4 - Commissioner Lesley Briones)

Programming

- Beyond Bees at Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens (Harris County Precinct 3 - Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey, P.E.)

Honorable Mentions

Projects Over \$500,000

- Camden Park (Westchase District)

Projects Under \$500,000

- Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center - Fuel Reduction and Mulching Project: Phase I (Harris County Precinct 3 - Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey, P.E.)

Planning Process / Policy Tools

- Deer Park Comprehensive Master Plan For Park, Recreation, and Open Space: 2024-2034 (City of Deer Park)

Programming

- Baytown and GCCISD Nature Education Programs (City of Baytown Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department)



Join us November 7 as we Green Up Greens Bayou! There is a beautiful, wide take-over trail that runs along either side of Greens Bayou. It is currently unattractive and in danger of being taken over by the Green Bayou Coalition, working with North Houston District, plans to add trees along the trail, all the way to Hardy Road!



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- 57 Arce Nature Facility (City of Kemah)
- Bayland Health and Wellness Hub Initiative: Transforming Community Wellness Through Integrated Park Programming (Harris County Precinct 4 - Commissioner Lesley Briones)
- Bayside Park (City of Seabrook)
- Challenger 7 Memorial Park (Harris County Precinct 2 – Commissioner Adrian Gacia)
- Colonel James Morgan New Washington Prairie (City of Morgan's Point)
- Cullinan Park Phase II (City of Sugar Land)
- Jenkins/ Holloway Perfect Trail Improvements Project (City of Baytown Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department)
- Joe Matthews Park (City of Mont Belvieu)
- Lockwood Park with Buffalo Bayou Partnership: Guiding Ecological Renewal (Buffalo Bayou Partnership)
- Louie's Together Playground (City of Tomball)
- Mahan Park Boat Ramp Expansion (City of La Marque)
- Stephen Woodring Park (Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 71)
- The Kraken at Carol Fox Park (City of Jersey Village)
- Wussow Park Renovation (North Houston District)

Projects Under \$500,000

- Alief Pocket Prairie (AliefVotes)
- Cherry Point Park (City Of Mont Belvieu)
- Dakota's Peace Grove (Friends of Columbia Tap and Rotary District 5890)
- Deputy Tommy Berry Pocket Park Renovation (Harris County Precinct 2 – Commissioner Adrian Gacia)
- Highland Bayou Park All-Inclusive Playground (City of La Marque)
- James Foster Park Renovation (City of Kemah)
- Pitner Pocket Park Community Mural (Harris County Precinct 4 - Commissioner Lesley Briones)
- Sugar Land Memorial Park Butterfly Garden Pavilion (City of Sugar Land)
- The Lookout a.k.a. The Bird Blind (The Woodlands Township)

Planning Process / Policy Tools

- Arts in the Parks: Sensory Sidewalk Project (City of La Marque)
- Columbia Tap Trail: Action Plan (Friends of Columbia Tap, Community Design Resource Center (University of Houston))
- Housing and Opportunity Toolkit (Friends of Columbia Tap, Community Design Resource Center (University of Houston), and Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice (Texas Southern University))
- Kemah Beacon at Betty Joann Blackledge Park (City of Kemah)



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Honorees by Category

Certificates of Recognition

Programming

- Beach Heroes of Galveston County (Galveston Bay Area Chapter - TX Master Naturalist)
- Harris County Precinct 2 and Texas 4-H Programming (Harris County Precinct 2 – Commissioner Adrian Gacia, Carly Martin)
- Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center - Events, Education, and Engagement in our Communities. (Harris County Precinct 3 Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey, P.E.)
- Programming for Park Visitors at Evelyn's Park (Terry Leavitt-Chavez)
- Rally on the River (Bay City Parks and Recreation)
- Sustainability Initiative Program (City of West University Place)
- Texas Horned Lizard Conservation Program (City of Pearland)

Thank You to Our Volunteer Judges

Casey Collins

Halfff

Brandi Keller

Texas Sea Grant

William Hajdik

City of Sugar Land

Kelli Ondracek

Kelli Ondracek

Eric Heppen

Harris County Precinct 3

Karina Yonekawa-Blest

Fonde Civic Club & Friends of Fonde Park



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