



# E.R. & Ann Taylor Park

## Habitat Management Plan



**HPARD**  
HOUSTON PARKS  
AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
A CAPRA Accredited Agency

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# E.R. & Ann Taylor Park

## Habitat Management Plan



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oo Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

E.R. & Ann Taylor Park is a 25-acre historic coastal prairie remnant and cultural heritage site located in southeast Houston within the Sims Bayou watershed. The park sits in the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes ecoregion, an area once defined by tallgrass prairie, seasonal wetlands, and scattered live oak mottes. The site is exceptionally meaningful to the surrounding community and to the descendants of E. R. Taylor, son of a slave broker and Ann (George) Taylor, a formerly enslaved woman. E. R. and Ann established a homestead on the property where they lived together for 39 years. The couple raised their six interracial children on the estate where they enjoyed farming, ranching and later discovered oil. To honor the site's significance, descendants of E.R. and Ann dedicated this 25-acre portion of their land to the Houston Parks Board in 1986. In 2001, it was formally transferred to the City of Houston to become a City park. Today, the park functions as both an ecological refuge and a place of memory, art, and cultural storytelling.

## City of Houston Nature Preserves

E.R. & Ann Taylor Park is one of 26 parks and 25 acres of 7,423 acres of natural habitat protected by the City of Houston's Nature Preserve Ordinance (Appendix A). The ordinance regulates public uses and development of these lands. Protection of the land within a preserve system provides a habitat for native wildlife, ecosystem services, and co-benefits in the form of carbon storage, reduced urban heat island effects, improved air quality, improved water quality and quantity, and educational opportunities for the public. The ordinance prohibits development of the preserves except for development identified for use in passive recreation, including but not limited to trails, benches, signage, and bird-friendly lighting.

## Site Context

The park is located in the Pierce Junction Oil Field, the second oldest oil field in Texas. Taylor descendants have maintained salt mining, oil, gas, and underground storage leases for more than 100 years. Ann Taylor signed the first oil and exploration lease with Howard Hughes Sr. in 1903. E.R. & Ann Taylor Park is surrounded by residential development, undeveloped parcels, a site home to the Houston Rodeo, and tree-lined edges that buffer the site from adjacent land uses. The central open area reflects early stages of prairie restoration, while the western grove of trees contains mature live oaks believed to be tied to the Taylor family's historic presence. A small prairie pothole wetland on the southwest edge provides some stormwater storage and ephemeral wildlife habitat. The park's cultural and natural resources make it a unique hybrid landscape within the City of Houston's system of nature preserves.

Mollie Taylor Stevenson, Sr., granddaughter of E.R. and Ann Taylor managed the 640-acre Taylor Estate for more than 50 years. Mollie Sr. and son, Major W. Stevenson, Sr. and his wife, Dr. Beverly Dorsey Stevenson, collaborated with Ann



IMAGE: Mollie Taylor Stevenson, Sr.

Hamilton, former Executive Director, Houston Parks Board for sixteen years to bring the park to fruition. In 2003, in memory of Mollie Taylor Stevenson Sr., E. R. and Ann Taylor Park officially opened.

## Existing Conditions

The landscape consists of a mosaic of prairie restoration zones, edge woodlands, and the central wetland depression. Recent clearing and reseeding efforts have initiated the restoration of native coastal prairie; however, portions of the site remain dominated by early successional species, particularly ragweed. Invasive trees such as Chinaberry and privet are present along the edges and require ongoing control. The live oak grove exhibits age-related stress and soil compaction but remains structurally important. Wildlife use is increasing, with regular sightings of migratory birds, pollinators, amphibians, and urban-adapted mammals. Cultural features—including wells, homestead debris, and the adjacent family cemetery—remain intact but need interpretation and preservation. Trail maintenance, safety improvements, and vegetation management are ongoing priorities.

## Goals and Objectives

The Habitat Management Plan establishes ecological, cultural, and community-centered goals to guide restoration over a 10-year period.

**ECOLOGICAL GOALS** focus on rebuilding a resilient coastal prairie ecosystem, supporting healthy oak savannah edges, and protecting the wetland basin. Objectives include achieving at least 90% native plant cover, establishing 150 or more native prairie species, reducing invasive woody species by 80–90%, maintaining zero net loss of live oak canopy, and ensuring all prairie zones undergo disturbance annually or at least every three years through mowing or prescribed burning.

Wildlife goals aim to increase habitat quality and advise further exploration into the installation of monitoring stations.

**CULTURAL GOALS** include preserving the site's historic features, co-creating interpretation with descendants, and maintaining interpretive signage. HPARD will support annual heritage programs and maintain partnerships with local schools, universities, and artists.

## RECREATION AND PUBLIC ACCESS GOALS

focus on safety, trail accessibility, and meaningful public engagement. Objectives include maintaining trail usability year-round, reducing dumping by 50%, and improving the trail loop by Year 7.

**E.R. & Ann Taylor Park and Nature Preserve**

Relax and enjoy nature in this 27-acre park in the shadow of Downtown Houston where you'll discover majestic live oak trees, prairie, and centuries of history along the park's nature trails.

**Engage with Nature!**  
In 2022, the City of Houston passed a landmark Nature Preserve Ordinance which designates over 7,400 acres of natural habitat within 26 city parks as nature preserves. These nature preserves are protected because they contain significant natural resources—and also provide valuable ecosystem services which benefit us all. These include improving our air quality, enhancing flood mitigation, improving carbon storage, and helping to mitigate the harmful urban "heat-island" effect.

**Did You Know?**  
Natural areas in Houston are places where nature and people still depend on each other in a relationship that has shaped the city. Why not try some of these activities whenever you visit the park?

**Natural Resources for YOU!**  
The Houston Parks and Recreation Department's Nature Preserve Ordinance protects over 7,400 acres of natural habitat within 26 city parks. These parks are managed to support native wildlife.

**Know Before You Go!**  
- Always stay on trails.  
- No use of weapons on site.  
- Don't drink or use alcohol.  
- No dogs allowed.  
- EMERGENCIES: Call 911.

Houston Parks and Recreation Department | EPA | HPARD

**An Abiding Love...**

E. R. & Ann Taylor Park exists as a poignant memorial to the love of two people who homesteaded this site many years ago.

**Putting Down Roots**  
In 1875, E.R. and Ann Taylor moved to the suburbs of Houston with their young children. They purchased a plot of land in the Sims Bayou area. The couple lived on the site for 39 years until Ann died in 1909.

**A Beautiful Field**  
E.R. Taylor discovered oil on his land in 1906. In 1908, the first production of the Pierce Junction oil field had reached over 80 million barrels. The Taylor family had maintained the surrounding land and the resources for seven generations, and the original Taylor homestead was abandoned by the City in 1986.

**Please Mark, we're Here!**  
E.R. Taylor discovered oil on his land in 1906. In 1908, the first production of the Pierce Junction oil field had reached over 80 million barrels. The Taylor family had maintained the surrounding land and the resources for seven generations, and the original Taylor homestead was abandoned by the City in 1986.

Houston Parks and Recreation Department | EPA | HPARD

IMAGES: Newly installed interpretive signage onsite

## Management Strategies and Implementation

Strategies to achieve these goals center on coordinated ecological management, culturally grounded interpretation, and programming. Key actions include invasive species control, native seeding and plug planting, rotational prescribed burns beginning in Year 5, wetland buffer protection, canopy and root-zone care for live oaks, and regular vegetation and wildlife monitoring. Cultural preservation strategies emphasize documentation of historic features, interpretive signage development, and integration of the Witness Series and other community-led programming. Public access strategies address trail maintenance, safety improvements, and visitor orientation.

Implementation is phased over three milestones. Years 1–3 focus on baseline data collection, invasive removal, initial seeding, signage installation, and cultural documentation. Years 4–6 introduce prescribed burning, wetland planting, and expanded monitoring. Years 7–10 emphasize adaptive management, detailed tracking of ecological outcomes, refinement of prairie composition, and strengthening long-term community stewardship. Together, these actions will restore ecological integrity, honor the site’s deep cultural legacy, and ensure E.R. & Ann Taylor Park continues to serve as a vibrant, restorative space for future generations.

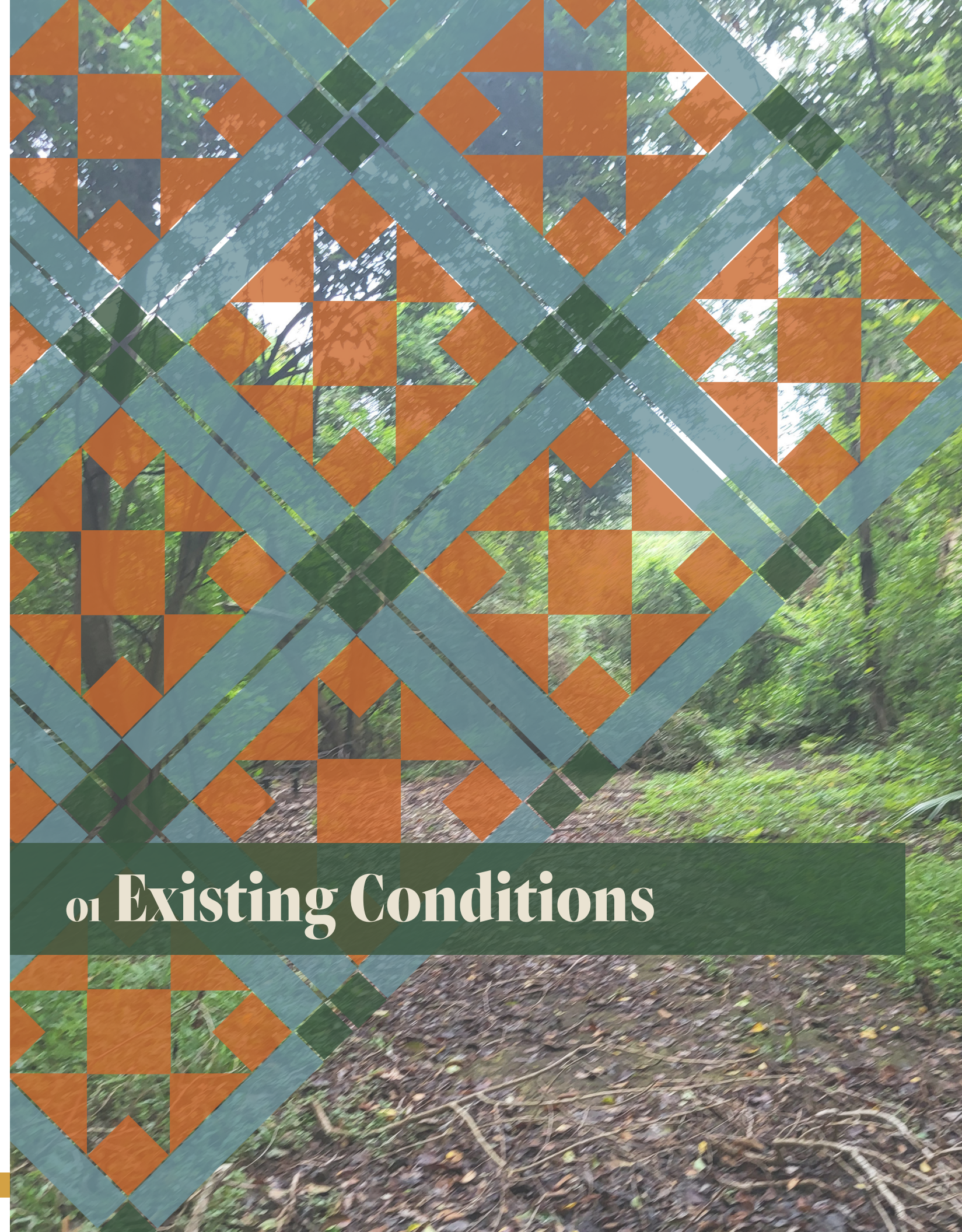
## Creating the Plan

This plan was created over the course of 2025 and 2026. City staff, the consultant, project advisors, and key stakeholders participated in a site visit in July 2025. The consultant conducted a series of interviews with City Staff, other experts in habitat management, cultural heritage experts involved in onsite programming, and descendants of the Taylor family who still remain in the area. Interviews helped to guide the development of this plan.

The consultant also reviewed a number of existing City of Houston documents to help inform this work including past vegetative surveys, HPARD Prairie Management Methods developed by the City of Houston in 2026, native tree and prairie planting lists, and past conceptual design work for the park completed in 2002 by Clark Condon - all of which can be found in the appendices. Four habitat management plans, one from Houston and three from other regions, were identified by the consultant and client, and analyzed to understand the best practices for developing these plans, including: “Lake Houston Wilderness Park” (Houston, Texas), “Miami-Dade County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program” (Miami, Florida), “Habitat Management Plan for Kabob Wildlife Management Area” (Buffalo, New York), and “Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Nulhegan Basin Division Habitat Management Plan” (Brunswick, Vermont).



IMAGE: Community planting day



# 01 Existing Conditions



## Existing Conditions

### Overview and Purpose

This chapter establishes the ecological and cultural foundations for the E.R. & Ann Taylor Park Habitat Management Plan. It summarizes the site's physical, biological, and historical characteristics based on field observations, stakeholder interviews, and precedent research. These findings inform management zones, restoration priorities, and long-term monitoring recommendations.

### Site Context

#### REGIONAL AND GEOGRAPHIC SETTING

E.R. & Ann Taylor Park is a 25-acre nature preserve in southwest Houston, located within the Sims Bayou watershed and the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes ecoregion. Historically, this part of Houston supported tallgrass prairie with scattered live oak mottes and prairie potholes - shallow depressions that held seasonal water. The park sits within the Central Flyway for migratory birds and forms part of a larger network of Houston green spaces that includes Herman Brown Park, Lake Houston Wilderness Park, and Sylvan Rodriguez Park. Urban development has fragmented these systems, increasing the importance of smaller preserves such as E.R. & Ann Taylor Park as refuges for urban wildlife.

#### SITE HISTORY AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

The land that became E.R. & Ann Taylor Park has deep cultural significance in Houston's African American history. The property was once part of a 640-acre homestead established by E.R. Taylor, son of a slave broker and Ann Taylor, a formerly enslaved woman. They lived together for nearly four decades following the Civil War. Through determination and careful land management, the family retained mineral rights that later provided financial security and a lasting legacy of independence.

The park was dedicated to commemorate that history and has become one of the

few public spaces in Houston honoring an interracial family from the Reconstruction era. Descendants and community members view the park as sacred ground. Artists and cultural practitioners continue to activate the space through programs such as the Witness Series, which combines performance, ancestor altars, and community gatherings that celebrate the site's heritage and its message of resilience and joy.

#### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND TOPOGRAPHY

The park is gently rolling, with elevations ranging from forty to fifty feet. For much of its history, E.R. & Ann Taylor Park functioned as a homestead and was never plowed or heavily disturbed. Because the soil remained largely intact, the park still preserves rare geological features known as mima or pimple mounds, likely shown as white dots in the historic aerial (right).

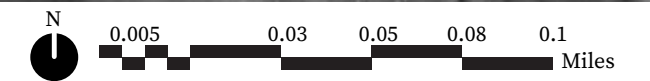
Mima mounds are low, earthen mounds that formed thousands of years ago. They're scattered across prairie landscapes worldwide, and have puzzled scientists for many years because no one knows exactly how they're formed. They may have formed from sediment gradually redistributed by wind and rainfall over time. They could also result from prairie soils expanding when wet and contracting as they dry. Some suggest they may even be caused by burrowing mammals such as pocket gophers. Mima mounds are slightly elevated with better drainage and more sandy soils than the surrounding landscape. Over thousands of years, these slight differences have created important microhabitats that support greater plant diversity and a richer prairie ecosystem. Many kinds of plants and animals are found utilizing mima mounds.



IMAGE: Pasture full of pimple/mima mounds in Cameron Parish, Louisiana, Photo by Jacob James; Copyright EcoGENESIS 2024



MAPS: 1944 historic aerial, Google Earth (top); Key map showing the location of ER & Ann Taylor Park in the Houston region, Google Earth (bottom)



Shallow depressions create a pattern typical of coastal prairie landscapes. And a small seasonal prairie pothole occupies an area on the edge of the site's southern boundary, visible on historic aerial photographs as a persistent hydrologic feature. The soils are predominantly sandy loams that drain quickly but hold moisture in lower areas. These conditions support native prairie vegetation and scattered live oaks but also favor the spread of aggressive invasive species following disturbance.

## Current Conditions

### VEGETATIVE COMMUNITIES

Vegetation across the park forms a mosaic of prairie restoration areas, legacy live oaks, and mixed hardwood edges.

**Prairie Zones:** Recently cleared and reseeded areas contain native grasses such as little bluestem, indiagrass, switchgrass, and eastern gamagrass. Early successional species, especially giant ragweed, dominated the prairie in the first year of restoration. Additionally, regrowth of trees and shrubs throughout the area was widespread. These unwanted species will continue to be managed through mowing and selective herbicide treatment until native perennials become established. Image 1 highlights the most concentrated efforts to date to clear and restore prairie. Image 2 shows a plan advisory viewing sandy loam soils likely remnants of historic mima mounds on site, indicating the site's soil profile to be relatively undisturbed by agricultural activities typical to the area.

**Forest Edge:** Hackberry, elm, ash, and other hardwoods dominate the perimeter. The forested edge provides a windbreak and screening but also contains invasive species that require periodic removal.

**Legacy Live Oaks:** Mature oaks, believed by descendants to have been planted by Ann Taylor, define the western portion of the site. Several show decline due to age and other factors, but they remain important for shade, wildlife habitat, and the park's visual identity. Image 3 shows where a concentration of these oaks are located.

**Invasive Species:** Chinaberry, ragweed, McCartney rose, elephant ear and glossy privet are some of the problem species. HPARD Natural Resources staff and contractors use cut-stump, basal, and foliar herbicide treatments with oversight by licensed applicators. Page right, key concentrations of ragweed and invasive vines are noted - images 4 and 5.

**Remnant Prairie Pothole/ Wetland:** At the southwest corner of the site (Image 6), a wetland feature exists as a mostly monoculture of cattail (*Typha* spp.). Poor drainage due to a human-made berm just north of the wetland contributes to the persistence of water uncharacteristic of these features regionally.



## WILDLIFE COMMUNITIES

Despite its small size, the park supports a variety of birds, insects, and small mammals. Common species include red-winged blackbirds, indigo and painted buntings, scissor-tailed flycatchers, cardinals, and seasonal monarch butterflies. Occasional coyote, frog, and turtle observations indicate a functioning food web. Although no federally listed species are known to occur, the preserve provides a crucial stepping-stone habitat within the city's broader ecological corridor and regional flyway.

## HYDROLOGY AND WETLAND FEATURES

Much of the site adjacent to the boardwalk sections of the trail would be considered wetland based on hydrology, soils, and vegetation. Those areas show as depressional prairie pothole habitat on historic imagery. Additionally, the park contains a small prairie pothole wetland, an impacted remnant, that retains water after heavy rainfall and supports wetland plants. Cattails (*Typha* spp.) take up much of the wetland's area. The feature provides habitat for amphibians and temporary water storage that benefits the Sims Bayou watershed. Because the site is isolated from any perennial stream, management should emphasize protection of soil structure and avoidance of herbicide or sediment runoff into the depression.

## SOILS AND ECOLOGICAL CONDITION

Field observation and comparison with nearby restoration sites indicate sandy loam soils with limited organic matter over a clay sublayer. These soils can dry quickly, making groundcover critical for stability and plant success. A minimum of four inches of intact topsoil is important for native prairie establishment and frequent mowing in early years is essential to suppress woody species and undesirable vegetation, while native prairie

plants that have been seeded and planted take hold.

## REGULATORY CONTEXT

### Local

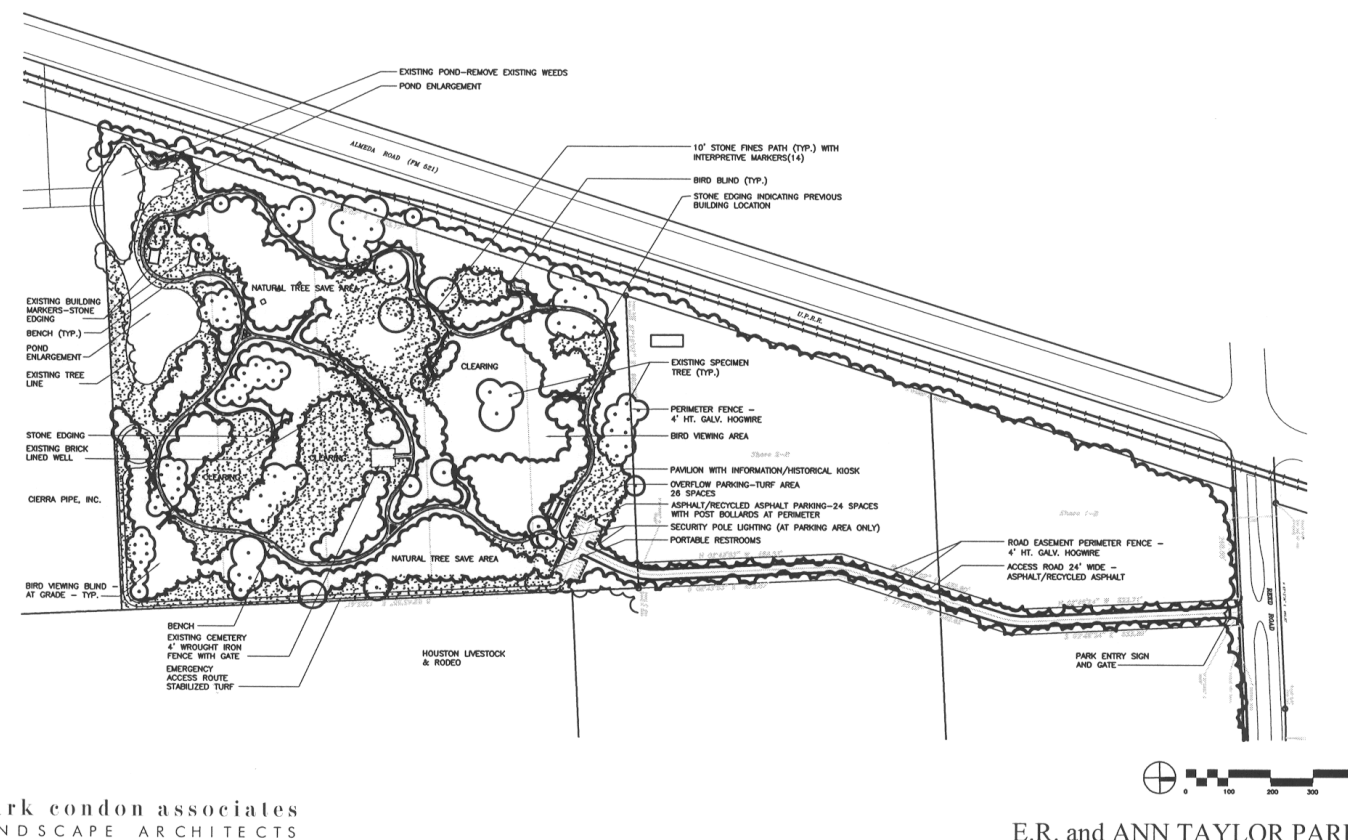
The City of Houston's Nature Preserve Ordinance (Appendix A) regulates public uses and development of the City's Nature Preserves including E.R. & Ann Taylor Park. Protection of the land within a preserve system provides a habitat for native wildlife, ecosystem services, and co-benefits in the form of carbon storage, reduced urban heat island effects, improved air quality, improved water quality and quantity, and educational opportunities for the public. The ordinance prohibits development of the preserves except for development identified for use in passive recreation, including but not limited to trails, benches, signage, and bird-friendly lighting.

### State

Texas law (Ch. 26) protects public parks and nature preserves from being used for other purposes unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative. If a project would affect parkland, the responsible government body must prove that it is unavoidable and that impacts to the land are minimized.

### Federal

Areas of the site adjacent to the boardwalk, in addition to the prairie pothole would likely meet the US Army Corps of Engineers definitions of a wetland based on hydrology, soils, and vegetation in those zones. Federally delineated wetlands are subject to protection under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.



clark condon associates  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

E.R. and ANN TAYLOR PARK

This drawing is conceptual in nature and is subject to change. No warranties or representations, expressed or implied, concerning the actual design, location or character of this plan are intended. This plan is not for permit or construction purposes.

Conceptual Plan  
CCA Proj. #101-86 2/20/02 (Scheme A)  
The Houston Park Board, INC.  
Houston, Texas

IMAGES: Conceptual Plan completed in 2002 by Clark Condon Associates (above); Existing site signage and benches (below)



## PAST EFFORTS WITHIN THE PARK

In 2002, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department contracted Clark Condon Associates to develop a conceptual plan for the park that highlighted key cultural assets and tree preservation areas. The plan suggests the addition of benches, bird blinds, trails, some limited clearing, and the expansion of and clearing of the pond on the south side of the site. Much of this plan was implemented though further development of the site no longer aligns with the City of Houston's goals of substantial prairie restoration in the site's core.



IMAGES: Vegetation plot at ER & Ann Taylor (top); Volunteer planting events at ER & Ann Taylor (middle and bottom)

### CURRENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department manages the park through regular mowing, litter and debris removal, seasonal seeding and planting events, and targeted herbicide applications for invasive removal. Vegetation plots and photographic points are used to track progress. Past vegetation surveys can be found in Appendix D.

Prairie areas are scheduled for prescribed burning beginning in the fourth year of restoration, in coordination with the Houston Fire Department. Maintenance activities occur year-round, with planting events and community volunteer work in the fall, winter, and spring. Seeds are sourced from remnant prairies within the Houston region and propagated in the HPARD greenhouse for installation into the site to establish the prairie and maintain regional genetic diversity.

HPARD Restoration Projects - Vegetation Survey Data Sheet		
Surveyors: Eric Keith	Plot # 2	Notes
Site Name: E.R. & Ann Taylor Park	Management: Prairie	
Date: 10/9/2024		
<b>Herbaceous Species</b>		
Mikania scandens		
Acer negundo		
Panicum hydrogiperoides		
Urtica americana		
<b>Bare</b>		
<b>Litter</b>		
<b>Water</b>		
<b>Woody Species</b>		
<b>Snags (dbh)</b>		
<b>Tree/Shrub Species (&gt;2.5-c)</b>		
Carya illinoensis		
Diospyros virginiana		
Liquidambar styraciflua		
Fraxinus pennsylvanica		
Pyrus calleryana		
Sabal <del>texana</del> mexicana		
Ilex decidua		
Celtis laevigata		
Quercus virginiana		
Urtica americana		

HPARD Restoration Projects - Vegetation Survey Data Sheet		
Surveyors: Eric Keith	Plot # 3	Notes
Site Name: E.R. & Ann Taylor Park	Management: Prairie	
Date: 10/8/2024		
<b>Herbaceous Species</b>		
Toxicodendron radicans	6	1-m square orientated N-S-E-W w/ stake in center
Optimumus hirtellus	3	Woody species measured > 1 in (2.5 cm) diam.
Ligustrum sinense	6	
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	1	
Rubus <del>trivialis</del>	1	
<b>Bare</b>		
<b>Litter</b>		
<b>Water</b>		
<b>Average Depth:</b>		
<b>Woody Species</b>		
<b>Snags (dbh)</b>		
<b>Tree/Shrub Species (&gt;2.5-cm.)</b>		
Celtis laevigata	3	6.5, 5.4, 6.3
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	1	31.9
Ilex vomitoria	6	5.2, 3.9, 7.4, 3.2, 2.5, 4.1
Ligustrum lucidum	6	4.4, 4.9, 4.8, 1.7, 9.4, 1.1
Quercus nigra	4	3.7, 5, 3.0, 5.9
Trielidion sebifera	2	20.6, 22.5
Urtica americana	(14)	20.2, 17.9, 24.3, 18.5, 7.8, 20.5, 15.7 10.2, 14.2, 8.9, 9.8, 12.5, 16.9, 35.5

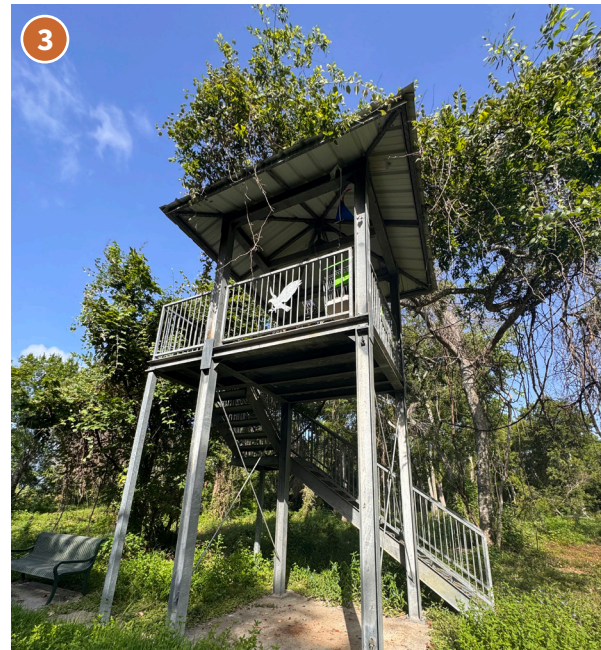
IMAGE: Vegetation surveys completed in Fall 2024

## BUILT FEATURES AND CULTURAL ASSETS

The park includes a number of built features and other components that reflect both its ecological and historical character.

**Built Features:** Access to the site is via Reed Rd. to the north. After an approximately 0.3 mile-long entrance road, visitors can access a parking lot (Image 1). An adjacent Pavilion is available for gathering (Image 2). An elevated wildlife observation tower near the southwest portion of the site can be found along the trail (Image 3). Substantial sections of the western trail are boardwalk (Image 4) as this area retains water in a remnant prairie pothole depression. Boardwalks are in need of near-term replacement. The remainder of the trail is a degrading asphalt mix. Fencing exists along portions of the eastern boundary and along a small portion of the southern boundary of the property, but is owned by the Houston Rodeo.

**Cultural Assets:** Two wells and concrete remnants mark the approximate homestead site. The family cemetery (Image 5) lies in the center of the park and is maintained in partnership with descendants. Interpretive signage connects ecological zones with the site's history and community stories. The western edge of the site includes a rail corridor that has been present since the early 1900s based on historic aerial imagery (Image 6). The park also serves as a venue for cultural events that integrate nature, art, and history. Descendants of E.R. and Ann Taylor have worked with local artists and other community members to host "The Witness Series," a series of participatory public art experiences honoring the sacred site and centered on the park's legacy live oaks as witnesses to the history of this place (Image 7).



# Preserving Ecological and Human Heritage

Houston Parks and Recreation Department is preserving ecological and human heritage while honoring the significance of this land to the local community.



"Glorious-Jay", Kristi Rangel, 2022; Acrylic on Watercolor Paper. Every year Ann Taylor Park hosts a participatory art event called the Witness Series which brings communities together through the power of nature and the shared belief that environmental equity is a basic human right. Houston multi-media artist Kristi Rangel named the Witness Series after these impressive Live Oak trees which have seen seven generations of history unfold here.

At E.R. and Ann Taylor Park, restoring nature goes hand in hand with honoring the people who lived here before us. This 27-acre park, just south of downtown Houston, was once part of a vast coastal prairie ecosystem, an endangered landscape that historically stretched across the Texas and Louisiana coasts. Today, Houston Parks and Recreation Department is restoring the park to reflect its historic prairie conditions by planting native grasses and wildflowers and using management practices that mimic natural prairie cycles.

The land also holds deep human significance, particularly for the Sunnyside community. Edward R. Taylor and Ann George Taylor built their home and farm here in the mid-1800s, raising their family on this land during a time when their interracial marriage could not be legally recognized. The park includes the site of their original homestead and the cemetery where Ann and three of her children are buried. By preserving both the natural landscape and this powerful history, E.R. and Ann Taylor Park stands as a place of remembrance, education, and connection, where the stories of people and prairie continue to shape the land.



The Witness Series explores Indigenous, African American, Latino and Asian connections to nature and art. Attendees become co-authors, editors and observers as they take part in these participatory public art experiences.



For the 2025 Witness Series event, visitors created an Ancestor Altar near Ann Taylor's gravesite, and left messages of love and goodwill in remembrance of their ancestors.

A sound bath provided visitors with an immersive, communal sonic experience which linked sound to healing and medicine in accordance with ancient African American tradition.



Houston Parks and Recreation Department



IMAGES: Newly installed interpretive signage at the park (top); Participants in The Witness Series, Houston Audubon (bottom left); Ancestor alter with image of Ann Taylor, Janice Brown (bottom right)

## 02 Goals and Objectives

# Goals and Objectives

## Management Zones

E.R. & Ann Taylor Park combines ecological restoration with cultural heritage preservation. Two interconnected habitat management zones emerge from the site analysis, in addition some unique assets outside of those areas:

**1. Prairie Core:** This zone is designated as the highest priority area for restoration to native coastal prairie and includes mima mounds and remnant prairie pothole depressions. Ongoing management activities will include native seeding and planting, invasive species management, and control of woody vegetation.

**2. Perimeter Woodland:** This area outside of the existing trail loop remains heavily forested by a variety of hardwood species. Ongoing management will focus on invasive species control, safety maintenance, and visual buffering.

### 3. Other Management Assets:

**Legacy Live Oak Grove:** The number of legacy live oaks on the western portion of the site are an important ecological and cultural asset for the site. Ongoing management will focus on protecting these trees during their normal lifespan and harvesting acorns for propagation both on site and for planting on other sites throughout the Houston area.

**Prairie Pothole Remnant Wetland:** While this remnant wetland is small and a lower priority as compared to prairie restoration for efforts on the site, this area still provides some significant habitat value for the site's wildlife. Ongoing management will be minimal but may include sediment management and potential wetland planting to diversify the plant community within the feature.

**Cultural Areas:** In addition to tree protection outlined above, further attention should be given to key cultural areas such as the family cemetery on site. Future habitat management efforts should look for opportunities to highlight and compliment cultural heritage programming and interpretive signage on site.

**Visitor Amenities:** The asphalt and boardwalk trail surfaces are deteriorating, and upgrading them is essential to support and complement the site's habitat restoration efforts. Visibility maintained by routine invasive species removal of the perimeter woodland with the addition of perimeter-wide fencing are recommended to increase site safety as the City of Houston looks to re-open the site to visitors.

Together these zones provide the framework for the management goals and objectives outlined in this chapter, as well as detailed strategies and implementation guidance in the final chapter.



## Goals and Objectives

The management goals for E.R. & Ann Taylor Park reflect three interrelated components of stewardship: ecological restoration, cultural heritage, and community use. Each goal defines the desired long-term condition of the park. Under each goal, quantifiable objectives describe the measurable outcomes expected during the 10-year planning horizon. Strategies and implementation timelines are outlined in Chapter 3 and summarize the types of work that will achieve those outcomes. Recommended monitoring procedures are also provided in Chapter 3.



### ECOLOGICAL GOALS

#### GOAL 1. RESTORE AND SUSTAIN NATIVE COASTAL PRAIRIE HABITAT

This goal re-establishes the park's historical prairie ecosystem, emphasizing the reintroduction of a diverse mix of native grasses and forbs adapted to coastal soils and hydrology, and the removal of aggressive woody species and non-native vegetation.

##### OBJECTIVES

- Achieve at least 90% native vegetation cover in core prairie restoration areas by Year 10.
- Establish a minimum of 150 native prairie species across prairie vegetation plots by Year 10.
- Reduce woody seedlings and saplings by 90% across the prairie footprint by Year 5 and maintain near-zero presence thereafter.
- Reduce invasive herbaceous vegetation by 80% across the prairie footprint by Year 5 and maintain near-zero presence thereafter.
- Maintain annual mowing or burning cycles so that no prairie section goes more than three years without disturbance.

#### GOAL 2. MAINTAIN HEALTHY OAK SAVANNAH AND FOREST-EDGE HABITATS

The live oak mottes and edge woodlands surrounding the prairie are integral to wildlife habitat and the site's visual identity, in addition to providing a buffer from adjacent development (visual and noise).

##### OBJECTIVES

- Maintain zero net loss of healthy live oak canopy cover over the 10-year period.
- Reduce invasive woody species in the forest edge by 80% by Year 5.

#### GOAL 3. PROTECT AND ENHANCE WETLAND MICROHABITATS

The remnant wetland functions as a seasonal wetland, providing storm-water storage, amphibian habitat, and support for other wildlife using the site as a stop-over.

##### OBJECTIVES

- Maintain an area of minimal disturbance within 25 feet of the prairie pothole depression at all times, excluding existing infrastructure.
- Increase native wetland plant cover (sedges, rushes, wetland forbs) diversity three-fold by Year 8.
- Ensure no measurable increase in sedimentation within the wetland basin.

#### GOAL 4. INCREASE WILDLIFE HABITAT QUALITY AND MONITORING CAPACITY

Enhancing habitat diversity and documenting wildlife use will demonstrate ecological success.

##### OBJECTIVES

- Increase observed bird species richness by at least 15% over baseline by Year 10.
- Complete biannual monitoring of bird species in spring and fall.

### CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY GOALS

#### GOAL 5. HONOR AND INTERPRET THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL LEGACY OF E.R. & ANN TAYLOR PARK

The park embodies African American land stewardship, family legacy, and the history of black cowboys and ranchers in Houston.

##### OBJECTIVES

- Increase the availability of cultural heritage information for visitors of the site.

#### GOAL 6. USE CULTURAL PROGRAMMING AS A TOOL FOR ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP

Public art and storytelling can deepen care for the landscape.

##### OBJECTIVES

- Increase participation in site programming to promote cultural and ecological goals in tandem.

### RECREATION AND PUBLIC ACCESS GOALS

#### GOAL 7. PROVIDE SAFE, WELCOMING, AND EDUCATIONAL VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Accessibility and interpretation will connect visitors to both the ecological and cultural values of the site.

##### OBJECTIVES

- Maintain the full trail loop for accessibility year-round, with quarterly inspections.
- Reduce illegal dumping incidents by 50% by Year 5, through monitoring, barriers, and community coordination.
- Maintain the interpretive trail loop.



IMAGE: Prairie restoration project in spring bloom (top) and winter dormancy (bottom)



## 03 Strategies + Implementation



# Strategies and Implementation

## Purpose

The Strategy and Implementation chapter translates the goals of the E.R. & Ann Taylor Park Habitat Management Plan into a clear, actionable path for the next decade. Building on the site analysis, historical context, and stakeholder priorities, this chapter outlines how management actions will restore native prairie structure, protect legacy live oaks, strengthen habitat connectivity, and ensure that the park remains a safe, resilient, and culturally meaningful space for the community.

Strategies in this chapter draw from multiple sources: the City of Houston’s Nature Preserve Ordinance, best-practice examples from comparable habitat management plans, and expert insights gathered through interviews and focus groups with ecologists, park managers, and members of the Taylor family. Together, these perspectives shape a management approach that balances ecological restoration with the preservation of the site’s cultural significance as a sacred landscape for Black Houstonians and a living expression of the Taylor family’s legacy. Implementation is organized around practical time horizons—**near-term (Years 1–3), mid-term (Years 4–6), and long-term (Years 7–10)**—to support phased restoration, adaptive learning, and operational feasibility by City staff. Each strategy includes corresponding actions, recommended timing, and notes on coordination needs such as herbicide treatment cycles, fire department collaboration for prescribed burns, volunteer planting events, and cultural programming.

Across all strategies, the plan follows an adaptive management framework: monitor, evaluate, adjust, and reinvest. Because E.R. & Ann Taylor Park is an evolving landscape—ecologically and socially—periodic recalibration is essential for success. This chapter establishes the roadmap for that process and provides the tools needed to implement, track, and refine habitat improvements over time.

## 10-year Timeline Overview

Phase	Years	Focus
PHASE 1	YEARS 1–3	Baseline monitoring, invasive and woody species removal, seeding, planting, cultural documentation, educational signage, and other maintenance and safety improvements
PHASE 2	YEARS 4–6	Prescribed burning, community planting events as needed, wetland planting, expanded monitoring
PHASE 3	YEARS 7–10	Adaptive management, canopy care, prairie refinement, community leadership
ALL	YEARS 1–10	Prairie mowing and ongoing herbicide treatment

## Best Practice Methods

### ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT

Detailed best practices for ecological management of urban prairies can be found in Appendix B: City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Natural Resources Division, “HPARD Prairie Management Methods” (March 2026).

### TIMING OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Effective prairie management depends on aligning disturbance and treatment actions with plant phenology, soil conditions, and seasonal site access. In Houston-area urban

Seasonal Prairie Management Activities Table		
MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY	OPTIMAL TIMING	NOTES / PURPOSE
Site Inspections	Year-round (monthly)	Visual inspections to identify invasive species, planting needs, trash, and access issues
Vegetation Surveys	Late spring–early summer	Conduct at the same time each year to minimize seasonal variability
Foliar Herbicide (Spot Spray)	March–September (peak: April–May)	Apply after leaf-out and before dormancy; avoid drought or heat stress
Basal Bark Herbicide	Year-round (best: spring–early fall)	Most effective on woody stems <6 in. diameter
Hack-and-Squirt	Late summer–fall	Avoid spring sap flow; optimal during root carbohydrate translocation
Cut-Stump Treatment	Year-round	Apply herbicide immediately after cutting for maximum effectiveness
Seeding	Fall (Oct–Nov) and Spring (Apr–May)	Target bare soil areas; use locally sourced native seed
Planting (plugs, pots, sprigs)	Fall, winter, and spring	Faster establishment than seed; minimal supplemental watering
Mowing	Late summer (minimum annual)	Suppresses woody growth and invasive seed set; soil must be dry
Targeted Grazing (optional)	April–October	Useful for saturated or inaccessible areas
Prescribed Fire	After establishment (often winter–early spring)	Requires permits and coordination with fire department

prairies, most active management occurs during the growing season, with careful avoidance of periods of standing water or extreme heat stress. Mowing and mechanical disturbance are most effective in late summer, when soils are dry enough to support equipment and when cutting can suppress woody encroachment and seed production of invasive herbaceous species without disrupting spring establishment of native plants.

Herbicide applications may occur year-round, but efficacy varies by method and season. Foliar treatments are most effective from late spring through early summer, once plants have fully leafed out and are actively growing. Basal bark treatments can be applied any time of year but perform best during the growing season. In contrast, hack-and-squirt and cut-stump treatments are best timed for late summer through fall. Prescribed fire, where feasible and permitted, is used as a longer-term maintenance tool after prairie

establishment. This management strategy is typically implemented outside of peak growing and nesting seasons, in coordination with local fire authorities.

### SEEDING, PROPAGATION, AND PLANTING

The City's restoration strategy emphasizes both planting propagated native species and broad-scale seeding, particularly during the early phases of restoration. For plant propagation, native seeds are collected locally and propagated either by City staff or trusted regional partners, ensuring genetic appropriateness and adaptation to local conditions. Nursery-grown plugs and container stock are installed strategically to establish a stable native plant matrix capable of competing with invasive species. Seeding occurs alongside planting in early phases and may be used selectively in later phases—such as overseeding gaps following disturbance or prescribed fire. Seed collection and plant propagation follow ethical and ecological best practices, including collecting only a small



IMAGE: Planting day

percentage of available seed from donor sites and prioritizing local ecotypes. Propagation focuses on species known to occur in Texas Coastal prairie systems, with attention to soil moisture, light conditions, and anticipated management regimes (mowing and fire). Planting is timed to maximize establishment success—generally in cooler, wetter seasons—and coordinated with invasive species control to reduce competition. Key partners include local native seed suppliers, conservation organizations, and City-affiliated nurseries, as well as informal collaborations with regional prairie practitioners.

### WORKING WITH CONTRACTORS

The City regularly works with contractors on ecological restoration projects, particularly for invasive species removal. All contractors working on site are required to meet City of Houston standards for ecological restoration and invasive species management. Work is overseen by HPARD Natural Resources staff, with clear expectations regarding treatment methods, timing, documentation, and safety. Frequency of treatments is determined by seasonal growth patterns, observed invasive pressure, and adaptive management reviews rather than fixed schedules. Contractors should take appropriate precautions to minimize the transfer of unwanted seed material potentially transferred to the site on equipment used on non-prairie sites.

### HERBICIDE AND INVASIVE REMOVAL

Invasive species management relies on targeted, species-specific herbicide applications rather than broadcast spraying. All herbicide use is supervised by licensed applicators following City of Houston Natural Resources Division standards and applicable regulations. Treatments are selected to minimize impacts to non-target species, soil health, and nearby wetland features. Herbicide use is integrated with mechanical controls, prescribed fire, and planting to ensure invasive removal supports, rather than undermines,

restoration goals. Herbicide treatments and other onsite activities should be timed to mitigate any potential impacts to wildlife.

#### *Herbaceous Invasive Species Control*

Spot foliar treatments are the primary method for controlling herbaceous invasive species within prairie restoration areas. These treatments focus on individual plants or discrete patches, allowing native species to remain intact. Spot spraying is often paired with mowing to prevent invasive species from setting seed while maintaining light availability for establishing prairie plants. Treatment frequency is adjusted seasonally and annually based on observed conditions and monitoring results.

#### *Woody Species Control*

Spot basal, foliar, hack-n-squirt, and cut stump treatments are all methods utilized for controlling woody native and invasive species within prairie restoration areas. Woody species control is often paired with mowing and/or prescribed fire to prevent trees and shrubs from turning prairie into forest. Treatment frequency is adjusted seasonally and annually based on observed conditions and monitoring results. Foliar herbicide applications are used selectively on smaller woody plants. Applications are timed to coincide with periods of active growth and favorable weather conditions to reduce drift and non-target exposure.

### MOWING

Mowing is a critical early-stage management tool used to suppress fast-growing annual weeds and woody species, reduce invasive seed production, and maintain light availability for native plants. Mowing height and frequency are carefully managed to avoid damaging desired species. As prairie vegetation becomes more established, mowing frequency is reduced to encourage structural diversity and natural successional processes. When mowing occurs, the City cleans equipment prior to entering the prairies to minimize the introduction of invasive species.

### BURNING

Prescribed fire is identified as a future management tool for E.R. & Ann Taylor Park, anticipated to begin once prairie vegetation and fuel loads are sufficient—generally several years into establishment. Burns will be conducted in coordination with the Houston Fire Department (HFD) and HPARD, following an approved, site-specific burn plan developed closer to implementation. That plan will define burn units, objectives, safety protocols, smoke management strategies, and contingency measures. Until a formal burn plan is adopted, mowing and targeted invasive control will serve as interim disturbance mechanisms.



IMAGES: Prescribed fire on another Houston prairie site

## FOREST MANAGEMENT

Forest management enhances visibility and supports a forested buffer along park edges and trails. Forest management prioritizes removal of invasive or declining trees while retaining healthy native canopy species. Decisions are guided by cultural considerations, and ecological function.

## VISIBILITY AND FENCING

Visibility is enhanced through selective forest edge management rather than extensive clearing. Fencing, where used, is minimal and designed to signal stewardship and promote safety, rather than exclusion. Materials and placement are selected to blend with the landscape and respect the site's character, using fencing primarily to guide access rather than fully enclose the park.



IMAGE: HPARD staff onsite in early phase restoration

## SITE HERITAGE

### INTEGRATING HERITAGE WITH ECOLOGY ON SITE

The cultural and historical significance of E.R. & Ann Taylor Park is treated as integral to site management. Ecological interventions are planned and implemented with sensitivity to known heritage features, including burial sites, historic homestead remnants, and areas of cultural gathering. Management actions are evaluated not only for ecological outcomes but also for their potential cultural impacts.

### ONGOING ENGAGEMENT WITH DESCENDANTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The City and project team commit to ongoing, respectful engagement with E.R. & Ann Taylor's descendants and key community partners. Engagement is prioritized during major decision points—such as changes to public access, interpretation, or management approach—and structured to allow for meaningful input rather than one-time consultation. Communication methods include facilitated meetings, site walks, and targeted updates rather than generalized outreach.

### INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE + PROGRAMMING

Interpretive signage and programming are designed to weave together cultural history and ecological restoration, presenting the site as both a sacred landscape and a living ecosystem. Language and visuals emphasize the interconnectedness of land stewardship, Black history, and prairie restoration, avoiding purely technical or purely commemorative narratives. Programming may include guided walks, seasonal events, and partnerships with artists, educators, and environmental organizations. Newly installed interpretive signs can be referenced in Appendix E.

## COMMUNITY USE

### PARK OPERATIONS

Community use of E.R. & Ann Taylor Park is guided by the principle that access should be intentional, respectful, and compatible with restoration goals. Programming and informal use are encouraged where they reinforce stewardship and connection to place, while activities that could undermine safety or habitat recovery are discouraged.

### VISIBILITY AND FENCING

Visibility is enhanced through selective forest edge thinning rather than extensive clearing. Fencing, where used, is minimal and designed to signal stewardship rather than exclusion. Materials and placement are selected to blend with the landscape and respect the site's character, using fencing primarily to guide access rather than fully enclose the park.

### TRAIL SURFACES AND ACCESS

Trail surface improvements are guided by nature preserve standards, prioritizing permeability, durability, and minimal ecological impact. Existing paved trails are maintained where necessary for accessibility, while boardwalks are used in wet or sensitive areas to protect soils and vegetation. Replacement or upgrades are evaluated for their compatibility with both ecological goals and public use needs.

## Implementation and Phasing

Goal	Strategy	Description + Objectives		Key Actions	Timeframe
<b>Ecological Goals</b>					
<b>Goal 1: Restore and Sustain Native Prairie Habitat</b>	<b>1.1 NATIVE PRAIRIE VEGETATION ESTABLISHMENT</b>	<p>Build a diverse, resilient coastal prairie community across the restored prairie core.</p> <p>Achieve at least 90% native vegetation cover in core prairie restoration areas by Year 10.</p> <p>Establish a minimum of 150 native prairie species across the site by Year 10.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propagate seeds, gathered locally, for large-scale planting events hosted on site at least twice a year for the first five years during the fall, winter, and spring</li> <li>Conduct annual vegetation monitoring via 1 m<sup>2</sup> quadrat vegetation plots with a density of one per acre; collect data on species diversity (richness and evenness) and maintain a site prairie plant list year-by-year</li> <li>Continue planting propagated plants through year ten where infill is necessary; utilize monitoring data to adjust species mix</li> <li>Broadcast native coastal prairie seed mix, from select vendors that collect locally, each year through year ten in specific scenarios where appropriate (e.g., overseeding gaps, post-disturbance, or after burns)</li> </ul>	Y1–Y10
	<b>1.2 INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>Reduce dominance of aggressive early invasives and reduce woody seedlings and saplings by 90% across the prairie footprint by Year 5 and maintain near-zero presence thereafter.</p> <p>Maintain annual mowing or burning cycles so that no prairie section goes more than three years without disturbance.</p> <p>Remove invasives and prevent tree and shrub reestablishment in prairie zones.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depending on the growing season, mow bi-weekly to monthly</li> <li>Increase frequency of mowing to a minimum of monthly for invasive annual giant ragweed</li> <li>When mowing is not possible due to standing water or soil moisture, remove unwanted early-successional species in high-concern areas with other tools</li> <li>Conduct targeted herbicide treatments throughout the prairie</li> <li>Monitor the development of invasive and woody species on site and align removal and spot herbicide treatment efforts to best suppress weeds before seeds set</li> <li>Use species-specific cut-stump or basal herbicide treatment as needed to control the emergence of woody species that would readily resprout with mowing or cutting alone</li> <li>Continue foliar herbicide applications for woody and herbaceous species</li> <li>Repeat seasonal sweeps to minimize emergence looking to reduce intensity of treatments from 2-3 times a year to once a year by Y5-6, increase intensity if needed</li> </ul>	Y1–Y10
	<b>1.3 SOIL PROTECTION</b>	<p>Maintain minimal disturbance of soils on site during restoration activities to minimize erosion of the site’s soil profile and reduce the likelihood of unwanted site seed bank activation.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid any further grading on site</li> <li>Limit heavy-duty equipment access to the site as much as possible and particularly during wetter seasons, especially after Y3</li> <li>Assess any areas where compaction may have occurred during site maintenance and restoration activities and monitor those sites to ensure intervention is not needed</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<b>1.4 FIRE MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>Use prescribed burning to improve prairie structure and ecological diversity.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Houston Fire Department to develop a site-specific burn plan in Y3-4</li> <li>Continue training and coordinating with the Houston Fire Department, including chainsaw and wildland fire training for HPARD staff, to support future burns</li> <li>Utilize the loop trail as a firebreak</li> <li>Implement prescribed burns with HFD starting in Y3-4</li> </ul>	Y3–Y10



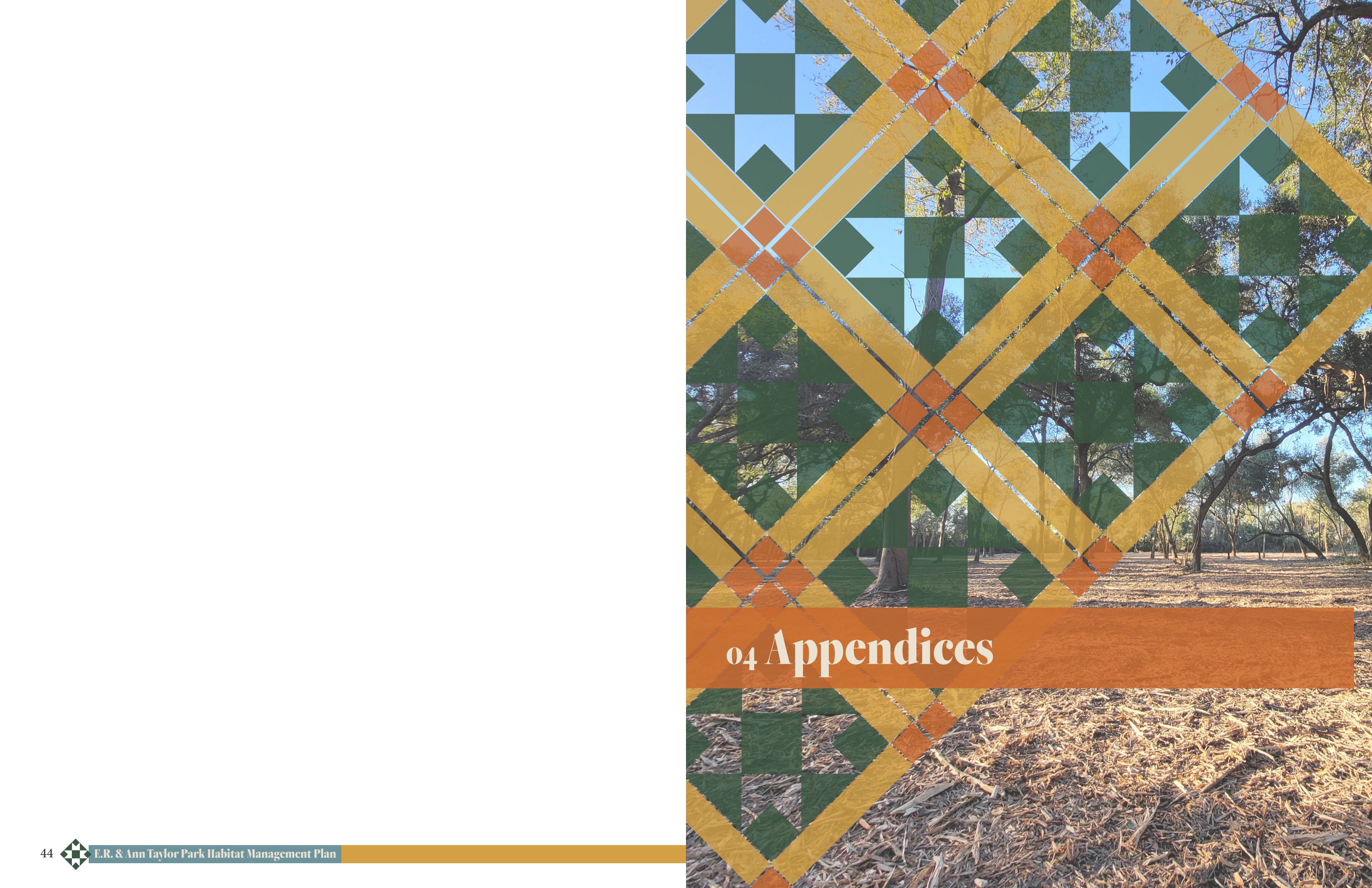
Goal	Strategy	Description + Objectives		Key Actions	Timeframe
<b>Goal 2: Protect and Enhance Woodland &amp; Live Oak Canopy</b>	<b>2.1 NATIVE SPECIES PROTECTION AND ESTABLISHMENT</b>	Enhance forested edges through the establishment of appropriate native trees that historically coexisted in balance with coastal prairie habitat without promoting forest encroachment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect and propagate acorns from legacy live oaks to support regeneration planning on site and on other sites regionally Y1-Y10</li> <li>Plant a diverse seedling mix of tree species within the existing forested edge that will not negatively impact the adjacent prairie, including canopy and understory species</li> <li>Focus on increasing the structural diversity of the woodland edge</li> </ul>	Y1-Y10
	<b>2.2 INVASIVE TREE &amp; SHRUB REMOVAL</b>	Remove non-native woody species and reduce midstory density. Reduce invasive woody species in the forest edge by 80% by Year 5.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize mechanical removal for non-native woody species &gt;8" DBH in woodland areas</li> <li>Utilize cut-stump treatments and foliar herbicide for emergent non-native woody species resistant to mechanical removal alone</li> <li>Manage vines within the forested area to prevent native tree canopy loss</li> </ul>	Y1-Y5 (maintain through Y10)
	<b>2.3 SOIL &amp; ROOT ZONE PROTECTION</b>	Prevent soil compaction and disturbance around large tree root systems.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrict the use of heavy equipment in woodland areas</li> <li>Protect root zones around legacy live oaks to ensure soil and root compaction does not occur in the event of nearby maintenance or site work</li> <li>Do not engage in any further grading or fill</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<b>Goal 3: Strengthen Site Hydrology, Wetland Function, and Microhabitats</b>	<b>3.1 REMNANT PRAIRIE POTHOLE PROTECTION</b>	The remnant prairie pothole functions as a seasonal wetland, providing storm-water storage, amphibian habitat, and support for other wildlife using the site as a stop-over. Maintain an area of minimal disturbance within 25 feet of the prairie pothole depression at all times, excluding existing infrastructure. Ensure no measurable increase in sedimentation within the wetland basin.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the wetland bi-annually to ensure no new emergence of invasive species</li> <li>In the event of invasive species emergence, consider a combination of mechanical removal and/or aquatic-approved herbicide treatments</li> <li>Avoid disturbance of the site by ensuring nearby maintenance activities do not cause substantial herbicide runoff or sedimentation into the prairie pothole, with a particular focus on buffering the wetland within 25 feet of the margin</li> </ul>	Y1-Y10
	<b>3.2 PLANT DIVERSITY</b>	Increase native wetland plant cover (sedges, rushes, wetland forbs) diversity three-fold by Year 8.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on creating a more diverse wetland plant community by engaging in annual planting events in Y5-Y8</li> </ul>	Y5-Y8



Goal	Strategy	Description + Objectives		Key Actions	Timeframe
<b>Goal 4: Increase wildlife habitat quality and monitoring capacity</b>	<b>4.1 PILOT WILDLIFE MONITORING TECHNIQUES ON-SITE</b>	Enhancing habitat diversity and documenting wildlife use will demonstrate ecological success. Increase observed bird species richness by at least 15% over baseline by Year 10.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with regional monitoring experts to establish best practice standards for wildlife monitoring stations in Nature Preserve sites for the City of Houston</li> <li>Install at least two wildlife monitoring stations (camera or acoustic) by Year 3</li> <li>Conduct annual bird and pollinator surveys beginning in Year 2 in collaboration with citizen scientists</li> </ul>	Y3-Y10
	<b>4.2 MAKE DATA PUBLICLY AVAILABLE</b>	Encourage public engagement with stewardship activities on site by making data publicly available.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document annual wildlife use data in a shared HPARD database and publish a summary report each year</li> </ul>	Y4-Y10
<b>Cultural and Community Goals</b>					
<b>Goal 5: Support Cultural Heritage, Community Use, and Stewardship</b>	<b>5.1 INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE</b>	The park embodies African American land stewardship and family legacy in Houston.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and install two interpretive signs covering history, ecology, and stewardship by Year 1 (Appendix E)</li> </ul>	Y1
	<b>5.2 HERITAGE PROGRAMMING</b>	Support partnerships that enhance the cultural heritage information for visitors of the site.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in at least two heritage-based public programs, in coordination with descendants and community partners</li> <li>Promote one annual interpretive or communication piece (digital or print) in collaboration with partners</li> </ul>	Y1-Y10
<b>Goal 6: Use cultural programming as a tool for ecological stewardship</b>	<b>6.1 STEWARDSHIP</b>	Storytelling can deepen care for the landscape.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host two or more volunteer or community-based stewardship events per year (planting, cleanup, monitoring, or cultural activation)</li> </ul>	Y1-Y10
	<b>6.2 EXPANDED ENGAGEMENT</b>	Increase participation in site programming to promote cultural and ecological goals in tandem.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage at least 100 participants annually across all cultural and stewardship events combined by Year 5</li> </ul>	Y1-Y10



Goal	Strategy	Description + Objectives		Key Actions	Timeframe
<b>Recreation and Public Access Goals</b>					
<b>Goal 7. Provide safe, welcoming, and educational visitor experiences</b>	<b>7.1 TRAIL QUALITY AND ACCESS</b>	Accessibility and interpretation will connect visitors to both the ecological and cultural values of the site. Maintain the full trail loop to provide accessibility year-round, with quarterly inspections.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore funding options for replacing the boardwalk sections of the trail loop by Y5</li> <li>Ensure fallen vegetation does not inhibit trail access - walk the trail on standard maintenance visits and ensure City staff review potential access issues within one month after any major storm event</li> <li>Inspect boardwalk and trail safety and access at least quarterly</li> </ul>	Y1-Y10
	<b>7.2 MINIMIZING SITE DUMPING AND DEGRADATION</b>	Reduce illegal dumping incidents by 50% by Year 5, through monitoring, barriers, and community coordination.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the presence of City staff, community partners, and visitors on the site with increased programming and stewardship activities</li> <li>Consider options for the park to maintain non-standard operating hours as a proactive management strategy to reduce illegal dumping and crime, enhance visitor safety, and minimize impacts to sensitive ecological features and park infrastructure</li> <li>Explore fencing options for the site's boundary that balance wildlife mobility but minimize human access outside of park hours</li> </ul>	Y1-Y5
	<b>7.3 WAYFINDING AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE</b>	Complete an interpretive trail loop by Year 1, linking ecological and cultural points of interest.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install wayfinding or trailhead improvements (bench, map, signage, bollards) by Year 1</li> </ul>	Y1



## 04 Appendices



**ARTICLE V. NATURE PRESERVES**

**Sec. 32-116. Purpose and policy.**

The purpose of this article is to preserve and protect in perpetuity city-owned natural areas by regulating public uses and development of these lands. Protection of the land within a preserve system provides a habitat for native wildlife, ecosystem services, and co-benefits in the form of carbon storage, reduced urban heat island effects, improved air quality, improved water quality and quantity, and educational opportunities for the public. The preserve will not contain traditional or customary facilities or improvements associated with a public park but may contain improvements to support passive recreational activities.

Uses shall be limited to those that maintain and protect the ecology of the area, conserve the natural features and scenic values, and expand community awareness and understanding of natural history and the environment. Nature preserve designations will be targeted for park land throughout the city to ensure equitable access to the benefits of nature for all Houstonians.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

**Sec. 32-117. Scope.**

This article applies only to city-owned nature preserves within the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, or city-owned nature preserves managed by Harris, Fort Bend or Montgomery County. Department staff, county staff, and other authorized persons working under staff supervision shall be exempt from the provisions of this article when performing activities related to director approved management plans. Additionally, the provisions shall not apply to city employees or county employees in the course of their official duties; others authorized by the city to engage in rescue, medical, or veterinary services; or vendors or others on preserve related business, when authorized by the director.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

**Sec. 32-118. Definitions.**

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings assigned in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

*Designated trail* means a trail or path within the boundaries of a natural area, whether paved or unpaved, maintained or unmaintained, designated as a trail for use by the public by the posting of signs or by designation on official maps of a natural area.

*Conservation easement* means a nonpossessory interest of a holder in real property that imposes limitations or affirmative obligations on the holder designed to retain or protect natural, scenic, and ecological values of real property in perpetuity.

*Constructed stormwater wetlands* mean wetland systems which are modified and controlled for stormwater management and water treatment. Constructed stormwater wetlands store water in relatively shallow pools that support conditions suitable for the growth of wetland plants.

*Native ecosystem* means a geographic area where indigenous plants, animals, and other organisms have adapted and evolved with competing species, predators, and diseases over many thousands of years to form an ecological balance that limits their abundance.

*Nature preserve* means a parcel of land owned or operated by the city that is designated for the protection and preservation of ecological communities and native wildlife through ordinance and/or the use of a conservation easement; the following areas are finally approved and designated by the city council as nature preserves:

*Blackhawk Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Brock Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Cambridge Village Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Clinton Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Crooker/Moody Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Cullinan (J.S. & L.H.) Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*E.R. & Ann Taylor Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*East Tidwell Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Eisenhower Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Farnsworth Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*FM Law Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Freed Art & Nature Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Furman Street Greenspace:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Herman Brown Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Keith-Wiess Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Lake Houston Wilderness Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Maxey Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Robert C Stuart Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Sheldon Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*South Main Estates Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Sylvan Rodriguez Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*The Lorraine Cherry Nature Preserve:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Tidwell Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*West Mount Houston Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*White Oak Parkway:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Woodland Park:* The area described in Exhibit A to Ordinance No. 2022-812, a copy of which is on file in the office of the city secretary.

*Natural area* means all city-owned lands containing native ecosystems that are under the control of or assigned to the department, Harris County, or other county for management, maintenance, and operation.

*Official search and rescue activities* means activities authorized and instigated by or on behalf of the local Coast Guard, Police or other National or local emergency service responsible for locating, relieving distress and preserving life of, and removing survivors from the site of a disaster, emergency, or hazard to a place of safety in case of lost, stranded, entrapped, or injured persons.

*Passive recreation activities* mean leisure or non-motorized recreational activities that place minimal stress on a site's resources such as hiking, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

*Service dog* has the meaning ascribed in Americans with Disabilities Act Title II Regulations, 28 C.F.R § 35.104. Defined terms within the definition of Service Animal set forth in 28 C.F.R § 35.104 shall have the meaning defined in 28 C.F.R § 35.104. Service Animal also means and includes a service animal or assistance animal as defined in Section 121.002 of the Texas Human Resources Code. A Service Animal does not include emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

### Sec. 32-119. Management objectives.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department's (HPARD) Natural Resources Management Division will be responsible for creating management objectives and plans for the preserves that are consistent with the defined purpose (Section 32-116). The management objectives are to:

- (1) Preserve the local plants, wildlife, and natural resources to maintain the biological diversity and long-term sustainability of the area's ecology;
- (2) Preserve the aesthetic values of the area for all to enjoy and for its contribution to the quality of life of the community;

- (3) Provide a variety of opportunities for passive recreation activities;
- (4) Support tourism in the community by providing public outdoor educational opportunities for visitors; and
- (5) Restore habitat in degraded areas of the preserve as close to its undisturbed condition as possible by reestablishing diverse plant species and native ecosystem processes.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

### Sec. 32-120. Conservation easement.

Where possible, the City of Houston shall record a conservation easement in the Real Property Records of Harris County, Texas, or other metropolitan county, to ensure the nature preserves remain undeveloped in perpetuity and are used only for passive recreation activities.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

### Sec. 32-121. Development of nature preserve.

- (a) Development shall be minimal and limited to amenities for passive recreation activities, including and limited to designated trails, noninvasive benches, signage, bird-friendly lighting, trash cans, and constructed stormwater wetlands built as required by section 32-125.
- (b) Existing improvements are allowed under this article, including:
  - (1) Roads constructed prior to October 12, 2022, are allowed under this article;
  - (2) Lighting installed prior to October 12, 2022, are allowed under this article; and
  - (3) The canoe launch, picnic tables, and fishing pier at Lake Houston Wilderness Park are allowed under this article.
- (c) Existing agreements and easements are allowed under this article, including Harris County Flood Control District and utility easements. All future agreements and easements shall adhere to the rules set forth in this article.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

### Sec. 32-122. Boundary markers.

Nature preserves boundaries shall be made clearly evident by HPARD posting boundary markers at intervals of approximately 330 feet if feasible.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

### Sec. 32-123. General rules for use.

- (a) All persons using the preserve shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, city ordinances, and Houston Parks and Recreation Department rules and regulations, some of which are provided on the City of Houston website.
- (b) Except as may be specifically authorized by a permit or permits issued in accordance with section 32-124, all persons using the preserve shall comply with the following:

(Supp. No. 90, Update 7)

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(Supp. No. 90, Update 7)

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- (1) No person shall construct any structure or building, or to develop the natural habitat of the nature preserve in any manner, except as provided by section 32-121 and section 32-125;
- (2) No person shall swim, wade, or otherwise enter any waters of a natural area or allow any pet animal or any riding or livestock animal to do so, except as provided by section 32-37 of this Code;
- (3) All preserve users must remain on designated trails and roads to prevent damage to the land and all other areas shall be considered "off limits";
  - a. No person shall enter areas considered "off limits" for any use; and
  - b. Dogs are restricted to designated trails, except service dogs or dogs assisting in official search and rescue activities. No person shall allow a dog to enter areas considered "off limits";
- (4) Mountain biking is prohibited within a nature preserve and biking is restricted to designated hike and bike trails, except that mountain biking is allowed on designated trails located within Eisenhower Park. No person shall ride a bicycle off designated trails;
- (5) The owner or person in custody of a dog shall immediately pick up all dog droppings (fecal matter) in accordance with section 6-24 of this Code;
- (6) Unless there is an existing utility corridor, existing easement, existing road, parking lot, well or existing right-of-way, no entity shall be allowed to place any new public service utility or road into, upon, or across nature preserve lands, and installation or removal of lines within existing utilities corridors, easements, or rights-of-way, requires the written approval from the director;
- (7) No person shall deface, damage, or inscribe a message, slogan, sign, or symbol upon any feature in the preserve, including the ground itself, using any material, including paint or markers of any kind;
- (8) No person shall remove any wildlife from the preserve, or release, abandon, place, bury, or otherwise dispose of any live animal, carcass, or remains of an animal in the preserve, except as provided by section 32-35 of this Code;
- (9) No person shall feed wildlife in the preserve;
- (10) No person shall remove, disturb, or damage any archaeological, geological, or paleontological materials from a natural area;
- (11) No person shall deposit rocks, wood, dirt, trash, or any other material in a natural area; and
- (12) It shall be unlawful for any person owning or having control of any livestock to graze or pasture such livestock, or cause such livestock to be grazed or pastured, or permit such livestock to graze or pasture upon any land within the preserve.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

**Sec. 32-124. Permits and procedures for special uses of the nature preserves.**

The provisions of this section shall not apply to persons or groups which have been issued a permit by the director to engage in such activities. Examples of such activities, for illustrative purposes only, might include: scientific research, including collecting any specimens such as plants, rocks, wildlife, or artifacts; non-fee educational activities or outdoor classes not conducted by the city; or educational activities or outdoor classes, not conducted by the city, with fees charged to participants.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

**Sec. 32-125. Constructed stormwater wetland guidelines.**

- (a) Parks that are designated as nature preserves in section 32-118 of this Code and encompass existing tributaries or channels may be considered for additional flood mitigation activities in the form of constructed stormwater wetlands, not listed within this Code, with the approval of the director and city council after a public hearing is held in accordance with section 32-126. Flood mitigation activities will only be considered in a designated nature preserve if there is no feasible and prudent alternative for flood mitigation in nearby areas of the watershed and if there is no existing restrictions, conditions, and covenants attached to the park.
- (b) All persons constructing stormwater wetlands in the preserve shall comply with the following design considerations and requirements:
  - (1) All constructed stormwater wetlands plans, including associated lighting, benches, signage, and trails shall be approved by the director;
  - (2) The hydraulic design, wetland sizing, selection of plants, and additional considerations shall be based the management objectives in section 32-119 of this Code and approved by the director;
  - (3) The design of the stormwater wetlands incorporates sufficient shallow areas to support aquatic vegetation and integrates ecologically designed features to manage stormwater;
  - (4) Allowable stormwater wetland vegetation is set forth in Appendix A; and
  - (5) Plant vendors must be approved by the director.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

**Sec. 32-126. Public hearing required prior to approval of a constructed stormwater wetland.**

Prior to approval of a constructed stormwater wetland established under section 32-126, city council shall hold a public hearing at which interested persons shall be entitled to speak and present written materials for or against the approval of the constructed stormwater wetland. Notice of the public hearing shall be published in a local daily newspaper of general circulation not later than the seventh day before the date of the hearing. Notice of the public hearing may be given, posted, or published in other places or by other means as the director deems appropriate, including giving notice to civic associations in the area surrounding the proposed constructed stormwater wetland.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

**Sec. 32-127. Penalty for article violations.**

The violation of any provision of this article is hereby declared to be unlawful. Any person violates the terms and conditions of section 32-123 and 32-126(b) of this article shall be deemed guilty of an offense and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished as provided in section 1-6 of this Code. Each violation shall constitute and be punishable as a separate offense.

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

**APPENDIX A. STORMWATER WETLAND VEGETATION LIST**

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Acmella oppositifolia</i> var. <i>repens</i>	creeping spotflower

<i>Andropogon glomeratus</i>	bushy bluestem
<i>Andropogon virginicus</i>	broomsedge bluestem
<i>Asclepias perennis</i>	aquatic milkweed
<i>Bacopa caroliniana</i>	blue waterhyssop
<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>	herb of grace
<i>Bidens aristosa</i>	swamp marigold
<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>	cherokee sedge
<i>Carex flaccosperma</i>	thinfuit sedge
<i>Carex hyalinolepis</i>	Shoreline sedge
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	common buttonbush
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	inland sea oats
<i>Cladium mariscus ssp, jamaicense</i>	Jamaica swamp sawgrass
<i>Crinum americanum</i>	swamp lily
<i>Cyperus articulatus</i>	jointed flatsedge
<i>Cyperus echinatus</i>	globe flatsedge
<i>Cyperus elegans</i>	royal flatsedge
<i>Cyperus haspan</i>	haspan flatsedge
<i>Cyperus ochraceus</i>	pond flatsedge
<i>Cyperus virens</i>	green flatsedge
<i>Echinodorus cordifolius</i>	creeping Burhead
<i>Eleocharis quadrangulata</i>	squarestem spikerush
<i>Equisetum hyemale</i>	scouringrush horsetail
<i>Helianthus angustifolius</i>	swamp sunflower
<i>Hibiscus laevis</i>	halberdleaf rosemallow
<i>Hibiscus lasiocarpus</i>	rosemallow
<i>Hydrocotyle umbellata</i>	manyflower marshpennywort
<i>Hydrolea ovata</i>	blue waterleaf
<i>Hymenocallis liriosme</i>	spring spiderlily
<i>Iris brevicaulis</i>	zigzag iris
<i>Iris virginica</i>	southern blue flag iris
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	common rush
<i>Juncus marginatus</i>	grassleaf rush
<i>Juncus roemerianus</i>	needlegrass rush
<i>Juncus validus</i>	roundhead rush
<i>Justicia lanceolata</i>	looseflower water-willow
<i>Kosteletzkya virginica</i>	saltmarsh mallow
<i>Lobelia puberula</i>	downy lobelia
<i>Ludwigia decurrens</i>	wingleaf primrose-willow
<i>Ludwigia octovalvis</i>	Mexican primrose-willow
<i>Ludwigia repens</i>	creeping primrose-willow
<i>Najas guadalupensis</i>	southern waternymph
<i>Nymphaea mexicana</i>	yellow water lily
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	white water lily
<i>Panicum hemitomon</i>	maidencane
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	switchgrass
<i>Phyla nodiflora</i>	turkey tangle fogfruit
<i>Physostegia virginiana</i>	obedient plant

<i>Pluchea odorata</i>	marsh fleabane
<i>Polygonum hydropiperoides</i>	swamp smartweed
<i>Pontederia cordata</i>	pickerelweed
<i>Rhynchospora caduca</i>	anglestem beaksedge
<i>Rhynchospora colorata</i>	white topped sedge
<i>Rhynchospora corniculata</i>	shortbristle horned beaksedge
<i>Rhynchospora recognita</i>	globe Beaksedge
<i>Rudbeckia maxima</i>	great coneflower
<i>Saccharum giganteum</i>	sugarcane plumegrass
<i>Sagittaria lancifolia</i>	bulitongue arrowhead
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	broadleaf arrowhead
<i>Sagittaria platyphylla</i>	delta arrowhead
<i>Saururus cernuus</i>	lizard tail
<i>Schoenoplectus californicus</i>	California bulrush
<i>Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani</i>	softstem bulrush
<i>Spartina patens</i>	marsh hay cordgrass
<i>Spartina spartinae</i>	gulf cordgrass
<i>Thalia dealbata</i>	powdery alligator flag
<i>Tradescantia ohiensis</i>	bluejacket
<i>Tripsacum dactyloides</i>	eastern gama grass
<i>Utricularia gibba</i>	humped bladderwort
<i>Zizaniopsis miliacea</i>	giant cutgrass

(Ord. No. 2022-812 , § 2, 10-12-2022)

**Secs. 32-128—32-145. Reserved.**

# HPARD Prairie Management Methods



City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department  
Natural Resources Division

March 2026

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**Recommended Citation:** City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) Natural Resources Division. (2026). *Prairie Management Methods*.

### Prairie History

Much of Houston falls within the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes ecoregion of Texas, which contains flat topography less than 150 feet in elevation (Griffith et al., 2004). Houston’s historic habitat was characterized by tallgrass prairie with trees predominately occurring in mottes or along the extensive waterways that flow through the city and into Galveston Bay. Prairie ecosystems are defined by plant communities consisting of native grasses and forbs with few trees or shrubs. Grasses are usually dominant, with species such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardi*), switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), yellow Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and Eastern gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*). Soils are typically clay or sandy clay loams, which the native grasses and forbs are well adapted to grow in.

Prairies provide a multitude of ecosystem services including wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, water quality improvements, and carbon sequestration. Prairie habitat supports a large, diverse array of wildlife species such as birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. Notable species include white-faced ibis, swallow-tailed kites, and white-tailed hawks, all state-listed Threatened species that utilize Houston’s prairie ecosystems.

Prairies also provide flood mitigation and erosion control. Many prairie plant species have deep, dense roots that act like a sponge underground and allow for prairie landscapes to absorb large amounts of water and reduce erosion. As water flows through prairies, the plants improve water quality by filtering out pollutants, such as excess nutrients, sediments, and other contaminants. These same dense root systems allow prairie plants to sequester large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, making prairie ecosystems exceptional carbon sinks.

Habitat loss and fragmentation are one of the greatest threats to the coastal prairies. Coastal prairies and marshes once covered 6.5 million acres of land along the Texas coast. Today only one percent of pristine prairie ecosystems remain, while another 15 to 20 percent are degraded ecosystems that could be restored (Texas Coastal Prairies Initiative, 2023; HARC, 2020). Prairie ecosystems are typically well suited for development, and most prairies have been converted to agricultural lands, rangelands, or developed for residential, commercial, or industrial uses.

**“Without these natural disturbance regimes, prairie restoration or enhancement methods should include artificial disturbance - mowing, controlled burns, or introduction of grazing animals.”**

Remaining prairies are threatened by continued development, woody encroachment, and the encroachment of invasive species. Historically, prairies were maintained in an herbaceous state through natural disturbances, such as wildlife and grazing animals. Over the last century, wildfire suppression and removal of grazers such as bison have allowed woody species to encroach on remaining habitat. The proliferation of invasive species, particularly Chinese tallow tree (*Triadica*

*sebifera*), are also one of the leading threats to remaining coastal prairies. Trees and other woody species will take over prairies in the absence of management, resulting in their transition to forested habitat. Without these natural disturbance regimes, prairie restoration or enhancement methods should include artificial disturbance- mowing, controlled burns, or introduction of grazing animals. Invasive species must be actively controlled and removed to prevent them from taking over the ecosystem and outcompeting the native species.

### Prairie Management Methods



#### Site Inspections and Analysis

##### Qualitative Analysis

Prairies should be visually inspected monthly to assess general maintenance needs. Items that should be reviewed at site inspections include but are not limited to invasive species removal needs, planting or seeding needs, and trash cleanup. Photos of the site should be taken at each site inspection to track progress over time.

##### Quantitative Analysis

Trained staff or environmental consultants with qualified biologists should be hired to conduct annual vegetation monitoring to assess vegetation community composition over time and influence management decision-making. Monitoring should be conducted at the same time of year each year to reduce seasonal differences in data. Methods for vegetation monitoring may include predetermined meter squared plots that are monitored for percent cover of each species.

Various wildlife surveys may be conducted at the site to provide additional information on the success of the prairie restoration project. Surveys for pollinators, birds, amphibians, reptiles, or mammals may be conducted to monitor utilization of the prairie by wildlife during establishment and beyond. Methods, equipment needs and required surveyor expertise will vary depending on what type of species is being surveyed.

***Invasive Species Removal***

Most invasive species must be treated with herbicides to ensure that no re-sprouting will occur. Early detection and removal of invasive species is key to containing the spread. Herbicide application for invasive species management should be conducted by a licensed Texas Department of Agriculture Pesticide Applicator. If there is not an in-house licensed pesticide applicator on the staff, then an environmental consulting company with a licensed applicator can be hired to treat invasive species on-site.

Herbicide management within the prairie should utilize spot treatment methods, which includes foliar, basal bark, hack-and-squirt, or cut-stump applications. Specific herbicides should be selected on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the invasive species that is being targeted for removal and the herbicide application method. In aquatic areas, such as wetlands, an aquatic rated herbicide must be used. Removal of undesirable species in the area surrounding the prairie site may be necessary to prevent species from seeding into the prairie and causing persistent invasive species growth. See Appendix A for lists of common invasive species to the Houston area and Appendix B for native woody invaders to prairies. Herbicide application of invasive species can be conducted any time of year, although for the most effective treatment optimal times to implement each method of application can vary:

- Foliar herbicide application can be applied in the spring through fall but will depend on when plants leaf out. This will generally begin in the spring (typically April or May) and should be stopped when plants start dropping their leaves in the fall or when they go dormant for the season (typically around October). Late spring and early summer are the most optimal time of year.
- Basal bark applications can be applied any time of year, but it is typically most effective in the growing season (spring and early summer).
- Hack-and-squirt and cut-stump applications can be applied any time of year, but they are typically less effective during the spring growing season when there is heavy sap flow. Late summer through fall is the most optimal time of year when woody vegetation transports food reserves to their roots for the winter.

***Woody Species***

When targeting woody species, herbicide control methods include basal bark, cut-stump, or foliar application. Basal bark herbicide application involves applying herbicide directly to the bark near the base of the plant without cutting the plant down. This method is specific to plants that are not mature enough to have well-developed bark, and are less than six inches in diameter, although a two inch or less diameter is preferred. Cut-stump application is required if woody species are too large for basal bark application and entails chain-sawing or hand-sawing the plant and applying herbicide across the surface of the cut. Foliar application involves spraying all of the plants leaves with a foliar herbicide and can be used on small plants up until they reach waist height.

Depending on the method of application and type of herbicide being used, a surfactant may be required for adequate absorption of the herbicide into the plant. The herbicide label will specify directions for use, including if a surfactant is required, specific ratios and types of surfactants that should be used for each type of spraying. It is recommended to use an herbicide dye for spot spraying applications so that applicators can see which plants have already been sprayed. This is especially helpful in a prairie setting where it can be harder to keep track of target plants due to the number and diversity of plants in an area.

***Herbaceous Species***

Herbaceous species, such as grasses and forbs, can be controlled through foliar herbicide application. Application will be most effective during times of growth and when the plant is not stressed by heat or drought. Many of these species are aggressive seeders and can produce thousands of seeds multiple times throughout the growing season. Targeted mowing treatments can cut off flowering structures before seeds can mature, preventing unwanted seed from spreading throughout the site. If invasive herbaceous species have mature seeds within the prairie restoration site, cutting and bagging the seeds is preferred to prevent germination.

***Native Plant Installation***

Once invasive, non-native, and woody vegetation is removed from a prairie, it should be seeded and planted with a diverse mix of locally native prairie species. Additional native plant installation will be needed to continuously increase native plant population and diversity at the site. Areas with few native plants, and areas recently treated for invasive species should be targeted for planting or seeding. Plants and seed should be purchased from vendors that collect locally from within an approximate 50-mile radius around the city of Houston. See Appendix C for a list of native prairie species that are recommended for planting or seeding in the Houston area.



Figure 1. Volunteers assisting with a prairie planting event at Clinton Park Prairie.

Seeding

The site can be selectively seeded throughout the restoration process in the areas that have visible soil. Any seeding should take place during fall and spring seasons (October-November and April-May). A seed drill is a device that evenly distributes seeds and can help to bury them slightly in the soil. However, seed can be cast by hand and is effective in areas where prairie growth has already begun, to ensure that only areas with bare soil receive seed. A diverse mix of locally native species that includes both grasses and forbs will help support establishment. Additionally, a seeding of native wildflowers in the fall will provide additional color and ground coverage to help prevent the establishment of invasive species.

Planting

Planting of native plants can take place throughout the restoration process in the spring, winter, and fall months. Plants include a variety of sizes, typically one-gallon to five-gallon pots or sprigs obtained from a local grower. These plants will establish more quickly than seed and will help to shade out undesirable species. No additional watering will be required for prairie plantings unless dry weather conditions require supplemental watering within the first month.

**Mowing and Disturbance**



Figure 2. HPARD mowing Sylvan Rodriguez Park Prairie with a tractor and batwing attachment.

Mowing

Mowing will provide long-term control of woody species and help in the establishment of native species. Frequency is dependent upon the density of woody species and the need to open-up the area for newly seeded and planted native vegetation. At a minimum, the site should be mowed annually until the prairie is fully established. Ideal times for mowing in a wet prairie would be late summer when soil conditions are dry, and it is favorable to bring heavy equipment into the site.

Tractors that have mowed land outside of prairie habitat can be a continuous source of invasive species migration into the prairie. To prevent the spread of invasive species, all mowing equipment should be swept and sprayed with a hose or power washer before entering the prairie. A tractor and triplex or batwing mower should be used to mow the prairie. Many native bunchgrasses cannot survive the low setting of a typical lawn mower. The height of the batwing mower should be set between 8” to 10” off the ground.



Figure 3. Goats being utilized for invasive species and poison ivy removal at an HPARD riparian restoration site at F.M. Law Park.

Grazing Animals

Another option for introducing disturbance into the prairie is by hiring a contractor to bring in bovids, such as cattle or goats, to graze at the site. Contractors may be obtained and will often provide temporary fencing to contain the animals. This strategy is optimal for sites that are difficult to access with equipment, saturated sites that prevent heavy equipment from entering, or where there may be issues with poison ivy or thorny vegetation that hinders staff or volunteers from entering the location. Goats are ideal for smaller sites that are overgrown with woody vegetation. They enter the site for short periods of time and can be focused on specific problem areas. Cattle are well suited for larger sites and are often a long-term solution managed by grazing rotations.

Prescribed Fire

Prescribed burns are beneficial to prairie maintenance as many prairie species co-evolved with wildfire. Controlled burns can improve plant growth and regeneration, and they can help decrease the risk of wildfire by reducing fuel loads. In order to conduct a prescribed burn within the City of Houston, site operators must follow appropriate state and local regulations.



Figure 4. Prescribed fire conducted by HPARD and the Houston Fire Department at Sylvan Rodriguez Park Prairie.

Annual Prairie Management Timeline												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Site Inspection	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal
Vegetation Survey			Adequate	Optimal	Optimal	Adequate						
Foliar Herbicide			Adequate	Optimal	Optimal	Adequate						
Basal Bark Herbicide	Adequate	Adequate	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Adequate	Adequate
Hack-and-Squirt Herbicide						Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	
Cut-Stump Herbicide	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal
Seeding			Adequate	Optimal	Optimal	Adequate			Adequate	Optimal	Adequate	Adequate
Planting	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Adequate					Adequate	Optimal	Optimal
Mowing						Adequate	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Adequate		
Grazing				Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal		
Prescribed Fire	Optimal	Optimal	Adequate									Adequate

Color Key:  =Optimal months  =Adequate months

### Adaptive Management

Once restored and established, Houston’s coastal prairies require ongoing adaptive management to maintain their ecological health and resilience. Land managers monitor vegetation, soil conditions, and wildlife use to evaluate how the prairie is responding over time. Management practices, such as prescribed burning, selective mowing, or targeted invasive species control, are adjusted based on these observations. This flexible approach allows managers to respond to changing conditions, support native plant diversity, and ensure the prairie continues to function as a healthy coastal ecosystem.

### Conclusion

Prairies are dynamic ecosystems that require disturbance to maintain their herbaceous state and keep invasives at bay. Without natural disturbance regimes, prairie restoration or enhancement methods should include artificial disturbance such as mowing, controlled burns, or introduction of grazing animals. Invasive species must be actively controlled and removed to prevent them from taking over the ecosystem and outcompeting the native species. Additional native plant installation will likely be needed to continuously increase native plant population and diversity within a prairie, especially during the initial establishment years. While prairie ecosystems require continuous management to maintain an herbaceous state and keep invasive species at bay, with regular management each year should see increased native species establishment and reduced invasive species or woody encroachment.





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### Appendix A: Identification Guide of Common Invasive Species in the Houston Area

<p><i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>, Camphor Tree</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree</li> <li>• Evergreen shiny leaves that have a distinct sent when crushed</li> <li>• Simple and alternating leaf arrangement</li> </ul>	<p><i>Ligustrum sinense</i>, Chinese Privet</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shrub</li> <li>• Small, oval shaped leaves with a noticeable crease down the middle</li> <li>• Leaves are arranged opposite from each other along the stem</li> </ul>
<p><i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>, Glossy Privet</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shrub/ small tree</li> <li>• Simple leaf arrangement</li> <li>• Leaves are arranged opposite from each other along the stem</li> <li>• Glossy, dark green leaves</li> </ul>	<p><i>Lonicera japonica</i>, Japanese Honeysuckle</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vine</li> <li>• Leaves are arranged opposite from each other along the stem</li> <li>• Flowers often and has distinct white or yellow flowers</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Melia azedarach</i>, Chinaberry</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree</li> <li>• Leaves are arranged in a compound structure</li> <li>• Toothed leaves</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Morus alba</i>, White Mulberry</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small tree</li> <li>• Large, shiny leaves with highly variable leaf shape</li> <li>• Simple and alternate leaf arrangement</li> <li>• Fruit can be white to red when ripe</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Triadica sebifera</i>, Chinese Tallow</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree</li> <li>• Unique leaf shape with pointed end</li> <li>• New growth can have a reddish tint</li> <li>• Saplings can be pulled up from roots if the plant is small enough</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>, Chinese Elm</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree</li> <li>• Toothed, pointed leaves similar to native and Winged Elm</li> <li>• Simple, alternate leaf arrangement</li> <li>• Distinctive lace pattern on bark of mature trees</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Dichanthium aristatum</i>, <i>Bothriochloa ischaemum</i>, Old World Bluestems</b></p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass</li> <li>• Flowers often</li> <li>• Seed heads are forked and can have a purple tint</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Sorghum halepense</i>, Johnsongrass</b></p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass</li> <li>• Large, pyramid shaped seed head with brown color</li> <li>• White stripe down the center of the leaf blade</li> <li>• Wide and long leaf blades similar to native Eastern Gama grass</li> </ul>
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<p><b><i>Arundo donax</i> Giant Reed</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass</li> <li>• Appearance similar to bamboo</li> <li>• Can grow to 12-16 feet tall</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Paspalum urvelli</i>, Vasey Grass</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass</li> <li>• Purple and fuzzy leaf base</li> <li>• Leaning seed head</li> <li>• Mealy appearance of seed head</li> <li>• Leaf blades have a wavy edge</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Cyperus enterianus</i>, Deep-rooted Sedge</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sedge (grass-like)</li> <li>• Glossy, dark green leaves</li> <li>• Densely clustered seeds</li> <li>• Stem is not a pointed triangle (unlike many native sedge species)</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Verbena brasiliensis</i>, Brazilian Vervain</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forb</li> <li>• Square stem</li> <li>• Tall and thin plant with minimal branching</li> <li>• Opposite leaves</li> <li>• Purple flower</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Rosa bracteata</i>, Macartney Rose</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forb/Small shrub, often forms thick brambles</li> <li>• Round, small leaves made up of 5-9 leaflets</li> <li>• Thorns on stem</li> <li>• White flower, yellow in center</li> <li>• Round fruit</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Lantana camara</i>, Common Lantana</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forb/small shrub</li> <li>• Square, hairy or prickly stems</li> <li>• Ovate shaped, opposite leaves.</li> <li>• Leaves are larger than the native lantana (<i>Lantana urticoides</i>)</li> <li>• Small, clustered flowers</li> <li>• Flowers vary in color. Typically white, yellow and pink, sometimes also orange, red, or lavender</li> </ul>
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**Appendix B: List of Common Native Woody Species to be Removed in Prairies**

- *Baccharis halimifolia*, Eastern Baccharis
- *Celtis laevigata*, Sugar Hackberry
- *Diospyros virginiana*, Common Persimmon
- *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, Green Ash
- *Ilex vomitoria*, Yaupon
- *Morella cerifera*, Wax Myrtle
- *Prunus caroliniana*, Carolina Cherry Laurel
- *Rubus sp.*, Blackberry or dewberry species (if forming dense brambles)

**Appendix C: List of Recommended Prairie Species to be Planted**

Native Texas Prairie Plant List	
Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i>	Eastern Bluestar
<i>Andropogon capillipes</i>	Chalky Bluestem
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big Bluestem
<i>Andropogon glomeratus</i>	Bushy Bluestem
<i>Andropogon gyrans</i>	Elliot's Bluestem
<i>Andropogon ternarius var. ternarius</i>	Splitbeard Bluestem
<i>Andropogon virginicus</i>	Broomsedge Bluestem
<i>Aristida purpurea</i>	Purple Three Awn
<i>Arnoglossum ovatum</i>	Ovateleaf Indian Plantain
<i>Arnoglossum plantagineum</i>	Indian Plantain
<i>Asclepias asperula</i>	Antelope-horns
<i>Asclepias perennis</i>	Aquatic Milkweed
<i>Asclepias tuberosa ssp. Interior</i>	Butterfly Weed
<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>	Whorled Milkweed
<i>Asclepias viridis</i>	Green Milkweed
<i>Baptisia alba</i>	White Wild Indigo
<i>Baptisia bracteata</i>	Longbract Wild Indigo
<i>Baptisia sphaerocarpa</i>	Yellow Wild Indigo
<i>Bidens aristosa</i>	Tickseed Sunflower
<i>Bothriochloa laguroides</i>	Silver Bluestem
<i>Bouteloua rigidiseta</i>	Texas Grama
<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	Winecup
<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>	Cherokee Sedge
<i>Centaurea americana</i>	American Basketflower
<i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>	Partridge Pea
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	Inland Sea Oats
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	Narrowleaf Wood Oats
<i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>	Blue Mistflower
<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	Lanceleaf Coreopsis
<i>Dalea candida</i>	White Prairie Clover
<i>Dalea compacta</i>	Compact Prairie Clover
<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	Purple Prairie Clover
<i>Desmanthus illinoensis</i>	Illinois bundleflower
<i>Dichanthelium scoparium</i>	Velvet Panicum
<i>Echinacea sanguinea</i>	Sanguine Purple Coneflower
<i>Echinacea sanguinea/purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower

Native Texas Prairie Plant List Cont.	
Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Elymus virignicus</i>	Virginia Wild Rye
<i>Eragrostis secundiflora ssp. Oxylepis</i>	Red Lovegrass
<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	Purple Lovegrass
<i>Erigeron annuus</i>	Daisy Fleabane
<i>Eryngium hookeri</i>	Hooker's Eryngo
<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	Rattlesnake Master
<i>Eupatorium hyssopifolium</i>	Hyssop leaf Boneset
<i>Gaillardia pulchella*</i>	Firewheel
<i>Helenium flexuosum</i>	Purple Sneezeweed
<i>Helianthus angustifolius</i>	Narrowleaf Sunflower
<i>Helianthus angustifolius</i>	Swamp Sunflower
<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	Maximillian Sunflower
<i>Helianthus mollis</i>	Ashy Sunflower
<i>Hibiscus laevis</i>	Halberdleaf Rosemallow
<i>Hibiscus lasiocarpus</i>	Wooly Rosemallow
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	Crimson-eyed Rose-mallow
<i>Hydrolea ovata</i>	Blue Waterleaf
<i>Hymenocallis liriosme</i>	Texas Spider Lily
<i>Hypericum hypercoides</i>	St. Andrew's Cross
<i>Hyptis alata</i>	Clustered Bushmint
<i>Iris hexagona</i>	Dixie Iris
<i>Kosteletzkya pentacarpos</i>	Saltmarsh Mallow
<i>Liatris acidota</i>	Sharp Blazing Star
<i>Liatris bracteata</i>	Bracted Blazing Star
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	Prairie Blazing Star
<i>Liatris squarrosa</i>	Scaley Blazingstar
<i>Monarda citriodora*</i>	Lemon Beebalm
<i>Monarda punctata*</i>	Spotted Beebalm
<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	Gulf Muhly
<i>Neptunia lutea</i>	Yellow Puff
<i>Neptunia pubescens</i>	Tropical Puff
<i>Oenothera lindheimeri</i>	Butterfly Gaura
<i>Oenothera speciosa*</i>	Pink Evening Primrose
<i>Panicum hallii</i>	Hall's Panicgrass
<i>Panicum rigidulum</i>	Red Top Panicum
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass
<i>Paspalum floridanum</i>	Florida Paspalum

Native Texas Prairie Plant List Cont.	
Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Paspalum monostachyum</i>	Gulfdune Paspalum
<i>Paspalum plicatulum</i>	Brownseed Paspalum
<i>Paspalum praecox</i>	Early Paspalum
<i>Penstemon tenuis</i>	Gulf Penstemon
<i>Physostegia intermedia</i>	Spring Obidient Plant
<i>Physostegia virginiana</i>	Fall Obedient Plant
<i>Pluchea odorata</i>	Marsh Fleabane
<i>Polytaenia nuttallii</i>	Prairie Parsley
<i>Polytaenia texana</i>	Texas Prairie Parsley
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Heal-all
<i>Pulchra rosea</i>	Swamp Fleabane
<i>Pycnanthemum tenuifolium</i>	Narrowleaf Mountain Mint
<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	Upright Prairie Coneflower
<i>Rhexia mariana</i>	Maryland Meadow Beauty
<i>Rudbeckia grandiflora</i>	Rough Coneflower
<i>Rudbeckia hirta*</i>	Black Eyed Susan
<i>Rudbeckia texana</i>	Texas Coneflower
<i>Sabatia campestris</i>	Meadow Pink
<i>Saccharum giganteum</i>	Sugarcane Plumegrass
<i>Salvia azurea</i>	Blue Sage
<i>Salvia azurea var. azurea</i>	Azure Blue Sage
<i>Salvia lyrata</i>	Lyreleaf Sage
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem
<i>Silphium integrifolium</i>	Rosinweed
<i>Silphium radula</i>	Roughstem Rosinweed
<i>Solidago sempervirens</i>	Seaside Goldenrod
<i>Solidago tortifolia</i>	Twist-leaf Goldenrod
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Yellow Indiangrass
<i>Symphyotrichum pratense</i>	Barren Silky Aster
<i>Tridens flavus</i>	Purpletop Tridens
<i>Tridens strictus</i>	Longspike Tridens
<i>Tripsacum dactyloides</i>	Eastern Gamagrass
<i>Tripsacum dactyloides</i>	Gamma Grass
<i>Verbena xutha</i>	Gulf Vervain
<i>Vernonia missurica</i>	Missouri Ironweed

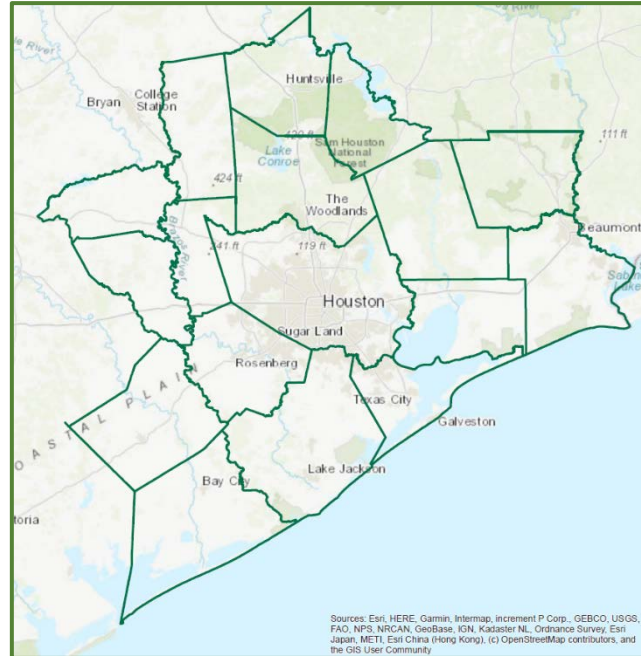
\*Do not need to be propagated because they will come up sufficiently from seed

# Native Tree List



In 2020, HPARD’s Tree Protection Committee published a new list for trees that can be planted on City of Houston property and Right of Way. The new Tree List only includes tree species that are native to the Houston Area. Native trees provide quality habitat for local wildlife, are well adapted to the conditions of the Houston area, and provide ecosystem services in the form of carbon sequestration, air and water quality improvement, and reduce urban heat. Native trees have checks and balances that prevent them from becoming invasive species.

Tree species were selected for the new tree list if the species is native to Harris County or within two adjacent counties (see map). This method ensures that the trees are well adapted to the area while also including trees from the surrounding counties that may have other beneficial adaptations.



**Sources:**

The primary sources selected to determine native status were the *Atlas of United States Trees* and *A Checklist of the Native and Naturalized plants of Houston and Vicinity*. These sources were selected because they considered the native status of the species before European settlement of the Houston area, and because they used specific and localized data sources. A wide variety of other sources were also cross-checked to ensure accuracy.

The *Atlas of United States Trees* was created in 1971 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service to map the natural distribution of all tree species in the U.S. prior to European settlement. The authors used decades of dendrology records, dating back to the first comprehensive report on trees in the U.S. created in 1884 as part of the tenth national census. Over 300 references were used, including state herbaria, doctoral theses, state-published distribution maps, and Forest Service maps of forest types.

The *Checklist of the Native and Naturalized Plants of Houston and Vicinity* is a list of plants that are native to Harris, Waller, Montgomery, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Liberty, Chambers, and Galveston counties. The checklist clearly distinguishes plants that are not native and have become naturalized or noxious. The author referenced 31 different books and herbaria and thoroughly checked each species at the Alfred Traverse Herbarium at Rice University, the Tracy Herbarium at Texas A&M, and the Southern Methodist University Herbarium.

**Citations:**

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Natural Area Trees (NA)



Species		Usage
Scientific name	Common name	
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box Elder	Large Tree
<i>Acer rubrum</i> var. <i>trilobum</i> / var. <i>drummondii</i>	Trident Red Maple Drummond's Red Maple	Large Tree
<i>Betula nigra</i>	River Birch	Large Tree
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	American Hornbeam	Large Tree
<i>Carya aquatica</i>	Water Hickory	Large Tree
<i>Carya cordiformis</i>	Bitternut Hickory	Large Tree
<i>Carya illinoensis</i>	Pecan	Large Tree
<i>Carya texana</i>	Black Hickory	Large Tree
<i>Carya tomentosa</i>	Mockernut Hickory	Large Tree
<i>Catalpa bignonioides</i>	Southern Catalpa	Large Tree
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	Sugarberry	Large Tree
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	Common Persimmon	Large Tree
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	White Ash	Large Tree
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Green Ash	Large Tree
<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American Holly	Large Tree
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Eastern Black Walnut	Large Tree
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern Redcedar	Large Tree
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Sweetgum	Large Tree
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Southern Magnolia	Large Tree
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Sweet Bay Magnolia	Large Tree
<i>Morus rubra</i>	Red Mulberry	Large Tree
<i>Nyssa aquatica</i>	Water Tupelo	Large Tree
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Blackgum	Large Tree
<i>Nyssa biflora</i>	Swamp Tupelo	Large Tree
<i>Pinus echinata</i>	Shortleaf Pine	Large Tree
<i>Pinus palustris</i>	Longleaf Pine	Large Tree
<i>Pinus taeda</i>	Loblolly Pine	Large Tree
<i>Planera aquatica</i>	Planertree or Water Elm	Large Tree
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	American Sycamore	Large Tree
<i>Populus deltoides</i>	Eastern Cottonwood	Large Tree
<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Black Cherry	Large Tree
<i>Quercus alba</i>	White Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus falcata</i>	Southern Red Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus laurifolia</i>	Laurel Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus lyrata</i>	Overcup Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Bur Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus michauxii</i>	Swamp Chestnut Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus nigra</i>	Water Oak	Large Tree

Natural Area Trees (NA)



Species		Usage
Scientific name	Common name	
<i>Quercus pagoda</i>	Cherrybark Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus phellos</i>	Willow Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus shumardii</i>	Shumard Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus stellata</i>	Post Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus texana</i>	Nuttall Oak	Large Tree
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Southern Live Oak	Large Tree
<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Sassafras	Large Tree
<i>Sideroxylon lanuginosum</i>	Gum Bully/Gum Bumelia	Large Tree
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	Bald Cypress	Large Tree
<i>Tilia americana</i>	Basswood	Large Tree
<i>Tilia Americana</i> var. <i>canadensis</i>	Carolina Basswood	Large Tree
<i>Ulmus americana</i>	American Elm	Large Tree
<i>Ulmus crassifolia</i>	Cedar Elm	Large Tree
<i>Aesculus pavia</i>	Red Buckeye	Small Tree
<i>Aralia spinosa</i>	Devil's Walkingstick	Small Tree
<i>Cercis canadensis</i> var. <i>canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	Small Tree
<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	White Fringetree	Small Tree
<i>Cornus drummondii</i>	Roughleaf Dogwood	Small Tree
<i>Cornus florida</i>	Flowering Dogwood	Small Tree
<i>Crataegus marshallii</i>	Parsley Hawthorn	Small Tree
<i>Crataegus spathulata</i>	Littlehip Hawthorn	Small Tree
<i>Crataegus viridis</i>	Green Hawthorn	Small Tree
<i>Crataegus opaca</i>	Western Mayhaw	Small Tree
<i>Cyrilla racemiflora</i>	Titi	Small Tree
<i>Diospyros texana</i>	Texas Persimmon	Small Tree
<i>Ehretia anacua</i>	Anacua	Small Tree
<i>Frangula caroliniana</i>	Carolina Buckthorn	Small Tree
<i>Halesia diptera</i>	Two-Wing Silverbell	Small Tree
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	American Witchhazel	Small Tree
<i>Ilex cassine</i>	Dahoon Holly	Small Tree
<i>Ilex decidua</i>	Possumhaw	Small Tree
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Yaupon	Small Tree
<i>Maclura pomifera</i>	Osage Orange	Small Tree
<i>Malus angustifolia</i>	Southern Crabapple	Small Tree
<i>Morella cerifera</i>	Wax Myrtle	Small Tree
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	American Hophornbeam	Small Tree
<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>	Retama	Small Tree

## Natural Area Trees (NA)



Species		
Scientific name	Common name	Usage
<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i> var. <i>glandulosa</i>	Honey Mesquite	Small Tree
<i>Prunus angustifolia</i>	Chickasaw Plum	Small Tree
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	Carolina Laurelcherry	Small Tree
<i>Prunus mexicana</i>	Mexican Plum	Small Tree
<i>Prunus umbellata</i>	Hog Plum	Small Tree
<i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>	Common Hoptree (Wafer ash)	Small Tree
<i>Rhus copallinum</i>	Winged Sumac	Small Tree
<i>Salix nigra</i>	Black Willow	Small Tree
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> ssp. <i>canadensis</i>	Black Elderberry	Small Tree
<i>Sapindus Saponaria</i> var. <i>drummondii</i>	Western Soapberry	Small Tree
<i>Ungnadia speciosa</i>	Mexican Buckeye	Small Tree
<i>Vaccinium arboreum</i>	Farkleberry	Small Tree
<i>Vachellia farnesiana</i>	Sweet Acacia	Small Tree
<i>Viburnum rufidulum</i>	Rusty Blackhaw	Small Tree
<i>Zanthoxylum clava-herculis</i>	Hercules' Club	Small Tree

## Prairie Plants



Species		
Scientific Name	Common Name	Type
<i>Amsonia repens</i>	Creeping Bluestar	Forb
<i>Arnoglossum ovatum</i>	Ovateleaf Cacalia	Forb
<i>Arnoglossum plantagineum</i>	Prairie Indian Plantain	Forb
<i>Asclepias hirtella</i>	Tall Green Milkweed	Forb
<i>Asclepias linearis</i>	Slim Milkweed	Forb
<i>Asclepias perennis</i>	Aquatic Milkweed	Forb
<i>Asclepias verticillata</i>	Whorled Milkweed	Forb
<i>Asclepias viridis</i>	Green Milkweed	Forb
<i>Baptisia bracteata</i>	Longbract Wild Indigo	Forb
<i>Baptisia sphaerocarpa</i>	Yellow Wild Indigo	Forb
<i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>	Partridge Pea	Forb
<i>Conoclinium coelestinum</i>	Blue Mistflower	Forb
<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	Lance-leaved Coreopsis	Forb
<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	Plains Coreopsis	Forb
<i>Desmanthus illinoensis</i>	Illinois Bundleflower	Forb
<i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i>	Eastern Bluestar	Forb
<i>Echinacea sanguinea</i>	Sanguine Purple Coneflower	Forb
<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	Rattlesnake Master	Forb
<i>Euphorbia bicolor</i>	Snow-on-the-Prairie	Forb
<i>Gaillardia aestivalis</i>	Lanceleaf Blanketflower	Forb
<i>Helenium flexuosum</i>	Southern Sneezeweed	Forb
<i>Helianthus angustifolius</i>	Swamp Sunflower	Forb
<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	Maximilian Sunflower	Forb
<i>Hibiscus laevis</i>	Halberdleaf Rosemallow	Forb
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	Crimson-eyed Rosemallow	Forb
<i>Hyptis alata</i>	Clustered Bushmint	Forb
<i>Liatris acidota</i>	Sharp Blazing Star	Forb
<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Tall Blazing Star	Forb
<i>Liatris bracteata</i>	Bracted Blazing Star	Forb
<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	Prairie Blazing Star	Forb
<i>Lobelia puberula</i>	Downy Lobelia	Forb
<i>Oenothera lindheimeri</i>	White Gaura	Forb
<i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i>	Narrowleaf Silkgrass	Forb
<i>Polytaenia texana</i>	Texas Prairie Parsley	Forb
<i>Pycnanthemum tenuifolium</i>	Narrowleaf Mountainmint	Forb
<i>Rhexia mariana</i>	Maryland Meadowbeauty	Forb
<i>Rudbeckia grandiflora</i>	Rough Coneflower	Forb
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed Susan	Forb
<i>Rudbeckia texana</i>	Texas Coneflower	Forb
<i>Salvia azurea</i>	Giant Blue Sage	Forb
<i>Silphium gracile</i>	Slender Rosinweed	Forb

Prairie Plants



<i>Silphium radula</i>	Roughstem Rosinweed	Forb
<i>Solidago mexicana</i>	Southern Seaside Goldenrod	Forb
<i>Solidago tortifolia</i>	Twist-leaf Goldenrod	Forb
<i>Symphotrichum pratense</i>	Barrens Silky Aster	Forb
<i>Verbena xutha</i>	Gulf Vervain	Forb
<i>Vernonia missurica</i>	Missouri Ironweed	Forb
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big Bluestem	Graminoid
<i>Andropogon tenuispatheus</i>	Bushy Bluestem	Graminoid
<i>Andropogon ternarius</i>	Splitbeard Bluestem	Graminoid
<i>Andropogon virginicus</i>	Broomsedge Bluestem	Graminoid
<i>Bothriochloa laguroides</i>	Silver Bluestem	Graminoid
<i>Carex bushii</i>	Bush's Sedge	Graminoid
<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>	Cherokee sedge	Graminoid
<i>Cyperus echinatus</i>	Globe Flatsedge	Graminoid
<i>Cyperus virens</i>	Green Flatsedge	Graminoid
<i>Elymus virginicus</i>	Virginia Wildrye	Graminoid
<i>Eragrostis secundiflora</i>	Red lovegrass	Graminoid
<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	Purple lovegrass	Graminoid
<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	Gulf Muhly	Graminoid
<i>Panicum vergatum</i>	Switchgrass	Graminoid
<i>Paspalum floridanum</i>	Florida Paspalum	Graminoid
<i>Paspalum plicatulum</i>	Brownseed Paspalum	Graminoid
<i>Rhynchospora caduca</i>	Anglestem Beaksedge	Graminoid
<i>Rhynchospora colorata</i>	Whitetop Sedge	Graminoid
<i>Rhynchospora corniculata</i>	Short-bristled Horned Beaksedge	Graminoid
<i>Saccharum giganteum</i>	Sugarcane Plumegrass	Graminoid
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem	Graminoid
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indiangrass	Graminoid
<i>Tridens flavus</i>	Purpletop Tridens	Graminoid
<i>Tridens strictus</i>	Longspike Tridens	Graminoid
<i>Tripsacum dachtyloides</i>	Eastern Gamagrass	Graminoid

Appendix D: E.R. & Ann Taylor Park Vegetation Surveys

Notes	Vegetation Survey: 10/9/2024											
	Plot 8		Plot 9		Plot 10		Plot 11		Plot 12		Plot 13	
Herbaceous Species (1 m <sup>2</sup> )	% Coverage											
<i>Acer negundo</i>												
<i>Ampelopsis arborea</i>												
<i>Campsis radicans</i>												
<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>												
<i>Carex festucacea</i>												
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>					1				2			
<i>Cocculus carolinus</i>					6		6		1			
<i>Dichanthelium commutatum</i>												
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>									2			
<i>Fraxinus pensylvanicus</i>												
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	8											
<i>Lactuca floridana</i>												4
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>												
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>												6
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>												
<i>Mikania scandens</i>												
<i>Morus rubra</i>												
<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i>	3											4
<i>Oxalis coarctata</i>												1
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>			12									
<i>Persicaria Hydropiperoides</i>												
<i>Poncirus trifoliata</i>												25
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	6		5							35		
<i>Quercus phellos</i>												
<i>Quercus nigra</i>												
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	2		1									
<i>Rosa bracteata</i>												
<i>Rubus trivialis</i>												
<i>Sabal minor</i>							10					
<i>Smilax bona-nox</i>												
<i>Solanum nigrescens</i>									6			
<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>							10					
<i>Ulmus americana</i>				1								
<i>Vitis mustangensis</i>				2								
<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>						2						3
Bare	1		9		1		4		20			7
Litter	80		70		90		70		34			50
Water												
Woody Species >2.5 cm (30 ft-radius)	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH
<i>Acer negundo</i>			1	3.6	1	9.2					4	24.5
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>			1	36.6	3	23.3	4	16.8				
<i>Carya illinoensis</i>					2	38.7						
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>												
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>												
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>												
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>					1	22.2						
<i>Ilex cornuta</i>												
<i>Ilex decidua</i>												
<i>Ilex opaca</i>												
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	52	5.0	6	4.7	2	3.1						
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	21	9.8	33	8.9	34	9.3	7	12.0	15	13.6		
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>					1	3.9						
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>												
<i>Maclura Pomifera</i>			1	3.2								
<i>Morus rubra</i>												
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	7	6.6	4	9.2	13	3.5	23	7.2	7	6.8	13	5.5
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>												
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	1	4.6					2	3.1	1	2.9		
<i>Quercus nigra</i>			1	63.6			2	4.4	1	5.5	7	7.0
<i>Rosa bracteata</i>												
<i>Sabal mexicana</i>												
<i>Sideroxylon lanuginosum</i>												
<i>Triadica sebifera</i>	3	27.1										
<i>Ulmus americana</i>	5	21.4	2	4.8	2	11.2	5	11.9	1	6.8	1	17.2
<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>												

Vegetation Survey: 10/8/2024														
Notes	Plot 1		Plot 2		Plot 3		Plot 4		Plot 5		Plot 6		Plot 7	
	Huge live oak!													
Herbaceous Species (1 m <sup>2</sup> )	% Coverage													
<i>Acer negundo</i>			8											
<i>Ampelopsis arborea</i>														
<i>Campsis radicans</i>									2					
<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>														
<i>Carex festucacea</i>														
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>											1		5	
<i>Cocculus carolinus</i>	1								2		5		1	
<i>Dichanthelium commutatum</i>														
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>														
<i>Fraxinus pensylvanicus</i>					1									
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>														
<i>Lactuca floridana</i>														
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	8													
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>	3				6									
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>														
<i>Mikania scandens</i>			20											
<i>Morus rubra</i>														
<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i>					3				10				6	
<i>Oxalis coymbosa</i>														
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>														
<i>Persicaria Hydrogiperoides</i>			18											
<i>Poncirus trifoliata</i>														
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>									15				18	
<i>Quercus phellos</i>														
<i>Quercus nigra</i>											1			
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>							3		2		4			
<i>Rosa bracteata</i>														
<i>Rubus trivialis</i>					1									
<i>Sabal minor</i>														
<i>Smilax bona-nox</i>												3		
<i>Solanum nigrescens</i>														
<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>					6						3			
<i>Ulmus americana</i>			4										4	
<i>Vitis mustangensis</i>														
<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>														
Bare	2				40						3		6	
Litter	86		50		43		97		69		80		60	
Water														
Woody Species >2.5 cm (30 ft-radius)	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH
<i>Acer negundo</i>														
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	9	20.7	1	4.8	3	6.1	5	10.6			2	15.8	4	19.5
<i>Carya illinoensis</i>			1	4.4			3	19.9	1	44	2	34.5		
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>			2	8.1										
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>											1	8.2		
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>			22	4.6	1	31.9								
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>														
<i>Ilex cornuta</i>														
<i>Ilex decidua</i>			4	3.4										
<i>Ilex opaca</i>														
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>					6	4.4	5	3.3			17	4.5	7	4.4
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	10	4.1			6	9.8	2	5.8	46	10.4	9	5.9	54	10.2
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>														
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>			1	8.1										
<i>Maclura Pomifera</i>	2	54.5												
<i>Morus rubra</i>							3	5.9						
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	12	5.4					1	4.5					2	3.9
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>			1	13.1										
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>			1	13.8			1	139.3			3	8.7	1	2.9
<i>Quercus nigra</i>					4	11.7	5	8.1	1	58.5	5	7.4	1	3.7
<i>Rosa bracteata</i>														
<i>Sabal mexicana</i>			2	29.4										
<i>Sideroxylon lanuginosum</i>														
<i>Triadica sebifera</i>					2	21.6								
<i>Ulmus americana</i>	1	54.7	38	6.9	14	16.6	4	28.7					1	10.1
<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>														

Vegetation Survey: 5/3/2023														
Notes	Plot 14		Plot 15		Plot 16		Plot 17		Plot 18		Plot 19			
	% Coverage													
<i>Acer negundo</i>														
<i>Ampelopsis arborea</i>														
<i>Campsis radicans</i>														
<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>														
<i>Carex festucacea</i>														
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>								1						
<i>Cocculus carolinus</i>								1	8				1	
<i>Dichanthelium commutatum</i>														
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>														
<i>Fraxinus pensylvanicus</i>														
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>								2		3		2		
<i>Lactuca floridana</i>														
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>														
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>										5				
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>														
<i>Mikania scandens</i>														
<i>Morus rubra</i>										2				
<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i>										15				
<i>Oxalis coymbosa</i>														
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>											17			
<i>Persicaria Hydrogiperoides</i>														
<i>Poncirus trifoliata</i>														
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>										8		10		6
<i>Quercus phellos</i>														
<i>Quercus nigra</i>														
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>										1			1	
<i>Rosa bracteata</i>														
<i>Rubus trivialis</i>														
<i>Sabal minor</i>														
<i>Smilax bona-nox</i>												1		
<i>Solanum nigrescens</i>														
<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>														
<i>Ulmus americana</i>														
<i>Vitis mustangensis</i>														
<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>														
Bare														
Litter	63		88		43		85		7		90		3	90
Water														
Woody Species >2.5 cm (30 ft-radius)	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH	Number	Avg DBH
<i>Acer negundo</i>														
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	1	17.5	2	5.8	1	12.8							1	5.3
<i>Carya illinoensis</i>	1	32.8			2	49.0								
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>														
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>												2	14.6	
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>														
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>														
<i>Ilex cornuta</i>														
<i>Ilex decidua</i>														
<i>Ilex opaca</i>														
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	17	5.2	28	3.6	1	4.5	66	7.0	111	6.5	76	5.8		
<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	16	7.6	40	8.1	24	8.4	11	15.8	7	11.4	6	8.5		
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>														
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>														
<i>Maclura Pomifera</i>														
<i>Morus rubra</i>										2	10.4		1	12.4
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	2	11.0	10	7.5	6	5.0	7	6.7					24	7.2
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>										3	8.3			
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	3	61.6	2	8.0									5	14.1
<i>Quercus nigra</i>	1	3.4	2	25.9	2	5.6							1	25.3
<i>Rosa bracteata</i>														
<i>Sabal mexicana</i>														
<i>Sideroxylon lanuginosum</i>													1	17.5
<i>Triadica sebifera</i>													3	17.6
<i>Ulmus americana</i>	1	2.5	4	4.2	5	6.5	1	23.4					2	21.0
<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>														



# An Abiding Love...

E. R. & Ann Taylor Park exists as a poignant memorial to the love of two people who homesteaded this site many years ago.

Born in 1845, Edward Ruthven (E.R.) Taylor was the son of a prominent Houston merchant, slave and cotton broker who served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Captured in 1863 by Ulysses S. Grant at the Battle of Vicksburg, E.R. contracted tuberculosis and returned to Houston in 1863.

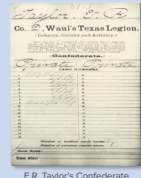
Ann Taylor was a family slave who nursed E.R. back to health. The couple fell in love, but since interracial marriages were illegal at that time, they defied law and lived together here for 39 years until Ann died in 1909.



The Sloane Collection, Pierce Junction Oilfield, undated.

### A Bountiful Field

E.R. Taylor discovered oil on his land in 1906. By 1984, total production at the Pierce Junction oilfield had reached over 88 million barrels. The Taylor family has maintained the surrounding land and its resources for seven generations, and the original Taylor homestead was donated to the City of Houston in 1986.



E.R. Taylor's Confederate Service Record.

### Putting Down Roots

In 1870, E.R. and Ann Taylor moved to the outskirts of Houston with their three-month-old, mixed-race daughter Pinkie Elizabeth. The couple raised six children here on this land, and Ann is buried with three of their children in the small cemetery beyond this panel. Sadly, segregation caught up with the couple in death. When E.R. Taylor died in 1924, he was buried in historic Glenwood Cemetery rather than here next to Ann, on the land they both loved.



E.R. Taylor on his porch.



Ann George (Taylor), undated.

### Pioneer black woman, slave's kin, dies at 106



Houston Chronicle article about Pinkie Elizabeth's death, undated.



Pinkie Elizabeth, E.R. and Ann Taylor's eldest daughter, died July 6, 1976.



Houston Parks and Recreation Department

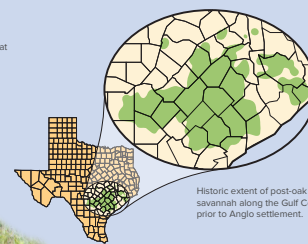
# Our Natural Heritage

A vast, native prairie once stretched as far as the eye could see across the Texas coastal plain. Today, less than 1% of our native prairies remain—most have been lost to development and agriculture long ago.



Further inland from the Gulf Coast, some of the surrounding landscape contained savannah habitat—an open grassland interspersed with scattered trees where wildlife such as American bison, red wolves, and black bear once ranged.

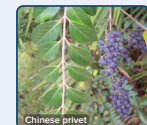
Long ago, herds of American bison grazed our native grasslands. They helped maintain this natural habitat by spreading grass seeds and controlling woody vegetation.



Historic extent of post-oak savannah along the Gulf Coast prior to Anglo settlement.

### Savannah Restoration

Houston Parks and Recreation Department staff are restoring the habitat beyond this panel to prairie and savannah ecosystem. Non-native shrubs and trees, such as Chinese privet and Chinese tallow, were removed to open up the surrounding habitat. Small trees and shrubs were removed and replaced with locally-collected native grasses and forbs. This savannah will serve as a transitional habitat as we make progress in restoring the prairie habitat that was once found at this site. Once fully established, this prairie will be maintained using prescribed fire and mowing to stimulate wildfire and grazing by large herbivores.



Chinese privet



Chinese tallow

Chinese privet and Chinese tallow were originally introduced as ornamental plants. Unfortunately, they establish quickly and turn grassland habitat into non-native forest which has little value for birds and native wildlife.



Wildfire is essential to the health of grassland ecosystems. When grasslands burn, nutrients are returned to the soil, sunlight stimulates the growth of native grasses, and woody vegetation is reduced.



Houston Parks and Recreation Department

# Preserving Ecological and Human Heritage

Houston Parks and Recreation Department is preserving ecological and human heritage while honoring the significance of this land to the local community.



"Glorious-Joy," Kristi Rangel, 2022; Acrylic on Watercolor Paper. Every year Ann Taylor Park hosts a participatory art event called the Witness Series which brings communities together through the power of nature and the shared belief that environmental equity is a basic human right. Houston multi-media artist Kristi Rangel named the Witness Series after these impressive Live Oak trees which have seen seven generations of history unfold here.

To learn more about upcoming Witness Series participatory art events please scan this QR code:

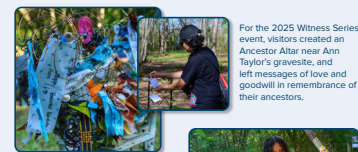


At E.R. and Ann Taylor Park, restoring nature goes hand in hand with honoring the people who lived here before us. This 27-acre park, just south of downtown Houston, was once part of a vast coastal prairie ecosystem, an endangered landscape that historically stretched across the Texas and Louisiana coasts. Today, Houston Parks and Recreation Department is restoring the park to reflect its historic prairie conditions by planting native grasses and wildflowers and using management practices that mimic natural prairie cycles.

The land also holds deep human significance, particularly for the Sunnyside community. Edward R. Taylor and Ann George Taylor built their home and farm here in the mid-1800s, raising their family on this land during a time when their interracial marriage could not be legally recognized. The park includes the site of their original homestead and the cemetery where Ann and three of her children are buried. By preserving both the natural landscape and this powerful history, E.R. and Ann Taylor Park stands as a place of remembrance, education, and connection, where the stories of people and prairie continue to shape the land.



The Witness Series explores Indigenous, African American, Latino and Asian connections to nature and art. Attendees become co-authors, editors and observers as they take part in these participatory public art experiences.



For the 2025 Witness Series event, visitors created an Ancestor Altar near Ann Taylor's gravesite, and left messages of love and goodwill in remembrance of their ancestors.



A sound bath provided visitors with an immersive, communal sonic experience which blended sound to healing and medicine in accordance with ancient African American tradition.



Houston Parks and Recreation Department

# A Haven for Wildlife

Urban parks provide important habitat for local and migratory wildlife.

Our local wildlife—birds, insects, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians—all depend on native plants. After thousands of years evolving together, our plants and animals have formed special relationships that help them survive.

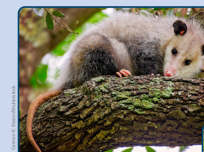
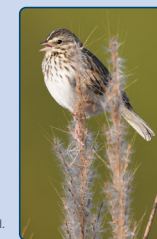


Monarch butterflies rely on native milkweeds for their primary food source as caterpillars.

American bumblebees use blades of native prairie grass to create their nests.

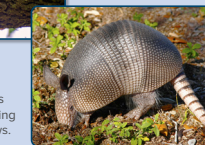


Grassland birds like the Savannah sparrow depend on native grass seeds as their main source of food.



Virginia opossums are omnivores that eat insects, lizards, and frogs as well as fruit from native trees.

Armadillos dine exclusively on insects which they dig up using their tough front claws.



### Volunteer with Us!



The Houston Parks and Recreation Department grows thousands of native plants at the city's greenhouse every year and volunteers help with habitat restoration here and in other City parks. If you're interested in volunteering with us, please email: [naturaresources@houston.tx.gov](mailto:naturaresources@houston.tx.gov).



Houston Parks and Recreation Department

# A Special Refuge

Did you know that over 160 bird species have been seen here at E.R. and Ann Taylor Park?

Take time to look around you and listen! How many different kinds of birds can you hear today? The prairie and surrounding woodland provides resident and migratory birds with all they need to survive—shelter for nesting, water for bathing and drinking, and food in the form of insects, plants, and other animals.

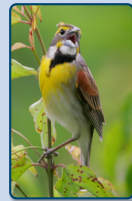


Known as "butcher birds," **Loggerhead Shrikes** skewer their prey on thorns or barbed wire and sometimes save it to eat a few days later!

The **American Kestrel** is one of our smallest birds of prey—yet still a fierce predator. Kestrels often hover facing into the wind while scanning the ground for grasshoppers, lizards, and small mammals.

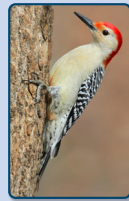


**Red-shouldered Hawks** are fairly common in Houston's woodlands. You can often find them by listening for their distinctive high-pitched "whistle" call.



**Dickcissels** are grassland birds and migrate in large flocks to their wintering grounds in Central and South America.

**Red-bellied Woodpeckers** search for insects in the bark of dead and dying trees. They have long thin tongues that stick out nearly 2" past the end of their beaks, and their spit is sticky—perfect for snatching prey from deep crevices!



**Blue Jays** live in Houston year-round and are known as "resident" birds. They have close family bonds and can often be heard mimicking the calls of hawks.

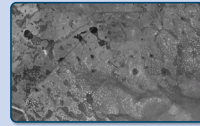


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# A Prairie Mystery

For much of its history, Ann Taylor Park functioned as a homestead and was never plowed or heavily disturbed. Because the soil remained largely intact, the park still preserves rare geological features known as *mima* or *pimple* mounds.



Mima or "pimple" mounds can clearly be seen in aerial photos of the Texas coastal prairie.

## What Are They?

Mima mounds are low, earthen mounds that formed thousands of years ago. They're scattered across prairie landscapes worldwide, and have puzzled scientists for many years because no one knows exactly how they're formed.

Could they be caused by sediment that's been slowly redistributed by wind and rain over time? Or perhaps they're caused by prairie soils shrinking and swelling as they wet and dry? Some say they could even be caused by burrowing mammals such as pocket gophers! What do you think?

## Did You Know?

Mima mounds were named after the Mima Prairie in Washington State where they were first identified by scientists in the 19th century.



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## Islands of Life

Mima mounds are slightly elevated with better drainage and more sandy soils than the surrounding landscape. Over thousands of years, these slight differences have created important microhabitats that support greater plant diversity and a richer prairie ecosystem. Many kinds of plants and animals are found utilizing mima mounds—here are just a few:



Gulf Muhly Grass



Texas Prairie Down



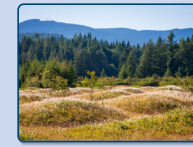
Pocket Gopher



Eastern Hognose Snake



Gulf Coast Toad



Mima mounds on prairies in the Pacific Northwest look more like gentle waves on the prairie rather than the smaller "pimple" mounds that occur here in Texas.



# Caring For Our Bayous

Over 22 bayous and waterways run through the Houston area. They transport rainwater that falls in your neighborhood to Galveston Bay, an estuary ecosystem that is critical habitat for the region's wildlife.

Our urban waterways are impacted by many sources of pollution and contamination. They are surrounded by roads, neighborhoods, industrial facilities, and construction projects that all influence their water quality and function.

## How Can YOU Help?

There are many ways that we can improve water quality in our bayous. Check out these examples from our city parks:



**Rain cisterns** help reduce the amount of water flowing during flood events. This decreases the amount of erosion and sediment in our bayous.



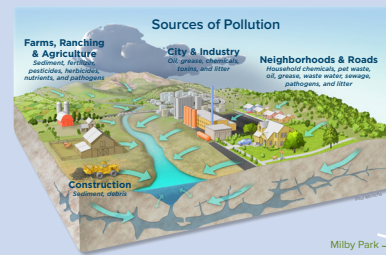
**Native plants** remove pollutants from stormwater runoff. This bioswale at Townwood Park acts as a filter, trapping sediment and chemicals during rain events.



**Riparian buffers** are important tools in keeping our bayous clean. These strips of trees trap pollutants, protect the banks of our waterways, and provide valuable wildlife habitat.

## Flow of Water

Stormwater runoff flows along our streets and into the nearest bayou through our storm drain system where it eventually flows into Galveston Bay. Galveston Bay is an environmentally and economically important estuarine ecosystem which provides critical habitat for shrimp and fish—so if you enjoy seafood, help us protect the water quality in your local bayou!



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