

City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department

Natural Resources Division

Kelli Ondracek, Natural Resources Manager

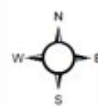
White Oak Parkway Native Habitat Restoration and Outreach

Public Participation and Education Subcommittee (2017) - \$45,000

Partners – Student Conservation Association, Houston Audubon

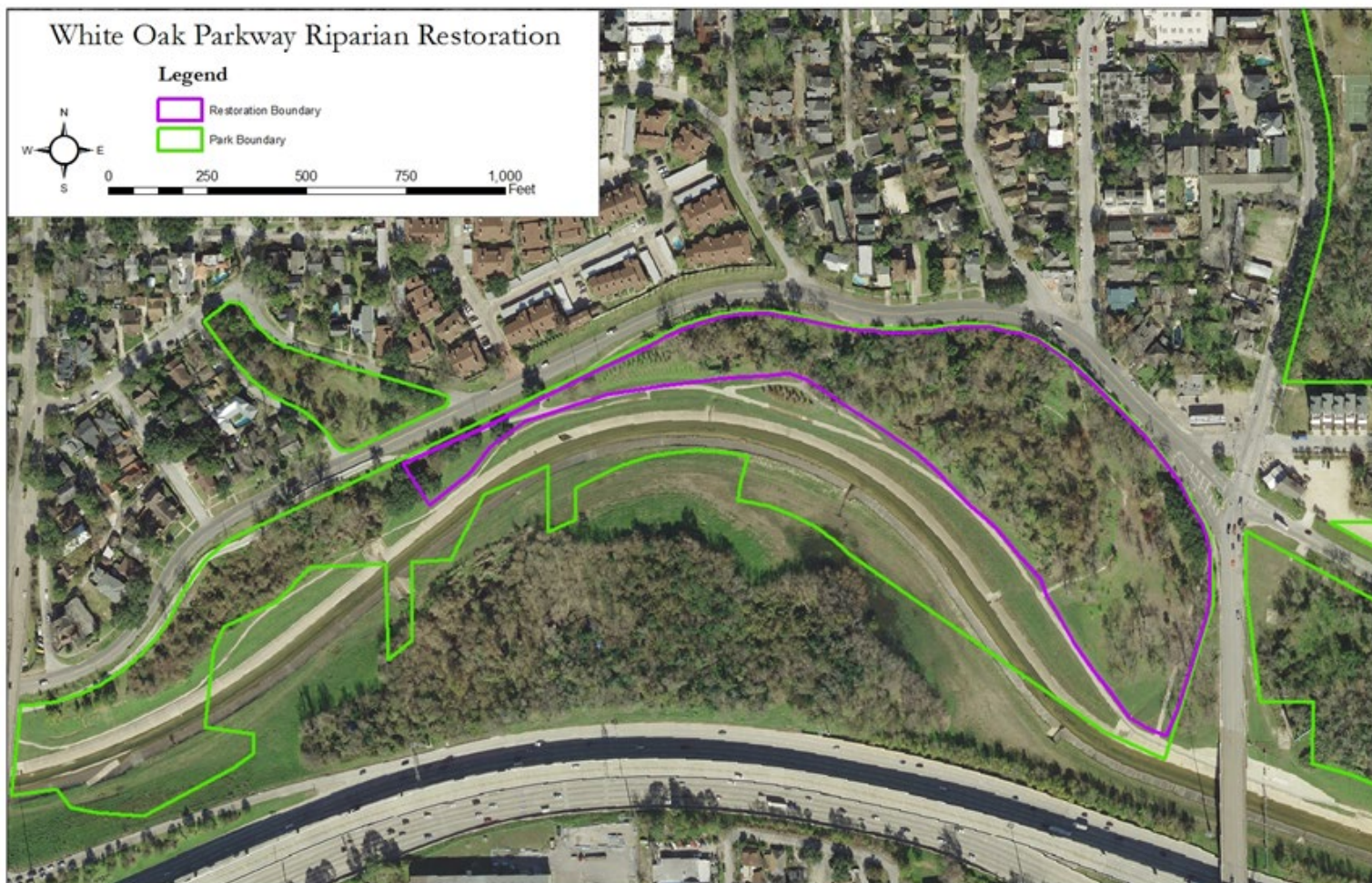
White Oak Parkway Riparian Restoration

Legend



- Restoration Boundary
- Park Boundary

0 250 500 750 1,000 Feet







An Amazing Place...

Did you know that over 150 species of birds have been seen here in White Oak Parkway—just a short distance from Downtown Houston?

The surrounding riparian forest provides resident and migratory birds all they need to thrive: shelter for nesting, food in the form of insects and plants, and water for bathing and drinking.



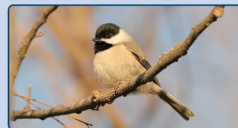
Downy Woodpeckers like to eat beetle larvae and ants that they find inside wood or tree bark.



Yellow-rumped Warblers forage for insects and fruit during the winter months. Look for the flash of their bright yellow rumps, and listen for their chip notes in the trees.



Red-shouldered hawks are fairly common in Houston's woodlands.



Snowy Egrets have distinctive yellow feet which are sometimes known as "golden slippers."

Caroline Chickadees are year-round residents that feed their young thousands of caterpillars.

Get Involved!

White Oak Park is a location for Houston Audubon's exciting Bird-Friendly Communities Initiative. Volunteers are helping to remove invasive plants, restore native habitat, and clean up plastic debris before it can be swept into White Oak Bayou—and eventually out into Galveston Bay. To find out more, contact Houston Audubon at www.houstonaudubon.org.

RESTORE HOUSTON • WHITE OAK BAYOU



Welcome to White Oak Parkway

Come and discover nature close to home in this 23.3-acre park along White Oak Bayou—you'll be amazed at the birds and other wildlife you'll see right in the middle of the city!

Thick and tangled woodlands once grew all along our bayous and these riparian corridors provided a rich and diverse habitat for all kinds of birds and other wildlife. Unfortunately this habitat has been degraded over time due to development and invasive vegetation.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department is working with Houston Audubon and other

project partners to restore 10-acres of native woodland habitat to White Oak Parkway. This will not only enhance urban bird and wildlife habitat in this park, but also improve the recreational experience for all Houstonians here along White Oak Bayou.

Why not stay awhile, relax and enjoy?

You might even be lucky enough to see a magnificent Bald Eagle along White Oak Bayou!

T.C. Jester Park

Volunteers with the Student Conservation Association are working with other project partners to remove invasive species and restore native habitat in White Oak Parkway.



This short loop trail takes you through White Oak Parkway—take time to look around as you explore!



Along the way you will notice a small wetland which was once a natural meadow in White Oak Bayou before the bayou was straightened and channelized in the 1950s to improve drainage.

Come and Help Us

Houston Parks and Recreation Department's Natural Resources Management Program is building a network of riparian buffers and nature preserves within Houston's parks. We need volunteers!

For more information go to: www.houston.tx.gov/parks/naturalresources

White Oak Parkway



Houston Parks and Recreation Department's Habitat Restoration Project

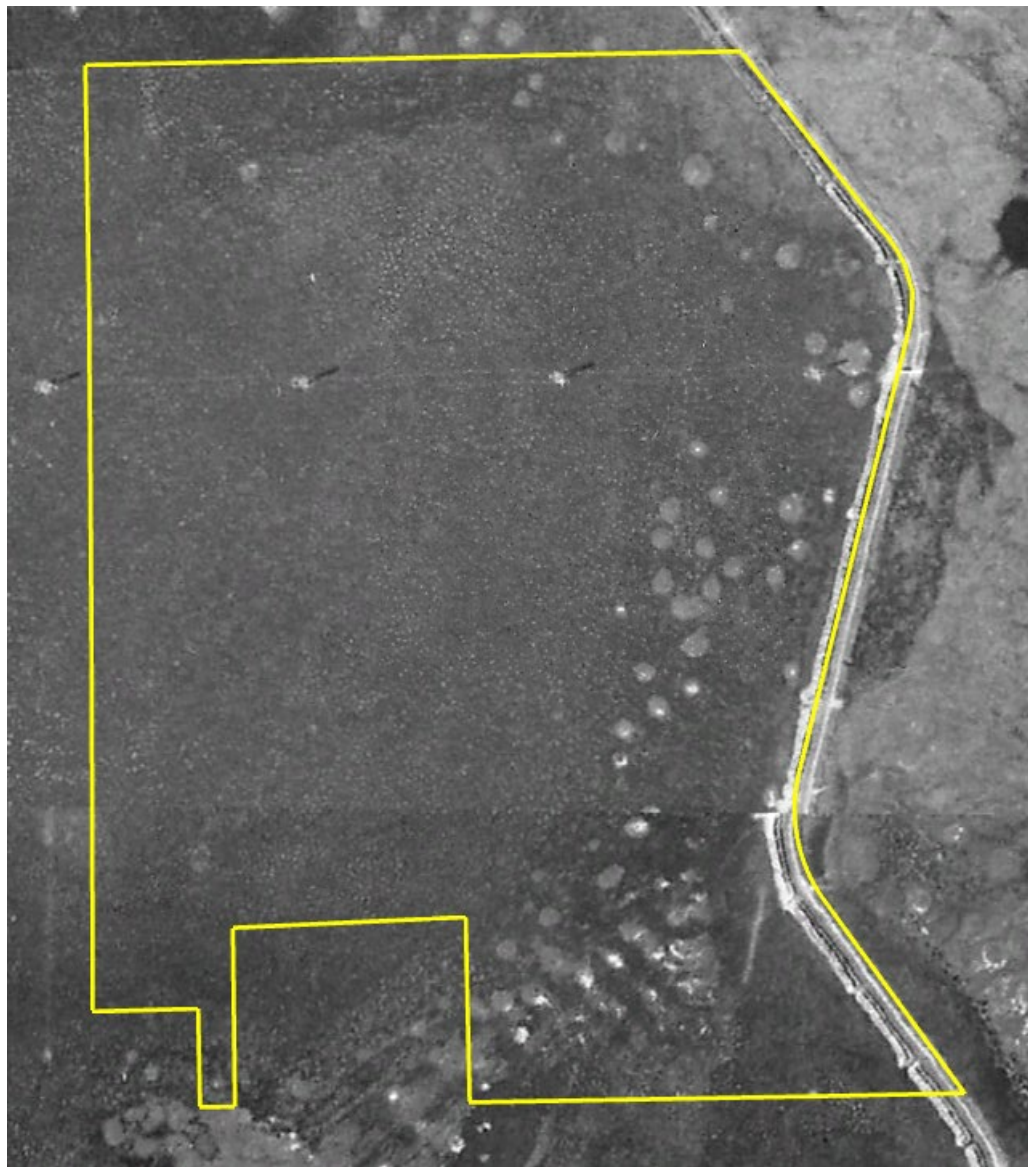


Blackhawk Park Habitat Restoration Project

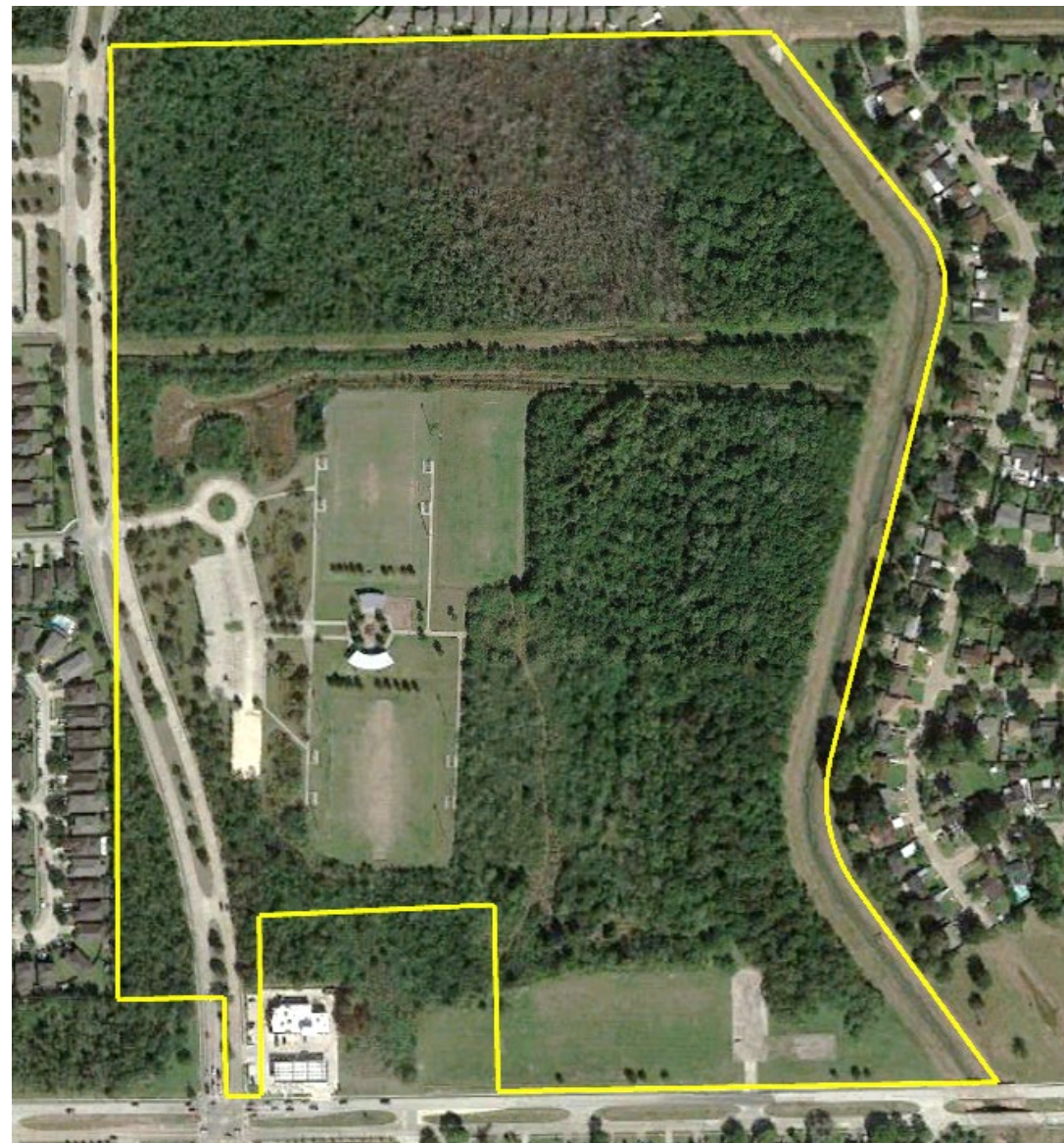
Public Participation and Education Subcommittee (2018) - \$53,600

Natural Resources Uses Subcommittee (2022) - \$50,000

Partners – Student Conservation Association

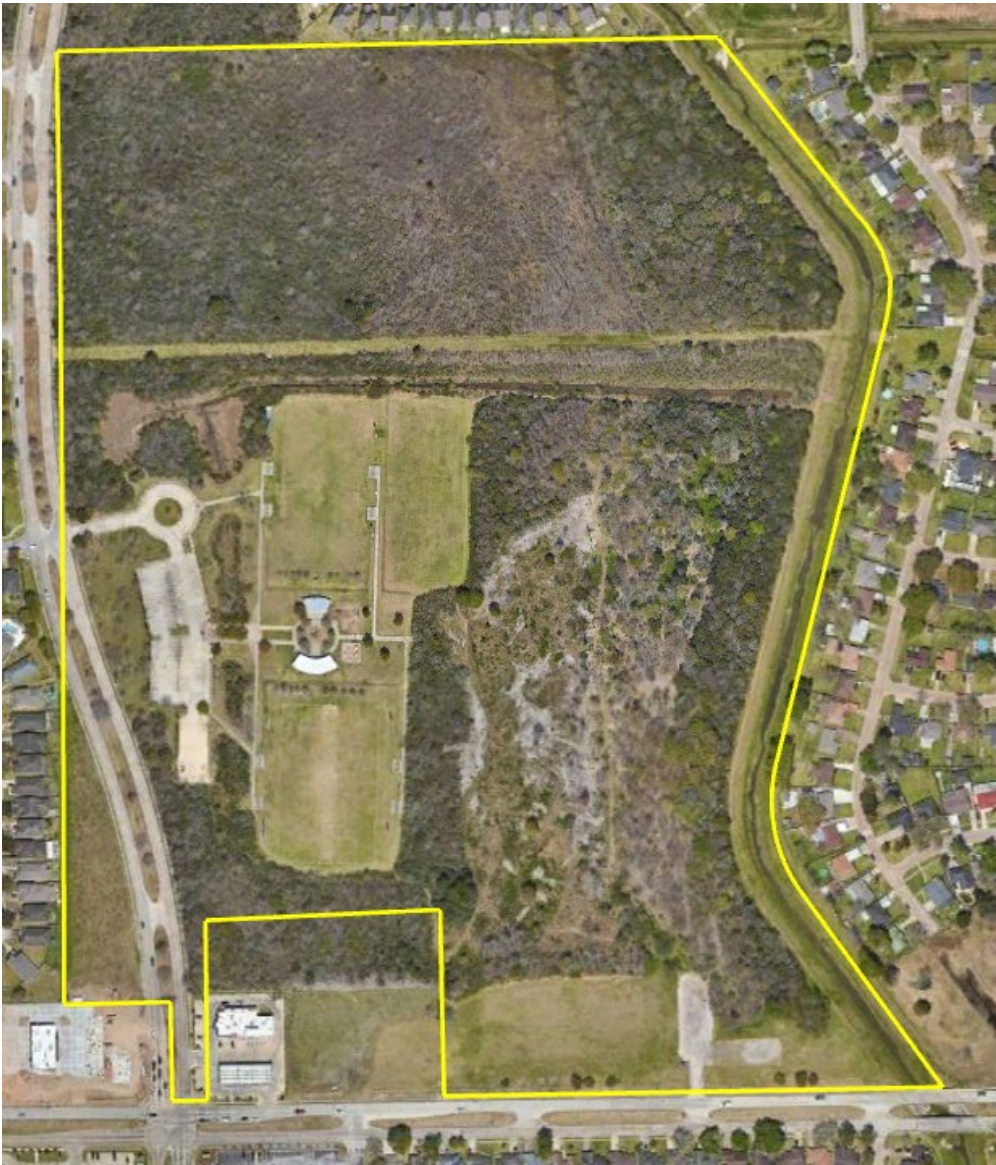


1944



2017

Phases







Our Vanishing Prairie Heritage

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



Over nine million acres of native prairie existed along the Gulf Coast prior to Anglo settlement.

Did You Know?

Prairies are now human-dependent ecosystems. To prevent a prairie from gradually becoming a forest, prairies must be mowed, grazed or burned.

A Work in Progress

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department is working to restore Blackhawk Prairie using modern land management tools to prevent the encroachment of brush and to establish native prairie vegetation. Non-native shrubs and trees will be removed from the site and replaced with native grasses and wildflowers to provide high quality habitat for migratory songbirds, insect pollinators, and other native wildlife.



The few remaining natural coastal prairies in the Houston area contain an incredible diversity of native plants. The Houston Parks and Recreation Department works to hand-collect seed from these locations and reintroduce native species back into our prairie restoration sites during volunteer planting events.



Non-native or invasive trees such as Chinese privet and Chinese tallow were introduced long ago as ornamental plants. Unfortunately, with the loss of grazing, bison and wildfires, they establish quickly and turn prairie habitat into non-native forests.



Where the Buffalo Roam...

When vast herds of bison historically grazed this landscape, they spread native seeds and helped to control the spread of woody vegetation.

Both lightning and Native Americans created wildfires which helped maintain our coastal prairies by reducing woody vegetation and supporting the growth of native prairie grasses and forbs.



Houston Parks and Recreation Department • Habitat Restoration Project



An Ocean of Grass

Come and Help Us!

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department's Natural Resources Management Program is restoring Blackhawk Prairie to provide a refuge for wildlife and to provide benefits to surrounding areas through the ecosystem services that natural habitat provides. For more information or to volunteer, go to: www.houstontx.gov/parks/naturalresources.

Standing here 150 years ago, you would have been surrounded by a vast prairie which stretched like an ocean of grass as far as the eye could see.



Le Conte's Sparrow



Texas Coneflower

Urban habitats play a critical role in sustaining native wildlife populations.

Did You Know?

Ecosystem services are the benefits that people gain from natural systems such as flood protection, water purification, pollution reduction, and erosion control.

Studded with small woodlands and wetlands, this coastal prairie was carpeted with wildflowers in springtime and home to an incredible diversity of wildlife, from the smallest insects and butterflies to bison and even red wolves.

Coastal prairies are places where our roots run deep. They're places where you can feel your senses come alive. As the Houston Parks and Recreation Department works to restore the surrounding Blackhawk Prairie, you should soon be able to observe a higher diversity of birds and other wildlife seeking food and shelter here.

Take time to look around you today. What can you see?



Northern Harrier



Indian Blanket



Bushy Bluestem



Five acres of mowed parkland were restored to coastal prairie habitat in Hobart Taylor Park.

Houston Parks and Recreation Department • Habitat Restoration Project



Sylvan Rodriguez Habitat Restoration Project

Natural Resources Uses Subcommittee (2021) - \$100,000

Natural Resources Uses Subcommittee (2022) - \$75,300

Partners – Student Conservation Association



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2017

Sylvan Rodriguez Park
Habitat Restoration Project

Figure 5. Restoration Phases Map
Legend

 Park Boundary

Phase

 I

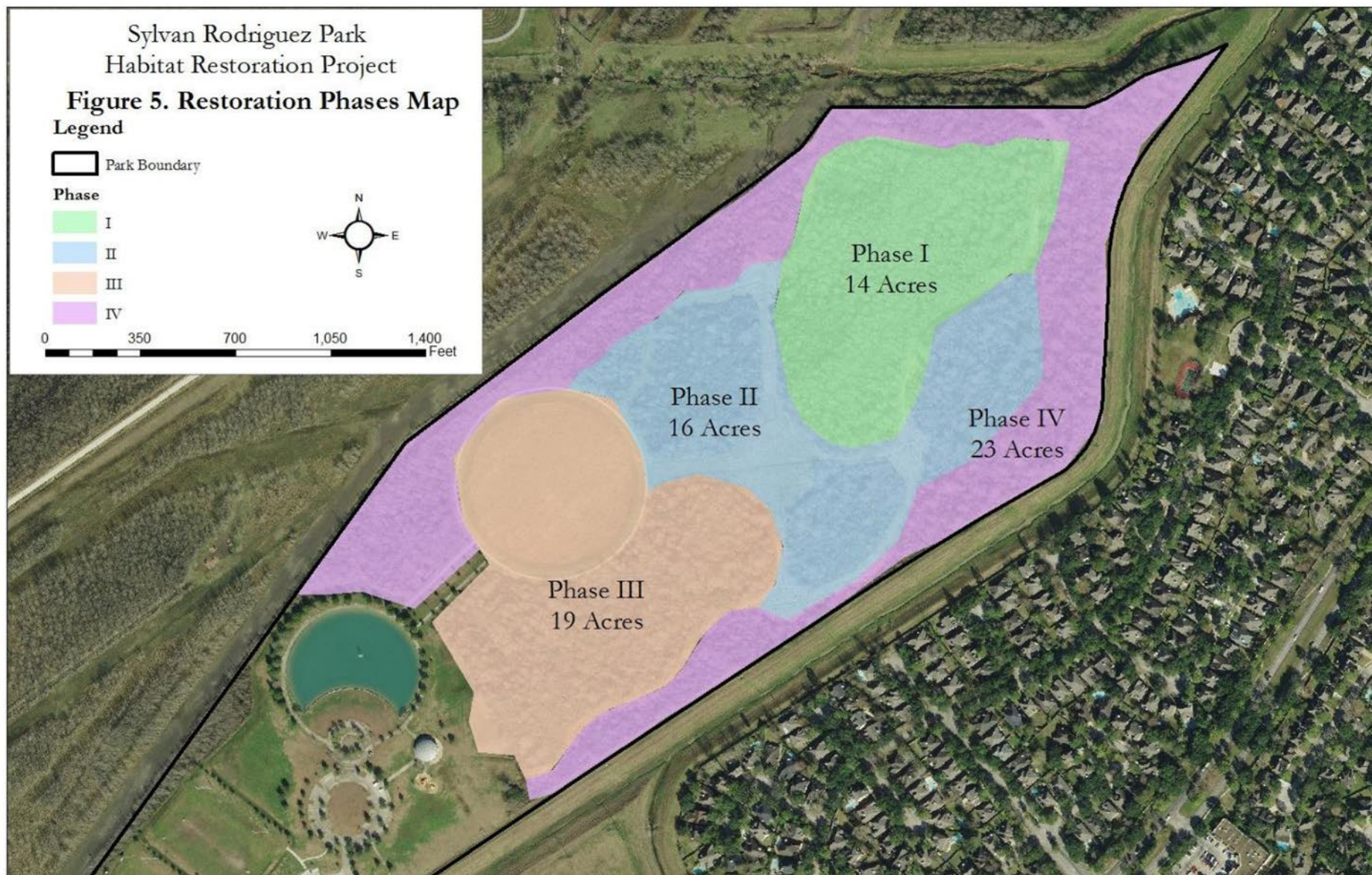
 II

 III

 IV



0 350 700 1,050 1,400
Feet



Phase 1



Phase 2 and 4

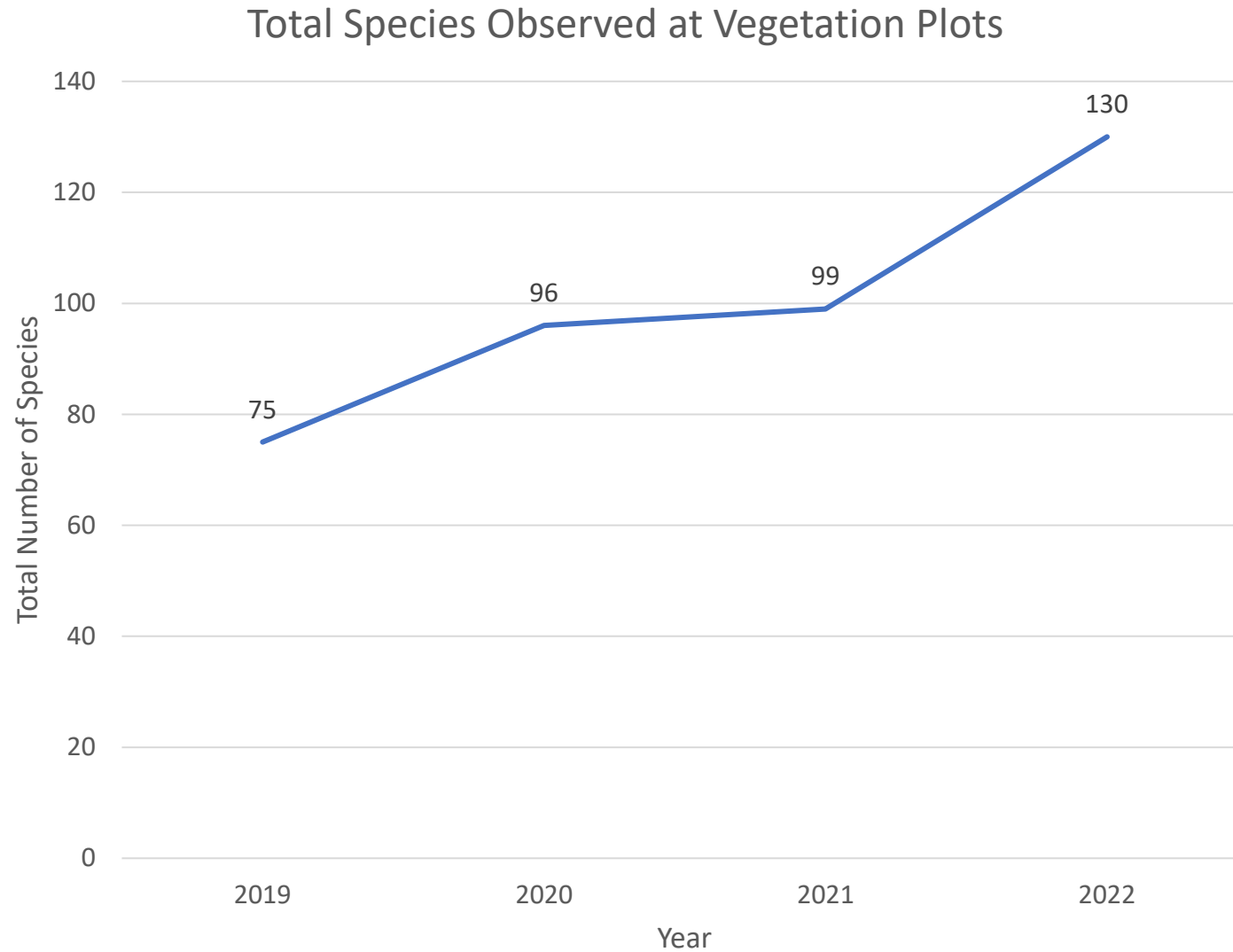


Final Phase





Species Diversity Increasing



97 native species that were not planted



Clematis



Snow on the Prairie



Gaura



Hirsute Sedge



Hooker's eryngo



Green Milkweed



Rhynchospora



Blue Waterleaf



Meadow Pink



Prescribed Fire



Park Improvements

Volunteer Engagement

- Over 15,000 plants installed
- Monthly volunteer group
 - 2nd Wednesdays



Townwood Park Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee (2022) - \$80,000







Using Nature to Clean Water

Bioswales are special features that capture and transport rainwater. As water passes through a bioswale, it is filtered and cleaned before entering our bayous. Bioswales also cool surrounding areas and provide habitat for wildlife!



The plants in this bioswale are native to the Houston area! This means that these plants have special relationships with our local wildlife and provide critical habitat in this urban setting.



Monarch butterflies drink nectar from native wildflowers.



Native bees like this eastern carpenter bee gather pollen from flowers to feed their young.



Savannah sparrows eat the seeds of our native grass species.

Did You Know?

Green Stormwater Infrastructure uses natural systems to manage stormwater, and includes bioswales, rain gardens, and constructed wetlands.



Houston Parks and Recreation Department
Natural Resources Division



HPARD
HOUSTON PARKS
AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
A CAPRA Accredited Agency

HPARD Water Management Plan



Water and Sediment Quality Subcommittee (2022) - \$50,000

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