**Regional Conservation News Release Template - Water Quality**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[Month] [Date], [Year]

Contact:

**[NEWS RELEASE HEADLINE]**

*[News Release Sub-header]*

**[CITY, STATE]** – The Houston-Galveston region is home to more than 16,000 miles of waterways and shoreline. Most people in the region live within a mile or two of a water body. Rivers, lakes, bays, and bayous enhance local economies, make up a crucial part of water supplies, and provide habitat for wildlife. Protecting and preserving the quality of these water bodies is essential to the region’s quality of life.

By 2035, much of the region’s drinking water will come from water in rivers, lakes, and bayous. Pollutants in these waters can increase the cost of treating water to be suitable for drinking. Today, most water bodies in the region do not meet the state standard for contact recreation. One of the ways water quality in the region can be improved is through preserving, restoring, or enhancing natural areas through conservation practices.

Conserving land adjacent to waterways and in upland natural areas like wetlands, forests, and prairies helps reduce the amount of pollution running off the land and into water bodies via stormwater. Enhancing urban areas with natural functions like wet-bottom detention ponds, trees, and native landscaping in new developments also helps reduce runoff pollution from roads and parking lots.

*[Below is an example of a conservation project of a significant water body that helped improve water quality and quality of life. You can use this as an example to highlight the potential economic benefits of your own conservation project, or you may replace this paragraph with information about your own conservation project and use this paragraph as a guide in how to discuss it.]*

The conversion of an old golf course into the Jersey Meadows Stormwater Detention Basin improved stormwater management and led to significant water quality benefits. A partnership between the Harris County Flood Control District, Harris County Precinct 4 and the City of Jersey Village resulted in the purchase of Jersey Meadows golf course in 2008. The basin includes restored wetlands to filter pollutants, native trees and shrubs, and a walking trail for residents. The 42-acre detention basin can hold 114 million gallons of water, and, along with other initiatives, has helped reduce bacteria concentrations in White Oak Bayou.

In 2021, the Houston-Galveston Area Council launched the Regional Conservation Initiative aimed at magnifying local conservation efforts and assisting local governments and nonprofits in securing the funding and resources needed to launch their own conservation projects. More information about the initiative, including a conservation funding guide and toolbox, model projects throughout the region, ecosystem service benefits, and mapping tools, is available at [www.h-gac.com/regional-conservation](https://www.h-gac.com/regional-conservation).