

A light blue map of the Gulf Coast Economic Development District, showing county boundaries. The map covers parts of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, with the Gulf of Mexico coastline visible on the right side.

# **Regional Conservation Framework**

## **Gulf Coast Economic Development District**

Friday, July 9, 2021

# Regional Conservation Framework

## About the Framework

- Based on extensive input from local governments and other stakeholders
- Vision & voluntary strategies
- Tools & funding resources
- Basis for ongoing H-GAC conservation efforts

March 16, 2021

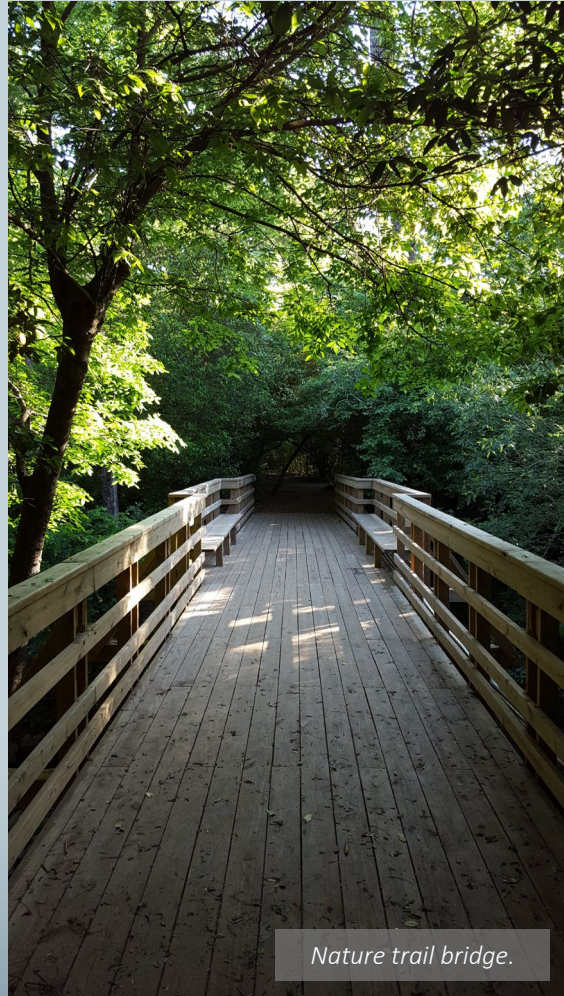


Photo: Justin Bower

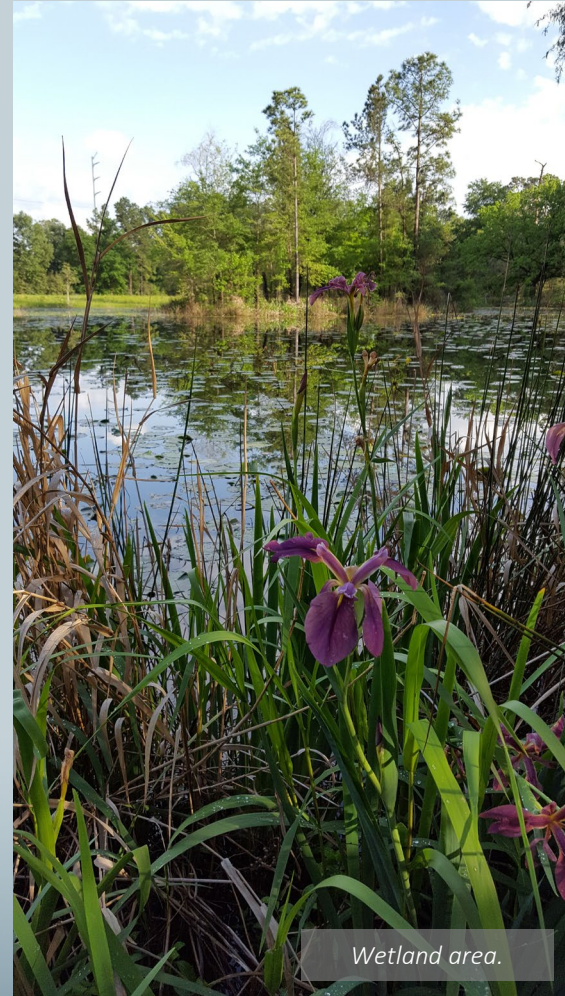
# The Case for Conservation



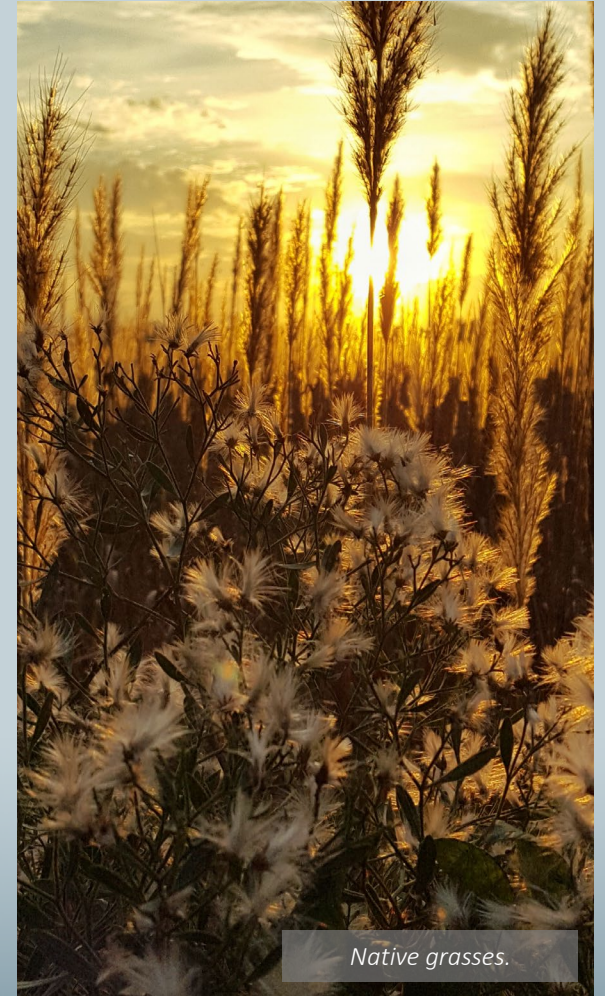
*Loblolly pines.*



*Nature trail bridge.*



*Wetland area.*



*Native grasses.*

# Three Big Initiatives

## A Flourishing Treescape



## Regional Greenway System



## Signature Projects



# Strategies & Actions - Snapshot

LEVERAGE	SUPPORT	FUNDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flood Mitigation</li><li>• Water Quality</li><li>• Transportation</li><li>• Economic Development</li></ul> <p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnership Building</li><li>• Metrics</li><li>• Messaging</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Priority Project List</li><li>• Grant Matchmaking</li><li>• New Financing Tools</li></ul>

# Recommended Strategies & Actions

## SECTION 5: APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A – RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The text below details the goal of and recommended actions for the three strategies detailed in the Regional Conservation Framework.

#### STRATEGY 1: LEVERAGE

**GOAL:** Use existing H-GAC programs, projects, and funding to integrate conservation more fully into planning and implementation activities.

**ACTION 1:** Working with community and economic development organizations to broaden access to natural areas and open space throughout the region and create opportunities for local businesses.

**ACTION 2:** Convening a Regional Forestry Work Group composed of local government stakeholders to coordinate with other organizations on large-scale initiatives to enhance the region's treescape.

**ACTION 3:** Expanding and updating H-GAC's online Forestry Tool,<sup>8</sup> which enables users to take a detailed look at the tree canopy, down to the street tree level.

**ACTION 4:** Integrating conservation planning metrics into the following H-GAC-led planning initiatives:

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Regional Transportation Plan
- H-GAC-led Watershed Protection Plans
- H-GAC-led regional and watershed-level flood mitigation projects

**ACTION 5:** Working with local partners, including nurseries, to increase the supply of native tree species available for tree planting initiatives.

<sup>8</sup><https://datalab.h-gac.com/urbanforestry>



#### STRATEGY 2: SUPPORT

**GOAL:** Support and expand existing efforts in the region through partnerships and communication, data access, and unified messaging.

**ACTION 1:** Compiling data on existing best practices and policy options, including relevant ordinances, and sharing with local governments.

**ACTION 2:** Developing and maintaining customizable public awareness materials for communities to use on social media and in press releases, posters, and flyers to build support for conservation initiatives.

**ACTION 3:** Engaging with decision-makers in the region to discuss the economic benefits of specific conservation strategies.

**ACTION 4:** Establishing and convening a conservation peer exchange forum, composed of local governments and professionals working on conservation issues across the region.

**ACTION 5:** Expanding and updating the economic valuation data presented in The Conservation Fund's Houston-Galveston Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services Assessment,<sup>9</sup> exploring the benefit-relevant indicators for specific conservation practices and sharing those data with local governments and professionals.

**ACTION 6:** Working with local governments and private sector organizations to encourage conservation strategies – such as tree protection, low impact development, and connecting to existing greenways – being incorporated in community design early on.

**ACTION 7:** Providing support to local governments on data analysis and mapping, integrating factors such as existing land type and socio-economic data.

#### STRATEGY 3: FUND

**GOAL:** Aid local governments or regional partners in receiving new funding or finding projects to fit existing funding sources.

<sup>9</sup>[https://www.conservationfund.org/images/projects/files/Houston\\_Galveston\\_Report.pdf](https://www.conservationfund.org/images/projects/files/Houston_Galveston_Report.pdf)

**ACTION 1:** Connecting local governments with nongovernmental organizations working toward similar goals or project outcomes.

**ACTION 2:** Developing funding partnerships that support land acquisition, development, management, and promotion.

**ACTION 3:** Establishing and maintaining a list of priority conservation projects for the region.

**ACTION 4:** Maintaining and expanding the online Conservation Funding Guide and promoting the tool with local governments.

**ACTION 5:** Providing support to requesting local governments in accessing grant funding to support conservation initiatives.

**ACTION 6:** Researching and distributing information on non-grant finance tools, such as bonds, donations from landowners, property tax dedications, and the establishment of a Regional Conservation District.



# Conservation Funding Guide



Houston-Galveston Area Council

H-GAC Resources

Search H-GAC

Search

Winter Storm Recovery Resources

## Conservation Funding Guide

Search Options

Program Name

Land Type(s)

- All
- Agriculture
- Coastal
- Forest

- Rural
- Urban
- Watershed
- Wetlands

Use(s)

- Conservation Easements
- Environmental Quality
- Flood Mitigation
- Green Infrastructure
- Habitat
- Land Acquisition

Source(s)

- Outreach and Education
- Recreation
- Resiliency
- Restoration
- Wildlife
- Federal
- State
- Other

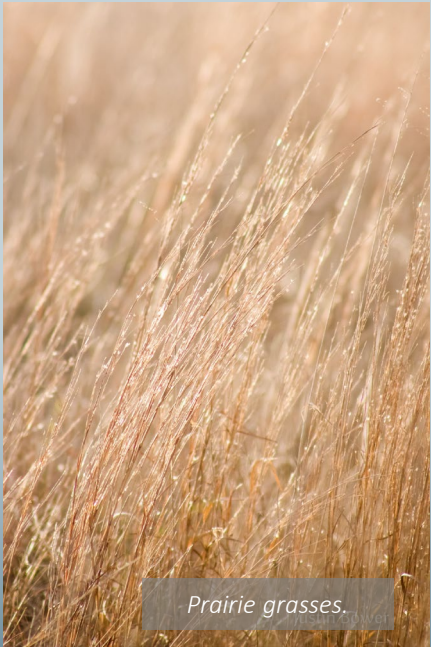
Reset

Search

- Regional Conservation
- Regional Conservation Framework
- Conservation Toolbox
- Ecosystem Service Benefits Matrices
- Conservation Funding Guide**
- Conservation Model Projects
- Conservation Mapping Tool



Cypress trees.



Prairie grasses.



Wildflowers.

# Other Resources & Tools

- Conservation Toolbox
- Ecosystem Services Benefits
- Model Projects
- Conservation Mapping Tool



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Learn more about this project at [h-gac.com/regional-conservation](https://h-gac.com/regional-conservation)

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