



HB 1410: A Big Step Forward for Parks

Deborah-January Bevers

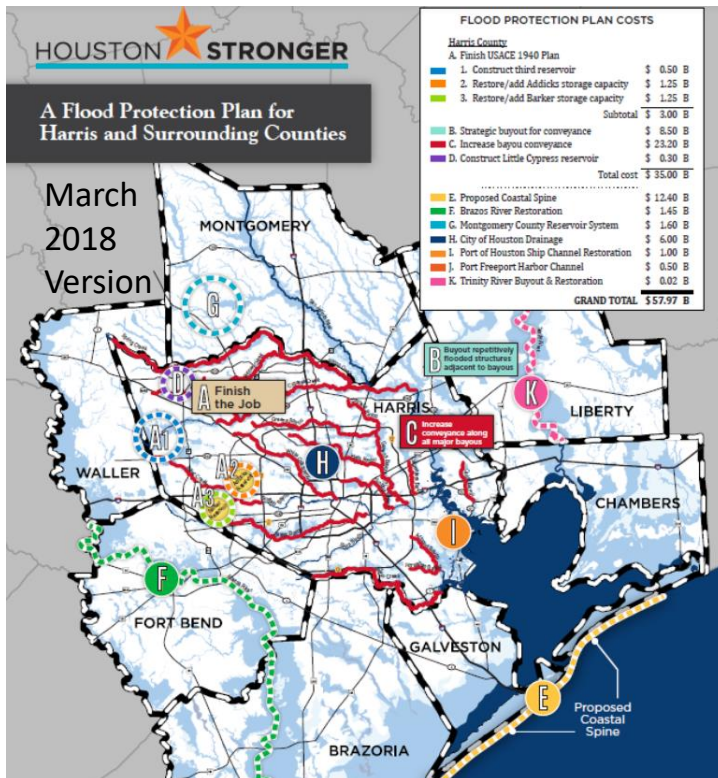
Auggie Campbell

July 12, 2021

HGAC

What is Houston Stronger?

BUFFALO BAYOU COMMUNITY PLAN



501(c)(4) Founded in October 2017; Chris Lindsay, Executive Director





The Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan

A long-term collaborative of environmental, business, and governmental entities working together to implement an ecosystem resilience plan for the 8-County Gulf-Houston region through 3 Key Goals:

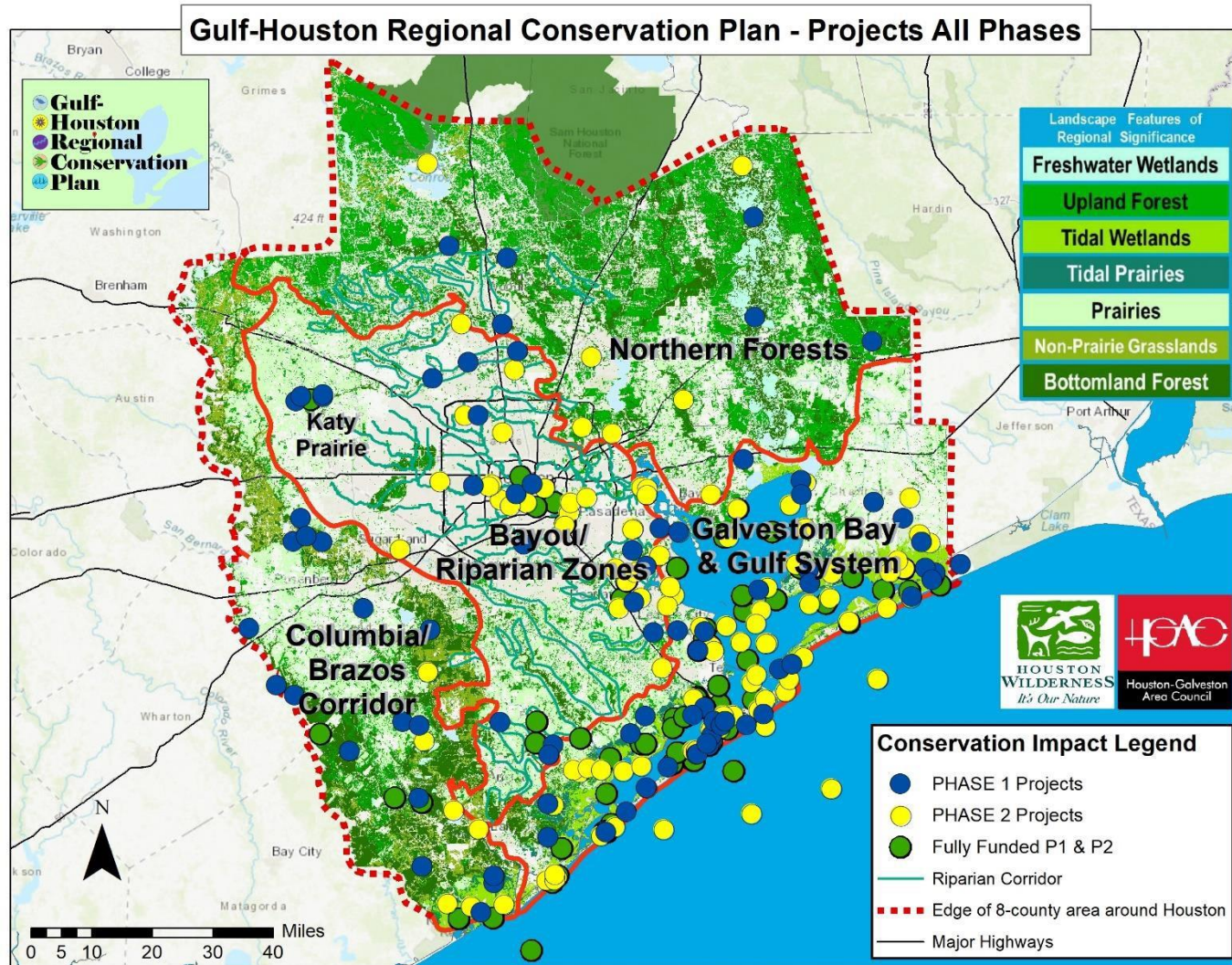
1st Goal - 24% by 2040 - Increase the current 14.7% in protected/preserved land in the region to 24% of land coverage by 2040

2nd Goal - 50% by 2040 - Increase and support the region-wide land management efforts to install nature-based stabilization techniques to 50% of land coverage by 2040

3rd Goal - 4% Annual Carbon Sequestration - Provide research and advocacy for an increase in air quality offsets through carbon absorption in native soils, plants, trees, and oyster reefs

RCP Working List of Projects and Already Funded Projects, to date

Over 75
Working
List of
Projects
funded
since 2014



2nd Key Goal

50% by 2040 - Increase and support the region-wide land management efforts to install nature-based stabilization techniques to 50% of land coverage by 2040



Types of Nature-based Stabilization Techniques:

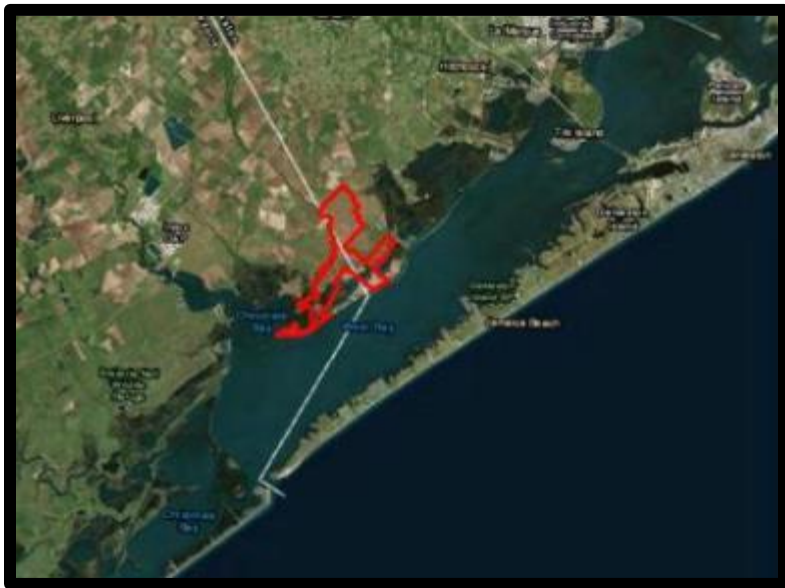
- Bioswale
- Cistern
- Stormwater Wetlands
- Green Roof
- Permeable Pavement
- Rain Barrel
- Rain Garden
- Stormwater Planter Box
- Underground Storage
- Vegetated Filter Strip
- Vegetated Swale
- Low Impact Development
- Large-Scale Native Tree Plantings



Examples of Protected/Preserved Lands

- 1) A 200 acre former golf course in Clear Lake, called Exploration Green, that is now protected/preserved land for flood detention, and recreation,
- 2) A 4,650 acre conservation easement along Chocolate Bay to help buffer against sea level rise and improve fisheries and wildlife habitat,
- 3) Over 10,000 acres of additional conserved prairie lands in Katy and
- 4) More than 70 large new detention basins along multiple waterways for added flood control and air/water quality improvements.

Chocolate Bayou Land



Exploration Green

Tools in the Resilience Toolbox

(1) Public & Private Ecological Restoration Projects

- Coastal Texas Study ER Projects
- **NGO, Developer, Municipal, County Projects
(Working List – Phase 2)**
- Wetland Mitigation Banks

(2) Private & Public Nature-based Stabilization Projects

(3) City of Houston's [Incentives for Green Development](#)

(4) Identifying desired green infrastructure strategies with

[NOAA's Green Infrastructure Options to Reduce Flooding](#)

How can MUDs build Recreational Facilities?

MUDs may acquire recreational facilities and obtain funds to develop and maintain them in the same manner as authorized for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of other district facilities.

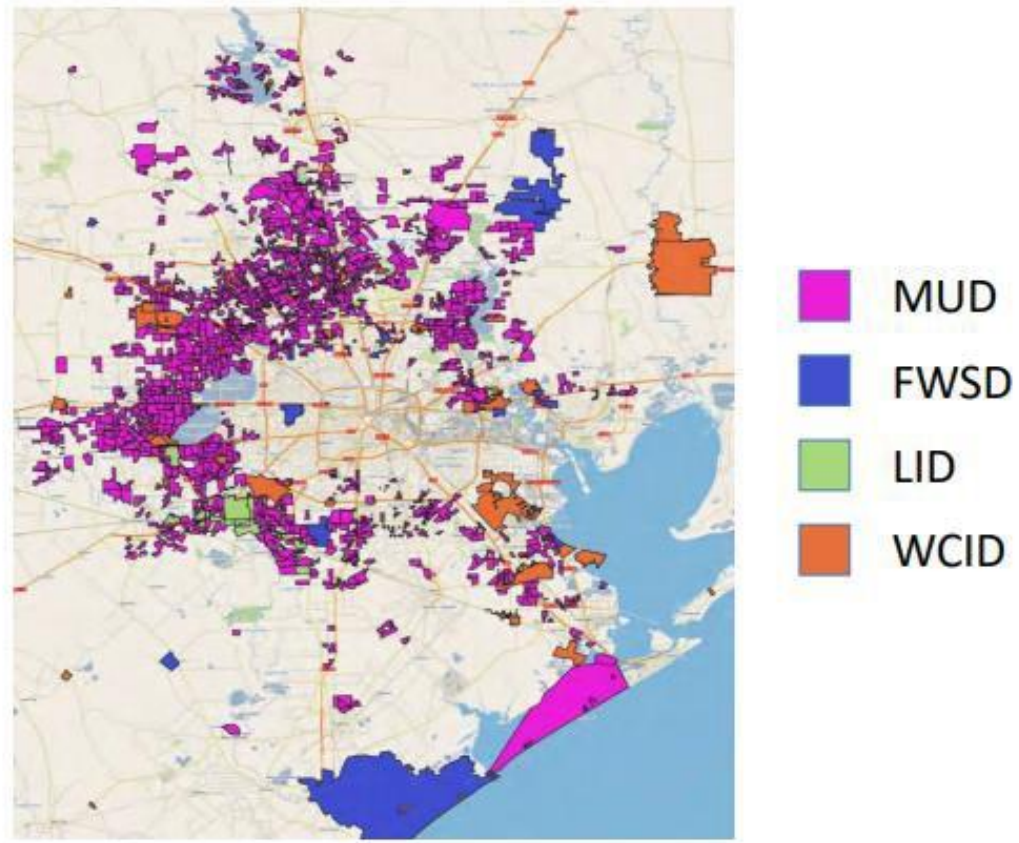
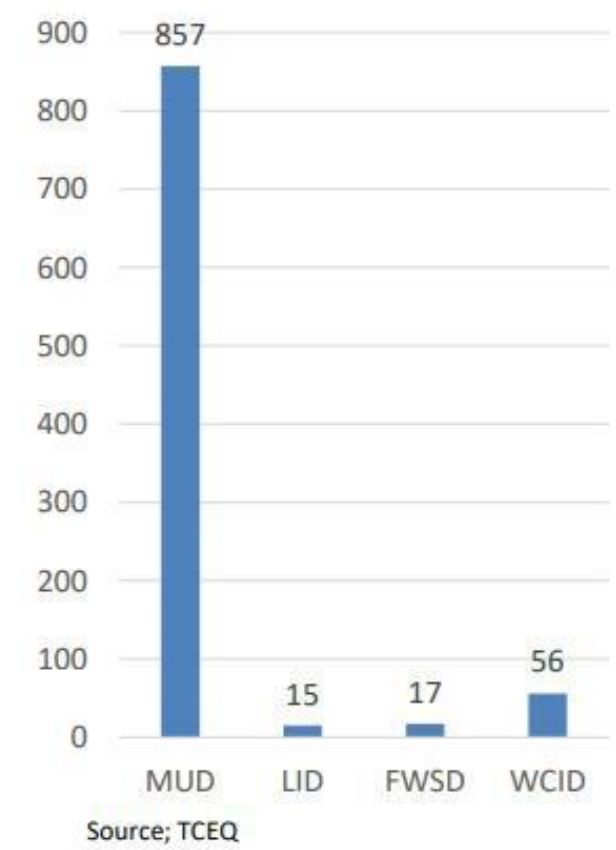
Allowing recreational bonds has been very successful and has allowed for hundreds of acres of critical green space!



**Bridgeland –
Recreational Facilities**

Texas Water Code (TWC) Sec. 49.464. ACQUISITION
OF AND PAYMENT FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

Within the Houston MSA, there are 945 such districts, including 857 municipal utility districts (MUDs), 15 levee improvement districts (LIDs), 17 fresh water supply districts (FWSDs), and 56 water control and improvement districts (WCIDs). This report sometimes will refer to all of these types of districts collectively as “MUDs.”



Tools in the Resilience Toolbox

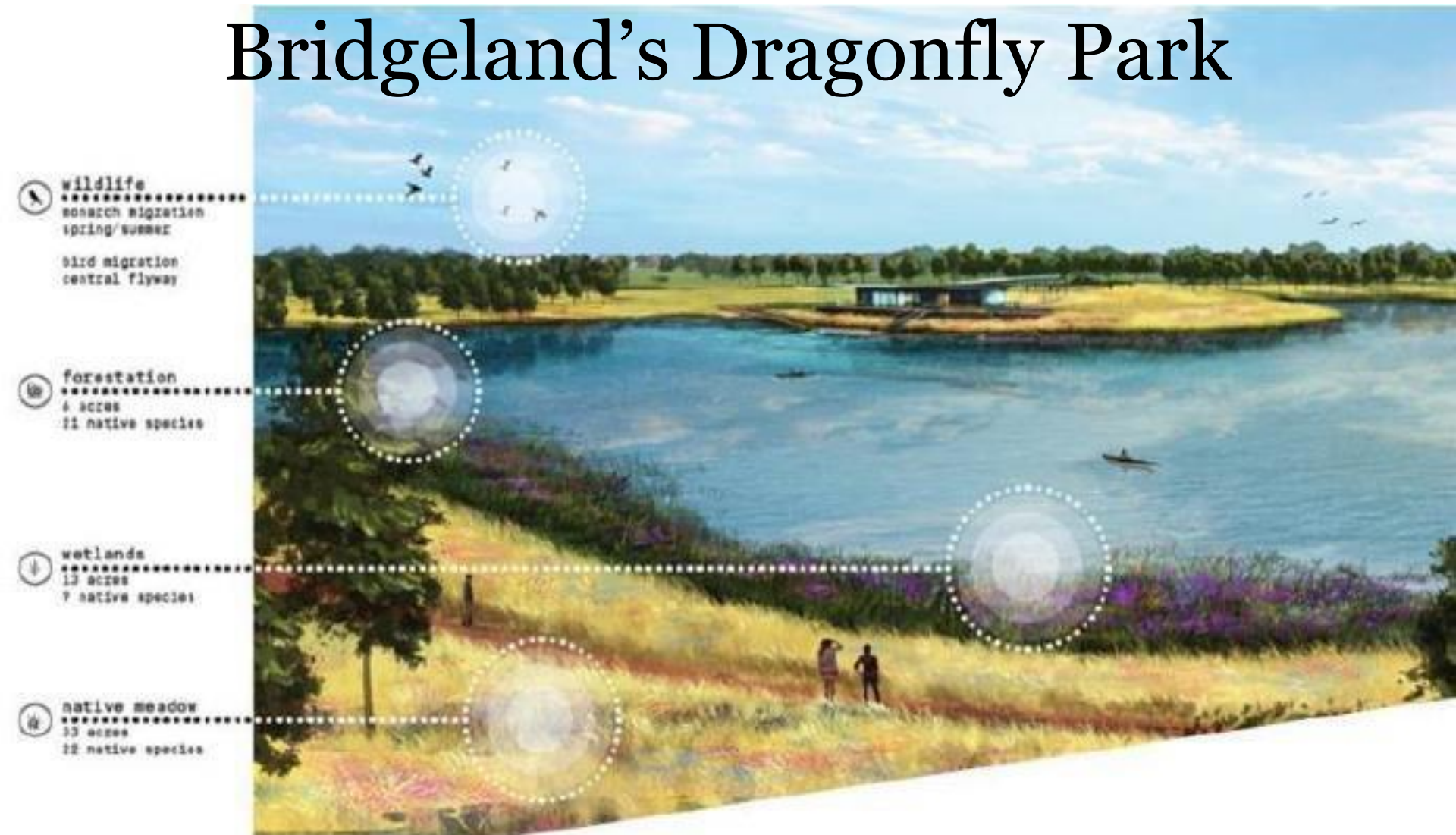
- (1) Recreational Facilities Bonds for some Texas counties**
- (2) Green Bonds
- (3) Texas Flood Infrastructure Fund**
- (4) Resilient Houston Plan Goal of 24% in conserved lands by 2040
- (5) Governmental Buyout Programs, detention areas, and CIPs
- (6) HCFCD Bond Projects and Buyouts Program**
- (7) Additional Park/Green Spaces through private/public partnerships**, including federal appropriations, grants and conservation easements
- (8) Gulf-Houston RCP Working List of Projects (Phase 1)**
- (9) Floodplain Regulations
- (10) Setbacks/Buffers

Under Texas Law, Types Recreational Facilities in Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) and other Water Districts eligible for recreational bonds

- (A) Forests, greenbelts, open spaces, and native habitat
- (B) Sidewalks, trails, paths, boardwalks, and fitness trail equipment (except golf courses)
- (C) Pedestrian bridges and underpasses that are less than 200 feet in length
- (D) Outdoor ballfields
- (E) Parks (outdoor playground facilities and associated ground surface amenities)
- (F) Amenity lakes, and associated water features, including splash pads and pump houses
- (G) Non-air conditioned recreational buildings (restrooms and storage), outdoor tennis and basketball courts
- (H) Fences no higher than eight feet and
Landscaping (including, but not limited to, trees, shrubs, and berms) and associated irrigation

Texas Administrative Code, Title 30, Part 1
TCEQ, Chapter 293.41., Subchapter E

Master Planned Community Example Bridgeland's Dragonfly Park



<https://www.bridgeland.com/things-to-do/activity-centers/dragonfly-park/>

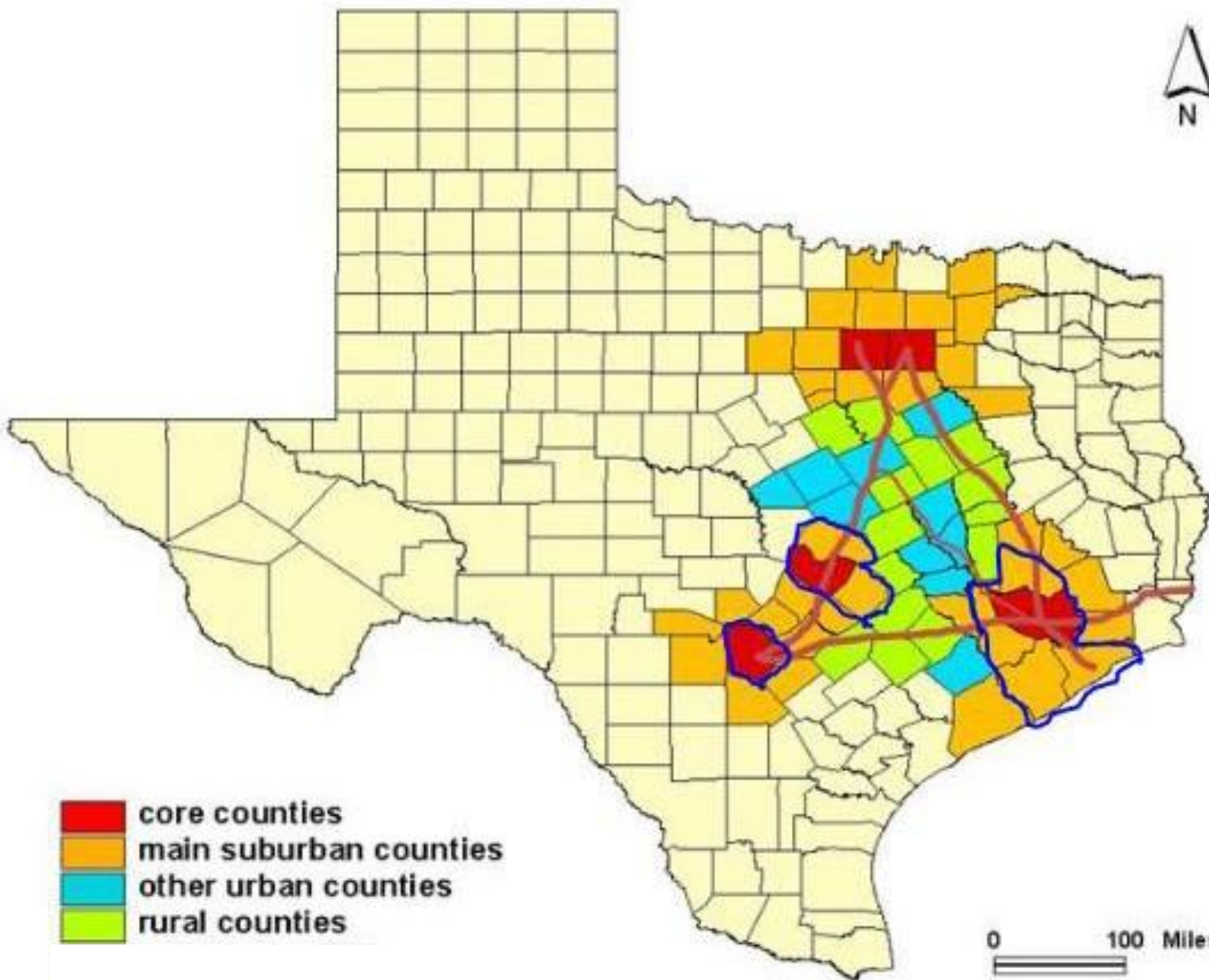
ecological systems

Cross Creek Ranch



NATIVE/NATURALIZED – AMENITY LAKES

JDC Johnson
DEVELOPMENT
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Source: Gavinho (2007)

Restrictions on the bonds that MUDs can issue for Recreational Facilities

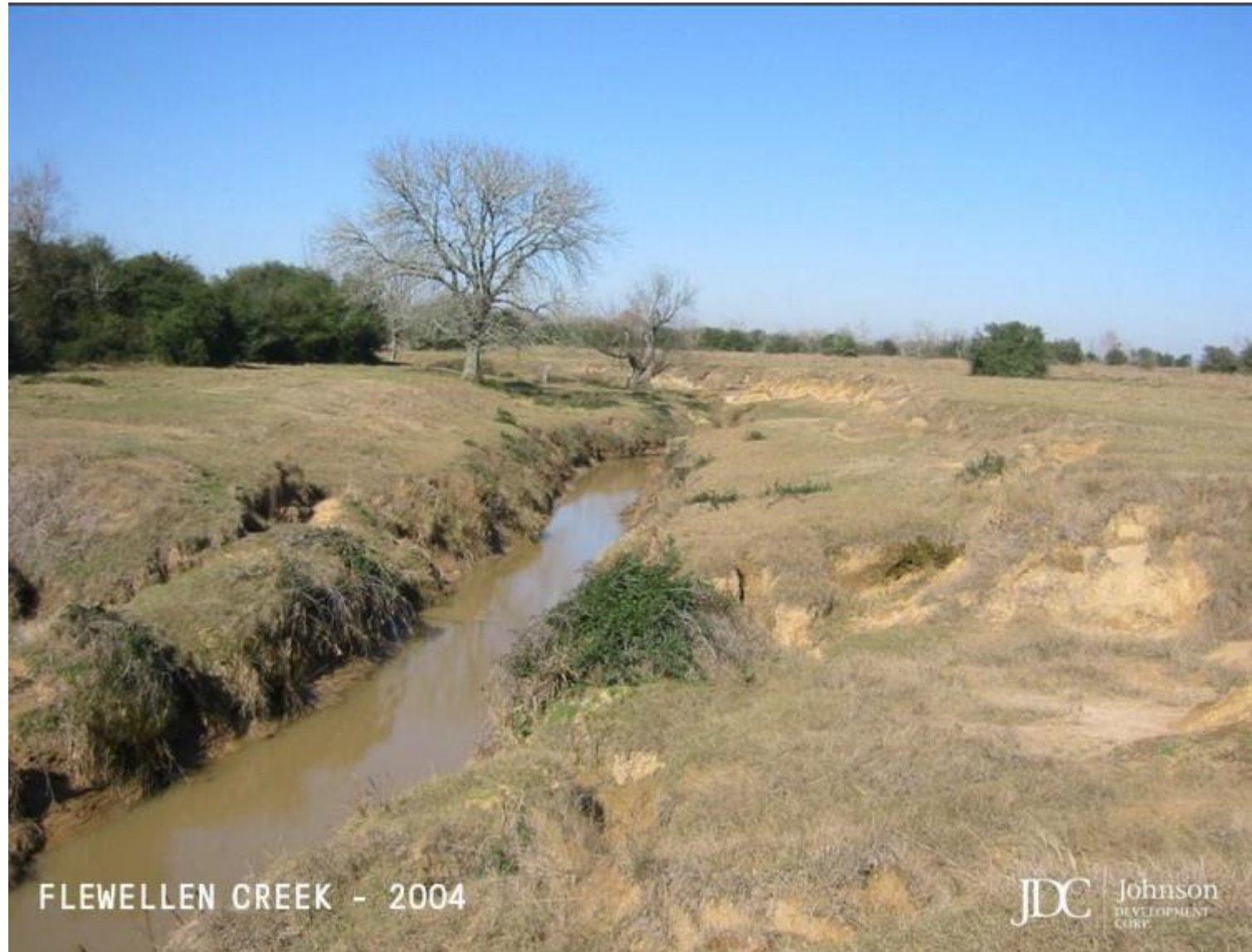
NEW LAW – Passage of HB 1410

A MUD's outstanding bonds supported by ad valorem taxes for recreational facilities **may [now] not exceed 3%** of the taxable value of property in the district at the time of issuance of the debt. This limitation does not apply to the financing of other MUD facilities; only paying for recreational facilities is limited.

A higher % = substantially more protected/preserved land

Texas Administrative Code, Title 30, Part 1
TCEQ, Chapter 293.41., Subchapter E

Cross Creek Ranch



FLEWELLEN CREEK - 2004

JDC Johnson
DEVELOPMENT
CORP.

Cross Creek Ranch



FLEWELLEN CREEK – VIEW SOUTH (PHASE-3)

JDC Johnson
DEVELOPMENT
CORP.

Harris County MUD No. 230 Mandolin Gardens Park



3rd Key Goal

Provide research and advocacy for a 4% annual increase in air quality offsets through carbon sequestration in native soils, plants, trees, and oyster reefs



Cross Creek Ranch

Tools in the Resilience Toolbox

- (1) Targeting Native Tree Species based on Ecosystem Services abilities
- (2) *Resilient Houston Plan* Goal of 4.6 Million Native Trees Planted by 2030
- (3) Carbon Trading (public and private)

Major forestation initiatives are taking place in the 8-county RCP area, including a 4.6 million native tree planting goal by 2030 and a Port of Houston TREES Program to plant 1 million trees along the 25 miles of the Houston Ship Channel.



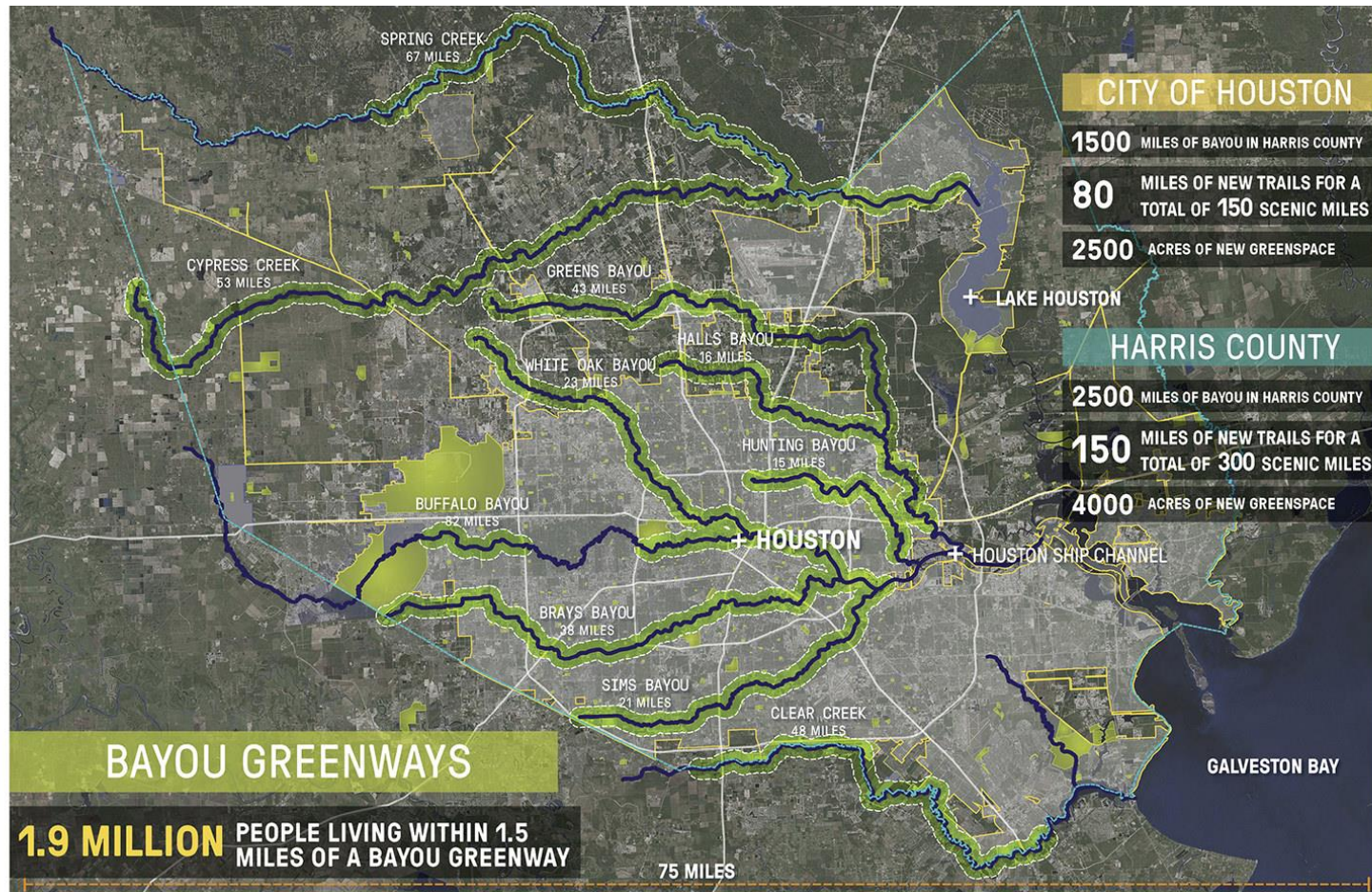
Bayport Terminal area



Benefits of the Resilience Toolbox

- (1) Proximity to parks increases property values (and property taxes) by 5%.
- (2) Reduce stormwater treatment costs—often offsetting costs in one year.
- (3) Happier residents and lower public spending on crime and healthcare.

Benefits of the Resilience Toolbox



Source/photo credit: Houston Parks Board



HOUSTON
WILDERNESS

It's Our Nature

Websites

www.houstonstronger.net

www.HoustonWilderness.org

www.GulfHoustonRCP.org

www.awbd-tx.org

