

community organizations united for collaboration in regional government watershed management...

LOOK UPSTREAM

OCTOBER 2007

Look Upstream. This is a monthly series of articles about **flooding and on-going loss of forested native floodplains in the Cypress Creek Watershed in Harris County, Texas.** These provide the reader with information on what has not, what should be and/or what is actually being done by local government, the public and the private sectors to reverse the downward direction of these quality of life elements so important to creating the market value and prosperity of our resident's homes and neighborhood property in Harris County's largest watershed.

The Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition has been coordinating with Commissioner Jerry Eversole, Commissioner Steve Radack and County Judge Ed Emmett for several years seeking funding sources and commitments to preserve land before development for the dual purpose of flood water detention/conveyance and greenway nature preserves, parks, and trails within the watershed. A major milestone enabling this to become realities is the **need for voter approval of Harris County bonds which will be on the November 6, 2007 ballot.** The news release below, received from Judge Emmett's office, describes the 6 propositions on which you are asked to vote on November 6th.

Look Upstream articles are provided as a public service by the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition, an all-volunteer, 501(c) (3) organization. Visit their website, www.ccfcc.org for more information on needed flood protection, environmental preservation, flood insurance and membership. If your community is not a member, arrange to join up so that you too have public representation in these matters. There are no fees or dues – all costs are paid by voluntary contributions and grants.

HARRIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT PLACES \$880 MILLION BOND PACKAGE ON NOVEMBER BALLOT

Bond Issues Would Not Require Property Tax Increase

Harris County Commissioners Court agreed unanimously in August to seek voter approval this November for a series of bond issues to improve county transportation, parks, and infrastructure and Port of Houston facilities.

Court members approved placing six bond proposals worth \$880 million on the Nov. 6, 2007, ballot. The bond issues would help pay for more parks, road construction, port expansion and other projects designed to expand the county's economy and enhance its livability and environment without spurring a tax increase.

"Voters right now are in no mood for a tax increase, and I have to agree with them on that," Emmett said. "County policy has been, and continues to be, to maintain the current property tax rate."

Commissioners Court voted 5-0 to place the following bond proposals on the November ballot:

Roads	\$ 190 million
Parks	95 million
Adult Detention	195 million
Forensic Center	80 million
Family Law Center	70 million
County Total	\$ 630 million
Port of Houston	250 million
Total Election	\$ 880 million

"The court's unanimous approval of these six propositions shows the importance that we all place on their passage," said County Judge Ed Emmett. "The bond issues will allow Harris County to address growing traffic congestion, provide for more green space to assist with flood control and make needed improvements for our jails and courts."

While our name indicates "Flood Control" and that is our primary concern, land secured for parks and trails frequently serves a dual purpose of flood mitigation, so we come out a winner on both issues. Our county precincts work closely with Harris County Flood Control District in selecting land parcels and designing facilities taking into account the needs of both parties. As mentioned above, our Coalition has and continues to be a very active participant in the discussions of possible locations that serve both purposes.

The CCFCC board of directors **strongly endorses voter approval of the "parks" bond proposition.** Our efforts towards the development of the Cypress Creek Greenway and new anchor parks, such as the planned

Kickerillo Mischer Preserve, are focused on combining flood mitigation efforts, and recreational use and preservation of acreage along Cypress Creek throughout the Cypress Creek watershed. Without the passage of this parks bond issue, the timely development of

the Cypress Creek Greenway is made much more difficult because of the current lack of public funding available for new county park projects which would be part of the Cypress Creek Greenway. There likely won't be another opportunity for 4 or 5 years. We ask voters to consider the following statement made during a recent hearing concerning the City of Houston's highly acclaimed undertaking to require land developers to set aside land for public parks; namely, "This effort is important because parks have function beyond generally improving the City. Parks and green spaces represent critically important environmental amenities; contact with nature is highly valued, and it offers a range of health benefits."

