

LOOK UPSTREAM

NOVEMBER 2005

Look Upstream: A Message from the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition.

Government studies to determine how to reduce stormwater flood damage in the Cypress Creek watershed have been carried out for decades. In 1986 a plan was developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and authorized by Congress for implementation. However, it was later discarded because it was not supported by the Harris County Flood Control District. An earlier Cypress Creek watershed master plan prepared by Turner Collie & Braden (TC&B) in 1984 was approved by Harris County Commissioner Court and is currently being updated. The USACE states that Harris County told them that the USACE plan was too structural (concrete-lined channels), and environmentally insufficient. Both issues were reportedly resolved by the TC&B master plan. However, unlike the USACE plan, it **was not funded**. Although it remains today as the official county plan, it is not mandatory that any government body or land developers implement the plan's recommendations. The comprehensive and recommended land use requirements for flood detention basins and other damage mitigation measures which are in the plan only serve as guidelines according to HCFC.

These previous studies have identified the need for as much as 15,930 acre feet of stormwater detention capacity for flood damage reduction in the area near the confluence of Cypress and Little Cypress Creeks. This is just upstream from where North Eldridge crosses Cypress Creek. In this general area a regional, 160+ acre

tract adjacent to Cypress Creek will now be developed for multiuse and will include both a nature park and a stormwater detention basin for flood damage mitigation. It is located on the west side of North Eldridge Parkway below the confluence of Big Cypress Creek and Little Cypress Creek. Work on designing the preliminary layout of the multiuse site plan is underway. Excavation is ongoing.

This site is expected to accommodate a wet bottom basin providing 1,300 acre feet of stormwater detention. Once dirt excavation is completed, it will be developed into a wooded nature park enclosing the basin. We hope that this will be one of many anchor parks in the 37-mile, Cypress Creek Greenway Project being promoted by the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition. CCFCC's present thoughts are that this site easily accessed from Eldridge Parkway will serve as a trail head for trails connecting to neighborhood green trails along Cypress Creek and along tributaries feeding into the main channel of Cypress Creek, neighborhood parks and other regional parks. As such it is intended this will eventually be linked to the nature preserve tract on Cypress Creek donated in June by the Kickerillo / Mischer joint venture developers. This tract was acquired from Hewlett-Packard by the developers and lies just east of SH 249 on the north side of Cypress Creek. Also,

trails in this reach of Cypress Creek between US 290 and Tomball Highway, as well as along Faulkey Gully, are being developed by Harris County and local MUD districts. Other neighboring MUDs are encouraged to participate by coming together to create what will be a highly valued quality of life asset throughout the watershed.

Harris County Flood Control District's Environmental Services group is actively sponsoring development of an interim land use plan for the site. A workshop was held October 12 at which time an overlay footprint of the basin lake was presented. A short fact sheet and a map of the site have been posted on their web site at www.hcfdc.org. Click on "Downloads", then "Info Sheets" and scroll down to *Stormwater Basin at Cypress Park*.

Community questions, concerns and comments are currently being encouraged. The deadline is December 15. For more information contact Jim Robertson, Chairman, Cypress Creek Greenway Project, Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition, 281-370-8243, (floodalliance@ccfcc.org) or Jennifer Dyke, Project Manager, Harris County Flood Control District, 713-684-4167.

This **Look Upstream** article is one in a monthly series written as a public service for publication in the neighborhood news letter of communities served by the Cypress Creek Flood Coalition's water districts and home owner association members. For more information visit their web site, www.ccfcc.org or e-mail floodalliance@ccfcc.org.

