

LOOK UPSTREAM

DECEMBER 2003

Development of a regional flood protection infrastructure in the Cypress Creek Watershed by a group of northwestern Harris County communities who are working with Harris County officials and agencies has been helped by financial assistance from Houston Endowment Inc, a long established philanthropy endowed by Mr. and Mrs. Jesse H. Jones.

The Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition (the "Coalition") an alliance of home owner associations, municipal utility districts, supporting member organizations and individual citizens was formed 4 years ago as a grass roots undertaking united for collaboration to improve regional government watershed management. After hundreds of homes, businesses and streets began flooding repeatedly in the late 1980's, they began undertaking initiatives to reverse the trend before the catastrophic consequences of urban development stormwater runoff in their watershed result in massive damages to the extent suffered by neighboring, more developed watersheds such as White Oak Bayou and Brays Bayou.

The Cypress Creek Watershed, of which 75% was undeveloped according to Harris County Appraisal District records in 1999, is by far the largest of the 22 watersheds in the county. It is undergoing explosive growth in new subdivisions as the area's highly reputed school districts and forested land attract an ever-increasing population forecasted to be over 438,000 people by 2020. For this reason, the Coalition has determined it is critical for intelligent planning purposes that an analysis be done to forecast where the flood hazard areas which will be shown on the new flood hazard maps now being finalized under a joint FEMA - Harris County Flood Control District project known as "TSARP" will expand because of this urban growth. This analysis to be done in 2004 by a team of engineers representing Harris County Flood Control District with participation by technical experts contracted by the Coalition will provide information not otherwise available. It will be critical as a tool which can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of current flood protection plans.

The Coalition is an all volunteer organization paying its expenses by "passing the hat" said their president, Dick Smith. "We do not have the highly specialized technical expertise for this study nor sufficient funds to pay for it; hence we have applied to several foundations seeking assistance. Houston Endowment, Inc has just notified us of their decision to award \$20,000 which will certainly help this cause. We are most grateful for their recognition of the importance of this research in the effort to build a safe community for our inhabitants".

Information on open meetings, flood insurance, flood maps, projects, events and more can be obtained from the CCFCC web site www.ccfcc.org or e-mail floodalliance@ccfcc.org.

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