

## LOOK UPSTREAM

JANUARY 2009

**Making a Difference!** What has been achieved in the Cypress Creek Watershed community efforts to reduce flooding and preserve the forested floodplain corridors within the Cypress Creek Watershed? Here is a synopsis of 2008.

- Floodplain Regulation: Technical resolution stemming from a 2004 investigation by the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition which found the "Upper Watershed" floodplains were significantly under-calculated by FEMA's TSARP computer modeling was resolved. Due to the urgency created by the immense growth of new subdivisions in the watershed, the resulting changes were adopted by Harris County Commissioners Court for new land development beginning in August 2008.
- Dick Smith, CCFCC president, observed "The bottom line is homes, businesses and schools in the Upper Watershed communities will be on safer ground while those living downstream will benefit from reduced risk of higher flood peaks which otherwise might occur. The Harris County Flood Control District has done an exemplary job as project manager for this technically challenging job."
- Flood insurance rate maps (FIRMs) which are currently being prepared by FEMA are expected to be available for public review by April, 2009 (The floodplain will possibly become even less in some communities located in the lower watershed area east of the Tomball Parkway).

- Watershed "Overflow". Greater knowledge was developed in understanding the characteristics and extent of large overflow zones where immense "ponding" is occurring during major storms resulting in storm water flowing out of the Upper Cypress Creek basin into Addicks and onward into Buffalo Bayou in downtown Houston.
- The Sierra Club lawsuit filed against FEMA in early 2007 seeking to prevent inadvertent destruction of wetlands in the Upper Watershed remains pending in federal district court.
- "Future Conditions" research. This unique project barely begun in 2004 but suspended due to inaccuracies inherent in the FEMA computers can be resumed now that the computer modeling has been corrected. Agreement has been reached with HCFCD to resume the project by April 2009.
- Cypress Creek Greenway. The 1st official trail opening occurred in November when the Gourley Trail interconnects between Meyer Park and Collins Park was dedicated. The pledged donation by Kickerillo - Mischer of what we believe will be approximately 140 acres of forested floodplain for a nature preserve on former HP property adjacent to the Tomball Parkway neared completion.
- Discussions began between CCFCC and HCFCD concerning funding responsibility for the watershed's new master plan (development began in 2001 and is continuing). Resolution of a huge

disparity in allocation of funds among the total 22 watersheds in Harris County has not been resolved. (Their "Active Projects" capital improvement funding recommendation submitted to Commissioners Court in May 2008 contained slightly less than \$8 million for Cypress Creek vs. \$206 million for their federal projects (Clear Creek, Greens, Sims, Brays, White Oak, Hunting, Halls and Buffalo Bayou). The total \$335 million CIP funding available is expected to be exhausted within 1 ½ years at that tune

- All administration and management to operate the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition are provided by unpaid volunteers from your communities. Out-of-pocket expenses are paid using donations from MUDs, HOAs and resident contributions of 50-cents per month on their water bill. The technical research needed to develop facts essential to improving development of appropriate flood mitigation damage protection depends on your participation—all of which is voluntary and tax deductible. PLEASE HELP.

**Look Upstream** articles are written and/or provided by the Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition (CCFCC) as a public service. Visit website [www.ccfcc.org](http://www.ccfcc.org) for more information on needed flood protection, environmental preservation, flood insurance and membership. or e-mail to [floodalliance@ccfcc.org](mailto:floodalliance@ccfcc.org).

