



7305 Navigation Blvd. Suite A  
Houston, TX 77011  
(713) 529-6443

Dear Supporter,

We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones healthy.

As for me, this past year has been a fantastic time of getting immersed in the longest-running conservation group in Houston (est. 1966). And getting to know our “deep bench” of Bayou Preservation Association board members, advisors, watershed representatives and other dedicated volunteers.

While I am not a lifelong Houstonian, I have lived in the Houston area for roughly 10 years, and I have loved enjoying the benefits of the beautiful Brays Bayou area near the Museum District. Since the abatement of our summer heat, I’ve been getting out to Brays Bayou with my 2-year-old daughter, visiting the snapping turtles and seeing the fish spawn and other abundant wildlife, even in the unfortunately channelized section of that waterway. From concrete to heavily forested riparian corridors, we’ve got great diversity of watershed systems in this gulf coast region.

Your passion for our mission fuels us as we tackle new challenges to our critical preservation work in and alongside these diverse Houston bayous. Since February, we’ve hired two fantastic new team members: Ryan Francisco, who directs our outreach, and Grant Moss who coordinates our many science programs.

### **Bacteria monitoring and reporting**

One of the projects that Grant has taken on includes a new area of focus for us: targeted bacteria monitoring. While Houston area streams are often brown-colored because of natural sediment including fine white sands in areas like Spring Creek and Cypress Creek, Houston bayous do have actually high levels of bacteria from watershed runoff (such as pet waste) and wastewater leaks. These high bacteria rates, often caused by dumping from sewage treatment plants that overflow during and just after storm events, can cause disease for people who directly interact with the water. These high bacteria rates can also lower oxygen levels in the water, which can cause fish kills. All of Houston’s watersheds drain into Galveston Bay which absorbs these pollutants that get pushed downstream to this importantly productive seafood water body.

For years, the Houston Galveston Area Council, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and other agencies have been identifying our area’s most polluted waterways. But finding the primary sources for the high bacteria rates has not been done. Bayou Preservation Association is now undertaking a large-scale project to sample in numerous sections along these waterways to locate the point sources of these targeted areas, which will include:

- Plum Creek
  - E. coli levels almost 30% higher than the state limit
  - Manchester/Harrisburg neighborhood

- Tributary of Buffalo Bayou – Glenwood Cemetery
  - 19.5% higher than state limit
  - Washington Ave. / Memorial Park neighborhood
- Country Club Bayou
  - E. coli almost 18% higher than state limit
  - Lawndale/Wayside neighborhood

Three other sites that we'll also focus on have between 15% and 17% rates higher than the state limit. These areas include Pine Gully (Park Place neighborhood), Berry Bayou (Allendale/Meadowbrook neighborhood), and Little White Oak Bayou (Near Northside).

Bayou Preservation Association's work in this critical arena of finding the sources for these high bacteria rates will include sampling downstream to upstream to better pinpoint the issues from wastewater facilities, and flowing outfall pipes, where levels are skewing highest. We will then present these results to all the local jurisdictions for correction. Once reported as "corrected", we'll continue to sample to ensure the follow-through of cessation of previous source issues. Monitoring of our watersheds in general is important. Until sources of concern can be found and addressed, monitoring data just sits on a shelf.

We'll be sharing our data from this and other scientific projects on our newly updated website [www.BayouPreservation.org](http://www.BayouPreservation.org) to share our progress on helping improve the water quality of our bayous.

#### **Habitat Restoration work**

Eric Ruckstuhl has been Bayou Preservation Association's Habitat Restoration Specialist for the past 27 years. Just this week he compiled the full data on his impressive body of invasive plant species work: 335 acres! Anyone who's done this type of back-breaking work in our searing heat and humidity understands the significance of those numbers. What is also important to note is that that this acreage number doesn't include the multiple "passes" needed to go back to truly eradicate the targeted species and their seed sources. A good 80% of these acres need successive sprayings and cuttings over months and years.

For Bayou Preservation Association, Eric and his crews have been tackling tallow and privet and numerous other invasive, stubborn species that, if left unchecked, completely wipe out native habitats for migratory birds and year-round wildlife species like our area river otters and beavers. Eric is currently focused on our largest-to-date project, 85 acres at Challenger 7 Memorial Park in Webster, rooting out 13 different plant species, including McCartney Rose and Japanese climbing fern.

**Your support is needed and appreciated at the end of 2022** as we grow our programs to make our bayous more than liquid receptacles for trash but flowing healthy arteries for our water sources.

With gratitude,



Brittani Flowers, President, CEO

*PS: Your donation of \$60, \$100, \$250, \$1,000 or more will enhance the health and beauty of our Houston region bayous. Thank you in advance for your support to continue to make our water-filled greenways accessible and safe for humans and the wildlife who call them home.*