

July 2026

Tributary Health Report



BAYOU PRESERVATION
ASSOCIATION

Country Club Bayou

Tributary Restoration for Watershed Resilience
Country Club Bayou, Brays Watershed
Bi-Monthly Cycle: July 2026

As stewards of regional watersheds, Bayou Preservation Association (BPA) collaborates with local partners to monitor and restore prioritized waterways in the greater Houston area. The Tributary Health Report is a bi-monthly (every two months) series documenting habitat conditions, progress on enhancements, and water quality outcomes at various sites of interest throughout the region. Through this initiative, BPA strives to offer transparent and accessible insights into the health of smaller waterways and their influence on the overall watershed system.

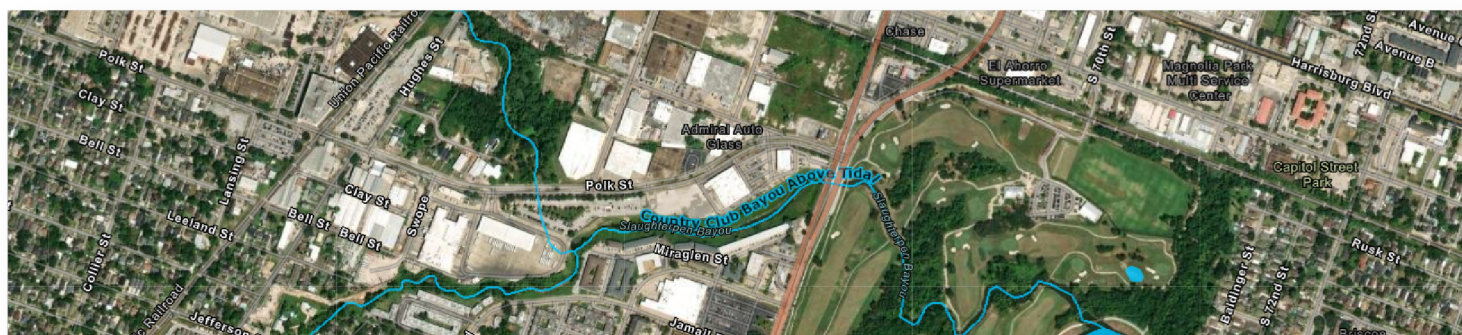


Photo Source: H-GAC, Country Club Bayou Above Tidal

Country Club Bayou (also known as Slaughterpen Bayou) is a small urban **tributary*** in Houston's East End that feeds into Brays Bayou, a major component of the regional **stormwater system***. Though modest in size, the tributary functions as an active drainage corridor, conveying **runoff*** from surrounding neighborhoods, streets, and industrial areas downstream to the broader Brays Bayou **watershed***.

Monitoring efforts indicate that elevated bacteria levels are impairing water quality, limiting safe human contact, and affecting ecological function.

KEY TERMS*

Fundamental terminology and definitions for watershed management and water quality are highlighted as they first appear in the document. For more in-depth knowledge, please check out our resources list highlighted at the end.

- **Tributary** - a smaller waterway that flows into and feeds a larger one
- **Stormwater System** - the network of natural and engineered infrastructure that captures and conveys water from rainfall events
- **Runoff** - water that flows across land surfaces, collects pollutants, sediment, and debris as it moves toward a waterway
- **Watershed** - a land area that drains to a common waterway; collects rainfall, runoff, and the pollutants they carry into a shared basin

WHAT DOES MONITORING TELL US?

Recent monitoring shows consistently elevated levels of *E. coli*, exceeding state standards for recreational contact. This bacteria originates from fecal waste associated with urban pet activity, livestock, wastewater infrastructure and other **non-point sources***.

Dissolved oxygen* levels are also periodically low, which can stress aquatic life. While the bayou corridor has a relatively dense tree canopy, the understory vegetation is uneven and, in some areas, is not effectively slowing runoff or filtering pollutants. During heavy rain events, stormwater moves quickly through the channel, overwhelming natural filtration capacity and contributing to streambank instability.

KEY TERMS*

- **Non-point source pollution** - contamination that originates from diffuse sources across a landscape rather than a single identifiable discharge point
- **Dissolved oxygen** - the amount of oxygen (O₂) that has been chemically able to dissolve in a water body, either as a concentration (mg/L) or percentage of the whole; depended on by aquatic organisms and plants for survival
- **Green infrastructure** - nature-based systems and design strategies integrated into the cityscape to manage stormwater, reduce runoff, and provide ecological and community benefits
- **Riparian** - the transitional zone between a waterway and upland areas; characterized by moisture-adapted vegetation that stabilize banks, filter runoff, and support habitat resilience



Water riffle section in Country Club Bayou

The following factors collectively degrade water quality and reduce the bayou's ecological function.

- Stormwater runoff carries bacteria, nutrients, sediment, and debris
- High-velocity flows during storm events cause channel erosion
- Trash and floatable debris accumulate along the streambanks and within the channel
- Presence of invasive vegetation limits riparian health
- Sanitary sewer overflows and failing infrastructure introduce pathogens into the channel

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE WATERSHED AS A WHOLE?

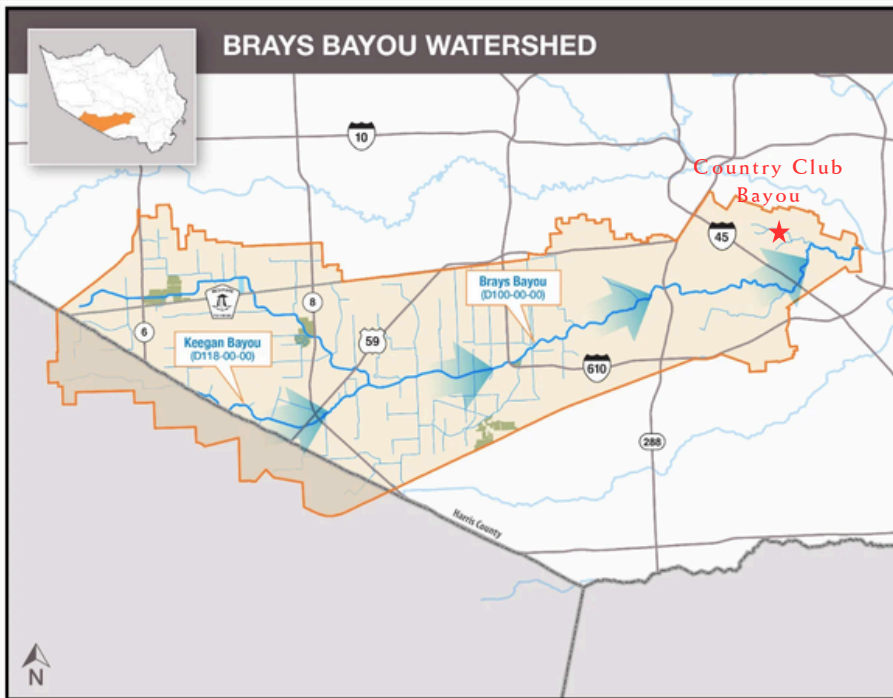


An upstream view of Country Club Bayou at Dawson Lunnon Cemetery

Country Club Bayou, spanning 1.25 miles, is part of an extensive network of tributaries that feed into Brays Bayou, which runs about 31 miles through Harris County. These smaller channels direct stormwater from urban surfaces, roads, rooftops, and parking lots into larger streams and bayous. Tributaries like this are often overlooked because they are less visible and frequently bordered by development. However, they play a critical role in determining downstream water quality as pollutants enter the system here before accumulating in larger bayous.

This waterway lacks sufficient **green stormwater infrastructure*** to intercept and treat runoff before it enters the channel. Existing drainage infrastructure prioritizes rapid conveyance rather than filtration or infiltration. The absence of stabilized streambanks, consistent **riparian*** vegetative buffers, and upstream pollution controls allows contaminants to move directly into Brays Bayou. This contributes to cumulative downstream impacts, including degraded water quality and reduced habitat value.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS?



Improving conditions in Country Club Bayou requires targeted, site-specific interventions:

- Installation of native vegetative buffers to enhance filtration and slow runoff
- Streambank stabilization through biostabilization
- Expansion of pet waste management infrastructure (e.g., stations and signage)
- Routine litter removal and maintenance
- Continued water quality monitoring to track progress

Photo Source: Harris County Flood Control District, Brays Bayou

Estimated Investment: \$150,000–\$170,000

This funding would support the implementation, maintenance, and community engagement needed to sustain stewardship efforts and drive long-term improvement through 2027.

REFLECTION ON OUR WATERSHED

Country Club Bayou reflects a broader pattern seen across regional watersheds, where smaller tributaries absorb the impacts of rapid development and stormwater runoff.

Addressing these systems at the tributary level provides a scalable opportunity to improve regional water quality. Strategic investment in green infrastructure and localized management can reduce pollutant loads, improve flow conditions, and strengthen the resilience of the entire watershed.

RESOURCES

For more information on watershed health, tributary management, and conservation strategies, check out the following resources.

- [Houston's Watersheds](#)
- [Nonpoint Source Pollution Program](#)
- [Bacteria Modeling Report](#)
- [311 Protect Our Pipes](#)

This work is made possible through the generous support of the Brown Foundation, Marvy Finger Family Foundation, and Clayton Fund, Inc.

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