

Hogg Bird Sanctuary Study Frequently Asked Questions March 2017

Study and Program Process

What was the purpose of this study of Hogg Bird Sanctuary?

In support of the Memorial Park Master Plan, the Houston Parks Board led a steering committee to conduct an in-depth programming study of Hogg Bird Sanctuary during 2016. The study looked at (1) the condition of the land and forest, (2) habitat and (3) potential and appropriate public access. This study built upon inventories and analysis completed for the Memorial Park Master Plan as well as planning work done for the Garden Club of Houston, Rice University and Memorial Park Conservancy. Based on the study's results, the Hogg Bird Study steering committee recommended a set of projects for the Sanctuary that were endorsed by the Memorial Park Standards committee. Since then, HPB has proceeded with design of the recommended improvements.

Who was on the study steering committee?

The nonprofit Houston Parks Board led this study in consultation with a steering committee that included representatives from the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and Memorial Park Conservancy with advice from the Garden Club of Houston. Design Workshop was the primary consultant. The steering committee representatives have stewardship responsibilities for the sanctuary or expertise in a particular field, such as native plants, and consulted with outside experts.

Who else was consulted for the Hogg Bird Sanctuary study?

In addition to the steering committee, others consulted as part of the process included experts and organizations such as the Harris County Flood Control District, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston Audubon and Rice University researchers. Native plant, hydrology, forestry and other ecologists and scientists were brought in as part of the programming process.

How was Rice University's research on the Hogg Bird Sanctuary used in this new study?

In 2014, the Garden Club of Houston commissioned Rice University professor Cin-Ty Lee and Houston naturalist Glenn Olsen to develop a habitat plan. The goal was to improve habitat in the Hogg Bird Sanctuary through installation of native plant species appropriate for birds and other wildlife. Cin-Ty Lee brought on his ornithology students and Rice BioSciences instructor Kelly Weinersmith to assist with research for the plan. Their extensive report, with its bird census data and planting plans for three micro-habitats, has been a valuable resource for the consultant and the steering committee.

Who is managing the Memorial Park Conservancy's Master Plan and how does this affect Hogg Bird Sanctuary?

A Standards Committee that includes members of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Memorial Park Conservancy and the Uptown TIRZ oversees execution of the Memorial Park Master Plan. Ultimately, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Houston have final approval authority over the execution of all proposed plans, including those in Hogg Bird Sanctuary.

What are the next steps?

The Hogg Bird Study steering committee recommended a set of projects for the Sanctuary. The first project will involve improvements within the southern zone, including a loop trail and drainage, plus drainage work on the north side to capture surface water runoff from adjacent properties that is eroding the banks of the park. The Garden Club project, a pollinator garden, will be located along the western edge of the lawn. Limited split rail fencing with gate openings will demark the park's northern boundary where no fencing currently exists. A pilot reforestation of the southern end of the property will be a primary focus of the coming work.

Ecology and Habitat

Will all invasive, non-native plants be removed from the area? / Will the removal of these plant species disrupt the wildlife? / What types of plants will replace the removed plants? / Who will approve the new plants?

The study's goal is to promote a healthy and resilient ecology largely comprised of native plants that attract and benefit wildlife. The study found that Hogg Bird Sanctuary is overwhelmed by invasive plants that choke out natural restoration of the forest. To promote a healthy forest, invasive plants will be removed from the southern end of the park. The area will then be replanted with a mix of native plants and maintained over a five year period. All new plantings will be consistent with the Memorial Park Master Plan, which emphasizes a desire for ecological restoration. This work will be similar to work currently underway in the rest of Memorial Park.

What is the location and site history of the Hogg Bird Sanctuary?

Hogg Bird Sanctuary is located off of Memorial Drive, at the end of Westcott Street. (See map below.)

To read more about the history of Memorial Park and Hogg Bird Sanctuary, visit the Memorial Park Conservancy's [website](#).



Infrastructure Work

What are the plans for the construction of a fence around the perimeter of the project? Where will the fence be located?

Advisory Committees to the Memorial Park Master Plan have recommended installing a split rail fence on the northern boundary of the park – where no fencing currently exists – to better demarcate public vs private property. Small openings in the fence will provide access where desired by neighbors.

Will any trails be added to the Sanctuary? What is the composition of the proposed trails?

The Memorial Park Master Plan proposes trails in the Hogg Bird Sanctuary. The Hogg Bird Study steering committee’s recommendations include preserving the existing mowed path on the north side of the sanctuary and creating a southern loop trail with overlooks. The northern leg of the loop trail will connect to an overlook of the Sanctuary interior. The trail will be built in concrete to provide a durable, accessible path for people of all physical abilities. The rest of the loop trail will be a mulched natural surface largely following the existing terrain.

Is a trail being proposed from Buffalo Bayou Park to Memorial Park through Hogg Bird Sanctuary?

The 2015 Memorial Park Master Plan does include proposals for trails in Hogg Bird Sanctuary but does not include plans for a hike-and-bike trail through Hogg Bird Sanctuary that connects Buffalo Bayou Park to Memorial Park.

What improvements are going to be made to fix the drainage issues in the sanctuary?

To reduce erosion at the site and improve water quality, the program recommends drainage work on the north side to control runoff. A new earthen, planted swale will gather off-site drainage. That drainage will be directed to the lower elevations of the sanctuary via two pipes.

Where will visitors access the Hogg Bird Sanctuary? Where is parking located?

The sanctuary will remain accessible via Westcott Street. Parking is available in the existing on-site parking lot.

The public may also currently access the Hogg Bird Sanctuary at Crestwood via a mulch trail, although not much of the sanctuary is accessible because of the existing topography in that area.

Are there any plans for a boat/canoe launch in the Hogg Bird Sanctuary?

A boat launch is not part of the proposed improvements. A new canoe/kayak launch has recently opened along Buffalo Bayou near the intersection of Woodway and North Post Oak Lane, just two miles upstream of the Hogg Bird Sanctuary.

Is the Hogg Bird Sanctuary study part of the Memorial Park Demonstration Project?

No. This Hogg Bird Sanctuary work is not part of or affiliated with the Memorial Park Demonstration Project. The draft recommendations for potential projects at Hogg Bird are feasible whether or not the demonstration project proceeds.

If you have questions about the Memorial Park Demonstration Project, we encourage you to contact the Harris County Flood Control District by visiting www.hcfcd.org/mpdp

General

Who is financing the Hogg Bird Sanctuary work?

Houston Parks Board received a generous grant from a donor to conduct the program study and the current implementation projects.

How does the public stay informed about the study?

Houston Parks Board will hold a public update meeting at St. Theresa's Church on April 3 at 6:30 PM to review current design work. You may also sign up for Houston Parks Board emails at www.houstonparksboard.org or check back to this page of the website periodically for updates.

Will materials from these meetings be available online?

Any materials presented at public meetings will be uploaded and made available on the Hogg Bird Sanctuary study page: <http://houstonparksboard.org/projects/hogg-bird-Sanctuary/>

How may I provide my input on the proposed Hogg Bird Sanctuary improvements?

Thank you for your interest in the proposed improvements. You may ask questions or email your comments to [info \[at\] houstonparksboard \[dot\] org](mailto:info@houstonparksboard.org).