

For Immediate Release

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***UNVEIL THE TRAIL, Spring Creek Greenway
Houston Wilderness Trail Showcase
with major sponsors***

Janet and Ernie Cockrell, Kay and Ned Holmes, and The Wilhelmina E. Robertson Fund

Houston, TX – February 21, 2008 – Houston Wilderness “unveils the trail,” highlighting The Spring Creek Greenway, the first segment of a planned 600-plus-mile regional trail system around Houston.

UNVEIL THE TRAIL

On Thursday February 21, 2008 a luncheon event will be held at the Houston Club downtown (registration will begin at 11:30) honoring the first *Trail Blazers*, individuals and public entities in the field of conservation and outdoor preservation who are making a difference. This year the honorees are **Patricia Peckinpaugh Hubbard, Montgomery County Precinct 3 Commissioner Ed Chance, and Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Jerry Eversole.**

The Spring Creek Greenway, created by Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Jerry Eversole and Montgomery County Precinct 3 Commissioner Ed Chance, is the centerpiece of a tremendous collaborative effort to link the natural beauty and unique biodiversity found throughout the 24-county area surrounding the Houston metropolis. This initial 33-mile network of greenspace, parks, nature centers and trails forms the heart and soul of a much larger 600-plus-mile emerald necklace of trails which will encircle Houston. The potential to create an inter-linking system of this magnitude depends greatly on the success of projects like the Spring Creek Greenway and the landmark, trail-blazing partnership created by Commissioners Chance and Eversole. The entire Houston area will benefit from the many recreational opportunities provided by the Spring Creek Greenway project—hiking, canoeing and kayaking, fishing, cycling, and horseback riding—all year round, and all within a 20-minute drive of downtown Houston.

The larger Houston Wilderness Regional Trail System benefits substantially from the Spring Creek Greenway as it connects the north and northwest sides of Harris County to the southwest and southeast ends of Montgomery County; thereby linking the top half of a proposed grand circular trail of differing ecosystems. When the collaboration was first announced in October 2003, Commissioner Eversole proclaimed, “Imagine the opportunities we are providing to future generations in our area. The prospect of leaving something more beautiful than anything of the past 100 years for the eight to ten million people who will live in Houston and Harris County within the next 20 years is extremely satisfying.”

While the recreational prospects are enormous, other benefits of the greenway include: contiguous linear connected wildlife habitat, support and preservation of some of the region’s most significant natural and historic assets, improved water quality and a reduction in flooding damage by steering development away from floodways. Legacy Land Trust, the primary nonprofit partner for the Spring Creek Greenway, holds four conservation easements within the Greenway; legal agreements which permanently protect the land from any future development. Montgomery County was the first county to sign a conservation easement in the state of Texas on the 72-acre Montgomery County Preserve along Spring Creek. Montgomery

County Commissioner Ed Chance stated: “The opportunity to have greenspace with public access which allows low-impact hike and bike areas that can also serve as a critical flood buffer zone is important for our citizens.”

SPRING CREEK GREENWAY

The Spring Creek Greenway is the first piece of a planned larger Houston Wilderness regional trail system. This landmark project is located between US Hwy. 59 and FM 2978 approximately 25 miles north of downtown Houston. The 33-mile long Greenway will connect and protect up to 12,000 acres of forest, on both sides of the creek. Project goals include preservation, restoration, recreation and education about this biologically diverse ecosystem and aims to create a cornerstone of linear connected ecotourism opportunities.

The Greenway has many public and private partners collaborating on protecting land and water; flood damage reduction; wetland mitigation, and low-impact recreation benefits. Patricia Peckinpaugh Hubbard is being honored at this event for having contributed the first donation of private land to Montgomery County for the project, which is now open to the public as the Peckinpaugh Preserve and adjacent to the first public canoe/kayak launch site in Montgomery County.

The network of trails and waterways weave through parks in Harris County Precinct 4: Burroughs Park, Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center, and Pundt Park; and in Montgomery County Precinct 3: Old Riley Fuzzel Road Preserve, Peckinpaugh Preserve, Montgomery County Preserve; and in both counties the 1700-acre George Mitchell Nature Preserve. The locations of trails and directions to the parks can be found online at www.springcreekgreenway.org, or Houston Wilderness at www.houstonwilderness.org. All wilderness enthusiasts are welcome!

HOUSTON WILDERNESS SPREADING THE WORD

The role of Houston Wilderness is to promote the work of these groups and individuals and public entities and to “grow” more of these collaborations along the 24-county Houston region to create the most substantial system of connected parks and trails in Texas.

Founded in 2002, Houston Wilderness is a broad-based alliance of business, environmental and government interests that act in concert to protect, preserve and promote the unique biodiversity of the region’s precious remaining ecological capital, from bottomland hardwoods and prairie grasslands to pine forests and wetlands, while recognizing the importance of the region’s natural assets to its cultural history, economic vitality and future well-being. A network of local, state and federal agencies, research and education centers, conservation organizations, business and economic interests and individuals pool resources and strengths to meet challenges beyond the scope of any individual organization.

Houston Wilderness recognizes that wilderness and quality of life are bound to one another. Through its work, the organization hopes to drive ecotourism; attract businesses and a talented workforce to the Houston area; work with developers and builders to preserve the area’s natural resources; and instill a sense of pride that the Houston area is one of the most ecologically diverse in the world.

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