

Lake Creek

Preserving vital land areas during a building boom is essential.

In recent decades, parts of Houston have flooded that have never flooded before. One cause is concrete. Soil absorbs water, which then serves as a nutrient for grass and trees. Concrete doesn't. Water that runs off concrete ends up in our underground drainage systems to be cleaned and used for drinking water. But if flood conditions exist, runoff can cause severe property damage.

Montgomery County is one of the fastest-growing areas in the United States. The preservation of land along the banks of its waterways is critical for flood control. Houston can't redo its past, but Montgomery County can learn from our experience.

Local government together with Bayou Land Conservancy and other private groups have taken steps to protect land along Spring Creek, which divides Harris and Montgomery counties in Southeast Texas. Now, Montgomery County-area land owners and nonprofits need a similar effort to preserve a greenway along Lake Creek, another tributary to the San Jacinto River. With the rapid development in Montgomery County, the creek and the crucial land along its banks are at risk.

Lake Creek Preserve is a good start. Lake Creek meanders through this preserve containing 529 acres of land north of The Woodlands and south of the Woodforest development.

Thirteen aspiring Eagle Scouts and their helpers recently completed the first trail in the preserve. Hikers walking the trail, which is a mile-and-a-half long, will pass through several ecosystems, including the densely wooded Big Thicket, the sunlit Piney Woods and the more sparse Oak Savannah. They might see bobcats and coyote prowling, deer grazing or alligators navigating the murky waters of Lake Creek. Yet, the preserve encompasses only a small portion of the land along the creek ("A walk on the wilderness side," Page B1, Wednesday).

Glenn Buckley, a project organizer, along with other concerned residents, has formed Lake Creek Greenway Partnership, a nonprofit that's currently seeking 501c(3) status, to protect an additional 9,471 acres along 20 miles of the creek. Area landowners, residents, donors and nonprofit groups should pitch in to complete this ambitious project before more concrete is poured.

Lake Creek Preserve and the planned greenway will benefit more than Montgomery County. These will be regional amenities. Just as Montgomery County residents benefit from Hermann Park and greenways like Cypress Creek, Harris County residents will benefit from a forest where people can walk a long distance beside a clean creek.

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