



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
Galveston District

News Release

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Corps, Flood Control District sign Project Partnership Agreement for Project Brays

HOUSTON - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, in partnership with the Harris County Flood Control District, has undertaken a project with a goal of reducing flood risks in the Brays Bayou watershed. The \$489-million Brays Bayou Flood Damage Reduction Project, also known as Project Brays, will reduce flooding risks for approximately 30,000 homes, including the Texas Medical Center.

On March 31, 2010, a Project Partnership Agreement was signed by Colonel David C. Weston, Galveston District commander, and Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, at Hermann Park's Bayou Parkland Pavilion in Houston, which will allow the federal government to begin reimbursing HCFCD for local dollars already spent on the project and for reimbursements on future work on Brays Bayou.

"We are committed to contributing to the safety, economic success and quality of life of the citizens of Houston and its neighboring communities," said Colonel David C. Weston, Galveston District commander. "The Corps has partnered with Harris County Flood Control District in order to carry out a project that will bring lasting benefits to those who live and work in the Brays Bayou Watershed."

Project Brays was studied and constructed under the auspices of the Water Resources Development Act section 211 (f) program, according to Shakhar D. Misir, a project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District. This program is a progressive venture initiated by Congress and supported by the Corps.

"The benefit of the section 211 (f) program affords an early project delivery because of the sponsor's role to physically construct the project while concurrently compiling the feasibility report," said Misir. "An approved feasibility report is the key to justify federal participation."

"The Corps has provided support to HCFCD at every watershed juncture cumulating in the signing of the PPA," said Misir. "This PPA being signed formally acknowledges the Brays Bayou project for cost share between the federal government and the local sponsor, HCFCD."

The project includes earthen channel modifications, which consist of 17.7 stream miles of channel widening from the mouth of Brays Bayou to Fondren Road, according to Misir. This widening will increase the



Mike Talbott (left), director of the Harris County Flood Control District, addresses a group at the Project Partnership Agreement signing for Project Brays in Houston. Also pictured (from left to right), Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, Galveston District commander Colonel David C. Weston and Art Storey, former director of HCFCD. (Courtesy photo)

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amount of stormwater the bayou is able to hold.

“Due to the channel widening, replacement of 12 bridges and the lengthening of 18 other bridges that cross Brays Bayou from the mouth to Fondren Road will be completed,” said Misir. “Approximately 1,900 acre-feet of stormwater detention on Willow Waterhole Bayou will be implemented, which will reduce flood potential for thousands along the bayou.”

Project Brays is an example of a federal project in which a non-federal agency takes the lead to manage the project using local funds. Harris County Flood Control District and the Corps share the cost of the project.

“In June 2001, Tropical Storm Allison dumped more than 14 inches of rain over portions of Brays Bayou in a 12-hour span,” said Weston. “The resulting floods caused up to \$2 billion in damages at Texas Medical Center and huge intangible costs attributed to lost research products. Events like these made the Brays project a viable candidate of the 211 (f) program supported by both the Corps and HCFCD.”

In the 1990s, the project was expedited by separating two elements, construction both upstream and downstream of Beltway 8, according to Misir. HCFCD has received federal reimbursements for construction upstream and the PPA will officially combine the two elements and allow for reimbursements to begin for the downstream construction.

Portions of the project that have been completed include the Arthur Storey and Old Westheimer stormwater detention basins, according to HCFCD. Additionally, the Eldridge basin is 66 percent complete and the Willow Waterhole basin is 43 percent complete.

The flood control district has completed widening segments of the bayou and has made two bridge modifications or replacements, according to HCFCD. The flood control district estimates the entire project will be finished in 2017, funding permitting.

The project is identified as the Locally Preferred Plan and is supported by the Brays Bayou Citizens Advisory Committee and the local community in general as determined by public meetings held throughout the planning process.

For more news and information, visit the Galveston District Web site, www.swg.usace.army.mil, or the Project Brays Web site, www.projectbrays.org.



Left to right, Shakh D. Misir, Corps project manager for Brays Bayou, Anne Brown, an attorney with the U.S. Army Office of General Counsel, Pat Kershaw, a Corps program analyst supporting Brays Bayou, Steve Fitzgerald, chief engineer for HCFCD and Betty Voelkel, a Corps program analyst supporting Brays Bayou, toured the progress along Brays Bayou following a Project Partnership Agreement signing in Houston. (Courtesy photo)