



**Willow Waterhole**  
Greenspace Conservancy

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**WILLOW WATERHOLE GREENSPACE CONSERVANCY ANNOUNCES PLANS TO  
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT WILLOW WATERHOLE GREENWAY TRAILS AND AMENITIES**

*\$10 Million Capital Campaign receives \$2 million gift from Kinder Foundation with promise to match an additional \$2 million in donations by others*

HOUSTON – November 1, 2021 – On Saturday, Mayor Sylvester Turner announced the Kinder Foundation’s lead gift of up to \$4 million to the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy to improve the 291-acre Willow Waterhole Greenway in the Westbury area of southwest Houston. The improvements will include trails at four lakes, a neighborhood trail connection, and land acquisition. If matches are obtained, there would also be more parking, a pier, amenities in the native prairie preserve area, and an outdoor classroom. In addition to these improvements, Harris County Precinct One has recently announced plans to begin rebuilding and extending trails around Westbury Lake in 2022.

The Willow Waterhole Greenway consists of six flood control detention basins and large greenspace areas, overseen by the Harris County Flood Control District and Houston Parks & Recreation Department (HPARD). The all-volunteer Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy, Brays Oaks Management District, and community donors have been making improvements to the greenspace since 2005.

The Kinder Foundation’s grant is in support of the Conservancy’s capital campaign seeking \$10 million for trails, targeted expansion of the property, and recreational amenities. Kinder Foundation is donating \$2 million to go towards trail construction and amenities at Willow, Triangle, Scout, and Dog Lakes, as well as a neighborhood connection to Chimney Rock Road. The Foundation will also match up to an additional \$2 million on a dollar-for-dollar basis for these projects.

“Willow Waterhole is truly a diamond in the rough that is poised to transform the quality of life of Houstonians in the southwest area of the city,” said Nancy Kinder, president of Kinder Foundation. “We admire the grit and determination of the conservancy’s leaders and volunteers for what they already have accomplished. It is time for Willow Waterhole Greenway to assume its rightful place as one of Houston’s great green spaces.”

“Willow Waterhole is one of the unique experiences in the City of Houston,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “The plan to improve it, along with the Kinder Foundation’s financial gift to help make it happen, are strong examples of how this city comes together for the greater good. I thank Nancy and Rich Kinder for investing in this project, and like other Houstonians, I am looking forward to enjoying the new amenities once completed.”

HPARD and the Brays Oaks Management District have agreed to collaborate on maintenance of the expanded recreational amenities within the property, which offers Houstonian’s flood relief, wildlife habitats in an urban setting, and educational and recreational opportunities. It’s beautiful rolling hills, sinuous lakes, large stands of trees, and areas of rare prairie grasses have made this unique area one of Houston’s best-kept secrets and most valuable assets.

“The Conservancy is ecstatic to begin improvements to the Greenway. This investment from Kinder Foundation is transformational for us to reach our goal of creating a Signature Park on the Southwest side of the city,” said Bill Burhans, President of the Conservancy. “The Willow Waterhole Complex is a model for the future in Houston by combining flood mitigation, public greenspace, and nature conservation. On behalf of the community who loves this property, we say thank you to Kinder Foundation!”

“Willow Waterhole is a hidden gem in this city that not many Houstonians know about,” said Kenneth Allen, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “This plan to upgrade and make it even more inviting to visitors is truly exciting. Thank you to the Kinder Foundation and all of our partners for making Houston a better place to live.”

The Brays Oaks Management District and City Councilmember Martha Castex-Tatum’s District K Office recently repaved the area’s main entrance drive along Dryad Drive. Work on land acquisition and trail design will begin immediately, and the project’s partners plan to complete the next phase of trail construction and amenities by the end of 2023.

“Parks and trails are essential for every community to improve people’s health, build social connections and expand environmental safeguards. Precinct One is proud to help our partners improve amenities in southwest Houston by rebuilding and extending over 3.5 miles of trails around Westbury Lake in 2022,” said Commissioner Rodney Ellis, Precinct One.

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#### **ABOUT WILLOW WATERHOLE GREENSPACE CONSERVANCY**

The Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy is a nonprofit organization formed in 2001. It is made up of a diverse, broad-based group of citizens from the community and is guided by its board of directors. The Conservancy’s mission is to lead nature conservation, organize events, and facilitate development of amenities at the Willow Waterhole Greenway through partnerships with the community, schools, environmental organizations, the Harris County Flood Control District, Harris County Precinct One, the City Parks and Recreation Department, and Brays Oaks Management District.

#### **ABOUT KINDER FOUNDATION**

Kinder Foundation, a family foundation established in 1997 by Rich and Nancy Kinder of Houston, Texas, provides transformational grants that impact urban green space, education, and quality of life. More at [www.kinderfoundation.org](http://www.kinderfoundation.org).

#### **Houston Parks and Recreation Department**

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages 381 parks and over 39,501 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all ages and abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit [www.houstonparks.org](http://www.houstonparks.org).