Lake Creek Preserve Newsletter Winter 2023/24

A lot has happened since our last newsletter. In addition to reporting on the continuing trail maintenance and improvements made by our volunteers we are elated to note that plans for a regional park including a nature center are moving forward as we will summarize below and as have

been reported in the Conroe Courrier and Houston Chronicle. Unfortunately, we have also learned that a major natural gas pipeline is being planned that will traverse portions of the park and preserve. Some of the impact has been mitigated through efforts by Commissioner Riley, resulting in reducing the pipeline ROW from 300' to 150' and drilling under the 64 ac Lake Creek Preserve.

REGIONAL PARK

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the 391 ac regional park, the Lake Creek Nature Preserve and Christine Allen Park. The red dashed line marks the boundary of the regional park. The proposed county road and gas pipeline right of way (ROW) through the park are shown in dashed white lines. The existing and planned hiking trails will connect all three parks and allow access to a variety of bottomland habitats.

The developed park (figure 2) is planned to ultimately contain three baseball fields, 3 fields for soccer/ football, multiple pickleball courts, basketball courts, recreation center, skate park, splash park, dog parks, amphitheater and a combined nature and community center overlooking a 10-15 ac lake and the natural area.

The nature and community center (in appendix) have been designed to work together as both an educational facility and venue for community and/or business functions. The nature center will contain a library, prep areas and classroom to enhance outdoor learning for the local school systems and colleges. Some office space has been included to house volunteer organizations such as the Lake Creek Greenway Partnership and Texas Master Naturalists

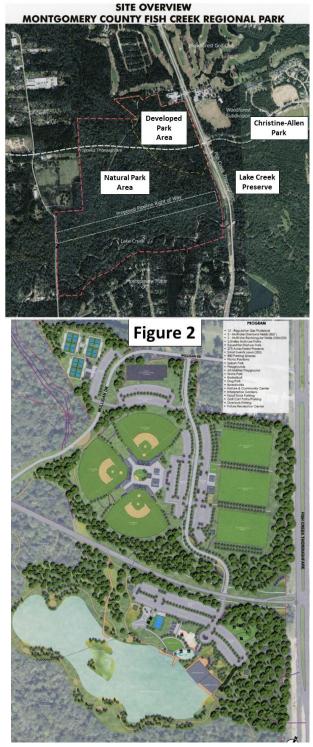


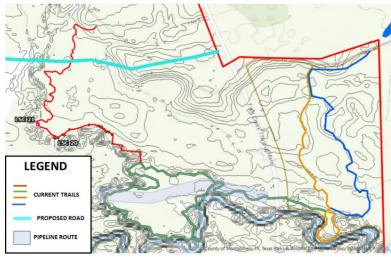
FIGURE 1

who will support the center programs. Initial clearing should start in the first quarter of 2024, while detailed design work is expected to begin in mid- year.

NEW TRAILS AND PROGRAM FEATURES

Thanks to three Eagle projects and work by Montgomery Honors College students, a section of the red trail has now been cleared from the NW corner of the green trail to the edge of the developed section of the proposed regional park (adjacent map). Additionally, steps were added at the ravine near the southern end to make the ravine crossing easier. Except for a possible N-S segment from the NE corner of the green trail, additional trial development will be on hold until we

CURRENT PRESERVE & PARK TRAILS 10-17-2023



have a better location for the proposed lake, developed trails and details on the pipeline route and schedule.

The Heartwood Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists has initiated monthly guided nature hikes through the preserve. Dates and a signup link are posted on the Lake Creek Facebook page and <u>https://txmn.org/heartwood/event/lake-creek-preserve-guided-hikes</u>. In addition, the Texas native plant society has been maintaining our pollinator areas by removing some of the native grasses and ragweed. As an experiment the western garden was just trimmed while grasses and ragweed were aggressively removed from the eastern area and reseeded. The



central area was weeded and fresh plants added in the spring. Finally, an Eagle project by Ellery Horak added bee houses to each of the three gardens.

Some may be wondering about the colored blocks and numbers recently added to the boardwalks . Colored



blocks refer to the trail (orange, blue, green, red) and the numbers refer to the boardwalk number on that trail. These were

added as a safety feature to locate



Nate Picket Eagle Projec

someone or a hazard in an emergency. Additional views of the new sections of the red trail are included in the appendix

TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Thanks to our trail crew volunteers the existing trails continue to be maintained in good shape. The flood in May lifted one of the boardwalks and created a hazard on the western end of the green trail





requiring the crew to cut through a 2-2½' trunk, while a June wind storm created a number of obstacles that needed to be removed. On a negative side, while most visitors respect the preserve and leave no waste, we have recently noticed that one or more persons are bagging their pet waste and dumping it along side of the storage shed. Please

note that this is a Leave No Trace facility. The preserve is maintained by volunteers which retains a natural experience and reduces county maintenance costs. Please help by disposing of pet and other waste at home or at proper waste collection sites. Regarding maintenance, we are always looking for volunteers seeking some exercise and a chance to give back to the community. To volunteer contact trails@lakecreektx.org.

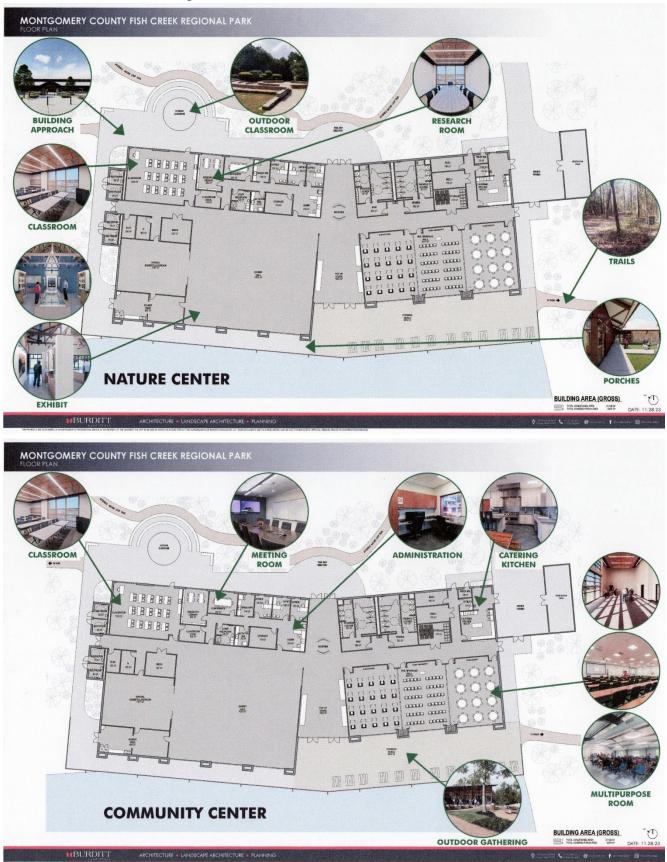
CONTINUING SCOUT SUPPORT

The Scouts continue to provide support through Eagle projects and other forms of service. For the second year in a row the Order of the Arrow held an Ordeal on the preserve. As part of the program they cleaned up the trail and restored boardwalk O3 which needed new supports and leveling in two sections.



APPENDIX

Note: The connecting atrium is available for an information booth, store and benches



NORTHERN PART OF RED TRAIL LOOKING SOUTH



CONTINUING SOUTH ALONG RED TRAIL



CONTINUING SOUTH ALONG RED TRAIL AND MOUND CREEK

