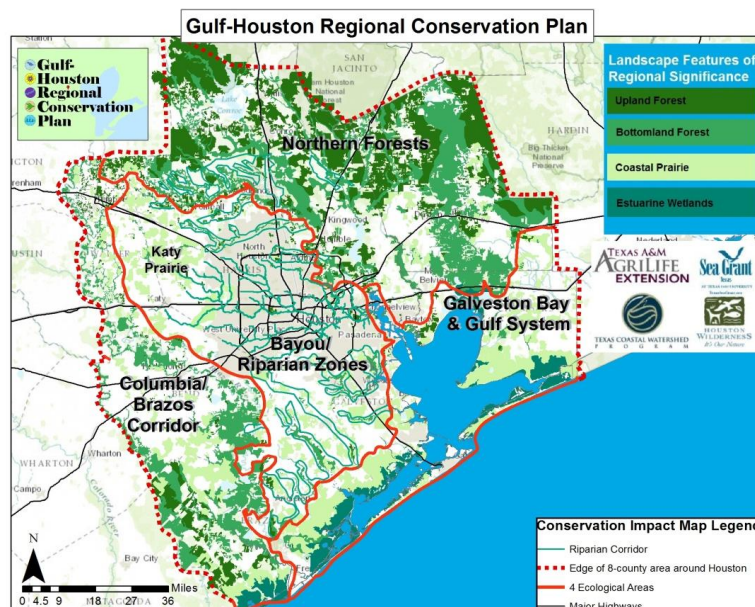




Executive Summary

The Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan (*Gulf-Houston RCP*) is a long-term collaborative of environmental, business and governmental entities working together to create a first-ever ecosystem continuity and connectivity plan for the Gulf-Houston Region.¹ This 8-county RCP is comprised of every known environmental/conservation project in the region and collectively identifies our region's most pressing environmental needs – organized into 4 key initiatives. Projects and initiatives in Phase One include land acquisition, land easements and restoration, and development of nature-based **trails**. Phase Two includes projects that concentrate on restoration, public access, maintenance and education.²

- *Riparian Corridor Protection Initiative* – protect acreage along riparian corridors (forests and prairies), in a holistic approach, for each of four Galveston Bay sub watersheds (Lake Creek, Cypress Creek, Spring Creek, Buffalo Bayou, Clear Creek and the two major rivers – San Jacinto and Trinity) and develop plans to improve habitat for birds migrating between the coast and inland areas.
 - *Bayou Greenways Initiative*
 - *Headwater to Baywater Initiative*
 - *Lower Trinity River Project*
 - *Columbia Brazos Corridor Project*
- *Prairie Conservation Initiative* – restoration and preservation of tens of thousands of acres of upland prairie land throughout the eight counties in the RCP.
- *Galveston Bay Habitat Acquisition & Easements Initiative* - restoring habitat (coastal wetlands, bottomlands and estuaries) from multiple counties leading into the Bay & Gulf Coast.
- *Galveston Bay Oyster Reefs & Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative* - restoration, creation and preservation of Galveston Bay oyster reefs, inland rookery islands and other bird habitat within the lower Galveston Bay watershed.



¹ The Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan includes 8 counties: Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Fort Bend, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller County

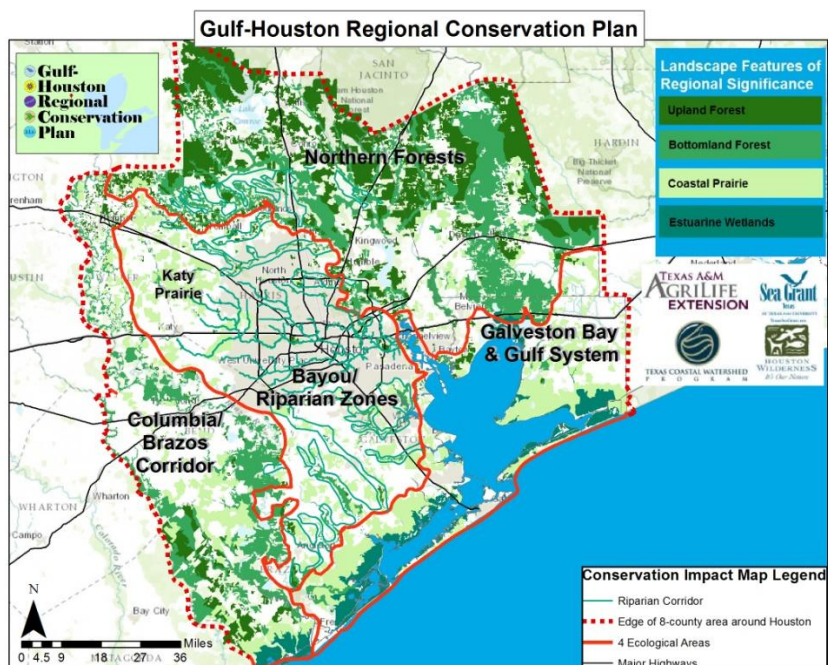
² For more information, see www.gulfhoustonrcp.org or email info@houstonwilderness.org.

Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan Executive Summary – Multiple Benefits

The Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan (*Gulf-Houston RCP*) is a long-term collaborative of environmental, business and governmental entities working together to create a first-ever ecosystem continuity and connectivity plan for the Gulf-Houston Region.³ This 8-county RCP is comprised of every known environmental/conservation project in the region and collectively identifies our region's most pressing environmental needs – organized into 4 key initiatives. The *Gulf-Houston RCP* includes a GIS-based, conservation impact map that highlights four (4) ecologically-significant areas ("Eco-Areas") within the 8-county region (see map below). The *Gulf-Houston RCP* contains two phases. Projects and initiatives in Phase One include **285,000 acres** of land acquisition, **15,000 acres** in land easements and restoration, and development of over **250 recreational trail miles** for the long term health, welfare and quality of life of all its residents, visitors and wildlife. Phase Two includes projects that concentrate on restoration, public access, maintenance and education.⁴

The *Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan* will:

- (1) Increase funding opportunities for *Gulf-Houston Plan* projects, and leverage conservation/recreation dollars from multiple sources;
- (2) Enhance and protect the natural benefits of our region;
- (3) Provide flood mitigation and hurricane-preparedness solutions;
- (4) Serve as a vehicle for other regional environmental collaborations and initiatives;
- (5) Demonstrate multiple green infrastructure benefits to serve the region's growing population;
- (6) Rapidly increase ecotourism;
- (7) Attract businesses and employees seeking natural amenities and high quality of life; and
- (8) Significantly boost economic development.



³ The Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan includes 8 counties: Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Fort Bend, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller County

⁴ For more information, see www.gulfhoustonrcp.org or email info@houstonwilderness.org.

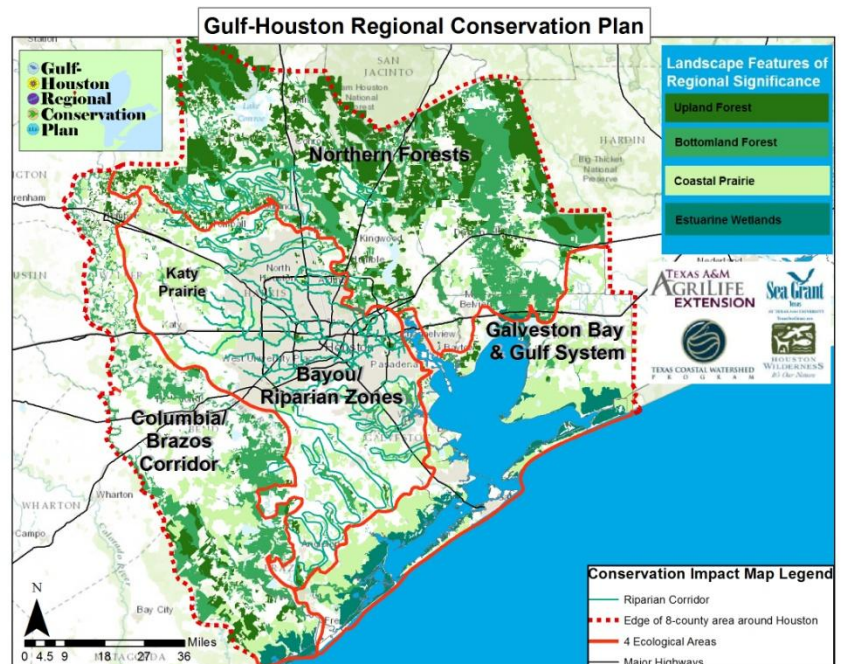
Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan Fact Sheet

Background: The Gulf-Houston Region includes three major rivers and over 15 major waterways leading to Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. From these waters, an amazing complex set of ecosystems comprising freshwater forests, prairies and bottomlands, brackish estuaries and saltwater marshes and forests including 1 million acres, or 1,562 square miles of wetlands in early 1900's. This area represents 7 percent of the nation's coastal wetlands in the lower 48 states.

Over-arching Conservation Goals: The 8-County Gulf-Houston Region still contains numerous acres of pristine and diverse ecologic habitats, but these intact ecological areas are becoming increasingly threatened and fractured due to land and water development, expansion of the region, and built infrastructure to accommodate the growth of the region. The result has been a reduction in forests and wetlands of 40 percent currently. The *Gulf-Houston Regional Planning Group* aims to **(1) preserve and protect these best remaining habitats, (2) improve water quality and quality of life and (3) ensure economic health and vitality for future generations in the greater Houston Region and Galveston Bay watershed.**

These goals are being achieved by RCP members and organizations in the following four ways:

- a. **Creating a *Regional Conservation Plan*** for multiple land and watershed conservation and restoration efforts in the 8-county region. Included in Phase One is **300,000 acres** of land acquisition, land easements and restoration, and **250 trail miles**. Later phases will include additional acquisition, restoration, public access and education (See Eco-Area Map below).
- b. **Preserving and protecting** the ecological values of land/water ecosystems and habitats that provide billions of dollars in environmental and infrastructure benefits by implementing the RCP. (See Benefits on next page)
- c. **Enhancing economic development** and natural recreational opportunities in the watersheds leading to Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico within the 8-county region. In Phase One, investing **\$1 billion dollars** to acquire and restore **300,000 acres** and **250+ trail miles** will result in **\$3 billion** given back to the community in economic development dollars.¹
- d. **Providing flood mitigation and hurricane-preparedness solutions** through inland and coastal conservation projects that serve as natural land and water buffers and storm-surge protection.



Regionally Significant Natural Resources for the Houston-Galveston area:

- Prairies (upland and coastal) – grasslands, wet meadows, hill prairies, native vegetation
- Forests – upland piney wood, bottomland hardwood
- Coastal Shorelines – estuaries, tidal marshes, oyster reefs
- Riparian Corridors – major bayou systems, significant rivers of watershed systems

The Benefits of Implementing the Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved and sustained human health• Purification of air and water• Water filtering, absorption and reduction of stormwater runoff• Improved the functioning of public and private water systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon sequestration• Pollination of crops• Nutrient cycling• Decomposition of wastes• Generation, stabilization and renewal of soils• Reduction of extreme weather events• Mitigation of droughts and floods | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food production• Recreation• Cultural values• Noise buffers• Enhanced and sustained wildlife habitat• Ecotourism – birding, fishing, hunting, etc |
|---|---|--|

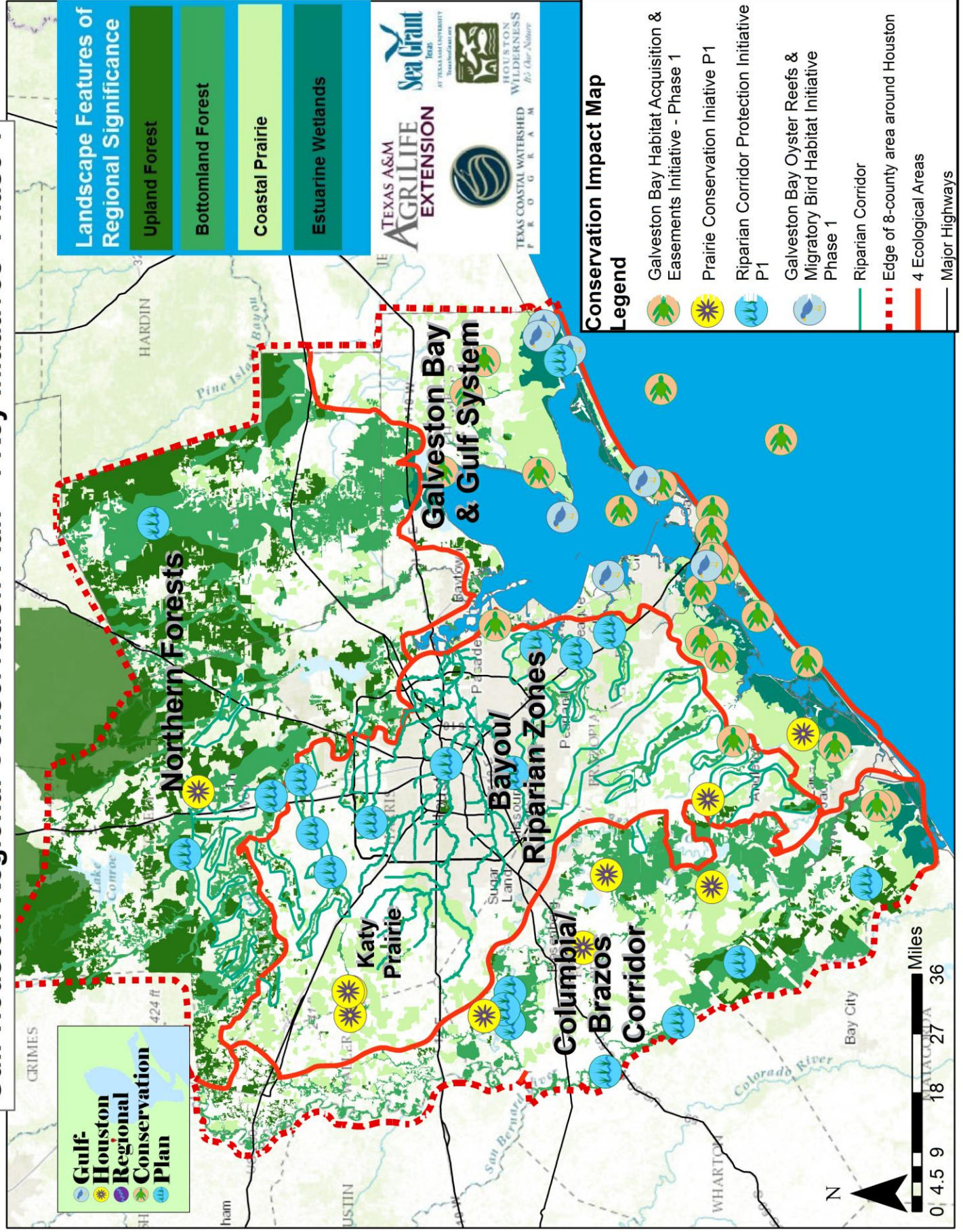


¹ Crompton, John L. "Impact Of Parks & Open Spaces On Property Values." *Impact Of Parks & Open Spaces On Property Values*. California Parks & Recreation Society, Winter 2007

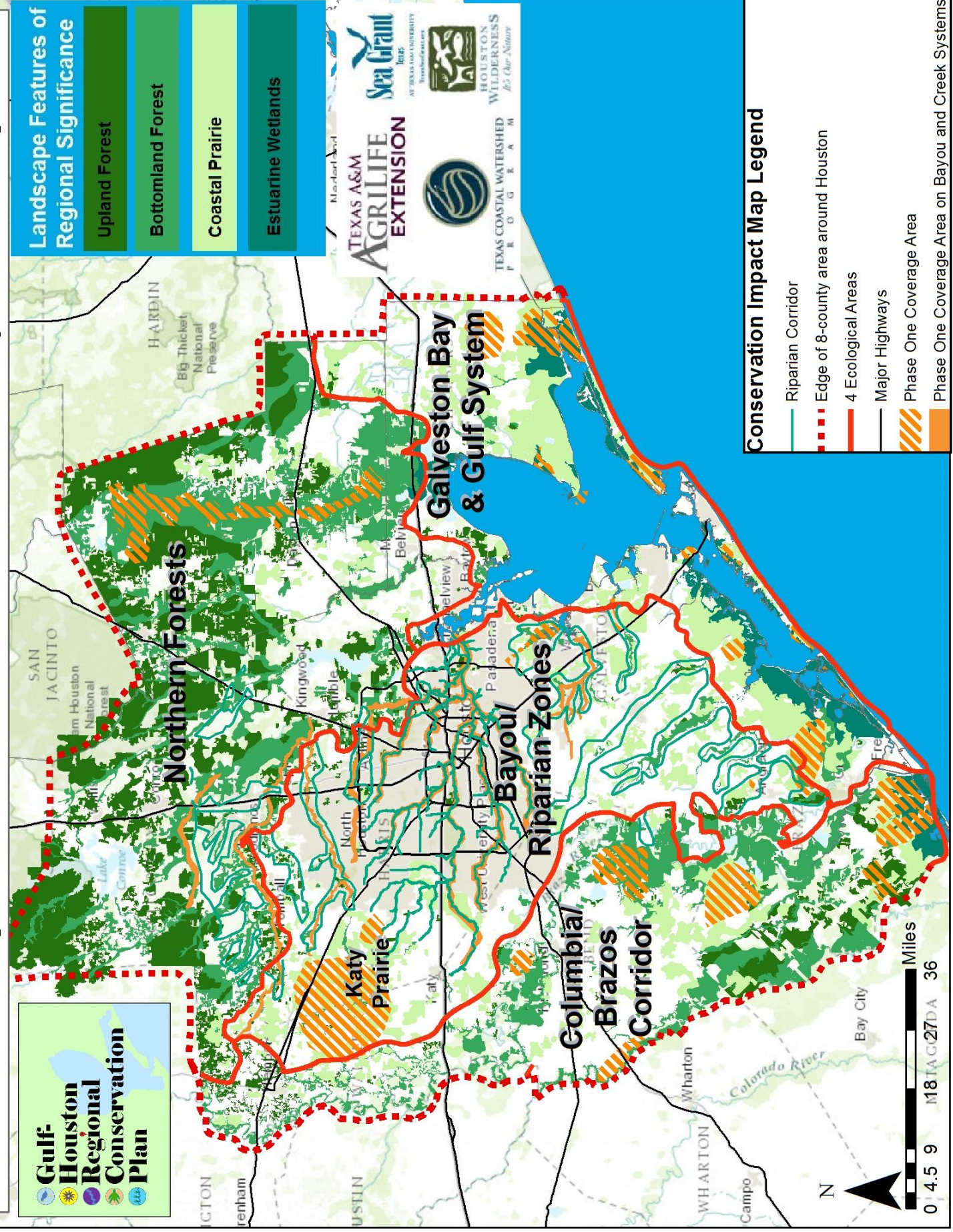
Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan



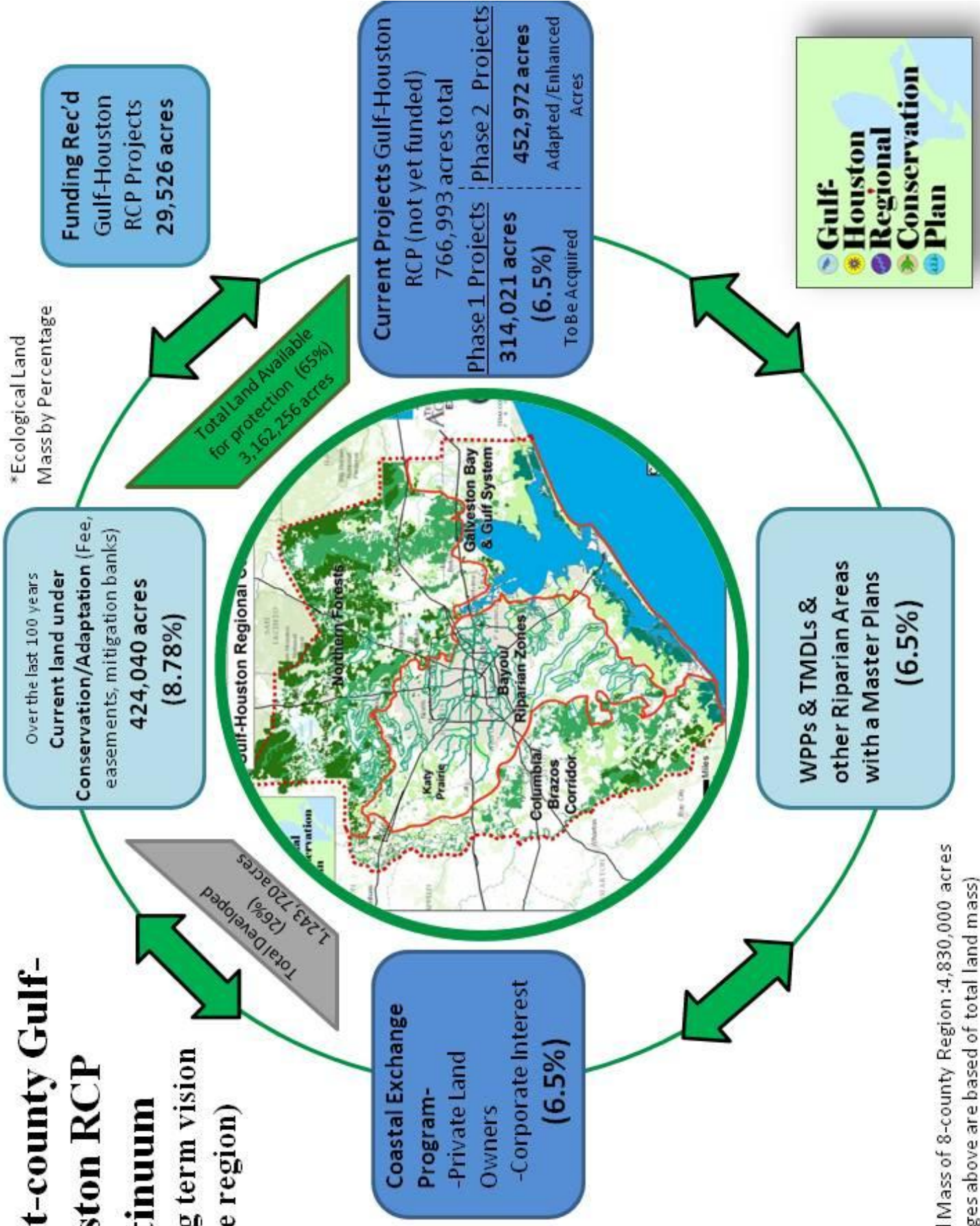
Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan - 4 Key Initiatives -Phase 1



Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan- Phase 1 Projects Coverage Area

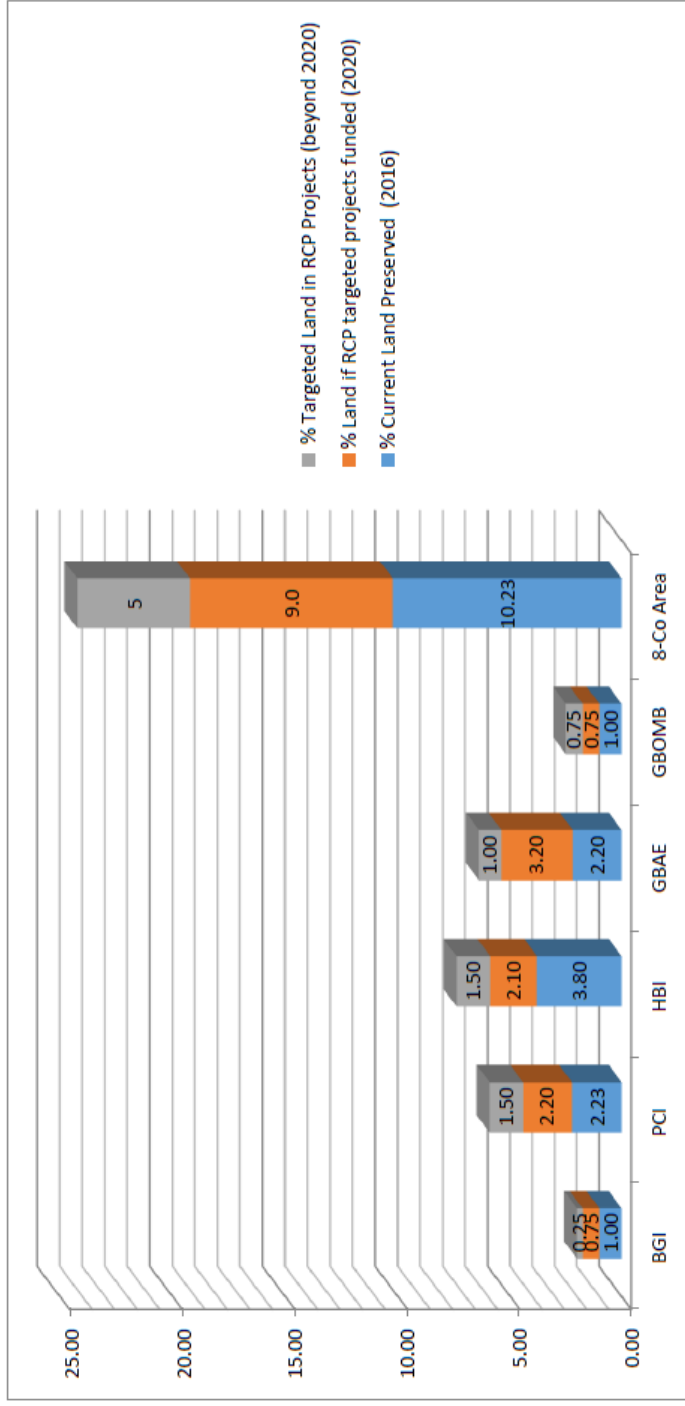


Eight-county Gulf-Houston RCP Continuum (A long term vision for the region)



Total Land Mass of 8-county Region :4,830,000 acres
(Percentages above are based of total land mass)

Preserved Land, Water & Oyster Reefs – 17% by 2020 and 24% beyond 2020



Improved Ecosystem Services for 8+ million people by 2020

- Water & Air Quality
- Stormwater Protection
 - Water Supply
- Carbon Sequestration
 - Erosion Control
 - Recreation
 - Property Values

RCP Budget for Phase 1- Funding Received

Organization	Initiative	Project	Funding Received	Funded by
Katy Prairie Conservancy	PCI	Katy Prairie Acquisition and Restoration Project Phase 1 & 2	\$1,000,000	NAWCA
Houston Parks Board	BGI	Bayou Greenways Initiative 2020	\$83,000,000	RESTORE – Bucket 2 & private entities
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. and Houston Parks Board	BGI	Clear Creek Linear Park Project	\$7,109,000	RESTORE – Bucket 2
Scenic Galveston	GBAE	Virginia Point Shoreline Protection and Estuarine Restoration	\$2,000,000	NFWF (Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund – GEBF)
Artist Boat	GBAE	Coastal Heritage Preserve (Multi-Phase)	\$4,032,500	NFWF (GEBF) & CWPRA, NCWCGP
The Conservation Fund	GBAE	Anahuac NWR Coastal Marsh Acquisition/ Protect Coastal Marshes on Bolivar Partnership/ Cade Ranch	\$5,363,000	NFWF (GEBF) & NAWCA
Scenic Galveston	GBAE	Hitchcock Prairie/ West Galveston Bay Conservation Corridor Habitat Preservation	\$4,075,000	NFWF (GEBF) & West Bay CIAP
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.	GBOMB	Texas Rookery Islands (Dickinson Bay Island II, Rollover Bay Island, Smith Point Island)	\$15,452,828	NRDA (Gulf Spill Early Restoration – GSER)
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.	GBOMB	Mid-Upper Texas Coast Artificial Reef	\$1,919,765	NRDA (GSER)
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.	GBOMB	Freeport Artificial Reef Project	\$2,155,365	NRDA (GSER)
The Nature Conservancy	GBOMB	Galveston Bay Sustainable Oyster Reef Restoration	\$2,500,000	NFWF (GEBF)
Coastal Conservation Association of Texas	GBOMB	Oyster Reef Restoration in East Bay	\$840,000	NFWF (GEBF)

RCP Budget for Phase 1- Funding Received

Organization	Initiative	Project	Funding Received	Funded by
Armand Bayou Nature Center	PCI	Armand Prairie Land Acquisition	\$100,000	Private Funding
The Nature Conservancy	PCI	San Bernard Woods Preserve	\$7,231,441	BHP Billiton
The Conservation Fund	GBAE	Anahuac NWR Coastal Marsh Acquisition	\$5,200,000	NFWF-Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF)
Houston Audubon	GBOMB	Bolivar Peninsula Habitat Acquisition, Restoration and Enhancement	\$75,000	NAWCA
Texas Agricultural Land Trust	BGI	Bulanek Farms – Texas Farms & Ranch Conservation Program	\$878,000	CIAP and TGLO
The Nature Conservancy	BGI	Brazos Woods Preserve	\$768,559	BHP Billiton
Galveston Bay Foundation	GBAE	Chocolate Bayou	\$675,000	CIAP, NFWF-GEBF
Trust for Public Land	GBAE	Follett's Island Land Acquisition and Conservation Program Phase 1	\$1,266,000	NFWF- GEBF
Galveston Bay Foundation	GBAE	Lone Pine Farm	\$1,316,400	CIAP and TGLO
Houston Audubon	GBOMB	Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary Rookery Island Restoration & Enhancement	\$239,800	NFWF-GBEP
TOTAL			\$133,360,858*	

GHRCP Total Cost
for Phase 1



November 2016 = \$950,032,365
March 2017 = \$983,687,365

*7 projects funded and 28 projects added to RCP during Fall 2016 and Spring 2017

Gulf-Houston RCP Partially or Fully Funded Projects

- \$133,360,858 has come to the region for Phase 1
- \$30,887,110 has come to the Region for Phase 2
 - 21,930+ Land Acres purchased or under conservation easement
 - 7,640+ Land Acres enhanced and restored
 - 150+ miles of trail developed

Gulf-Houston Regional Conservation Plan Phase 1 & 2 and Fully Funded Projects

