



# Lake Creek Preserve News

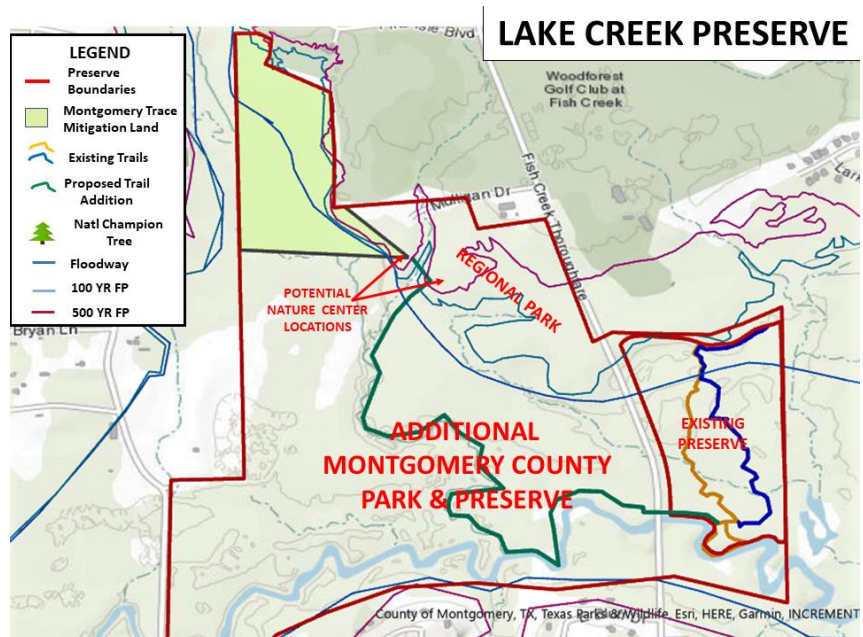
## Fall 2021



Much has happened on the preserve since our last newsletter, not the least of which involves the county acquiring an additional 350+ acres to the preserve on the west side of Fish Creek Thoroughfare (FCT) and moving forward with the construction of additional nature trails and the design of a nature center on that property.

### ADDITIONAL LAND ACQUISITION REGIONAL PARK AND NATURE CENTER

The adjacent map shows the location of the additional lands being acquired by the county. It contains about 50 ac of high ground outside of the floodway that will contain sports fields, picnic areas, a nature center complex and other amenities consistent with a regional park. The remainder of the property will remain undeveloped except for hiking and biking trails. Initial work



is under way to develop a master plan for the property and to begin conceptual design of the nature center. In addition, an initial low impact hike/bike trail has been marked that will connect the current preserve with the nature center. Clearing will be done by adult volunteers and Scouts as general service and Eagle Scout projects following the process used on the current preserve. More developed ADA compliant trails will be incorporated in the master plan and added during the construction phases.

### IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PRESERVE

**Pollinator Areas:** Three areas along the parking area at the central trailhead have been prepped for native plants and flowers. The central area was planted with a variety of flowering natives while the other two on either side were seeded with native wildflower mixes to draw in a variety of pollinators. They should make an attractive display for spring and fall visitors.



**Creek Overlook Observation/Access Points:**

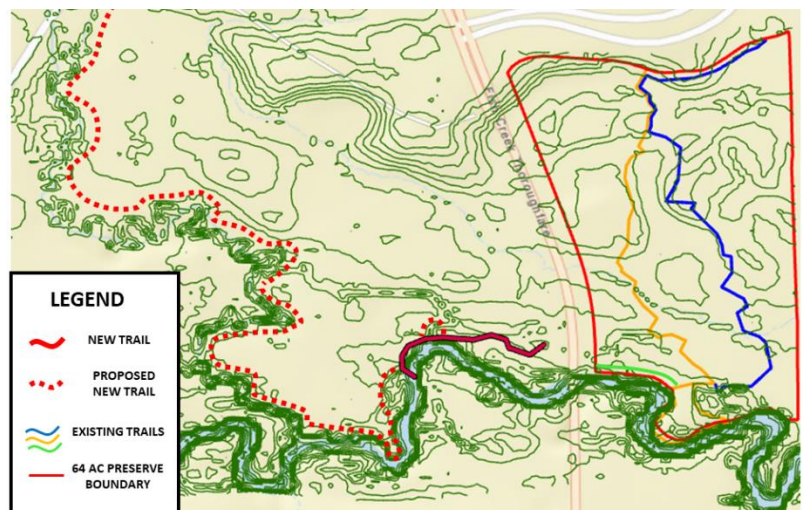
A small raised platform has been installed on the creek loop to give visitors a good vantage point to observe the creek and associated wildlife. An additional observation point and access to the creek have been cleared and marked with signage.

**Improvements to Entrances:** Several visitors have mentioned that the loose pea gravel at the middle trailhead made walking difficult. In response to that concern Scouts are adding geotextiles to the middle trailhead which will give a firmer footing while still allowing water to infiltrate the soil.



**Trail Development and Improvements:** A new green trail is being developed that leaves from the orange creek loop and will connect to the new portion of the preserve on the west side of Fish Creek Thoroughfare. That section has been completed to the SW corner of the current preserve and under the FCT bridges where Scouts have added an ATV barrier and part of a dry pathway under the bridge. Plans are under way to add a boardwalk across the drainage ditch leading to the trailhead on the west side of FCT.

In addition, Covia Corporation volunteers have cut the initial ¼ mile of trail within the additional lands. This section of trail will require cutting a short detour or bridging a deep ravine which will be key to allowing east access to the trail beyond that point. We expect the development of additional new trail to continue over the next few years as volunteers are available.





Finally, those who enter the preserve from Christine-Allen Park will notice that we are adding landscaping timbers and crushed granite to the E-W section of the blue trail that tends to get muddy during wet periods.

## INITIATION OF NEW PROGRAMS

**Guided Nature Hikes:** Starting in early 2022 the Texas Master Naturalists Heartwood Section will be leading guided nature hikes in the Lake Creek Preserve. We will post the tour schedules on our website under coming events as well as the Texas Master Naturalists Newsletter and a variety of neighborhood media. Signup will be through the lakecreektx.org web site.

**Wildlife Tracking:** We will be placing facilities at both trailheads to record wildlife sightings in the preserve. This will supplement our few game cameras. In the interim please report any wildlife sighting with day, time and location at [trails@lakecreektx.org](mailto:trails@lakecreektx.org).

**Special Events:** Watch our website to sign-up for coming program opportunities related to presentations on local plants and wildlife. The first event is planned for May 2022.

## CHANGES TO ACCESS POINTS

Starting in September, 2021 we have been locking the gate at the Fish Creek Thoroughfare entrance at night. This was necessitated due to suspicious nighttime activity and theft of some signs.

We are still working on the schedule for opening and closing the gate so you may encounter it locked during the day on occasion. Should that happen, the park may still be accessed on weekdays from Christine-Allen Nature Park (see map) using the trailhead at the NE corner of the preserve.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We would like to thank all of the Scouts (82 Eagle projects completed on the preserve to date), Covia Corporation and all of the other volunteers who are making the trails possible. Our organization is completely volunteer run. This keeps our overhead very low. Even when we have to hire permanent staff for the nature center, we expect to rely heavily on volunteers for trail maintenance and program to try to involve as much of the community as possible. That said, we hope that you will consider volunteering to help on one of the areas listed below:

**Trails & Grounds Committee-** keep a list of contacts willing to help with trail and grounds maintenance (trails, infrastructure, pollinator areas), keep track of the condition of the trails, schedule trail maintenance days as needed, supervise work days.

**Program Committee-** Identify programs and presenters for the community consistent with our mission, work with related organizations such as Texas Master Naturalists and the Nature Center Director (when hired) to schedule tours and events for the community, work the logistics of events, promote the events, make presentations as your interest and skill permits.

**Financials Committee** – with the board, develop an annual budget, keep the financial books, track grants, write proposals for grants, seek out contributors to support programs and mission, organize fund raisers.

**IT** – maintain web site and keep track of computing equipment and software licenses.

**General Support:** keeping records, organizing and tracking equipment, helping with demonstrations/displays; maintaining game cameras (coordinate with program and trails committees).

**Anyone interested in volunteering in any capacity should contact:** Glenn Buckley at [glenn@lakecreektx.org](mailto:glenn@lakecreektx.org) or Bob Wise at [trails@lakecreektx.org](mailto:trails@lakecreektx.org).

## **DONATIONS**

Finally, we would like to thank The Exxon Corporation, Westwood Magnolia Parkway Improvement District, Hauber Foundation, Damaris Watson, Chopin and Joan Kiang, Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center and an Anonymous donor for their financial support in 2021. It is helping the Scout projects and other improvements in the preserve as well as allowing us to develop the educational programs planned to start in 2022.