



Bayou Land Conservancy

Strategic Conservation Plan

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Executive Summary

Bayou Land Conservancy (BLC) is a local land trust working in the greater Houston area, one of the most populated and fastest growing cities in the United States. BLC's mission is to preserve land along streams for flood control, clean water, and wildlife. BLC works to achieve this mission through the placement of conservation easements (CEs) on land. Since 1995, BLC has placed 61 CEs and owns one property, protecting a total of almost 14,000 acres.

BLC continuously strives for successful land conservation, stewardship, and community engagement, and strategic planning is critical to achieving these goals effectively. A strategic conservation plan (SCP) was developed to better prioritize BLC projects.

This SCP was developed using readily available geographic information systems data and public input. Datasets were ranked and analyzed to produce an output that shows the areas of greatest priority for preservation.

The results showed that there are approximately 100,000 acres of very high priority lands within BLC's focus area. The cost to purchase this land, or CEs on the land, far exceeds BLC's resources. BLC has a goal to preserve fifteen percent of the very high priority areas and strategically work with partners to protect additional lands.

BLC is a small organization that aims to have a large impact in local land conservation, and that requires community support. Community support in the form of donation of volunteer time and skills, and financial investments will determine the success of this SCP.

Introduction

History of Bayou Land Conservancy

Houston is located in the Western Gulf Coastal Plains, an area characterized by low elevations gently leading to the Gulf of Mexico. The Western Gulf Coastal Plains encompasses western Louisiana, southern Arkansas, east Texas, and southeastern Oklahoma. It is typified with meandering rivers and streams dissecting woodlands, forests, rolling plains, and sandy low hills (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 2012.) Houston is known as The Bayou City due to the many slow flowing waterways that drain into nearby Galveston Bay.

Bayou Land Conservancy's (BLC) mission is to preserve land along streams for flood control, clean water, and wildlife. The greater Houston area is particularly prone to flooding due to its geographic position, humid subtropical climate, multiple waterbodies, and ever-expanding population. Land preservation within floodplains allows floodwater storage that won't impact residential or business communities. Preservation along waterways also provides water purification as overland water flows through a natural area to a waterway, filtering out pollutants. Most waterways within the greater Houston area are impaired (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, 2016) and yet most of the area's drinking water is supplied by surface waters, like Lake Houston. The natural ecosystem services provided by land preservation, aid in water quality. Lastly, the greater Houston area is comprised of four ecoregions: Pineywoods, Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes, Post Oak Savannah, and Blackland Prairie (Gould, 1960). Each ecoregion provides habitat for distinct species and natural communities. The meeting of these four ecoregions has resulted in an incredibly diverse species richness in Houston.

BLC began as a land conservation committee of Bayou Preservation Association, a group dedicated to protecting the bayou systems of Houston. BLC was launched in 1996 to preserve the floodplain and green spaces surrounding these streams to better protect the bayous, and the water that flows into them. After formation, BLC began stewarding a conservation easement (CE) that was signed with Bayou Preservation Association in 1995.

For a brief time, the organization was also known as Southeast Texas Conservancy, and later as Legacy Land Trust. In 2010, the organization was renamed to a version of its original name, Bayou Land Conservancy.

From 1996 to 2002, BLC preserved 1,600 acres with seven CEs. These early CEs were with private landowners. In 2002, the Montgomery County Preserve was put under a CE with BLC. This marked the first time in Texas history that a county government and a land trust successfully completed a CE. Montgomery County Precinct 3 and BLC have worked together since that day to preserve the north side of Spring Creek as part of the Spring Creek Greenway.

In 2007, BLC entered into an agreement with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to establish a formal in-lieu-fee program. This program collected funds from projects requiring USACE permits and applied them toward property acquisition, habitat enhancement, habitat restoration, and perpetual preservation of land within the Spring Creek watershed. This was both an effective approach to

satisfy compensatory mitigation requirements and preserve land in a rapidly developing area. The program led to the protection of over 450 acres, with nine CEs.

In 2012, BLC was proudly recognized as a nationally accredited land trust by the Land Trust Alliance, a first in the Houston region. The process of accreditation involved a rigorous review and analysis of previous projects, organizational structure, and ability to steward land in perpetuity. Accreditation is a prestigious acknowledgment that BLC is committed to professional excellence and to maintaining the public's trust in our conservation work. BLC is also a member of the Texas Land Trust Council, a statewide organization that works to enhance and benefit the land conservation community. As a member of these organizations, BLC receives support with advocacy for conservation policies, training, financial support, and a community of knowledgeable experts.

BLC has remained at the forefront of land conservation, and from 2012-2014 proved itself a successful partner in land conservation by leading fundraising for the Lawther Deer Park Prairie. The conservation value of Lawther Deer Park Prairie was discovered in 2011 by naturalists looking for remnant prairies in the Houston area. This 51-acre property is an unspoiled native prairie that was being sold for development, unless money to purchase it could be raised. BLC galvanized the fundraising efforts with an energized campaign on print, digital, radio, and TV stations. Support from area ecologists, conservation groups, local residents, and private companies proved fruitful, and the land was purchased for permanent protection. BLC signed the CE on Valentine's Day 2014, three years after the remnant prairie was discovered.

2014 marked another achievement for BLC with acquisition of approximately 12 acres along Cypress Creek. The Ashton Gardens Preserve was donated to BLC by Mr. Rex Gray, landowner of an adjacent wedding and event venue. It was Mr. Gray's wish that the land remained undisturbed and natural, and that this natural beauty greet guests as they enter the wedding venue. BLC has maintained the land since, and in 2018 began ecological restoration efforts.

Throughout its history, BLC has pursued its vision to have a network of protected greenspaces that connect people and nature. To that end, BLC maintains two environmental education programs. One program, No Child Left Inside, immerses children in the outdoors through water quality studies, nature observation, and aquatic recreation during field trips. The second program, Spring Creek Greenway Ambassador program, is an adult education program held twice a year with five classes. It gives participants a greater understanding of the natural environment around them by teaching plant and animal identification, natural surface trail maintenance, how to protect and preserve lands, and how to get involved with BLC. Both environmental education programs are offered to participants at no charge.

One vision of BLC is to have a protected network of green spaces that connect people and nature. In 2018, BLC finished construction of a 14-mile trail along Spring Creek. The Spring Creek Nature Trail project fulfilled a public need for a connected, natural trail that catered to multiple user groups. BLC worked with several partners and landowners to fund and align the trail along meanders, wetlands, and creeks. To encourage personal connections to the trail, much of the construction was led by volunteers, who donated more than 2,000 hours to the project.

Finally, in 2018 BLC's accreditation was renewed, confirming compliance with national quality standards and providing continued assurance to donors and landowners of our commitment to forever steward their lands. As of the date of this report, BLC has protected almost 14,000 acres through 61 CEs and one property that it owns.

Planning for the Future

As the only local land trust in northern Harris and Montgomery counties, and with mounting community concerns about flooding and development, BLC is poised to have a larger role in green infrastructure. Catastrophic flooding events in recent years have increased the potential for funding land conservation, and BLC seeks to be prepared. In addition, BLC realizes that previous avenues for land conservation are changing, and BLC needs to plan for these changes.

BLC's land protection has been heavily dependent on United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wetlands and waters of the U.S. regulations. Over 75% of the lands that BLC protects are the result of required USACE mitigation for Clean Water Act permits. These mitigation projects require that CEs are donated, hence BLC's ability to preserve so much land with a small budget. Land protection based on these regulations is tenuous with ever-changing rules and regulations.

In 2008, the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources rule was issued by EPA and USACE. In compliance of this rule, large mitigation banks have become the preferred method of mitigation, instead of smaller lands preserved as permittee-responsible mitigation. This change in Clean Water Act regulation has resulted in fewer, but larger, CEs per year.

Since the 1972 reorganized and expanded Clean Water Act, there has been a struggle within all three branches of the federal government to define "waters of the U.S.", which are the limits of federal jurisdiction over aquatic resources. For over forty years, this struggle has resulted in shifting definitions that either increased or decreased the amount of aquatic resources requiring federal permits (and thus requiring mitigation). In 2019, the EPA and USACE issued a final rule that once again changed the definition of "waters of the U.S." (Congressional Research Service. 2019). Based on review by BLC and other wetland professionals, this new definition will likely result in fewer federal Clean Water Act permits. Fewer permits will result in fewer mitigation projects. For the near future, BLC believes that fewer conservation easements will be donated in the Houston region as a result of mitigation for federal permits.

BLC continuously strives for successful land conservation, stewardship, and community engagement, and strategic planning is critical to achieving these goals effectively in the wake of changing environmental regulations. In recent years, BLC has taken many steps to strengthen operations and focus energy with deliberate staff hiring, Board of Directors recruitment, committee development, member outreach, and a focusing of its conservation geographic area.

In 2016, BLC's Lands Committee was reinvigorated to include new community members with a passion and skillset for evaluating land projects from key partnerships and holds regular meetings. The Lands Committee explores land conservation options and opportunities for preservation, communicates with

landowners, visits potential project sites, conducts community outreach, and advises staff on solutions to issues and concerns. After consideration, the committee recommends land projects to the Board of Directors.

When BLC first formed, it was the first land trust in the entire greater Houston area, but over time additional land trusts were organized and accredited. With additional land trusts, BLC was now able to focus its conservation efforts to a smaller geographic area. BLC identified a geographic area to focus conservation efforts with input from staff, Lands Committee members, and Board of Directors. This geographic area was determined based on community needs, BLC knowledge strengths, previous conservation successes, and the BLC office location. The focus area includes the watersheds that feed into Lake Houston; it protects lands and communities upstream of Lake Houston and benefits downstream communities who rely upon Lake Houston for their drinking water. The focus area stretches from Huntsville south to Houston and is over 4,000 square miles (larger than Delaware and Rhode Island combined).

The focus area includes a population of roughly five million people, expected to grow by another three million by 2040 (HGAC, 2014). It includes six counties, including two of the fastest growing counties in the nation: Harris and Montgomery. Cities within the focus area were founded in the 1800s and the land was family owned. If developed, land was primarily used for timber and agricultural production. However, with the fast-paced growth of Houston and surrounding cities, land that was once family owned has been divided and fragmented into much smaller parcels for use as suburban residential homes, commercial, and industrial uses. Harris County has an average land parcel size of 1.13 acre with a standard deviation of 13 acres and Montgomery County has an average land parcel size of 2.5 acre with a standard deviation of 29 acres.

In 2017, BLC adopted a Strategic Plan that summarizes BLC's focus and set three-year goals with input from BLC Board of Directors and staff, led by the strategic planning professionals at Conservation Impact. This plan was completed to help allocate and manage organizational resources to achieve results, and to help build a more solid and sustainable organization. The plan also identified a goal to conserve six new properties in three years.

BLC initiated this strategic conservation plan (SCP) to create a framework toward those land conservation goals. This plan is the next step toward organizational improvement and growth, as it will allow BLC to better prioritize projects and respond to funding opportunities with those projects. The goals of the SCP are to identify and describe important areas for BLC to protect and create a plan of action toward their conservation.

This plan is being completed under direction of the BLC Lands Committee.

A SCP is the next step toward organizational improvement and growth. It will aid in in landowner outreach, member engagement, corporate partnerships, and in working with private foundations.

Data Collection and Prioritization

BLC created a framework to evaluate potential projects using existing organizational strategic plans and processes, geographic information systems (GIS) data, and public input.

Project Selection Criteria and Checklist

Since 2017, BLC has evaluated all potential projects against a Board approved Project Selection Criteria and Checklist (Appendix A). This checklist is part of a defined process for selecting land and easement projects prior to preliminary Lands Committee and Board approval. It documents whether a proposed project aligns with BLC's mission and values, possesses conservation values worthy of protection, has a public benefit, and can be successfully stewarded in perpetuity. The BLC staff and Lands Committee use the Project Selection Criteria and Checklist to evaluate whether a project addresses BLC's strategic plan and if it is within a priority area.

The checklist generates two quantitative scores for Mission Fulfillment and Conservation Values, which are plotted on a decision graphic. The placement determines if the project should be:

1. Potentially rejected (low mission fulfillment with low conservation values)
2. Pursued if conservation values will improve (high mission fulfillment with low conservation values)
3. Pursued with a partner or another land trust (low mission fulfillment with high conservation values)
4. Pursued without contingency (high mission fulfillment with high conservation values)

The checklist is intended to be completed in a timely manner, within an hour or two, for single projects. The checklist is not intended to evaluate multiple projects or large-scale areas of interest.

Although this checklist includes quantitative outputs, it incorporates the evaluator's expertise and enables him or her to emphasize significance and priority of the project prior to making a recommendation. It is utilized to make recommendations for projects to the Board of Directors, who has final decision making on all projects.

Data Analysis

BLC's conservation efforts are informed by our mission values of flood control, clean water, and conserving wildlife habitat. To better understand how BLC can conserve lands which achieve these goals, BLC collected GIS data related to each of the three mission values (flood control, clean water, and wildlife habitat). GIS data was collected from multiple public agencies, national non-profits, and internal data sources within the BLC focus area.

BLC was fortunate to work with Texas A&M University's Geography Society during the 2018-2019 school year. The Geography Society was led by upper-classmen who managed volunteer undergraduate students in data collection, optimization, and analysis. After data collection, BLC staff and Lands Committee

Members evaluated each GIS dataset and assigned weights to the variables based on BLC’s mission and values. Higher weights were given to data that best aligned with the mission and values.

An ArcGIS suitability analysis processed the data. This tool allows for users to set criteria that the ArcGIS software then compares and ranks the most preferred sites. Five separate suitability analyses were run: general site conditions, flood control, clean water, wildlife habitat, and overall. Each analysis determined the highest priorities for BLC conservation related to our unique mission values.

The suitability analysis was run with weighted site selections using raster data. Raster data is mapped data organized into rows and columns where each cell represents information. Although BLC is most interested in lands within the defined focus area of the Lake Houston watershed, the raster data could not be fit to within the irregular shape of the focus area. To run the suitability analysis, it had to be run within a square polygon, therefore the analysis extended outside of the BLC focus area. The weights of each data layers were determined by BLC and then overlapped to produce a rank. This ranking resulted in showing the highest and lowest priority lands for BLC.

General Site Conditions

BLC works to preserve land around the fourth largest city in the United States, which includes two of the fastest growing counties (Harris and Montgomery). Although the Houston region is highly urbanized, there are areas of low-density development, agricultural development, and undeveloped areas appropriate for conservation. The first step in evaluating which lands are ideal for conservation is to understand general conditions of land size, adjacency to protected lands, and adjacency to outdoor passive recreation areas like parks, trails, and greenways.

General site conditions were evaluated for the SCP and assigned weights for the GIS suitability analysis. The values were based upon BLC’s prioritization of the data. The below table lists each GIS dataset and its prioritization used in the suitability analysis:

Table 1. General site conditions evaluated during GIS suitability analysis.

Dataset	Dataset Description	BLC Prioritization
Coastal Change Analysis Program (C-CAP)	These data provide information on coastal land cover and land cover change information developed by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)	Undeveloped land was given highest priority for preservation by BLC. Developed land (with impervious cover) is given lowest priority.
National Hydrography Dataset: Rivers Streams	Digital geospatial dataset that maps streams and rivers of the U.S. Created by United States Geological Survey	Land adjacent to rivers or streams is given highest priority for preservation by BLC. Adjacency was defined as within 0.1 mile.
Preserves/Parks		

BLC Preserve	Preserves that BLC currently protects	Preservation of contiguous tracts increases habitat connectivity, giving wildlife a larger home range. Land sharing a boundary with BLC preserves is given highest priority. Land adjacent is given a high priority. Adjacency was defined as within a mile.
National Conservation Easement Database	Database with known CE information. Compiled by Ducks Unlimited and Trust for Public Land from land trusts and public agencies throughout the U.S.	Land adjacent to other CEs is given higher priority for preservation by BLC. Adjacency was defined as within 0.1 mile.
PADUS	Inventory of known protected open space in the U.S.	Land adjacent to protected open space is given higher priority for preservation by BLC. Adjacency was defined as within 0.1 mile
Parks	Data collected by Houston Advanced Research Center for parks in the greater Houston area.	Land adjacent to parks is given higher priority for preservation by BLC. Adjacency was defined as within 0.1 mile.
Trails		
Lake Creek Paddle Trail	Proposed by Lake Creek Greenway Partnership in 2015. GIS adapted by BLC from a public map.	Land adjacent to the greenway is given higher priority for preservation by BLC. Adjacency was defined as within 0.1 mile.
County Tax Parcels		
Montgomery County	Tax parcel data provided by the county	Land greater than 50 acres is considered for preservation by BLC. BLC’s focus area is a quickly urbanizing, and large tracts are being subdivided. This fragmentation has produced smaller parcels of available land. Lands over 50 acres are considered for preservation.
Harris County	Tax parcel data provided by the county	
Walker County	Tax parcel data provided by the county	
San Jacinto County	Tax parcel data provided by the county	
Waller County	Tax parcel data provided by the county	

Flood Control

BLC works to conserve land that reduces the impacts of flooding, both within and downstream of our focus area. One of the simplest ways to keep homes and businesses safe from floodwaters is to preserve floodplains in their undeveloped, natural state. Floodplains are land next to rivers, creeks, and bayous that flood most frequently. The Houston region’s floodplains contain riparian corridors that are often naturally forested wetlands, which filter pollutants from overland water flow and serve as storm buffers for our communities. When floodplains are left natural, and not developed, they can lessen flooding by

absorbing stormwater before it can reach houses and businesses. Undeveloped preserved floodplains maintain their flood control capabilities, and land restored to greenspace improves flood control.

Research focused on watersheds in Texas, including the Houston-Galveston region, found that healthy, large, intact, and well-connected areas of green infrastructure represent an optimal configuration to maximize hazard mitigation benefits (Kim and Park 2016, Kim, Kim et al. 2017, Lee 2018). Lee 2018 suggested that a one percent increase of green infrastructure in the 100-year floodplain can potentially reduce annual peak flow by nearly eight percent. Preserving natural floodplains is an investment in greenspace insurance that improves health, safety, and quality of life.

To achieve the mission of preserving land for flood control, BLC relies upon data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). These maps show floodplains and are meant to help determine the risk of flooding for a property. The maps are not exhaustive, and flooding from other sources not shown on the FIRMs is possible. However, FEMA FIRMs are the only reliable mapped source of floodplain data.

The FEMA FIRM floodplain is typically delineated by event frequency. For example, the 1% (100-year) floodplain represents an area of inundation having a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded (flooded) in any given year, whereas the 0.02% (500-year) floodplain has a 0.02% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The floodway is where the water is likely to be the deepest and fastest. It is calculated by determining the area that must be reserved to carry and discharge the 100-year flood without overflow.

It is important to note that current floodplain mapping data is from 2014 for the greater Houston area. However, from 2015 to 2017, three natural disasters were declared in Harris County by the federal government as a result of severe flooding. These flooding events established that currently mapped FIRMs for the area are inadequate, as much of the flooding occurred outside of mapped floodplains. As such, the floodplain maps are being updated by Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) and FEMA. These updates will use data collected from hydrologic and hydraulic models, floodplain mapping updated with Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) technology, and updated rainfall frequency data released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Atlas 14) in 2018. The updated FIRMs are not expected until 2023.

BLC used the FEMA FIRM data to determine areas of high, medium, and low conservation interest. Land within a mapped floodplain (floodway, 100-year, and 500-year floodplain) scored very high. Land adjacent to a mapped floodplain, within a quarter mile, scored as high. Land outside and not adjacent to the floodplains rated medium.

Clean Water

BLC works to conserve land that improves water quality, both within and downstream of our focus area. Water quality is important for the health of aquatic species, recreational users of a waterway, and drinking water. Most residents within the greater Houston-area obtain their drinking water from the surface waters of Lake Houston, Lake Conroe, or Lake Livingston. Clean water within tributaries is critical to water quality and provides a cost savings to the taxpayer by reducing water treatment costs.

Healthy riparian corridors promote water quality in multiple ways. When the banks of a waterway are vegetated, the roots hold soils in place and reduce erosion along the waterway. Plants that grow along stream banks also provide shade, which moderates water temperature and dissolved oxygen extremes. Pollutants are filtered out of stormwaters that have traveled through riparian habitats via submerged root systems prior to reaching a waterway.

To determine the location of lands where preservation could have a beneficial impact on water quality, BLC collected and evaluated the following datasets:

Table 2. Water quality datasets evaluated during GIS suitability analysis.

Dataset	Dataset Description	BLC Prioritization	
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)			
TCEQ Impaired Streams	Streams noted on TCEQ's 303(d) list. The 303(d) list identifies those impaired waters for which the state plans to develop total maximum daily loads.	Land adjacent to impaired streams is a higher priority for BLC, as protection of adjacent lands could prevent further degradation. Adjacency was defined as within 0.1 mile.	
Superfund Sites in Texas	Displays all registered Superfund sites. The Superfund program is a federal program designed to fund the cleanup of toxic waste.	Land adjacent to superfund sites, leaking storage tank site, VCP sites, Municipal Solid Waste, or Wastewater outfalls is a lower priority for BLC, as the land presents an increased risk to BLC. These federal and TCEQ environmental programs document lands with known contamination or areas with higher potential for contamination (municipal solid waste and wastewater outfalls). Preservation projects adjacent to them would need careful risk evaluation beyond the scope of this mapping tool. Adjacency was defined as within 0.25 mile.	
Leaking Petroleum Storage	Displays leaking petroleum storage tanks registered with TCEQ		
TCEQ Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP)	Displays all registered VCP sites. The VCP is a brownfields program designed to address sites that are burdened by real or reasonably perceived environmental issues that may hamper real estate transactions or redevelopment.		
Municipal Solid Waste	Displays known solid waste sites and landfills in Texas		
TCEQ Permitted Wastewater Outfalls	Displays permitted waste water outfalls in Texas		
Bayou Land Conservancy			
Sand & Gravel Mines_2017	BLC created data displaying sand and gravel mines visible on aerial photographs. Updated in 2018 by reviewing 2017 aerial photographs.		Land within or directly adjacent to mine operations is a lower priority for BLC, as the land presents an increased

		risk to BLC. Adjacency was defined as within 0.25 mile.
Trust for Public Land		
West Fork San Jacinto Greenprint	Trust for Public Land (TPL) evaluated land for water quality & water-based recreation opportunities (2016).	Land that was a high priority in the Greenprint is a high priority for BLC. The Greenprint evaluation aligns with BLC’s mission.
United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)		
Texas Wetlands	Wetlands mapped by USFWS within the state of Texas	BLC prioritizes land containing wetlands as wetlands are known to filter pollutants and aid in maintaining and improving water quality.

Wildlife Habitat

Ecoregions are ecosystems of similar type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources. BLC’s focus area includes four unique ecoregions: Pineywoods, Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes, Blackland Prairies, and Post Oak Savannah (1960, Gould).

Most of BLC’s focus area is within the Pineywoods Ecoregion, which extends from Texas to Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. The Pineywoods region can be described as pine and pine-hardwood forests with scattered areas of cropland, planted pastures, and native pastures. Rolling terrain covered with pines and oaks, and rich bottomlands with tall hardwoods, characterize the forests of the east Texas Pineywoods.

The Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes region is a nearly level, slowly drained plain less than 150 feet in elevation. This ecoregion includes many streams, rivers, and bayous flowing into the Gulf of Mexico. The region includes barrier islands along the coast, salt grass marshes surrounding bays and estuaries, remnant tallgrass prairies, oak parklands and oak mottes scattered along the coast, and tall woodlands in the river bottomlands. The Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes are found in the southern portions of BLC’s focus area, particularly in the headwaters of Cypress Creek.

Blackland prairies are mapped within the northeastern portion of BLC’s focus area. This ecoregion is dominated by deep, black soils commonly referred to as “black gumbo”. These dark, alkaline soils support tallgrass prairies, but many have been converted to croplands or ranchlands due to their fertile nature and ability to support food and forage crops.

Within BLC’s focus area, the Post Oak Savannah ecoregion is documented in transitional habitats between the three other ecoregions, in the central western portion of the focus area. This is an intergrade ecoregion between northwestern plains and eastern forests where the distributions of many plants and animals overlap. Post Oak Savannah is comprised of areas of oak woodland interspersed with grasslands.

Soils range from sandy loams to clays, with color variations dependent on the amount of water that unique areas receive (uplands soils are lighter than bottomland soils).

These four ecoregions determine the wildlife species that are native to BLC’s focus area. Ecotones, or areas where two or more ecoregions intersect, are rich with wildlife and plant diversity. With four ecoregions coming together, wildlife diversity increases and varies from grassland-dependent species, to forest dwellers, freshwater to marine species, and migratory birds that utilize the abundant resources of “stopover” sites to replenish energy reserves during their travels.

To evaluate the highest priority conservation areas for wildlife, BLC collected data from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

Table 3. Wildlife habitat datasets evaluated during GIS suitability analysis.

Dataset	Dataset Description	BLC Prioritization
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)		
Texas Ecosystem Analytical Mapper (TEAM)	TEAM is the tool that shows TPWD's Ecological Mapping Systems. The data was produced in cooperation with private, state, and federal partners to classify and map land cover and abiotic variables.	BLC determined the habitats that it prioritizes; natural native areas. Primarily floodplains and aquatic habitats (wetlands/streams/wetlands).
Texas Natural Diversity Database (NDD)	Displays occurrence information for species, native plant communities, or an animal aggregation.	Land within or adjacent to Texas NDD has a higher priority to BLC. Adjacency was defined as within 0.1 mile
Texas Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)	Sites established to perform research on wildlife populations and habitat, conduct education on sound resource management, and to provide public access and recreational opportunities - all of which are compatible with the conservation of this valuable resource.	Land adjacent to WMAs has a higher priority to BLC. Adjacency was defined as within 0.1 mile

Bayou Land Conservancy Priority Ranking

After the individual suitability analysis, all datasets were analyzed for an Overall BLC Priority Ranking. The priority ranking delineates those properties that best meet BLC’s mission.

Community Input

BLC engaged our members and the local community to better understand what lands they value for preservation. To learn what the community valued, BLC created a ten-question survey that was available online from November 16, 2018 to December 18, 2018 (Appendix B). The survey was sent to all BLC members via email, posted to our website and social media outlets, and announced in our monthly newsletter and at meetings.

On December 4, 2018, BLC hosted a public meeting at the Houston Advanced Research Center’s office in the evening. Crouch Environmental Services, Inc (now Hollaway Environmental and Communications Services) presented briefly on BLC, including discussion of the focus area and mission values, followed by an hour of small group workshops to discuss ideas, thoughts, and comments about lands that BLC should protect. There were over 40 attendees at the meeting. Maps displaying the vicinity, floodplains, water quality data, and wildlife data were available for review and marking with comments. A paper copy of the survey was also available for guests to fill out.

Seventy-one surveys were completed either online or at the public meeting. The survey showed that most respondents were familiar with BLC, think land conservation is important, and believe that it is important that BLC preserved lands are open to the public. The results also showed that respondents enjoy preserved lands in different ways with no clear preference on the method of enjoyment.

The survey included one question allowing respondents to write in ideas and suggestions for lands that BLC should protect. At the public meeting, attendees had the additional opportunity to write comments about preservation on area maps. There were 61 written responses that were separated into the following categories:

Table 4. Category of community input comments.

Category	Number of Responses
Specific Location Projects	25
Community Conservation	11
Specific Habitat Projects	11
General Land Protection	5
Maintenance	4
Connecting lands	3
No category	2

The complete survey results are in Appendix C.

Prioritization Results

BLC evaluated 25 datasets over the 4,000-square mile focus area. These datasets were separated into four distinct categories matching BLC’s mission values of flood control, water quality, and wildlife habitat conservation, in addition to general conservation goals of the organization. These four categories were analyzed independently of each other to determine and rank priority areas for each.

After the individual suitability analysis, all datasets were analyzed together for an Overall BLC Priority Ranking. The Overall BLC Priority Ranking analysis does not add the individual dataset results to each other, instead it is a separate analysis of all 25 datasets with their respective weight classes. It was used to determine the areas of greatest critical conservation need with all variables being considered.

Table 5. Acreage of land within the focus area categorized by priority level.

Value	Number of Datasets	Very High Priority Acreage	High Priority Acreage	Medium Priority Acreage	Total Priority Acreage
General Site Conditions	12	700,000.00	800,000.00	1,400,000.00	2.9 million
Flood Control	1	400,000.00	600,000.00	1,400,000.00	2.4 million
Water Quality	9	300,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,500,000.00	2.8 million
Wildlife	3	500,000.00	1,200,000.00	900,000.00	2.6 million
OVERALL PRIORITY RANKING	25	100,000.00	700,000.00	700,000.00	1.5 million

Appendix D show the resulting maps from each analysis.

Strategic Plan Implementation

Highest Priority Cost Estimates

The GIS suitability analyses showed lands where preservation would have positive impacts on flood control, water quality, and wildlife habitat. The Overall Priority Ranking analyzed all variables and provided an output of the highest priority areas, considering general site conditions and all mission values. Within BLC's focus area, 59% of the land was identified as priority areas for preservation (1.5 million acres), with 4% (100,000 acres) identified as very high priority.

Land prices vary wildly within the focus area, but in order to estimate costs, BLC uses a land purchase price estimate of \$50,000 per acre. This price is used to estimate land purchase, in fee. Conservation easement costs are estimated to be \$40,000 per acre (80% of the fee cost). The cost to preserve all very high priority lands (100,000 acres) through either CE or land purchase ranges from \$4 to 5 billion.

Organization Capacity

The organizational capacity to carry out a SCP is determined by financial resources (member support, grants, and endowments), human resources (staff and dedicated volunteers), and the tools (equipment and technology) used to preserve land. BLC has five full time staff, about 300 members, and an annual operating budget of under \$1 million. A 2017 organizational strategic plan noted an enormous opportunity to grow member support and helped to identify member growth goals for the next three years. It did not identify additional human resources or non-member funding mechanisms.

Over BLC's history, BLC has preserved 62 projects with either a CE or fee ownership, for a total of almost 14,000 acres in 22 years. Land protection has ranged from one to ten projects per year, with an average of three to four projects. BLC's project sizes range from 3-acre amendments to over 1,900-acre projects, with an average of over 600 acres per year.

The amount of land identified as highest priority for preservation is far more than the organizational capacity of BLC, based on historic success. BLC's current human resources, financial resources, and even equipment amounts are inadequate for the protection of such large amounts of land.

Partnerships

BLC likely will be unable to preserve all land identified as highest priority within the focus area, based on current and predicted organizational capacity. However, the SCP can be implemented through strategic partnerships that promote land preservation and best management land practices. Partners will include, but aren't limited to:

- Local municipalities including county, city, and municipal utilities districts;
- River authorities, such as the San Jacinto River Authority;
- Policy makers (local, state, and national) to fund conservation, incentivize conservation, and prevent development within floodplains;
- Watershed organizations, such as Cypress Creek Flood Control Coalition and Lake Creek Greenway Partnership;
- Other area conservation groups, such as Houston Audubon;
- Area planning and research groups, such as Houston Wilderness, Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), and Houston Advanced Research Center;
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through land conservation programs such as Agricultural CE Program; Healthy Forests Reserve Program, or the Floodplain Easement Program;
- Statewide land trusts, such as Texas Agricultural Land Trust and Texas Land Conservancy;
- International land trusts, such as The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land;
- Private foundations that fund conservation work; and
- Landowners that incorporate sustainable land stewardship practices.

BLC is currently a member of several community partnerships. BLC is a partner in the Headwaters to Baywaters initiative with local conservation groups including Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Galveston Bay Foundation, Houston Audubon Society, and Katy Prairie Conservancy. The mission of the initiative is to preserve and restore riparian corridors across the San Jacinto River watershed and Galveston Bay. The group meets regularly and in 2018 received funding to create a tool that communicates the importance of preserved riparian corridors in the region. A website with storymap is being developed at this time. BLC believes this partnership will attract additional funding to the area for land acquisition.

BLC is a partner in the Conservation Flood Mitigation Group, which formed after 2017's Hurricane Harvey. The group is composed of local environmental and park organizations. It works to promote green

infrastructure, including land conservation, as a tool for flood damage reduction. The group has advocated with local municipalities and at the 2019 Texas state legislative session.

BLC actively engages in watershed-based partnerships. We were partners in the HGAC-moderated San Jacinto Watershed Protection Plan and in 2019, BLC will begin participation in H-GAC's Cypress Creek Watershed Protection Plan. BLC attended the partnership kickoff meeting in July 2019. These watershed protection plan partnerships allow BLC to meet community members from different backgrounds and professional expertise interested in protecting and improving their local watershed from stream impairments.

In 2019, BLC attended an introductory meeting with the Conservation Assistance Program which supports the Galveston Bay Estuary Program. This program provides financial assistance to coordinate with conservation partners and builds funding strategies with those partners. BLC believes this partnership will be beneficial to protecting land in the southern portion of BLC's focus area.

Land Protection Goals

Through organization and partner actions, BLC has a goal to protect the highest priority lands in the focus area from structural development that would diminish conservation values. Based on changes to Clean Water Act permitting and mitigation, BLC anticipates that the next 20 years of land conservation will not mirror the previous 20 years. BLC's future land protection may be in the form of conservation easements held by BLC or partners, land ownership, non-CEs that align with conservation values (such as NRCS floodplain easements), deed restrictions, municipal parks, and policies or regulations that prevent development in the floodplain. BLC's land protection goals are expected to be achieved with private landowners and through collaborative partnerships, which have already formed to maximize the success of regional land conservation.

Looking forward, BLC has an ambitious goal to protect 15% of the highest priority lands in the focus area. This would result in protection of 15,000 floodplain acres in 20 years.

To reach the goal of protecting 15% of the highest priority lands, BLC is committing to following objectives:

- Conserve 15,000 acres in the next twenty years within the focus area.
- Schedule annual meetings with partners to encourage their conservation of lands and provide assistance where needed.
- In 2020, BLC will develop a communication plan for landowner outreach and CE workshops. CE workshops should educate landowners on conservation, resource protection, and CEs.
- In 2020, develop a financial plan to fund conservation projects. This may include private fundraising, endowments, or grants.
- In 2020, Lands Committee will explore the concept of a landowner conservation program for those unable to donate a CE. This program would promote and encourage best land management practices and acknowledge a landowner's commitment to land stewardship.

Tools

As discussed in the Data Collection section, the recently established Project Selection Criteria and Checklist has strengthened BLC's ability to evaluate and select projects with appropriate regard for organizational capacity. BLC will continue to evaluate each potential project with this checklist, with project approvals through the Lands Committee and Board of Directors.

Scheduled Plan Updates

BLC protects land in perpetuity. Over time, organizational resources and community needs may change. This SCP is intended to be reevaluated every five years and revised as needed.

Community Support

BLC's land preservation positively impacts over five million people living both upstream and downstream of Lake Houston. BLC is fortunate to preserve land in richly diverse ecosystems within equally diverse communities. In order to implement the SCP successfully, BLC needs continued support from our members, partners, local and federal agencies, and community groups. BLC is a small organization that aims to have a large impact in local land conservation, and that requires the donation of volunteer time and skills, and a financial investment in land protection projects. Volunteers support BLC's operations by joining the Board of Directors or one of several specialized committees. Land conservation and stewardship work at BLC is greatly accelerated by the time volunteers give to recording species data as part of the Baseline Survey Crew and documenting land conditions on the Conservation Crew. In the last year, BLC has added another volunteer opportunity with the Spring Creek Nature Trails Stewards, a program that allows participants to adopt a trail section for monitoring. Lastly, volunteer support at events and workdays provides a tremendous boost to staff resources.

Land preservation in a rapidly urbanizing area is incredibly difficult without financial support from the community. BLC hosts two annual signature fundraising events, the Wild and Scenic Film Festival and the Land Lover Gala. Each provides a unique opportunity for nature lovers to contribute to the success of BLC's programs. BLC also has three ways to directly donate; by becoming a member with a one-time donation, joining our Land Lover Club with monthly donations, or by joining our Stewardship Society with a substantial donation. Financial investment in BLC is an investment in the unique local habitats that make up our community.

Community support will determine the success of this SCP. BLC is relying on our members to recognize the importance of the work and contribute.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Project Selection Criteria and Checklist

Appendix B: Community Input Survey

Appendix C: Community Input Survey Results

Appendix D: BLC Prioritization Maps

Appendix A
Project Selection Criteria and Checklist

BAYOU LAND CONSERVANCY
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA AND CHECKLIST
FOR LAND ACQUISITION AND CONSERVATION EASEMENTS
Adopted by Full Board on March 25, 2017
Amended on January 16, 2018

Mission

Bayou Land Conservancy preserves land along streams for flood control, clean water, and wildlife.

Background Information

Project Name _____

Name of landowner _____

Type of project (donation or purchase, easement or fee) _____

Size of property _____

Location of property _____ (City/County)
_____ (Watershed, Nearby Streets)

Length of riparian frontage distance (if any) _____

Historic and current land-use of property _____

Land-use of adjacent properties _____

Current/Historic Land-use issues (encumbrances) _____

Date of site inspection and name of inspector _____

Brief description of the project

Mission and Goals Compliance (20pts maximum)

Does the project address Bayou Land Conservancy’s (BLC) mission and goals? Describe how.

_____ (+10 pts)

Will this project address the current BLC strategic plan? If so, list those elements.

_____ (+ 2pts each)

Is the project located in a focus or priority area? If not, is it adjacent to the focus area’s watersheds? Describe its location in reference to the focus area.

(+3pts if within)

(+2pts if adjacent)

Total Mission Fulfillment Points _____

IRS Conservation Purposes Test

Check boxes for compliance with the Internal Revenue Service’s conservation purposes test and other conservation values. (Projects must meet at least one.)

Outdoor Recreation and Education Values: The preservation of land areas for outdoor recreation by, or the education of, the general public.

Natural Resources Conservation Values: The protection of a relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife, or plants, or similar ecosystem.

Open Space Conservation Values: The preservation of open space (including farmland and forestland) where such preservation is for the scenic enjoyment of the general public and will yield a significant public benefit.

Open Space Conservation Values: The preservation of open space (including farmland and forestland) where such preservation is pursuant to a clearly delineated federal, state, or local governmental conservation policy and will yield a significant public benefit.

Historic Conservation Values: The preservation of a historically important land area or certified historic structure.

Describe the significant public benefit:

Conservation Values (20pts total)**Check 'yes' responses**

- Property is unique to the area. (1 pt)
- It is unlikely that BLC will acquire equally desirable and valuable substitute property. (1 pt)
- Property sets an important precedent for resource protection. (1 pt)
Precedent: _____
- Property of sufficient size that the important conservation resources are likely to remain intact even if the adjacent properties are developed. BLC is most interested in non-urban parcels of 50 or more acres. If in an urban or otherwise restricted setting, property is over 5 acres. (1pt)
- Property is adjacent to or buffers other protected properties. (1pt)
- Property has the ability to link to other protected properties. (1 pt)
- There is the possibility to expand the protected portions of the property in the future. (0.5 pt)
- Property is intact. No sub-divisions are planned. (1pt)
- Property is visible from a major highway, waterway, or recreation area. (0.5 pt)
- Property includes land that is part of a public or private federal, state, regional, or local conservation plan or policy. State Plan: _____ (1 pt)
- Land development in vicinity of the property is intense, and this site is likely to be developed if not preserved. (1pt)
- Development of property is likely to contribute to degradation of scenic, natural, or historic character of area. (1pt)
- Property contains wetlands, floodplains, riparian corridors, or other lands necessary for the protection of water resources. Provides storm water and flood control benefits. (1pt)
- Property contains high quality or unique wetlands to the area. (1pt)
- Conservation easement would place an appropriately sized buffer around wetlands (1pt)
- Property has the ability to protect water quality, as identified in a Greenprint. (1pt)
- Property contains native prairie grasses, or grasses important to wildlife habitat. (1 pt)
- Property is an important wildlife movement corridor. (1 pt)
- Wildlife habitat is diverse and habitat quality is good to excellent. (1 pt)
- Public may use the property or appreciate its scenic beauty through public access. (0.5 pt)
- Property is important local resource that attracts tourism or commerce to the area. (0.5 pt)
- The project will increase connectivity for the public (i.e. trail linkages). (0.5 pt)
- Land has high value for its educational or outreach potentials. (0.5 pt)

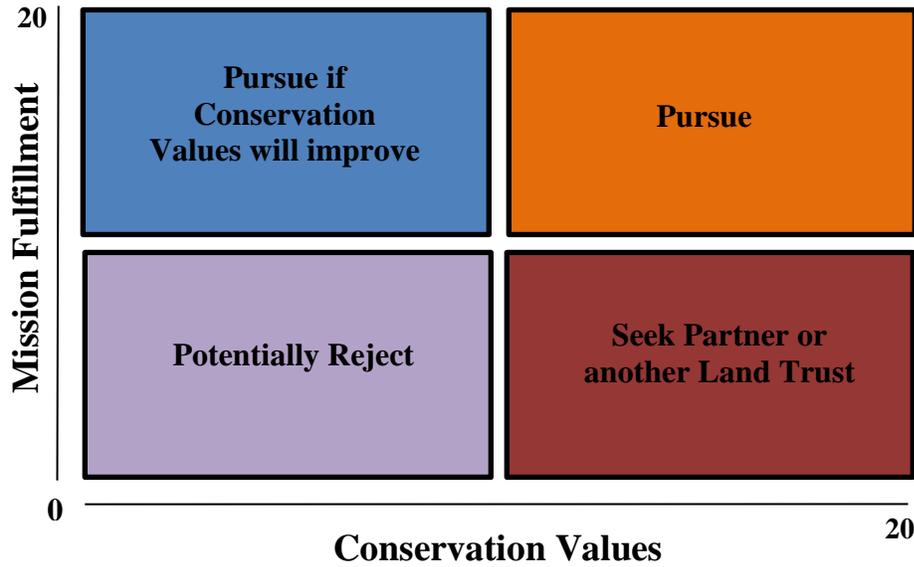
Total Conservation Values Points _____

Conservation and Mission Fulfillment Scoring

Objectively compare the project’s ability to fulfill BLC’s mission and the conservation values.

Total Mission Fulfillment Score ____

Total Conservation Values Score ____



Significance or Priority of the Project

Does this project add to an existing project underway at BLC? How?

Is this project significant enough that other projects can be postponed or rejected in order to complete this one?

- BLC partnered with landowner before and they proved to be responsible land steward?
- Does another land trust rank this property as a higher priority than BLC does?

Feasibility Issues

A project may meet the selection criteria favoring a land protection proposal and still may not be accepted if one or more of the following considerations apply:

- The landowner insists on reserved rights inconsistent with conserving the property's primary conservation values.
- The easement cannot be acquired by the land trust with reasonable effort in relation to the property's conservation value.
- Title of the property is clouded by a mortgage, lien, easement, or other restriction that could jeopardize the conservation value of the property or limit enforcement in perpetuity.
- Adjacent development may significantly diminish the conservation values of the property.
- The proposed open space is part of a development proposal that, overall, is likely to have significant adverse impacts on the property's conservation resources.
- Inadequate or difficult access to the property for management or monitoring.
- Stewardship responsibilities will be too expensive or unusually difficult.
- The land trust does not have the staff or volunteers to manage the project over time.
- The land trust does not have the financial resources to monitor and defend the easement.
- Ethical, public image or conflict of interest problems exist in association with the acceptance of the project.
- The property is irreparably contaminated or the cost of cleanup is too high or the risk of accepting an easement on contaminated land is too high.
- The project does not satisfy state or federal requirements (legal issues, funding issues, etc.):

List any other relevant feasibility factors:

Appendix B
Community Input Survey



**Bayou Land Conservancy
Strategic Conservation Plan 2019
Community Input Survey**

Bayou Land Conservancy (BLC) is a nonprofit that preserves land in the greater north Houston, Woodlands, and Conroe area. We are seeking your input to help shape the future of land preservation in our area. We will use your answers to help us create a strategic conservation plan. Please take a couple minutes to answer the survey.

- Are you familiar with BLC?
 - Know BLC, but not involved
 - Know BLC and involved
 - No prior knowledge

- How long have you lived in this area?
 - <5 years
 - 5-15 years
 - 15-30 years
 - Over 30 years

- How important do you think land preservation is in our area?
 - Very Important
 - Important
 - Neutral
 - Not Important

- What land needs preserving in our area? How would you rate each on a scale of 1 to 5?

	Most Important			Least Important	
○ Interconnected lands	1	2	3	4	5
○ Forests	1	2	3	4	5
○ Prairies	1	2	3	4	5
○ Wetlands	1	2	3	4	5
○ Streams	1	2	3	4	5
○ Land for public access	1	2	3	4	5
○ Land for flood protection	1	2	3	4	5
○ Rare plant/animal communities	1	2	3	4	5
○ All of the above					

- What do you believe are the most important benefits of preserved land? Please rate.

	Most Important			Least Important	
○ Clean water	1	2	3	4	5
○ Space for floodwater to go	1	2	3	4	5
○ Places for animals to live	1	2	3	4	5
○ Noise & light buffer	1	2	3	4	5
○ Scenic views	1	2	3	4	5
○ Outdoor Recreation	1	2	3	4	5
○ Environmental Education	1	2	3	4	5



- How do you like to enjoy preserved land? Select all that apply.
 - Paved multi-use trails
 - Natural surface (unpaved) multi-use trails
 - Paved single-use trails
 - Natural surface (unpaved) single-use trails
 - Equestrian trails
 - Access to paddle trails (paddleboard, canoe, kayak)
 - Access to fishing locations

- How important is it that BLC preserved lands are open to the public?
 - Very important (only preserve if public access allowed)
 - Somewhat important
 - Not important (no public access is okay)

- How do you think BLC is funded? Select all that apply.
 - Foundation/Endowment
 - Taxes
 - Member donations
 - Fundraising events
 - Land stewardship fees
 - Other

- How likely are you to contribute financially to help achieve conservation objectives of BLC?
 - Not Likely
 - Likely

- Do you have any ideas for land preservation, or suggestions for lands that BLC should protect?

Appendix C

Community Input Survey Results



Strategic Conservation Plan Community Input Survey Results

	TOTAL	PERCENTAGES
No. of Respondants	71	
Q1: Are you familiar with BLC?		
Know BLC, but not involved	21	30%
Know BLC & involved	47	66%
No Prior Knowledge	3	4%
Total	71	
Q2: How long have you lived in the area?		
<5yrs	8	11%
5-15 yrs	19	27%
15-30 yrs	23	33%
>30yrs	20	29%
Total	70	
Q3: How important do you think land preservation is in our area?		
Very Important	67	94%
Important	4	6%
Neutral	0	0%
Not Important	0	0%
Total	71	
Q4: What land needs preserving in our area?		
Interconnected lands	25	9%
Forests	29	10%
Prairies	23	8%
Wetlands	33	12%
Streams	30	11%
Land for public access	27	10%
Land for flood protection	31	11%
Rare plant/animal communities	27	10%
All of the above	56	20%
Total	281	
Q5: How do you like to enjoy preserved land?		
Paved Multi-Use Trails	33	15%
Natural Surface Multi-Use Trails	59	27%
Paved Single-Use Trails	18	8%
Natural Surface Single-Use Trails	40	18%
Equestrian Trails	2	1%
Access to Paddle Trails	50	23%
Access to Fishing	19	9%
Total	221	



Strategic Conservation Plan Community Input Survey Results

Q6: What do you believe are the most important benefits of preserved land?

Clean Water	56	17%
Space for Floodwater	65	19%
Places for Animals to live	58	17%
Noise & Light Buffer	32	10%
Scenic Views	38	11%
Outdoor Recreation	47	14%
Environmental Education	39	12%
Total	335	

Q7: How important is it that BLC preserved lands are open to the public?

Very Important	27	39%
Somewhat Important	35	50%
Not Important (no public access is okay)	8	11%
Total	70	

Q8: How do you think BLC is funded?

Foundation/Endowment	44	22%
Taxes	6	3%
Member donations	55	27%
Fundraising events	57	28%
Land Stewardship Fees	32	16%
Other	7	3%
Total	201	

Q9: How likely are you to contribute financially to help achieve preservation objectives of BLC?

Not likely	10	14%
Likely	60	86%
Total	70	

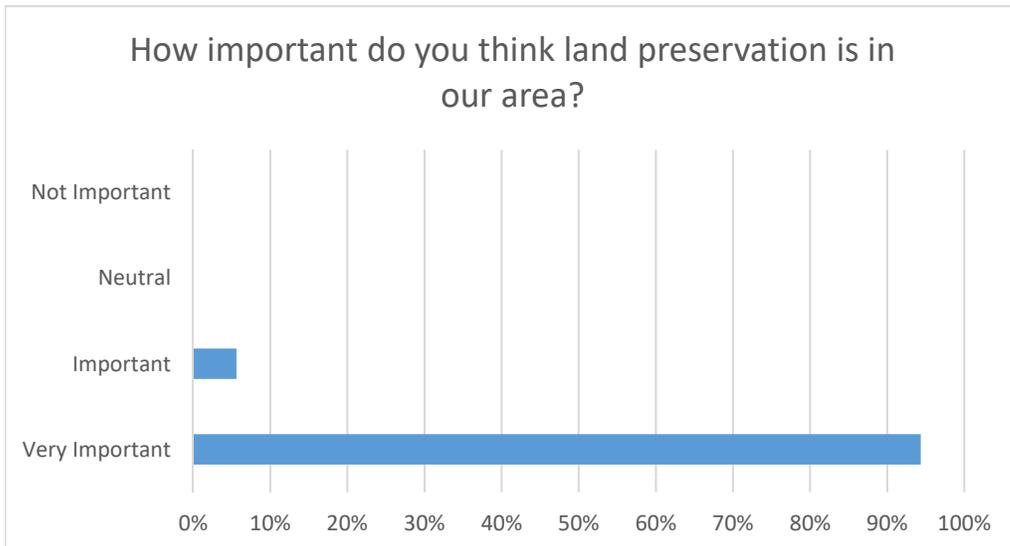
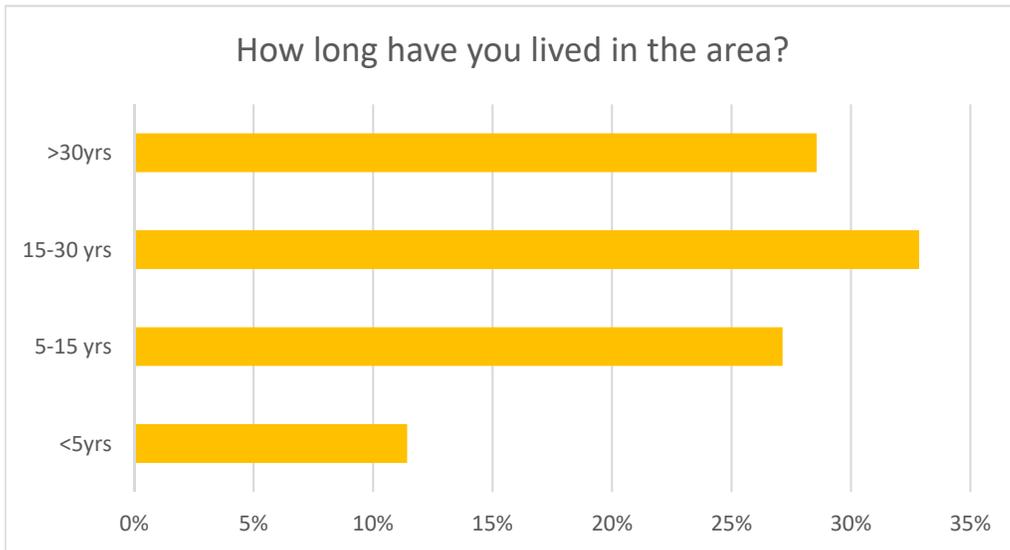
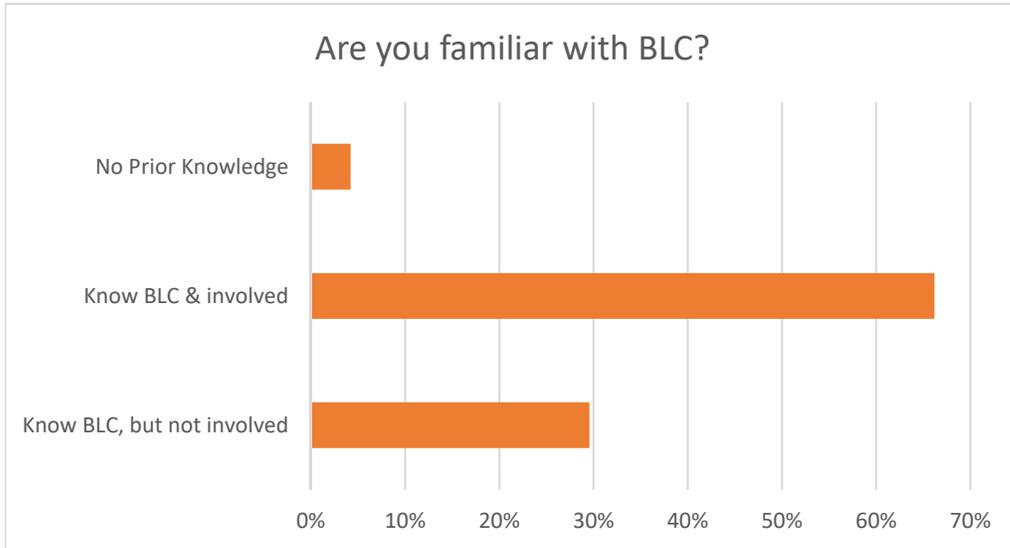
Q10: Do you have any ideas for land preservation, or suggestions for lands that BLC should protect?

18 responses online

14 responses on paper survey

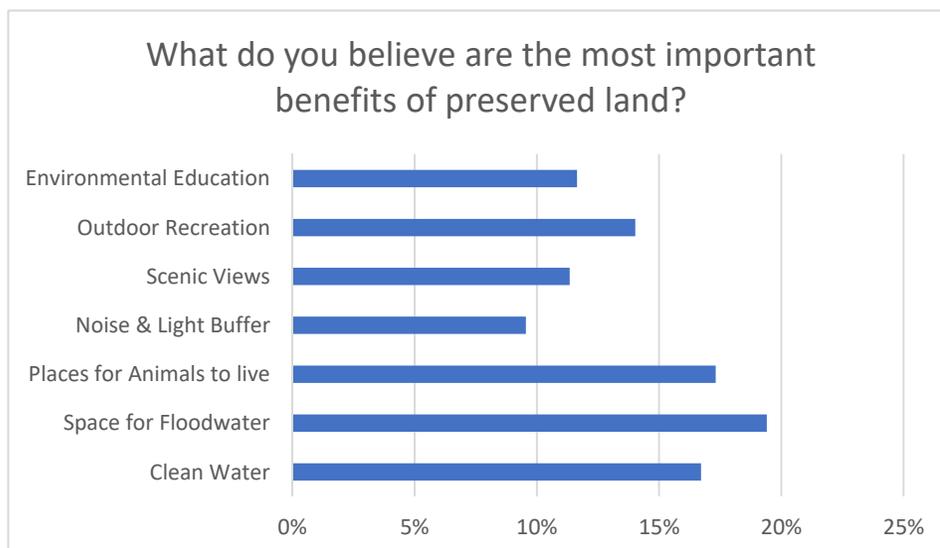
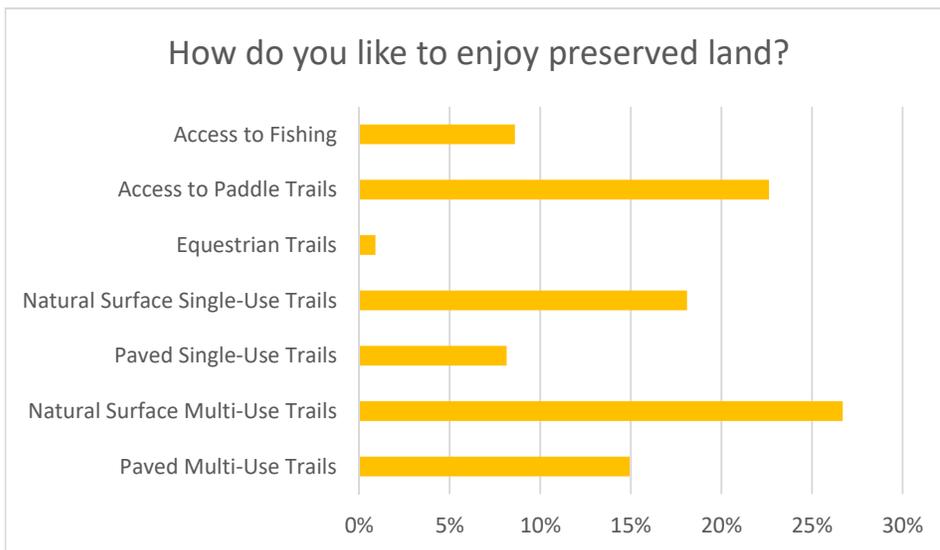
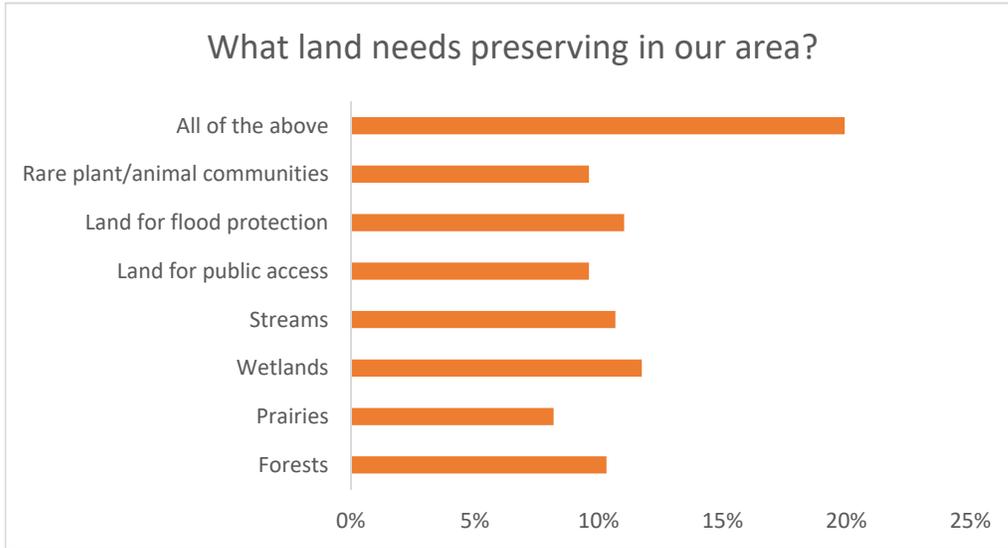


Strategic Conservation Plan Community Input Survey Results



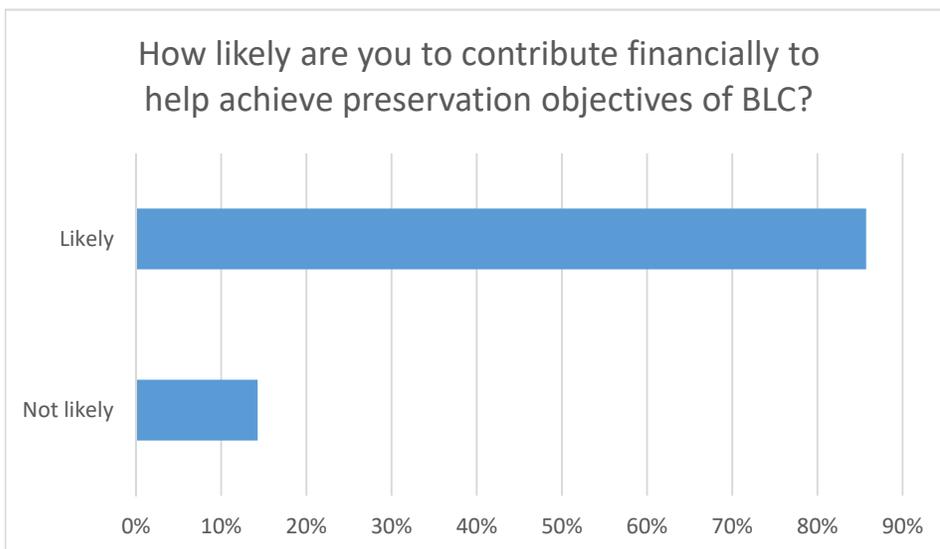
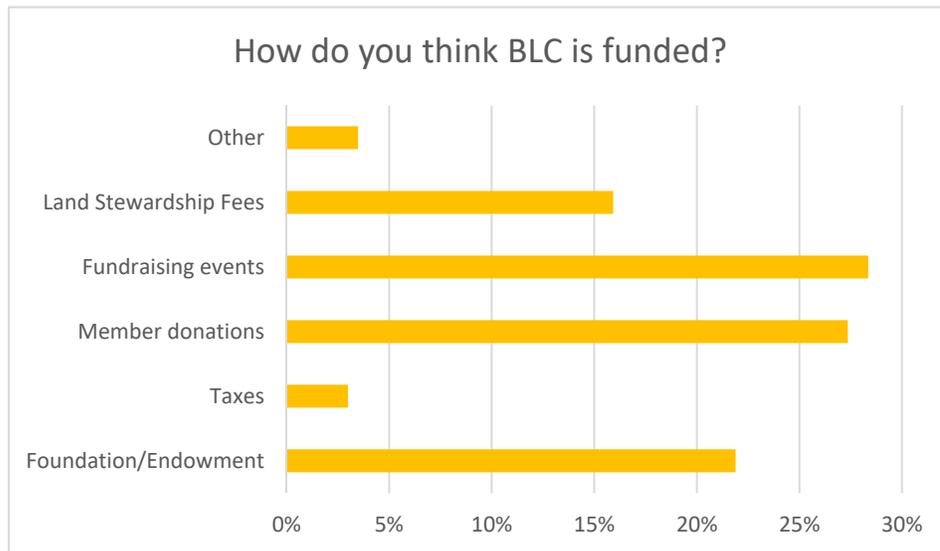
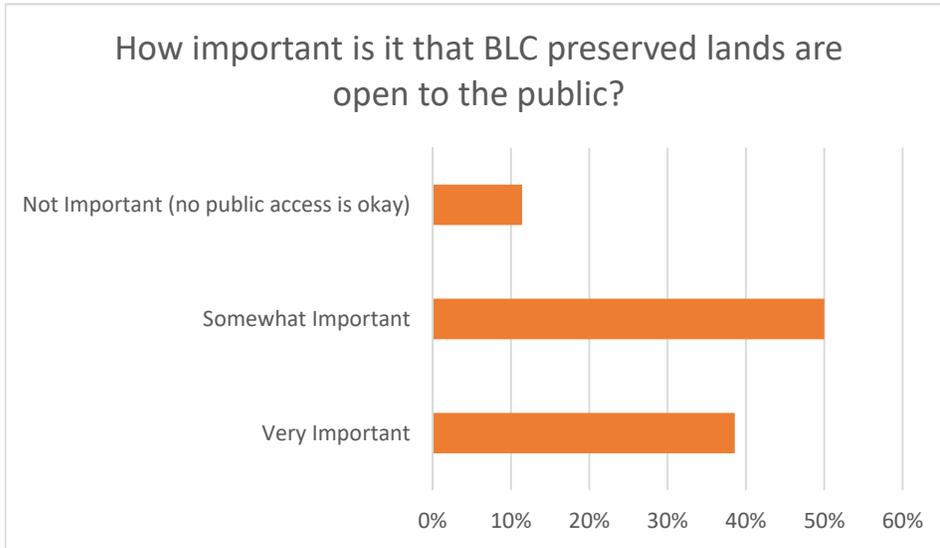


Strategic Conservation Plan Community Input Survey Results





Strategic Conservation Plan Community Input Survey Results



**Strategic Conservation Plan
Community Input Survey Results**

Theme	Comment
Community Conservation	<p>Yes. I have discovered that very FEW people are aware there are trails along Spring Creek or know about the Bayou Land Conservancy. When there are booths set up, they are usually at places like Farmer's Markets or some where similar, where the same few people go, that already tend to know. It would be helpful to have booths at other places where we don't see the same typical people and don't keep preaching to the choir. Have more events that encourage youth and families to get out on the trails. Having both paved and unpaved trails helps people with disabilities or in wheel chairs to have access to nature. I would like to see ongoing involvement that can happen at any time... ie., there is an island in Maine and a place in NY that encourage fairy houses along the trails made only of items that are natural .. no man made synthetics, plastics, etc.. (Unpainted, unfired, clay figurines made of earth were allowed) or have scavenger hunts with info on the type of plants and trees found in the area, giving interesting anecdotes to help with recall, as well as other ideas that children might come up with that would be fun for them. ..after all, children are our future. I remember once upon a time.. my family went camping. My siblings and I broke down into teams.. we gave my brother a head start, he headed off into the woods... we had to follow him by finding signs that he left behind.. such as sticks pointing which way he had gone... or stacks of stones.. the object was for us to catch up to him and catch him before he got back to our campsite. He won. Any event that gets children out in nature would be of benefit.</p>
	<p>I think environmental education and outreach is critical to raising awareness of the important job done by BLC- as in the long term it will help folks understand the value of preserving land for the critical ecological services it provides and also for quality of life and recreation in the greater Houston area.</p>
	<p>More publicity - it all seems like a best kept secret.</p>
General Kudos	Keep up the good work!
General Land Protection	Open lands all around Houston and Galveston, Angleton prairie- contact Mike Lange.
General Land Protection	Bayoulands should protect all areas presently not being developed which are ripe for development and vulnerable.
Maintenance	<p>I understand the benefits of partnering with off-road bicyclists, but heavy bicycle use can have adverse impacts on trails and watercourses.</p>
	<p>Need more funds dedicated to maintenance of trails and facilities on lands, building and opening gets the attention but maintaining is usually lacking so people go there expecting what they saw promoted for media and find something totally different. not a good impression nor good for their partnering with the cause</p>

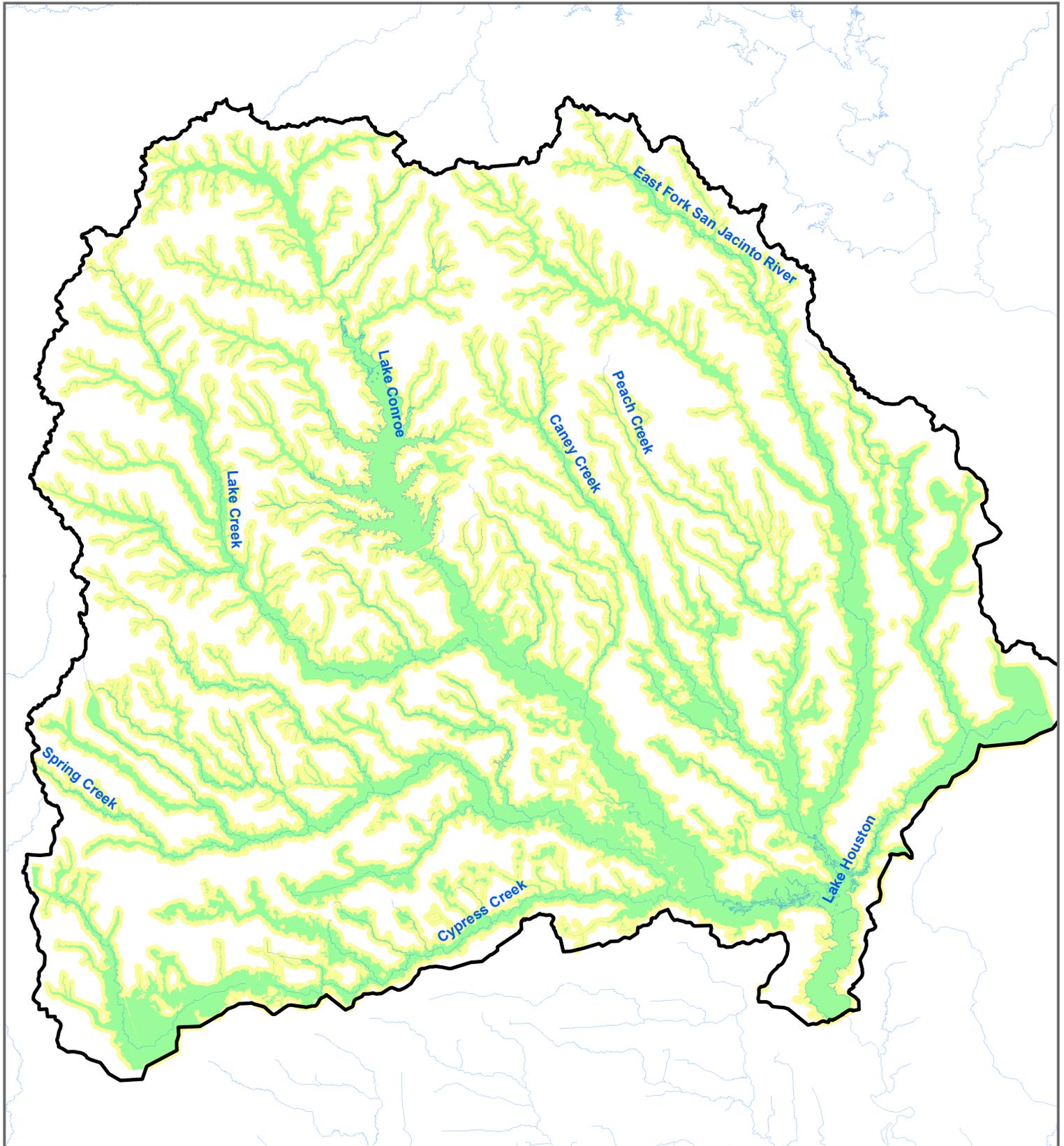
**Strategic Conservation Plan
Community Input Survey Results**

Specific Habitat Projects	Fire protection, not to be like California.
	Every tree filled tract you can. There is area between the hardy and alpine Westfield that may already be owned by the railroad but if not it is one of the few heavily wooded locations left in the area.
	Please continue focusing on riparian corridors!
	I'd like more forestation, re-wilding, and paths along the gullies/streams/bayous/rivers that run through neighborhoods and the city. We need more nature around us for a myriad of reasons including righting the heat island effect from all our building, and protection from floods. The animals need more habitat and the fracturing of their habitats is causing increased extinction rates. Having foresty veins of life running through the city along these water sources could benefit wildlife and humans more than larger parks that are far apart and difficult for most animals or people to get to. This is my theory after reading probably too many articles about conservation, coexistence, and fighting climate change/pollution/flooding :)
Specific Location Projects	The BLC should seek to preserve land in areas that are likely to see development in the relatively near future as the Houston metropolitan area expands.
	With the major flooding issues we are facing I think a focus for preservation should be on those tracts adjacent to our waterways.
	Area upstream of Little Cypress Creek Reserve from Telge to Cypress-Rosehill Rd.
	I would like to see more projects along Cypress Creek.
	SW of Champion Forest and Cypresswood area.
Consider property near Lake Livingston.	

Appendix D
BLC Prioritization Maps

Strategic Conservation Plan

Prioritization for Flood Control



Legend

- BLC Focus Area
- Streams

Prioritization Value

- High
- Very high

BayouLand Conservancy

We preserve land along streams for flood control, clean water, and wildlife

Miles

N

Coordinate System	NAD 1983
Map Drawn By	Becky Martinez
Date	09/06/2019

Strategic Conservation Plan

Prioritization for Water Quality



Legend

- BLC Focus Area
- Streams

Prioritization VALUE

- Medium
- High
- Very High

BayouLand Conservancy

We preserve land along streams for flood control, clean water, and wildlife

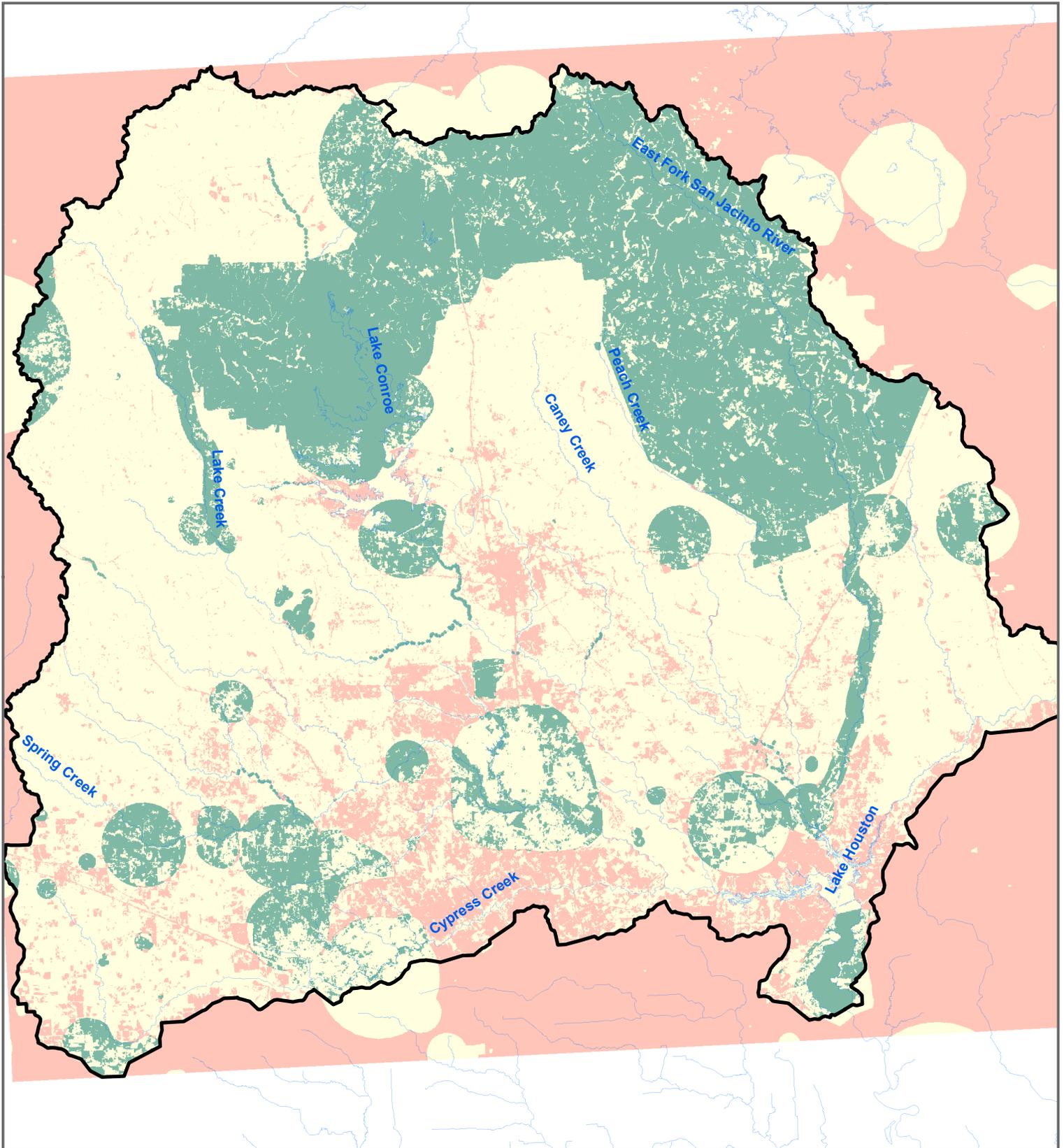
Miles

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Coordinate System	NAD 1983
Map Drawn By	Becky Martinez
Date	09/06/2019

Strategic Conservation Plan

Prioritization for Wildlife Habitat



Legend

BLC Focus Area

Streams

Prioritization

VALUE

Low

Medium

High



BayouLand Conservancy

We preserve land along streams for flood control, clean water, and wildlife



Coordinate System

NAD 1983

Map Drawn By

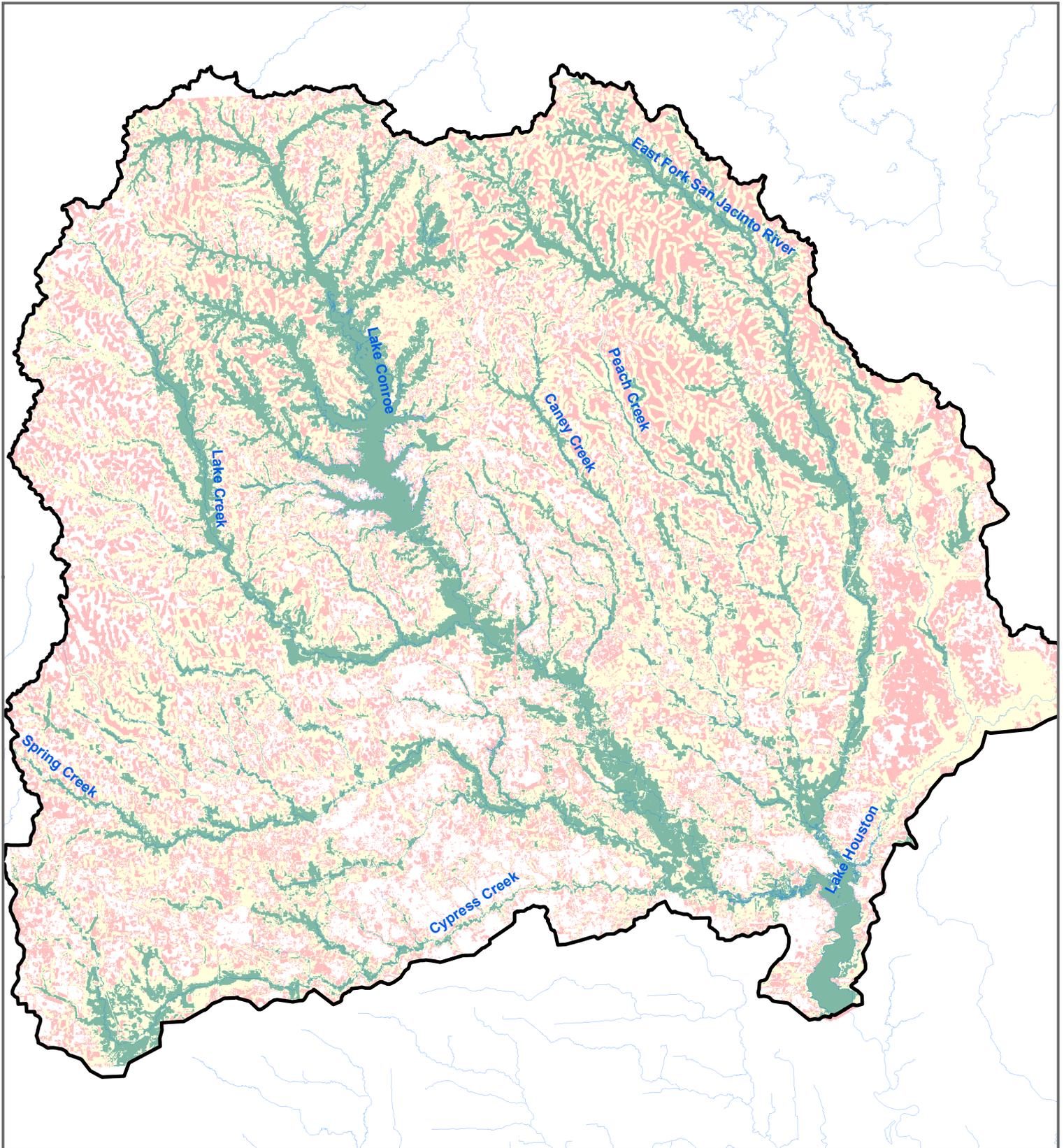
Becky Martinez

Date

09/06/2019

Strategic Conservation Plan

Overall Priority Ranking



Legend

- BLC Focus Area
- Streams

Overall Priorities

Value

- Medium
- High
- Very High

BayouLand Conservancy

We preserve land along streams for flood control, clean water, and wildlife

Miles

N

Coordinate System	NAD 1983
Map Drawn By	Becky Martinez
Date	09/06/2019