

NEWS RELEASE



Contact:
Rhea Davis
Greenspoint District
Ph. 281-874-2134
Cell 713-454-9988
rdavis@greenspoint.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHAT:

Join Galena Park students and other Greens Bayou enthusiasts for the announcement and celebration of a \$38,000 State Farm Youth Advisory Board grant that will help eliminate invasive plants in the region. Students will get a firsthand look at the bayou they will help transform and begin identifying plants with the help of an expert.

WHEN:

Monday, Feb. 22, 2010, 5 p.m.

WHERE:

Future canoe launch/outdoor classroom site, 12895 Greens Bayou Street, 77015 (at the corner of Greens Bayou Drive/Dwight Street). The proposed site is underdeveloped property. On-street parking is available along the shoulder (north side) of Greens Bayou Drive. Carpooling is recommended.

Photo opportunities with the students will be available.

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The Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition (GBCC) has been awarded \$38,000 by the State Farm Youth Advisory Board to create a program that will help eradicate invasive plants along the bayou and educate students about the importance of a balanced ecosystem.

The program teams Galena Park high school students with the GBCC, Houston Parks Board, the Bayou Preservation Association, and the W.D. Ley Family YMCA to reclaim a section of the bayou choked by invasive plants. Working both in the classroom and in the field, students will learn the history of invasive species introduction, research native and invasive plants and develop a plan of action to restore the ecosystem's delicate balance.

Students from Galena Park and officials from State Farm and the organizations participating in the program will announce the grant award Feb. 22, 2010 during a check presentation ceremony. Students will then tour the area and begin identifying invasive plants.

“The State Farm Youth Advisory grant is important because it provides funding to restore the property to its natural state,” said Regina Lindsey, executive director of the Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition. “And it also gives students the opportunity to serve their community while exploring the impacts various species have on the environment.”

Once a plan is complete, students will work alongside botanists to remove invasive plants and replace them with native species. The project will eventually open 14-acres of public space along the bayou and provide the community with a place to learn about the environment.

Students who participate in the program will share their knowledge with the community by creating panels that educate the public about invasive plants in the region. Many invasive plants start out harmlessly in home gardens and quickly strangle nearby habitats.

Removing invasive plants along the bayou will do more than make the area more attractive; it may help eliminate flooding during the next storm season. Invasive plants can clog the natural drainage in the region and cause high water in nearby neighborhoods.

The GBCC grant was among 83 awarded nationwide from nearly 1200 proposals submitted to the State Farm Youth Advisory Board. The board is comprised of 30 students, ages 17 to 20, from across the United States and Canada. Each year, they are charged with helping State Farm distribute \$5 million to people and organizations that address issues important to State Farm and communities across the United States and Canada.

The Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition is a 501c3 organization that addresses quality of life issues along the 45-mile watershed including, flood mitigation, park and trail improvement projects and economic development.

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If weather is inclement, the event will be hosted at the Wendel D. Lay Family YMCA at 15055 Wallisville Road, Houston, TX 77049. You can call Regina Lindsey at (281) 415-4350 to confirm location.