

Melinda Adams
Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council
4200 South Freeway, Suite 2200
Fort Worth, Texas 76115

Dear Melinda:

I am pleased to submit our Fossil Creek Mitigation/Preservation Project for the CTUFC 2009 Bronze Leaf Award program. I have enclosed a two page project explanation with one photo image and three additional pages of photos.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



GEOFFREY C. SHERMAN
Landscape Horticulturist
Certified Arborist

**Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council
2009 Bronze Leaf Award
Nomination form
Outstanding Municipal Stewardship Project**

Project Lead: Joe Pack, RLA, Senior Park Planner, City of North Richland Hills Parks and Recreation Department

Project Description:

Fossil Creek Off-Site Mitigation and Preservation

The beginning of the Fossil Creek Off-Site Mitigation and Preservation Project actually grew out of another project - the Liberty Lakes project at Liberty Park in North Richland Hills, designed to reduce erosion within the Calloway Branch drainage channel by filling in eroded areas and excavation and installation of a geosynthetic liner within the channel.

The Liberty Lakes project was unable to avoid the jurisdictional waters of the U.S. governed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, thus requiring a plan to mitigate adverse impacts to the aquatic environment that included the temporary loss of storm water detainment and aquatic habitat from the current course of the Calloway Branch perennial stream.

A mitigation option was considered that would provide on-site natural plantings of trees and grasses in an area north of the project site that would restore the area to its native state prior to channelization. However, an alternative mitigation opportunity was identified that would allow the City of North Richland Hills to select a larger, more established area of vegetation for preservation in lieu of the on-site mitigation.

The Fossil Creek Mitigation/Preservation Site

As an alternative to the on-site mitigation of the Liberty Lakes project, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers allowed for off-site mitigation at the rate of 5 to1, linear off-site mitigation to linear on-site mitigation. Another requirement for off-site mitigation was that the area under consideration had to be within an area that was under threat of development. With this information in hand, the City of North Richland Hills identified a section of Fossil Creek at Fossil Creek Park in southwest North Richland Hills. With the threat of development present at the site from a proposed gas well, a gas pipeline easement and park development as identified in the North Richland Hills Park Master Plan, the mitigation site was approved.

The Fossil Creek Mitigation/Preservation area, located within the boundaries of Fossil Creek Park and a large area of lowland hardwoods, consists of 1352 linear feet of Fossil Creek and a 50 foot forested buffer on each side. Fossil Creek is a

perennial waterway with a mature forest consisting primarily of bottomland hardwoods and native riverine grasses. The banks of the channel range from 20 to 30 feet from top of slope to channel bottom and the channel ranges from 30 to 70 feet between ordinary high water marks.

The selection of the Fossil Creek site did not require any on-site grading or additional planting. The site was selected to preserve an area of natural beauty with large hardwood trees and understory vegetation. A deed restriction describing the mitigation area as a preservation area and restricting development was filed with the Tarrant County Clerk's Office. While the City of North Richland Hills could have mitigated the Liberty Lakes project with new plantings, they believed that the preservation of a section of a mature forest and waterway was the best use of a mitigation opportunity and the best way to serve the citizens of North Richland Hills.

The project deserves recognition due to the City of North Richland Hill's creative response to a need for mitigation of natural habitat and the preservation of a mature forested area of the city allowing for the protection of the area from development in perpetuity.

The following photos show the Liberty Lakes project site, an aerial view of the Fossil Creek mitigation site and various views of this newly preserved section of North Richland Hills with the gently flowing waters of Fossil Creek surrounded by lush vegetation of Fossil Creek Park.



Liberty Lake Project Site



Highlighted aerial view of 1352 ft. Fossil Creek Mitigation/Preservation area in southwest North Richland Hills.



Preserved mitigation area showing Fossil Creek bank height and mature trees



Preserved forested buffer area on the side of Fossil Creek



Preserved forested area of Fossil Creek with undergrowth



Preserved Fossil Creek area looking north from channel bed