

PROJECT FACT SHEET

Project Title: Lake Waco Wetland

Project Lead: City of Waco Water Utilities Dept.

Project Website: http://www.waco-texas.com/city_depts/waterutilities/wetlands.htm

Funding Source(s): City of Waco Water Utilities Department, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Fort Worth District, and Baylor University.

Supplemental Funding Source: Congressional Appropriations (2003) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Recreational Trails Grant (2004).

Project Partner(s): U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Fort Worth District and Baylor University.

Project Description: The City of Waco began construction on the Lake Waco Wetland Project in late August of 2001 to mitigate the loss of habitat from the raising of Lake Waco by seven feet. Now complete, the wetland covers approximately 174 acres and provides valuable habitat to numerous aquatic/wetland plants, aquatic insects, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and bird species. In addition, the wetland may contribute to moderating the nutrient load of the North Bosque River to Lake Waco.

Project Benefits: The construction of the wetland provides excellent opportunities for research and education. The Lake Waco Wetland provides a valuable opportunity for the public to obtain information about the importance of wetlands and water conservation issues. The Research and Education Center was completed in August 2004, and provides a visitor's center, classrooms for educational seminars, and a research area. The 6,000 square foot building, which is ADA certified, has a 1,500 square foot research area, a 2,000 square foot Visitors' Center, and a 900 square foot classroom with basic science equipment. Over 21 public and private school districts, as well as colleges and universities, have participated in either the plantings or educational opportunities offered at the wetlands. In addition, volunteer plantings are held every fall and spring encouraging a variety of native aquatic plant growth throughout the wetland area. The volunteer count from spring 2004 until now is over 1,000. Trails and observation platforms, also ADA certified, are constructed to provide access to the wetland for wildlife viewing.

Project Schedule: The Center for Reservoir and Aquatic Systems Research (CRASR) is a research and education partnership between Baylor University (BU) and the City of Waco (COW) focused on aquatic

resources. This Center is a natural outflow of many years of collaboration between these institutions as over the years Baylor and the City have each developed significant water-related expertise and capabilities. At Baylor, the focus for almost four decades has been on understanding the basic scientific principles that control the structure and function of aquatic environments. The City has dealt primarily with applied management issues. CRASR will provide synergistic benefits to both institutions and stimulate much needed inter and multidisciplinary research. In addition, it focuses on developing educational outreach programs related to aquatic and wetland values.

Twelve pond mesocosms and a stream mesocosm are being built along side the inflow area of the wetland.

Project Status: Wetland plant diversity is being encouraged with selected cattail removal and planting of native aquatic species. Total plant coverage within the wetland is about 80 percent.

Construction on the Research and Education Center is completed. Reservations for use of this facility are increasing, with more than 40 events already scheduled. More than 7,000 public visits (planting, educational, special events and general) have been recorded thus far and more than 3,000 visitors are anticipated next year.

CRASR received a \$35,000 research grant to perform stream mesocosms activities at the wetland. The TPWD recreational trails grant will provide more access for the public.

Educational activities and programs are being developed with numerous entities.

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