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## Watershed Report January 25, 2011

### Little White Oak Bayou



### A Wonderland of “Witches Britches” and other Problems

On January 9, 2011 we met with Blake Masters (SuperNeighborhood 15 Board Member), his wife Juleena Masters (President, Montie Beach Civic Club) and Sarah Melicki (Rep. Jessica Farrar’s Constituent Services Director) on Link Road to take a tour of Little White Oak Bayou and to discuss existing problems and possible solutions.

#### Problems

##### Trash

The accumulation of trash shown on the photo exists throughout the watershed and will eventually end up in Buffalo Bayou via the confluence of Little White Oak Bayou and Lower White Oak Bayou. We agreed that most of the trash originates from the upstream neighborhoods and from the freeways adjacent to the stream (I-45 and Loop 610 North). Much of the plastic trash is entangled in shrubs and small trees which are most likely invasive species—hard to distinguish because of fallen foliage.



## Solutions

### Trash

Watershed Clean-ups and Trash Bashes would certainly reduce the amount of trash but the efforts will probably be a “drop in the bucket” because of the never ending replenishment from upstream. WOBA will be investigating whether the “Stormwater Management Joint Task Force “ (Harris County Flood Control District, Harris County, City of Houston, TxDOT) could provide educational tools , such as neighborhood meetings ,freeway signage & TV advertisements to reduce this nonpoint source pollution. A metric for pollution/trash reduction and monitoring would be very helpful. ([www.cleanwaterclearchoice.org](http://www.cleanwaterclearchoice.org))

Any input from the BPA Water Quality Committee would be very much appreciated. The most effective thing would be to ask the Joint Task Force to make Little White Oak Bayou a demonstration project for the reduction in stormwater trash. They could measure existing levels of trash in the bayou and create metrics for trash reduction. Then they could monitor the effectiveness of various best management practices and report the results annually.

### Channel Maintenance

In 1960's TxDOT acquired right of way along Little White Oak Bayou in order to straighten and deepen the channel to provide drainage for the North Loop 610. TxDOT, in the intervening years, has not maintained the steep slopes. There are now extensive areas of invasive vegetation, and some erosion and slope failures. Harris County Flood Control District is willing to perform this much needed maintenance on Little White Oak Bayou, if it were not for a Texas law that prohibits TxDOT from granting HCFCF a maintenance easement without compensation. TxDOT and the HCFCF ,with the help of State Representative Jessica Farrar's office, and with encouragement from the BPA and WOBA, are currently researching opportunities that would facilitate cooperation between these two government agencies.

