



PRESS RELEASE

Public Art Installation to begin at confluence of White Oak and Buffalo Bayous

Mural by nationally renowned Ink Dwell studio to showcase migratory birds of Houston's major waterways

HOUSTON, TX – March 12, 2021 – Houston Parks Board and Buffalo Bayou Partnership are pleased to announce a new public art installation along the Bayou Greenway trail at the confluence of White Oak and Buffalo Bayous, just below the University of Houston-Downtown's historic One Main Building. The mural, created by artist Jane Kim, co-founder of Ink Dwell studio, showcases the birds that call Houston's bayous home.

Titled *Confluence*, the mural tells a 12-month story of Houston's migratory birds. Its name refers to the way in which many birds change color seasonally to attract mates. At the center are six species represented in both their spring breeding plumage and their non-breeding plumage. On the right are three species that winter in Houston; on the left are three species that arrive in the spring to breed. A map of Houston's bayous serves as the backdrop to bring movement and energy to the work.

"Houston is one of the most diverse cities in the United States," says artist Jane Kim, "and that's not just limited to its people. The region's wetlands attract a spectacular array of bird life and *Confluence* is a monument to that beauty and diversity."

"We are excited to see work begin on *Confluence* and enliven this vital corridor with accessible public art," said Beth White, President and CEO of Houston Parks Board. "The bayous define our city, bringing wildlife and nature to our own backyards. We hope that this mural will be a focal point for trail users and encourage Houstonians to learn more about the waterways that make Houston unique."

Measuring 223 feet in length, the mural will span the wall along the confluence of White Oak Bayou Greenway and Buffalo Bayou trail (mere steps away from the University of Houston-Downtown) and enrich the experience of cyclists, pedestrians, students, and commuters who use the trail daily. Central to both the bayou system and downtown Houston, *Confluence* will also be visible to nearby office buildings and the University of Houston-Downtown campus. Installation began in early March 2021 and is expected to take four to six weeks to complete.

"*Confluence* is an ideal example of Buffalo Bayou Partnership's ongoing commitment to public art," said Anne Olson, President of Buffalo Bayou Partnership. "Ink Dwell studio's depiction of Houston's native birds provides a beautiful contrast to the urban character of this downtown site. We are pleased to be a part of this collaboration."

"This public art project is another example of why the Houston Parks system is one of the best in the nation," said Kenneth Allen, Interim Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. "The synergy between nature and art with this installation on the trail will be a welcoming landmark for all who see it. Our thanks to all the partners who've made it possible."

As with Bayou Greenways, this mural is a product of the extraordinary public/private partnership between City of Houston and Harris County, along with voters and philanthropists with a particular thanks to Tom and Laura Bacon.

“This mural is about celebrating Bayou Greenways and discovering Houston’s amazing position in the center of North America’s largest migratory flyway,” said Laura Bacon. “One day, Houston will be known as the only major city in America where you can eat at an award-winning restaurant on Saturday night, stay in a wonderful hotel, and see 128 species of birds before noon on the following morning, Tom and I are thrilled to support *Confluence*.”

Confluence is commissioned by Houston Parks Board and hosted in collaboration with Buffalo Bayou Partnership. The mural project has also engaged with Houston Audubon to provide ornithological expertise and programmatic direction. Houston Parks Board serves as project manager on the installation and is responsible for ongoing maintenance of this portion of the Bayou Greenways system.

“Houston’s birdlife is rich and varied, in color, shape, and song,” said Helen Drummond, Houston Audubon’s Executive Director. “Birds are an important part of our natural landscape, and because they can be seen all around us, they are a great way to connect with nature. We are thrilled to see the beauty and inspiration birds can bring to our lives shared through this mural.”

For more information on *Confluence* and associated programming, please visit houstonparksboard.org and follow Houston Parks Board, Buffalo Bayou Partnership, and Houston Audubon on social media.

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Photos: <http://bit.ly/3vjfnHU>
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A nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to providing access to quality parks and greenspace in the Greater Houston region, **Houston Parks Board** creates, improves, protects and advocates for parks for everyone. Since 1976, the organization has utilized public-private partnerships and its extensive philanthropic, government and community relationships to improve parks large and small. Houston Parks Board is currently leading the transformational \$220 million Bayou Greenways 2020 project to complete a 150-mile network of connected parks and trails along Houston’s major waterways. For more information, visit houstonparksboard.org.

Bayou Greenways 2020 is one of the most ambitious parks projects in the U.S. By transforming more than 3,000 acres of underutilized land along Houston’s major waterways into linear parks, Bayou Greenways 2020 will complete a 150-mile network of connected parks and trails. The \$220 million project will connect people, places, and greenspace while enhancing air and water quality, preserving flood-prone areas and stimulating economic development in Houston. Public investment was matched by significant private contributions including an extraordinary lead gift of \$50 million in 2013 from the Kinder Foundation.

Established in 1986, **Buffalo Bayou Partnership** (BBP) is the non-profit transforming and revitalizing Buffalo Bayou, Houston’s most significant natural resource. The organization’s geographic focus is the 10-square mile stretch of the bayou that flows from Shepherd Drive, through the heart of downtown into the East End, and onto the Port of Houston Turning Basin. Thanks to the generous support of foundations, corporations, individuals and government agencies, BBP has implemented more than \$200 million in improvements for the redevelopment and stewardship of the waterfront – spearheading award-winning projects such as

Buffalo Bayou Park, protecting land for future parks and green space, constructing hike and bike trails, and operating comprehensive clean-up and maintenance programs. Buffalo Bayou Partnership also activates the waterway through pedestrian, boating and biking amenities; volunteer activities; permanent and temporary art installations; and wide-ranging tours and programs that engage tens of thousands of visitors each year. For more information, visit buffalobayou.org.

Houston Audubon's mission is to advance the conservation of birds and positively impact their supporting environments which it accomplishes through acquiring and maintaining critical habitat as bird sanctuaries, providing education programs and nature experiences for children and adults, and advocating policy and management actions in support of the mission. Houston Audubon owns and manages 17 nature sanctuaries encompassing 4,121 acres across the Greater Houston and Galveston regions and became an Accredited Land Trust in 2017.

The **Houston Parks and Recreation Department** (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 39,501 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call 832-395-7022 or visit houstonparks.org.