

# LEOH Trip

## WILLOW WATERHOLE GREENWAY

November 15, 2022





On a cold and windy day, hardy LEOH members met in the Dryad parking lot at the Willow Waterhole's Westbury Lake, to enjoy a tour! Trudy Holmes, a Willow Waterhole Conservancy board member, led the tour. Trudy was a LEOH speaker in September, so the tour was a great follow-up activity.



The main picnic area at the Westbury Lake contains the *Naturescape Garden*, comprised of carved tree trunks depicting some of the wildlife that may be viewed in the area. Trudy pointed out that children are welcome to climb on them.





There are 6 lakes (aka retention ponds, basins) within the 300 acres of WW, including Prairie Lake on the other side of South Post Oak Blvd. The lakes range in size from roughly 10 acres to 100 acres, with Westbury Lake being the largest. Lake depths average about 8 ft. Coming attractions include the renovation of the former Shell property and structures, a new fishing pier, and a dog park.





We began our walking tour by crossing a bridge over part of Westbury lake. Numerous trails are being paved, to allow for easier access.

We enjoyed viewing an artist's depiction on a paved trail of some of the songbirds that can be seen at WW.



## The Dabney Kennedy Scout Pavilion at Willow Waterhole Greenway

This Pavilion is named in honor of Dabney Kennedy and recognizes scouts who have completed their Eagle and Gold Award projects at the Willow Waterhole Greenway. Dabney was a greatly respected local and national leader of the Boy Scouts; he held many roles over six decades and received multiple awards for his distinguished service:

### Leadership Roles

Den Chief, Patrol Leader, Scoutmaster, Camp Director  
Vice Chairman National Order of the Arrow Program  
Architect of the Modern National Order of the Arrow Conference  
Led/Participated in 38 National meetings and events  
Founded the National Leadership Seminar  
Led National Fundraising to Build the Museum for Founders of the Order



### Awards

National Order of the Arrow Lifetime Achievement Award  
National Order of the Arrow Centurion Award  
National Order of the Arrow Distinguished Service Award  
James E. West Fellow and Vigil Honor

Arrow of Light, Eagle with Palms, NESA Outstanding Eagle Scout Award, Silver Beaver, Silver Antelope, Silver Explorer

Dabney was also a community leader and fifty-year resident of Westbury. During this time he served as the President of the Kolter Elementary, Johnston Middle School, and Westbury High School PTO's. In addition, he was President of the Westbury Civic Club and the Westbury Area Improvement Corporation, Vice President of the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy, and served on the Brays Bayou Association Board of Directors and HISD Southwest Task Force. He was presented with the Citizen of the Year Award by the Mayor of Westbury and the Southwest Chamber of Commerce, and the Dow Chemical Presidential Award for Community Service.

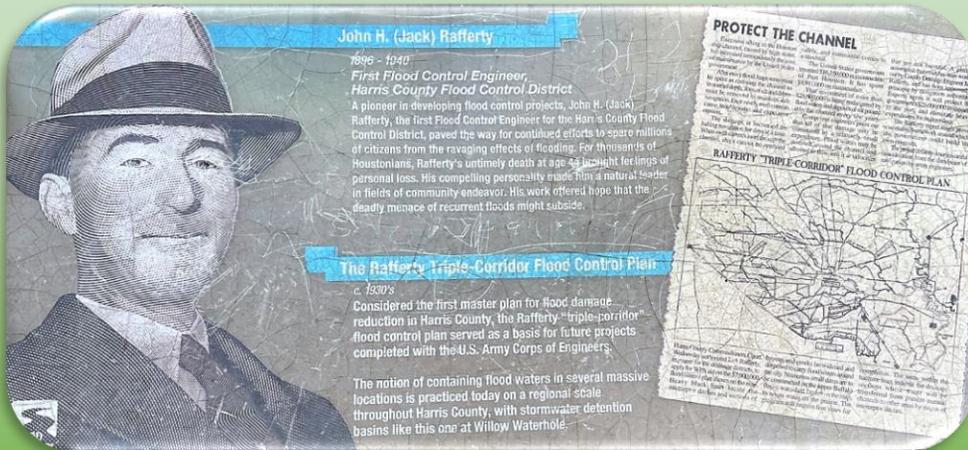


Part of the tour included a stop at the Scout Pavilion, built in honor of numerous boy scouts who earned awards by completing projects for WW.

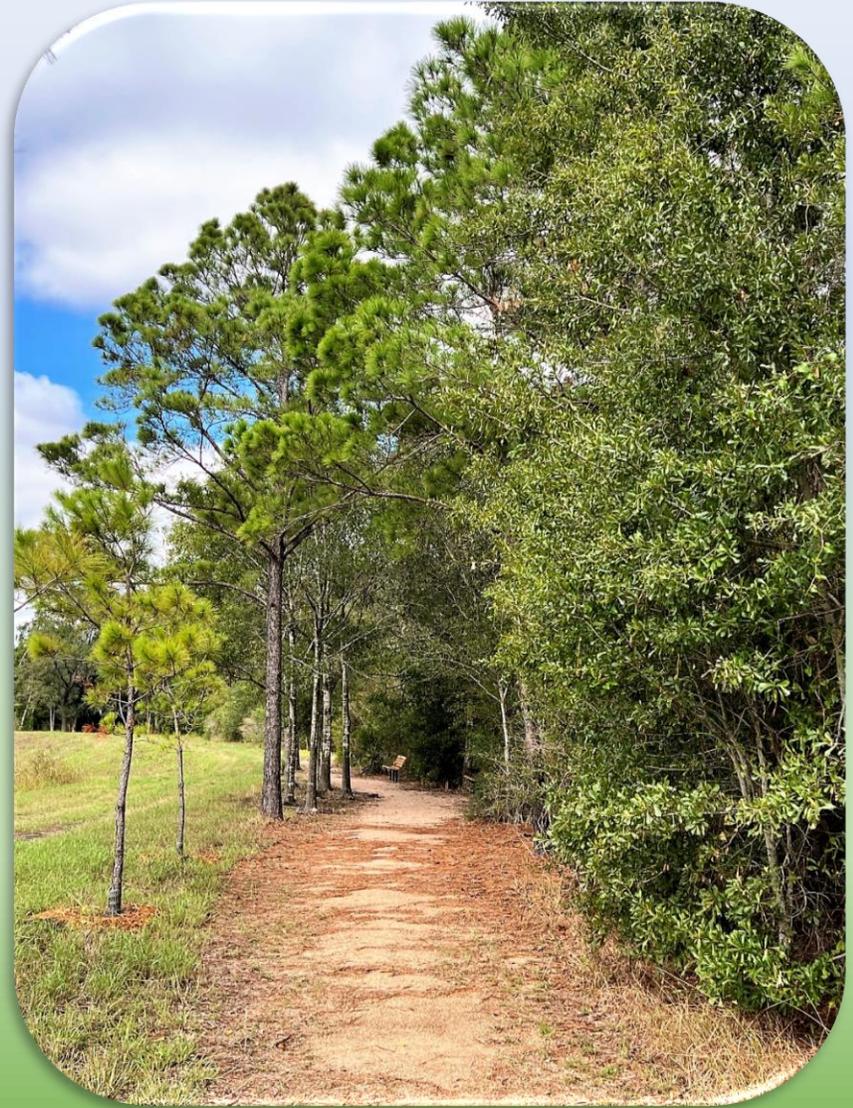
The pavilion pillars include listings of the names of these scouts.

After leaving Westbury Lake, the walking tour took everyone to *The Gathering Place*, which is surrounded by other Willow Waterhole lakes.

A sign here describes the influence of Jack Rafferty, an early flood control engineer. His work helped lead to the modern use of flood retention basins, such as WW.



On our walk, we noted the nearby *Mary Immaculate Province*, a religious community of Dominican Sisters serving as teachers and nurses. They are now also known as the "Rally Nuns". Mattress Mack was their host at the World Series, as they cheered our World Champion Houston Astros with rally towels!



We neared the end of our tour by crossing Gasmer Drive and S. Willow to take the Bayou Trail to the Willow Waterhole Bayou.



Trudy stood on the bank of the WW Bayou, a tributary of the much larger Brays Bayou, as she discussed the devastating flooding that has occurred from the bayou during extreme rain events, such as Hurricane Harvey.

Note that Trudy “walks the talk”. Along the way, she picked up trash for proper disposal. Unfortunately, trash pickup is an ongoing need at WW.



During high water events, water flows from the WW bayou over the weirs (seen above) into Scout Lake and Dog Lake. From these lakes, culverts route the water to the other lakes.



The Willow Waterhole is a beautiful place to visit and enjoy nature, regardless of the time of year! Fishing is encouraged, as the lakes are stocked periodically with game fish. Native grasses and trees have been planted, and invasive species of fish and plants are routinely removed. Birding is popular; even seagulls have been spotted on occasion, along with large birds such as roseate spoonbills and herons.



Smile and say *CHEESE!*  
Some of the tour group had to leave the tour early.  
Trudy snapped this photo at the end of the tour,  
which includes most of the group that enjoyed the full tour.



Our Willow Waterhole tour was followed by lunch at Café Express in Meyerland Plaza.  
Thank you, Ann Fairchild, for putting together another  
fun and educational outing!