



## **Houston Arboretum & Nature Center's Land Restoration**

*Work to begin on test plot in May*

HOUSTON, TX (May 19, 2016) – As the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center prepares for extensive renovations and restoration, a 5-acre section of its 155-acres will be used as a pilot demonstration project for public viewing. The site is in keeping with the Arboretum's master plan vision which includes efforts to restore the land to ecosystems native to the Houston area.

The test plot area identified will specifically reflect prairie and savanna ecosystems because it is part of a larger area with scientifically tested soils indicating prairie/savanna conditions exists. The first step will involve the removal of trees that are under 6" in diameter. This will allow more light to reach the sites understory and promote the growth of a native, open savanna ecosystem consisting of a combination of grasses with scattered tree growth.

"Our goal is to restore the Arboretum's land to reflect the four ecosystems native to the Houston area: woodland, riparian, prairie/savanna and wetlands," said Debbie Markey, executive director of the Arboretum. "These ecosystems will make the landscape more resilient and sustainable, and the reintroduction of native trees, grasses, and wildflowers will provide rich habitat for native fauna, including songbirds and other wildlife."

The Arboretum's goal is to ensure as many diverse tree types remain in the area as possible while creating a healthy savanna landscape. An assessment of the trees within the site was conducted based on type, age, size, health, spacing and location. Following the assessment, it was determined that 75% of the trees will be kept. Trees that are removed will be re-purposed in other landscaping areas around the Arboretum grounds and for building purposes (walkways, maintenance, fences).

"We are excited to see how the land responds as it is returned to its historic state and the wildlife diversity it will bring, allowing us to conserve the land whilst educating the Arboretum's visitors on the importance of the natural gulf coast environment," said Markey.

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### **About**

The mission of the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center is to provide education about the natural environment to people of all ages and to protect and enhance the Arboretum as a haven and as a sanctuary for native plants and animals. The Houston Arboretum & Nature Center (HANC), one of the first nature education facilities for children in the state of Texas, provides services to nearly 200,000 visitors annually. The Arboretum also provides nature education for more than 10,000 children annually. For more information about the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center and levels of membership, visit [houstonarboretum.org](http://houstonarboretum.org).