

## Introduction

Brazoria County, Texas, located south of Houston, is a county of approximately 241,767 citizens. It is bordered by Galveston County to the northeast, Harris County to the north; Matagorda County to the southwest, Wharton County to the west, Fort Bend County to the northwest and the Gulf of Mexico to the south.

Major Highways running through Brazoria County include State Highway 6 which runs east-west; State Highway 35 which runs southwest-north; State Highway 36 which runs southeast-northwest, and State Highway 288 which runs south-north.

Brazoria County takes its name from the Brazos River, which flows through it, and serves as one of the most historic counties in the state of Texas. The first of Stephen F. Austin's authorized 300 American settlers arrived at the mouth of the Brazos River in Brazoria County in the year 1821, and many of the events leading to the Texas Revolution developed in Brazoria County.

In April of 1981, a group of citizens, The Citizens Advisory Group, requested that Commissioner's Court take action to instate a Parks Board of Trustees. They believed that Brazoria County would be better served by having a Parks Department who would work with Commissioner's Court to provide clean, safe places for county citizens to enjoy. On February 20, 1982, the first Parks Director was hired, and later that year, the first County Park (Quintana Beach County Park) was opened to the public.

Currently, Brazoria County Parks Department manages and maintains 9 in-land parks, 2 beach front parks, 21 boat ramps and two sections of public beach. Quintana Beach and San Luis Pass County Parks offer R.V. site and cabin rental. Camp Mohawk County Park offers cabin and dormitory rental. The remaining parks offer day use pavilion rentals.

Programs offered by Brazoria County Parks Department events include the following: *Dunes Day* held in January; *Adopt-A-Beach Clean Up* held in April and September; *Kidsfest* held in August; *Ghosts of the Gulf Coast* held in October; and *Christmas Tidings on the Gulf* held in December (see brochure insert for more information). Programs offered to park patrons include *Saturday Night Movie Under the Stars*; *Saturday Fun in the Park*; *Dinner and a Movie at the Park*; *Discover Nature's Wonders & Adventures*; *Handmade Native American Pottery*; *Learn the Art of Target Archery*; *Kayaking* and *Friday Night Camp Out* (see brochure insert for more information).

## **Purpose**

Due to the rise in population and the increased concerns of citizens regarding their health, family bonding, and land conservation, the need to update the 1998 Parks Master Plan has been acknowledged. In order to serve Brazoria County residents to the fullest, it is necessary to reflect changes in the County's population and demographic makeup and document work accomplished in the last five years based on 1998 recommendations.

The purpose of this Master Plan update is to:

- A. Provide guidance for orderly and consistent park, recreation and open space enhancements in Brazoria County
- B. Provide guidance for environmental and family-based programs, including the development of new programs and facilities
- C. Establish priorities and recommendations for the development of new parks facilities, as well as environmental and family-based programs, based on the needs of surrounding communities.
- D. Establish priorities and recommendations for improvements to existing County owned park facilities based on community needs.
- E. Provide recommendations and guidance for the acquisition and preservation of quality open space and wildlife habitat in Brazoria County.

This document is intended to be used as a guide for future park and open space development within the County and has been approved by Brazoria County's Commissioner's Court.

## **Use of Master Plan**

This document includes specific recommendations for future land acquisition, park expansion, and park development to serve the growing population and needs of Brazoria County. Included are the following: inventory of existing facilities; the results of needs assessments; recommended priorities for actual park development, and implementation guidelines and a five-year action plan.

This Master Plan should be the basis for the future development and fiscal planning of the Brazoria County park system for the next five to ten years. Annual reviews of the Master Plan will be performed by the County to ensure that implementation is on course with proposed planning and to allow any specific changes to be addressed.