



HOUSTON
PARKS BOARD



Mireya Reyna, Elmore
mireya@elmorepr.com / 832-459-7761

Justin Lacey, Houston Botanic Garden
justin@hbg.org / 713-715-9675 ext.151

Alan Bernstein, TIRZ 8
abernstein@haweshill.com / 713-503-9421

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Credit: *Anthony Rathbun, courtesy of Houston Parks Board*

RELEASE

Houston Botanic Garden, Houston Parks Board, and Gulfgate Redevelopment Authority Unveil 300-Foot ‘Wild Texas’ Mural on Earth Day

Community celebrated colorful tribute to Texas landscape along Sims Bayou Greenway

HOUSTON – April 24, 2024 – On International Earth Day, April 22, Houston Botanic Garden (HBG), Houston Parks Board (HPB), and Gulfgate Redevelopment Authority (TIRZ 8) celebrated the reveal of *Wild Texas*, a new, 300-foot mural by local muralist David Cobb. Located along the Sims Bayou Greenway beneath the HBG footbridge, *Wild Texas* honors regional plant biodiversity. Project partners — HBG, HPB, TIRZ #8, and Harris County Flood Control District — exhibit their investment in Houston’s southeast community with this vibrant, eye-catching work that creates over 1,500 square feet of civic art.

“It was a joy to see muralist David Cobb out nearly every day, preparing his paint-by-number schematic that enabled this art project to be a true neighborhood affair open to all abilities,” said Jill Barry, President and CEO, Houston Botanic Garden. “I know this was beyond a labor of love for him, and the stunning outcome is a testament to his dedication. ‘Wild Texas’ has quickly become an anchor piece, both for visitors to the Garden and community members who use the Sims Bayou Greenway, delighting everyone who sees it.”

A team effort, nearly 150 volunteers — including a group of students from nearby Raul Yzaguirre School for Success Early College T-STEM Academy — assisted Cobb, spending over 450 hours painting the expansive space between October 2023 and March 2024.

“We like to call the retaining walls along Bayou Greenways our canvas. For an artist like David, these can be wonderful pallets to bring trail sections to life,” said Beth White, President and CEO, Houston Parks

Board. “Now, those who travel along the 20-mile Sims Bayou Greenway can enjoy this beautiful tribute to our nature and wildlife, while visiting the Houston Botanic Garden. We are thankful to our project partners who made this incredible display possible.”

HBG staff from the horticulture and education departments consulted on the plants and wildlife reflected in the mural. Through a most colorful depiction of the Lone Star State, viewers travel across a succession of regional ecosystems, from deserts and prairies to piney woods and oak forests. Sprinkled across the mural, viewers will recognize the prickly pear cactus, monarch butterfly, bluebonnets, American waterlily, and more flora, fauna, and wildlife.

“The TIRZ 8 board is honored to provide the funding for the creation and ongoing maintenance of the mural as the board carries out its mission to improve parks and similar amenities in its service area in cooperation with so many important partners.” said Sonny Garza, Chairman, Gulfgate Redevelopment Authority/TIZ 8.

The Sims Bayou Greenway Trail is a nearly 20-mile stretch of concrete hike-and-bike trails from Blue Ridge County Park near Hillcroft Avenue to Milby Park. Sims Bayou is one of nine bayous being transformed as part of [Bayou Greenways](#), a public-private partnership between HPB, City of Houston, and Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD), and in close collaboration with the Harris County Flood Control District.

To learn more about the Houston Botanic Garden’s living plant collections that inspired David Cobb, visit www.hbg.org.

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Houston Parks Board

Houston Parks Board expands, improves, and protects parks and greenspace in the Houston region. Since 1976, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization has utilized public-private partnerships and its extensive philanthropic, government, and community relationships to provide equitable access to quality parks and green space to the Greater Houston region. In addition to leading the transformational Bayou Greenways initiative, Houston Parks Board cares for more than 2,800 acres of green space and supports park projects large and small. For more information, visit houstonparksboard.org.

Houston Botanic Garden

Houston Botanic Garden inspires and connects visitors with a curated collection of tropical, subtropical, and arid plants from around the world that reflect the city’s rich cultural and ethnic diversity. As a 132-acre urban oasis and living museum with 1,000 taxa, the Garden enriches life through discovery, education, and the conservation of plants and the natural environment.

Instagram: [@houstonbotanic](#)

Facebook: [@houstonbotanicgarden](#)

Website: www.hbg.org

Gulfgate Redevelopment Authority (TIRZ 8)

The primary goal of Gulfgate Redevelopment Authority/ Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone 8 is to encourage the sound growth of the residential, retail, and commercial sectors in its southeast Houston

zone through: the purchase, demolition and reconstruction of property, design and construction of improved mobility systems, streetscape enhancements, pedestrian amenities, public utility system upgrades, adequate public facilities, and parkland & public space improvements. For more information, visit tirz8.org.