



## NEWS RELEASE

# Addressing flooding in the Cypress Creek watershed will require a combination of concepts along the entirety of Cypress Creek to fully mitigate the issues experienced in this area, according to a new report by the Greater Houston Flood Mitigation Consortium

*Cypress Creek is one of the most flood-prone watersheds in the Houston region, with significant damages in multiple storms and there is no easy way to address this repeated flooding;*

*A “third reservoir” in the upper Cypress Creek watershed will not reduce flooding in the populated lower watershed, but buyouts, channel improvements, land preservation, and regional detention can help*

*Symposium to be held May 14 to discuss this report and consortium’s 2019 body of work*

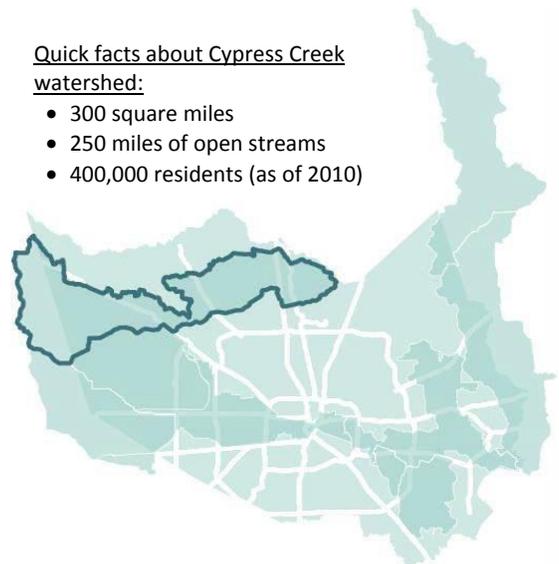
HOUSTON – May 9, 2019 – The devastating impacts of Hurricane Harvey to homes in the Cypress Creek watershed facilitated ongoing discussions among local agencies, civic leaders, and the business community for a “third reservoir” or other storage to prevent a repeat event during future storms. To contribute to that conversation, the [Greater Houston Flood Mitigation Consortium](#) has released the report, **Cypress Creek Watershed Analysis of Flooding & Storage Options**, by Rice University’s Severe Storm Prediction, Education, and Evacuation from Disasters (SSPEED) Center, which investigates the potential for flood mitigation infrastructure in the Cypress Creek watershed.

Cypress Creek is unusual in that in major rainfall events, water from the upper watershed regularly flows out of the watershed across the Katy Prairie into Addicks Reservoir. A “third reservoir” has been proposed as a way to eliminate this so-called “overflow,” which largely affects undeveloped land. The consortium’s initial report had raised the possibility that some form of reservoir in the area could instead be focused on reducing flooding in the heavily populated Cypress Creek watershed.

According to Consortium Project Manager Christof Spieler, “The main finding of this report is that measures will be needed along the entirety of Cypress Creek to fully address

### Quick facts about Cypress Creek watershed:

- 300 square miles
- 250 miles of open streams
- 400,000 residents (as of 2010)



the existing flooding problems that this area has experienced. Meanwhile, we can preserve the undeveloped land and in the upper part of the watershed and work collaboratively to ensure development activities upstream do not adversely impact people living downstream in this watershed.”

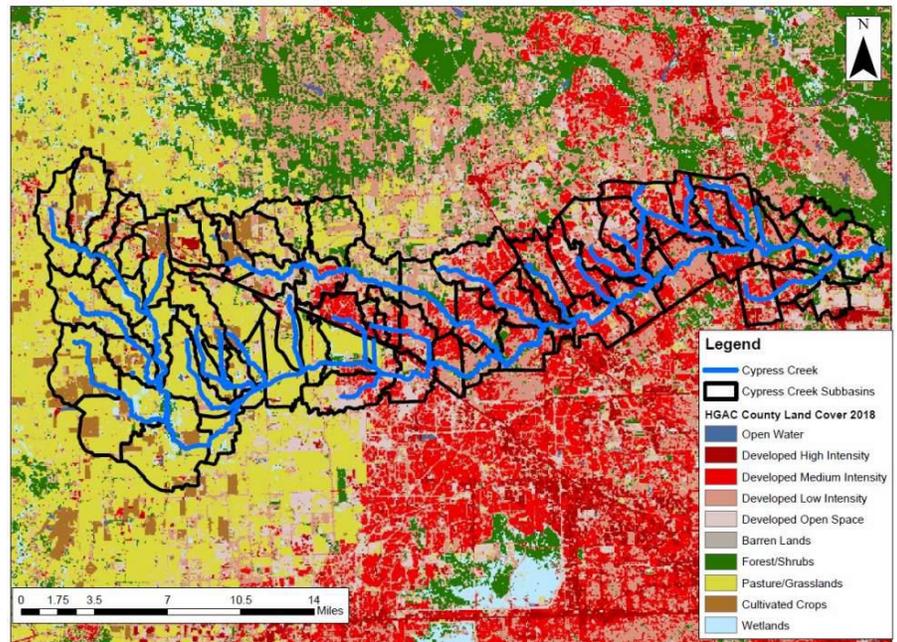
The study analyzed hydrologic and hydraulic computer models which provided insight on where the Cypress Creek flooding originates and the challenges in mitigating such flooding.

Ultimately the report arrived at three key conclusions concerning storage in the Cypress Creek watershed:

- ❖ An upper Cypress Creek watershed levee and reservoir(s) can reduce or eliminate the overflow to Addicks reservoir; however, these projects will not significantly reduce the major source of downstream flooding along the middle and lower portions of Cypress Creek. Flood reduction measures would be needed along the entire creek to fully address the existing flooding problems (such as 3 medium or 7 small reservoirs distributed across the region).

- ❖ Due to development, there are few viable locations remaining for major detention storage in the middle and lower portions of the Cypress Creek watershed. Other alternatives such as buyouts, channel improvements or a possible tunnel in the lower and middle watershed could be considered, alongside appropriate mitigation as needed. Harris County Flood Control District has allocated some funding for such projects.

- ❖ To prevent flooding along Cypress Creek and the overflow to Addicks from getting worse, the remaining undeveloped land and its natural detention/retention capabilities in the upper watershed should be preserved. When there is development in those areas, measures should be instilled to prevent an increase in downstream flows above the existing rates.



*The middle and downstream portions of the Cypress Creek watershed have become developed for residential and commercial purposes in the last several decades and the upper portion of the watershed is quickly being developed.*

Importantly, this study did not include Little Cypress Creek because the Harris County Flood Control District has a major study underway for that watershed.

A link to the full report can be found at [houstonconsortium.org](http://houstonconsortium.org).

**Symposium – May 14**

The Consortium will hold a public event presenting the findings from this report, as well as its 2019 body of work. The event is free and open to the public; registration is encouraged. Register at <http://bit.ly/2Wz6oR6>.

**About the Consortium:**

The Greater Houston Flood Mitigation Consortium includes the Greater Houston area's [leading researchers](#) focused on landscape-scale and neighborhood-level flood mitigation strategies that are feasible and have high potential for impact. Huitt-Zollars, a planning, engineering, and architectural firm, manages the consortium. The consortium is funded with support from [Houston Endowment](#), [Kinder Foundation](#), and the [Cynthia & George Mitchell Foundation](#) with additional support from the [Walton Family Foundation](#), [Cullen Foundation](#), and Harte Charitable Foundation. More at [houstonconsortium.org](http://houstonconsortium.org).

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