

Special  
Edition!



# SUSTAINABILITY

Students from the School of Business and School of Human Sciences and Humanities at the University of Houston-Clear Lake are working together in collaboration with the city of Houston to promote the city's efforts to improve air, land and water quality, and support renewable energy projects.

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# CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



*Best wishes as you soar into the future. Go Hawks!*

*William A. Staples*

William A. Staples, President  
University of Houston  Clear Lake

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ASSISTANT DESIGN EDITOR  
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Lindsay Humphrey

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**Address letters to:**  
The Signal  
Student Publications Office  
UH-Clear Lake  
2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 456  
Houston, TX 77058

**Reach the staff:**  
Phone: 281-283-2570  
Fax: 281-283-2569  
Email: [thesignal@uhcl.edu](mailto:thesignal@uhcl.edu)  
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Video footage by Brittainy Klappenbach, Anja Borski and Jennelle Henry

# UHCL Collaborates With Mayor’s Office

## Students Promote The Houston Sustainability Project

JASMINE GASCAR  
THE SIGNAL

Graduate and undergraduate students in Michael Brims’ video production classes are partnering with graduate students from Kathleen Garland’s seminar in sustainability class to create informational and promotional videos in support of a city of Houston sustainability project of their choice.

“Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states on its website ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)). “Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony that permits fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.”

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced it would award nearly \$100 million in grants to promote sustainable environments in 45 regional areas across the country. The city of Houston region was awarded \$3.75 million of those grants to implement its own sustainability projects.

Part of the city’s initiative with these projects is to help raise awareness among its citizens and to inform them of the opportunities available to them to help make the city more sustainable on a daily basis. The city is also hoping to educate the public about the idea of sustainability itself, a term that is garnering national attention with the development of projects and collaborations like the video project with UHCL.

“Sustainability in our eyes is

looking at how we can make environmental projects economical and equitable,” said Lisa Lin, sustainability manager for the Office of the Mayor. “This is important in helping sustain the city and making it more adaptable and resilient to change.”

Garland, lecturer in environmental management, said graduate students from her seminar in sustainability class are acting as the subject matter specialists and have provided some of the contact coordination while students in Brims’ video production and editing and single camera video production classes are acting as the technical specialists.

“The students are getting a chance to create stories that the public and student community will see,” Garland said. “They will actually get credit for this, so this will give them much more exposure to the real world than say a term paper, which only the instructor will see.”

Brims, an assistant professor of communication, approached Garland after the city of Houston decided to embed some of his own videos about the city’s sustainability projects on its website. He decided to engage his students into a similar project and researched sustainability courses at UHCL, which then led him to Garland.

“I love the interdisciplinary approach we are taking with this project,” Brims said. “It’s like in the real world where you have a team of different people with different angles, different expertise, all working on the same project. People learn to work together.”

Graduate student and project participant Jenelle Henry said her video project on the Rise of Mixed Use Developments in the Midtown/Houston Area was a real learning experience, not just in video

production but in sustainability as well.

“I never knew anything about [sustainability] before this class,” said Henry, digital media studies major. “I’m still trying to wrap my head around the idea. Initially I thought it was about recycling, but this project has taught me it’s a lot more. It’s made me more aware of [sustainability] and will help me do my part to help the community.”

Lin said this collaboration with UHCL was the first of its kind. Her role was to provide a landscape of the projects that the city of Houston currently has ongoing for the students to choose from and make their own.

“We want [the students] to show and demonstrate the value of these sustainability projects and show that they are economically feasible and that some are fun in nature,” Lin said. “We are increasing our recreational green space while addressing issues like flood issues, so we hope that these videos will show that [sustainability] projects are an asset to the community and an improvement of the quality of life for the city.”

Garland is hoping this collaboration will create the opportunity to expand on future projects that include not only sustainability but strategies for resilience as well.

“Sustainability is how you manage your internal systems and use of resources; resilience is how you plan to deal with external pressures like natural disasters, that sort of thing,” Garland said. “Resilience is a broader subject, but it includes sustainability; both are important and they tie together.”

The city of Houston is hoping that the partnership with UHCL will open doors for

students and for future collaborations.

“We hope to help the next generation of employees be exposed to sustainability projects and what the city is doing,” Lin said. “Hopefully we will inspire students to explore the field of sustainability and to look for opportunities for employment [in sustainability] in the future.”

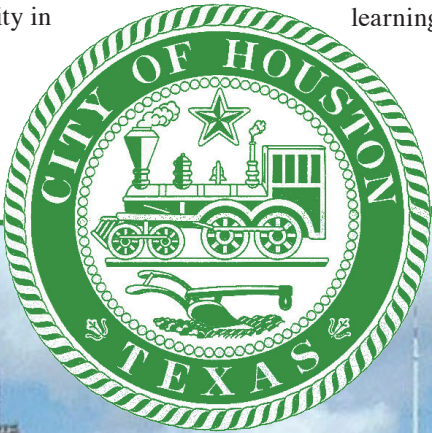
For more information on the city of Houston’s sustainability projects, visit [www.greenhoustontx.gov](http://www.greenhoustontx.gov).

For more information or to view UHCL’s sustainability video projects, visit <http://uhclvideo.wordpress.com>.

Scan to Go Online



Scan the QR Code to view the Sustainability Project videos created by students in Michael Brims’ video production class.





# Kemah: Preserving History, Restoring Communities

**ALICIA ALVAREZ**  
*THE SIGNAL*

The city of Kemah has seen many changes in its community. Some changes are due to growth in population and progression through time, and other changes are due to what nature brings to the Galveston Bay.

Kemah has been through major storms and has rebuilt, restored and recovered numerous times while simultaneously preserving the history of the city.

The city of Kemah began as 177 acres of land granted to a colonist by the Mexican government in 1824. Its ownership changed several times before it was sectioned off into town lots in 1898, establishing the town of Evergreen. Two years later, the 1900 Storm forced local families to evacuate and then rebuild.

The name was changed to Kemah less than a decade later to allow for the opening of a post office in 1907 because the Evergreen name had already been claimed.

After Hurricane Carla destroyed most of the restaurants on the Kemah strip in 1961, Kemah restaurant owners rebuilt, and many homes in the area were converted to family-owned shops. This area is now known as the Kemah Lighthouse District and is adjacent to the Kemah Boardwalk.

The oldest historical landmark is estimated to have been built in 1900. There are only a few of these older homes left in the area.

“Most of the landmarks have been destroyed by

hurricanes,” said Pepper Coffey, author of the book “Images of America Kemah,” which was written in collaboration with the Kemah Historical Society.

The Kemah Historical Society, created in June 2004, decided to collect and preserve the history of Kemah and the people who founded it.

One of Kemah’s preservation projects has been the restoration and relocation of the old Kemah School House, which has now become the Kemah Historical Society’s museum and Kemah Visitor Center.

“Kemah has no library or museum, so it has given people a place to bring their historical pictures and have them scanned and preserved,” Coffey said. “A copy of all the pictures have been saved on CDs and shared with the Galveston County Historical Commission.”

The Kemah School House was acquired by the city of Kemah in 2006.

“[The schoolhouse] was previously located along SH 146 and had several interim uses, including a boat shoe store,” said Rick Beverlin, city administrator for the city of Kemah. The Kemah School Museum is now owned and operated by the city of Kemah.

The two-room schoolhouse was originally used to teach students in first through sixth grade and operated from 1912 to 1949. It was restored in four phases, with the primary restoration completed in October 2007.

The historical preservation of these landmarks has grown and developed the community. The Kemah

School Museum holds pictures of the original founders and longtime residents who have shared their memories and history about Kemah.

“People, visitors and residents alike, have become informed about and appreciate Kemah’s unique and colorful history,” Coffey said.

Kemah’s history can also be appreciated at the Armand Bayou Nature Center. The Hanson House was built in 1895 and donated by the Hanson family to the nature center in 1981.

The Armand Bayou Nature Center has preserved the house in its original form, which is on display as the Hanson farmhouse. The farmhouse forms part of the Martyn Farm, which takes visitors back to experience what farm life was like along the Gulf Coast during the late 1890s and early 1900s.

The city of Kemah has new projects being considered. Among these projects is a proposed transportation center, which would be located behind the school house and would unify the historical school house and green-space/park environment.

“It is important to maintain Kemah’s history and landmarks, even within the context of economic development, and new infrastructure within the area,” Beverlin said. “Kemah has succeeded by being a mix of both old and new, tied to its history, and will continue to do so.”



HALEY FOLLETT:THE SIGNAL

The Hanson farmhouse at the Armand Bayou Nature Center.



TIFFANY FITZPATRICK:THE SIGNAL

The Kemah Historical Society’s museum and Kemah Visitor Center represents one of the city’s preservation projects.

# Kemah Past and Present



"THE BLANKETY BLANK BRIDGE" BY EVELYN STEBBINS FROM THE BOOK "IMAGES OF AMERICA: KEMAH" BY PEPPER COFFEY.

The community now known as Kemah started out as a 177-acre land grant from the Mexican government. It was established as the town of Evergreen in 1898.

Two years later, the 1900 Storm demolished the town and forced residents to relocate temporarily. The town's name changed to Kemah in 1907.

In its 115-year history, Kemah has faced major hurricanes, major reconstructions and increasing urbanization.

Through a long-term community effort to preserve its old buildings, landmarks and history, Kemah has built a sustainable community for its residents and a lasting getaway for its visitors.



Powered by a hand-cranked cable system, the ferry was the only way to get across the Clear Creek channel until a drawbridge was built in 1929.

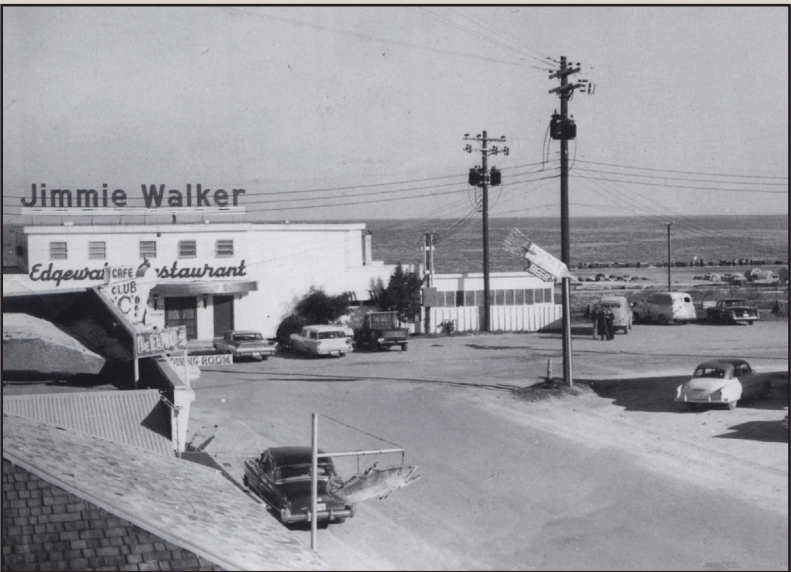


The old Kemah drawbridge can be seen in the background of this photo taken by Wendy Wachslar Standish in the early 1980s. Residents of Kemah planned their daily lives and routines around when the bridge would be down for crossing.

The current bridge over the Clear Creek channel was opened in 1986. The bridge's fixed clearance of 73 feet allows for continual passage of both boats and cars.



SHAWN DOMINGUES:THE SIGNAL



LEFT: Jimmie Walker's was a prominent restaurant on what is now known as the Kemah Boardwalk.

RIGHT: The Kemah Boardwalk as it appears today.



SHAWN DOMINGUES:THE SIGNAL

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The 2013-2014 SGA Executive Council wishes you

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For complete job description, scan the QR code or visit [uhclthesignal.com/wordpress/current-staff/student-worker-wanted](http://uhclthesignal.com/wordpress/current-staff/student-worker-wanted).

Interested applicants should send their resumes to Taleen Washington, faculty adviser, at [washington@uhcl.edu](mailto:washington@uhcl.edu).

Resumes will be collected during the winter break and a decision will be made in January 2014.



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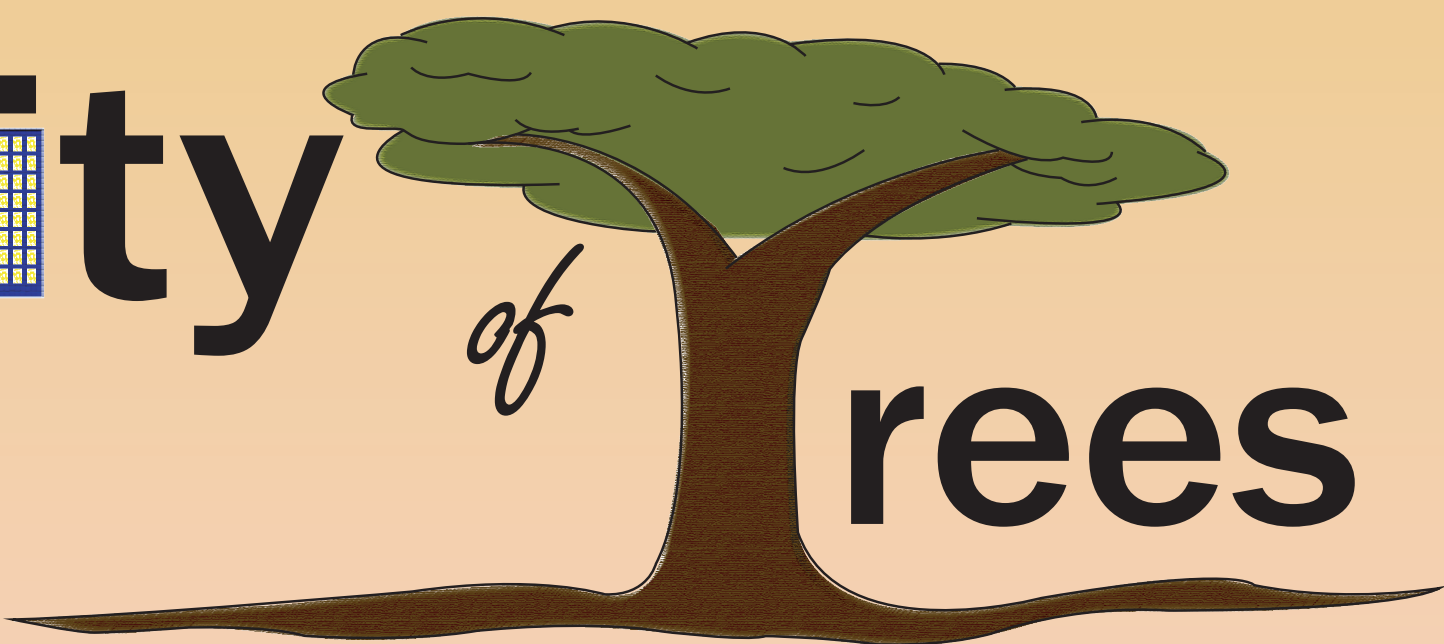
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# City of rees



## Former Golf Course Repurposed As Green Space

**KELSEY BENOIT**  
THE SIGNAL

The Clear Lake City Water Authority (CLCWA), along with partners, is planning a new flood detention system that includes an open green space and efforts toward tree conservation.

The plan is called Exploration Green; it will be developed on a former golf course that was purchased in 2011 by the CLCWA. It spans across an area between Bay Area Boulevard, Space Center Boulevard and El Dorado Boulevard, near the UHCL campus.

The new park created as part of Exploration Green will be a nonprofit area open to residents. CLCWA introduced a master plan at a town hall meeting Feb. 21 that shows the park will provide a number of recreational opportunities including: athletic sports fields, an entrance plaza, picnic and open game areas, and hiking and biking trails.

The park's primary purpose is to help with area flooding by establishing a wetland area with grasses and plants that help maintain and clean

water, along with an elongated lake throughout the property.

The 178-acre area that Exploration Green will envelope includes upward of 700 trees. Drought issues in 2011 resulted in some tree loss to that area, but the proposed project could save up to 42 percent of the existing vegetation.

"Tree conservation is important because trees produce a large amount of oxygen and help to reduce carbon dioxide," said Katie Hart, a digital media studies graduate student who is filming the project as part of a sustainability assignment in assistant professor Michael Brim's video production and editing class. "They also provide housing for the local wildlife. Essentially, they are an important part of the ecosystem and need to be protected."

Along with the preservation of existing nature and vegetation, CLCWA also has plans to work with the organization Trees for Houston to plant more trees. Trees for Houston was founded in 1982 and works to make sure that trees shade

neighborhoods, clean air, help to beautify streets and slow runoff. The organization has worked on large projects around Houston including Bush Intercontinental Airport and Texas Southern University. They are a nonprofit organization that plants and preserves trees around Houston, and in nearly 30 years they have planted more than 460,000 trees.

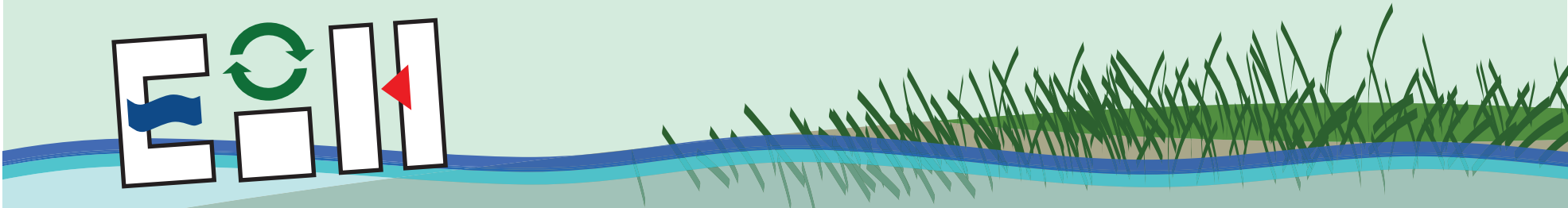
"This is a rare opportunity to plant desirable native species within a heavily urbanized area," said Barry Ward, executive director of Trees for Houston.

The two organizations, CLCWA and Trees for Houston, have plans for adding more than 3,000 native trees to the open area.

"The nursery area has just been completed, so installation of trees should begin in the next couple weeks," Ward said.

For more information on the master plan for Exploration Green, visit [www.CLCgreenplan.org](http://www.CLCgreenplan.org). For more information on Trees for Houston, visit [www.treesforhouston.org](http://www.treesforhouston.org).





## Environmental Institute Educates Community About Sustainability

**MALORI BIZZELL**  
THE SIGNAL

When students come to the UHCL campus, there is one feature that is unique from other campuses: its environment. UHCL resides on a 524-acre nature preserve along the Armand Bayou.

Not only can students enjoy the nature scenery, they can also participate in maintaining a healthy environment around the campus.

and another big component and a passion of mine is landscaping for wildlife,” said Christina LaChance, Water Smart Program coordinator.

The program helps children with different curriculums, such as math, writing and science, through outdoor learning. EIH offers various teacher workshops to help local schools use these programs in their classrooms.

EIH also features a butterfly garden and

Purple martins rely on what already exists, whether previously used nests or man-made housing, to nest and raise their babies. After Hurricane Ike destroyed the previous martin house on campus, Fendley built the new one, which is larger and includes a live camera to allow students to watch the springtime nesting progress online.

When students come to learn about the birds, they get to experience the purple martins in all stages of life and discover how the birds help the environment around them. For example, the purple martins help sustain life on campus by reducing the insect population around campus.

“Purple martins on campus are such a great teaching tool in addition to just having beautiful wildlife on campus,” Fendley said.

EIH is partially funded by the Texas Legislature and supported by state and federal grants. The grant funding allows EIH to provide more resources to the community and fund more projects, such as a new demonstration urban garden.

Students interested in volunteering their time to help the efforts of the Environmental Institute of Houston can join the volunteer habitat workdays every Tuesday at 9 a.m.

For other ways to help or to learn more



DAVID ROZYCKI:THE SIGNAL  
Gib Larson volunteers with EIH a couple of hours every Tuesday morning.



DAVID ROZYCKI:THE SIGNAL  
Shiela Brown, habitat curriculum specialist, points out a green tree frog to students from Clear Creek Independent School District.

The Environmental Institute of Houston (EIH), located on the north annex of the UHCL campus, was established to address environmental issues through research, education and outreach.

“Students are more than welcome to come to the EIH anytime to eat lunch, volunteer or to study,” said Rowena McDermid, master naturalist in environmental education at EIH.

EIH has many projects and programs that include UHCL students as well as the surrounding community.

Once a week elementary children from Clear Creek Independent School District come to EIH to learn the importance of sustaining life through outdoor learning in the UHCL Water Smart Educational Training Habitat.

The program was funded by chemical company Lyondell Basell and built by volunteers.

“[Water Smart Educational Training Habitat] focuses on aspects of sustainable landscaping, so that includes landscaping that conserves water, protects water quality,

a hummingbird garden that students and community members can enjoy.

One of the largest projects that EIH has worked on is replacing the wetlands in Armand Bayou.

In 2010, EIH began construction on a wetland project, which is now complete, to help sustain life in the bayou and help the water quality of the bayou. The project reached completion in September 2011.

The wetland is now a source for graduate students’ research and local schools’ field trips. It also helps to sustain wildlife in Armand Bayou.

“[Wetlands] improve water quality, provide habitat and also provide research and teaching opportunities for our campus,” said George Guillen, executive director of EIH.

EIH also has a bird housing facility on campus for purple martins that is used as a teaching tool for students and local elementary schools.

“Back in 2007, I had noticed one day a very small, wooden birdhouse, erected on

a pole, outside of the EIH building,” said Matt Fendley, university computing and telecommunications systems coordinator. “I immediately recognized it as a purple martin house; however, I noticed there were no martins nesting in it and took that opportunity to get in touch with EIH.”



DAVID ROZYCKI:THE SIGNAL  
Shiela Brown, habitat curriculum specialist with the Environmental Institute of Houston, waters the “pizza” garden. All the herbs grown in the garden are used to make pizza.



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