

CEC News (www.cechouston.org)

Wide Open Spaces – Guaranteed

By Lily Auliff

When you move into a subdivision that promises nearby “open space,” there are no guarantees – unless you choose a beach house next to Felton Preserve on Bolivar Peninsula, a 366-acre tract that is permanently protected from development by a conservation easement arranged by Legacy Land Trust (LLT).

Through conservation easements, landowners keep their property but donate or sell their right to construct buildings, subdivide, irrigate, harvest timber, etc. The easement stays with the title to the property, even when it changes hands.

On Felton Preserve, development, signage, and hunting will be forbidden; managed cattle grazing will continue.

The property is being protected as part of a mitigation project required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The owner is building beach houses on one side of his property, and conserving 366 acres of coastal prairie on the other side as payment for the wetlands that he will fill.

“So many mitigation projects require the developer to create wetlands, which never properly function, rather than preserve what we have,” explains Jennifer Lorenz, director of LLT. “This is a full preservation project – no digging, no removal of dirt, no unnatural filling took place to fulfill his mitigation requirements.”

The owner plans to market the new homes as being surrounded by the easement. And after most of the homes are built, he will turn the property over to the homeowners association.

“They will become the owners and stewards of this land, providing them with a direct relationship to the protection of the land that surrounds them,” says Lorenz. “This is a good thing.”

For more information about this project, call Legacy Land Trust at 713-524-2100.