



## MEMORIAL PARK FACT SHEET

### OVERVIEW

- Memorial Park is distinctive nationally for its size, location, and composition as an urban wilderness and active recreation park.
- At 1,500 acres, Memorial Park is Houston's largest urban-center park and is almost double the size of New York's Central Park.
- Located in Uptown Houston near the intersection of IH-10W and IH-610S, the Park is bounded on the south by Buffalo Bayou.
- With approximately 30 miles of natural and surfaced trails, the Park's 600-acre urban wilderness (southside) is one of the largest centrally located urban forests in the country.
- The Park is the only site of a former WWI training camp in the U.S. that has not been completely developed.
- The Park is a State Archeological Landmark and a State of Texas Legacy Park.

### USAGE

- Approximately 4 million Houstonians from 170+ zip codes visit Memorial Park each year for community and social interaction, wildlife watching, and recreating in nature.
- The Seymour Lieberman Exer-Trail is the single most used free public health amenity in the city of Houston, and the most popular running trail in the nation. The trail sees an average of 10,000 runners daily. Frequent users have included former First Lady Barbara Bush and athletes of Houston's professional sports teams.
- Over 65,000 rounds of golf are played each year on one of the country's best 18-hole public golf courses.
- Over 42,000 tennis court reservations are made annually.
- Facilities for jogging, tennis, hiking, biking, picnicking, and other activities are all available.

### HISTORY

- Memorial Park was the site of Camp Logan, one of the country's 32 World War I training camps. Over 70,000 soldiers trained at Camp Logan.
- Brothers Will and Mike Hogg purchased the land after the war and sold it to the City of Houston at cost. The initial deed in 1924, and all subsequent deeds, stated that the land was to be used for park purposes only.

- In 1924, the City of Houston formally established the land as Memorial Park, in memory of the U. S. soldiers who lost their lives in the war effort.
- After the death of the Hogg brothers, their sister Miss Ima Hogg worked closely with the City Parks Director to steward Memorial Park, ensuring that it was used only for park purposes. In her later years, Miss Ima formed a “Friends of Memorial Park,” an organization to help steward the Park going forward.
- The Memorial Park Golf Course was established in 1934 for \$184k. City of Houston paid \$29k and the Texas Relief Commission paid the balance. It was renovated in 1995 for \$5MM.
- Houston Arboretum and Nature Center was established in 1967, dedicating 155 acres in the Park to nature education.
- The Seymour Lieberman Exer-Trail was established between 1978 and 1981.
- Memorial Park suffered a devastating drought in 2011 that accelerated the loss of 50-90% of the tree canopy in some areas of the Park.
- Ima Hogg’s Friends of Memorial Park organization morphed over time and eventually became the Memorial Park Conservancy in 2000, a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to the care of Memorial Park.
- In 2015, a Master Plan for the Park was passed by Houston City Council. Designed by architectural landscaping firm Nelson Byrd Woltz, the plan focuses on further revealing the historical and cultural context of the park as well as providing extensive ecological restoration to strengthen the unique urban forest setting of Houston's largest urban greenspace.
- In 2016, the City of Houston transitioned the operation and maintenance of 1,110 of the Park’s 1,500 acres to the Conservancy.

## **NATURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

- A 2016 biological assessment of all living things in Memorial Park identified 79 species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish and 60 species of birds.
- This same report identified 267 species of trees, shrubs, and woody vines.