

The \$160 million Gambit

The Cypress Creek watershed needs to have installed ~25,000 acre/feet of detention along the creek according to the recent Michael Baker study. This is about **3.9 square miles of detention**. The study said the need for detention was “...immediate”. The reason: over-development in the watershed and no place for the water to go. As a result, we have flooded 7 times since 2000, the last three floods being the Memorial Day flood in 2015, Tax Day in 2016 and Harvey in 2017.

The recent Harris County flood bond vote approved ~\$2.5 billion for flood mitigation across all 22 watersheds in the county. While Cypress Creek watershed was allocated funds to purchase land in the flood plain, it was not allotted funds to build detention facilities. The Michael Baker study identified nine areas along the creek as potential detention sites. All need to be built.

There are plans by Harris County Flood Control (HCFCD) to build 2 small detention sites, one on TC Jester and the other in the Westador neighborhood. Neither of these construction projects have funds approved yet.

On the other hand, HCFCD set aside \$175 million in flood bond funds for matching programs with any government entity. In other words, if a city or other government entity, i.e. MUD, PUD, WCID, proposed a flood mitigation project, HCFCD would match that entity’s funds from this pot of money. Three years after the bond passed **there is still \$160 million in matching funds available**.

The Cypress Creek watershed is exclusively in unincorporated Harris County. There are no cities or towns in the watershed, but there are dozens of MUDs. A number of these water districts have considerable retained earnings that they have accrued over the years, some as much as \$20 million. It is our belief here at cycreekstoptheflooding.com that sufficient funds are available in the watershed for the immediate construction of a detention facility which would benefit all, if MUDs would work together. We do not expect any one MUD to put up a huge sum of money but rather like the rain, all put their share in the bucket. The county would then match our bucket of funds.

We are currently hamstrung in funding for detention by the necessity of requesting federal funds via the state land office. As you can imagine this is an agonizingly slow affair with many hurdles. The \$160 million is available immediately from HCFCD, it is part of the bond.

The idea of “self-help” along Cy Creek is a new idea. People are resistant to change. MUD boards could see the idea as outside of their purview; not true, flood control is within the remit of virtually all MUD charters. Or the idea may be viewed as “never been done before”. Never have we had so many floods before, either. If we wait for the state and federal government to act, we can expect more and greater losses to flooding, including the losses of recreational facilities built by MUDs with their retained earnings. And the losses of homes, business and economic prosperity in the area. **We need to act.**

Our first step is to discuss the idea among the voters and citizens along Cy Creek. Unless the idea has popular support, it is doubtful MUD boards will cast aside their hesitations and act. Please discuss the idea within your family, with your friend and neighbors and with your MUD board. If you need more information please contact us here at **cycreekstoptheflooding.com**.