Fort Worth Audubon Society

established 1941

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www.fwas.org

October 23, 2015

Richard Zavala
Director, Parks and Community Services
4200 S. Freeway, Suite 2200
Fort Worth, TX 76115

Dear Director Zavala,

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL TO NAME A TRAIL TO HONOR MARGARET PARKER

The Fort Worth Audubon Society (FWAS), as part of our upcoming 75th Anniversary celebration during 2016, wishes to name the trail on Greer Island at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge to honor the memory of Margaret Parker. We believe Margaret is deserving of this honor as she was key to getting the original Greer Island Nature Center & Wildlife Refuge (which eventually became the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge) established.

Under the auspices of FWAS (Margaret served in several FWAS board positions over the years), she brought members of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, Junior League, garden clubs, and Children's Museum to appear before the Park Board in 1964 to request help in finding land that could be used as a wildlife sanctuary. The Park Board granted that request and set aside 380 acres comprising Greer Island, the water around it, and a narrow strip of land bordering the lake.

Once the land was set aside, she worked with Dr. Warren Pulich from the University of Dallas to plan trails, then actually went out and helped mark those trails. Once this was done, she organized a group to survey the flora and fauna of the land. From then on, Margaret did everything she could to have the Nature Center publicized, and worked closely with City Council members and other municipal leaders. This activity resulted in getting approval of hiring workers for the Nature Center, which finally made it a reality.

Additionally, Margaret mentored untold number of young people (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other youth groups) who she brought out to the Greer Island for educational tours over many years. I can't tell you the number of individuals who I've come across in the conservation community that were inspired by her on these outings. Their stories always make me wish I were one of them.

Even though we believe Margaret's crowning glory was the Nature Center, she delighted in being instrumental in a later effort to get the Corps of Engineers (COE) to change plans that would have destroyed trees and habitat as part of an effort to widen and straighten the Clear Fork of the Trinity River through Trinity and Forest Parks.

After being enraged by the COE plans, Margaret wrote a letter to President Johnson and sent it by way of her sister who was on then on the White House staff. Her sister got the letter into the hands of a special assistant to the President, who advised her that local political pressure could help alter plans. It did not hurt that President Johnson requested that her letter be referred to his Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall. Emboldened by these events, Margaret brought the conservation community together, which got lots of news articles printed, stirring up the community against the COE plans. Eventually, the COE altered their plans and 20 acres were saved as a result.

On behalf of FWAS, I greatly appreciate your consideration of our request to name the trail on Greer Island to honor the memory of Margaret Parker, so please let us know if there is anything further we can do to help make it a reality.

Sincerely,

Michael Francis
President, FWAS
president@fwas.org