

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

THE CARPENTER CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

Q: What is the Carpenter Creek Restoration Project and why is it needed?

A: The Carpenter Creek Restoration Project consists of the planning, design, and permitting of an approximately 2.5-mile-long stream restoration project proposed for Carpenter Creek.

Sedimentation to Carpenter Creek, the sole tributary to Bayou Texar, dates back to at least the early 1900s when much of the surrounding watershed was logged for the prized longleaf pine, leaving the landscape exposed and vulnerable to erosion. Water quality declines became more pronounced in the 1950s and 1960s due to urbanization. This change in land use, from primarily timber and agriculture to residential and commercial, led to an increase in paved, impervious surfaces and water quality impairments, changes in natural water flow patterns, erosion, and sedimentation to the Creek and Bayou. Today, the creek suffers from “urban stream syndrome” that has led to bank erosion, downstream sedimentation, and water quality impairments that have negatively impacted the ecosystem and surrounding developments.

The Carpenter Creek Restoration Project will improve the health of the creek ecosystem while enhancing public access to this regional amenity. The project will prioritize improving water quality and connectivity while bolstering community resilience throughout the system. The benefits extend to nearby properties and contribute to the long-term vitality of Bayou Texar and health of the watershed.

The restoration of the creek may look different depending on local conditions and collaboration with landowners like yourself and will be designed holistically to support overall increased ecological value and community resilience for the watershed. This will be measured by total reduced sediment loads, nitrogen levels, and localized flood levels and increased acreage of restored wetlands. The Project hopes to create a network of destinations that will bring people to the water’s edge, promoting stewardship and conservation of the creek for all.

Throughout this process, the project team will be available to answer questions. The double-sided project fact sheet provides a quick overview of the Restoration Project and project map. To learn more, you can also visit the project website and stay informed about project updates at <https://www.ppbep.org/what-we-do/restoration/carpenter-creek>.

Q: Are there any benefits to me as a property owner?

A: Yes, there are! Property owners along the creek have reported past flooding, erosion, foul odors, and sedimentation covering up what was once a deep gravel bottom creek running through a forested floodplain in their backyards. The Carpenter Creek Restoration Project is designed to address these concerns and to deliver localized environmental and economic benefits that will positively impact homeowners like yourself while catalyzing watershed improvements that will extend these benefits to your neighbors, local businesses and future generations.

If you experience erosion, collapsing streambanks, falling trees, dense accumulations of trash and debris, frequent flooding or worsening flood conditions, please let us know. This project seeks to lower high water levels associated with storm events and lessen erosion around the creek by stabilizing the stream banks. These measures will help reduce property damage upstream and lower sediment accumulation, improving water quality downstream in Bayou Texar.

Water quality improvements will enhance conditions for fish and wildlife by restoring riparian and wetland habitats, increasing habitat connectivity, and supporting fish passage and the growth of submerged aquatic vegetation. Healthier ecosystems benefit everyone by providing cleaner water, more resilient landscapes, and a stronger natural foundation for future growth, often increasing property value in the affected properties and neighborhoods.

Historically, this creek served as a gathering place for all Pensacolians – a place of baptisms, a place to wash clothes, hunting and fishing, or respite. Our design team hopes to not only physically restore the waterway but also restore the beauty and cultural value of the creek and provide access for the community. Re-establishing community stewardship of this shared waterway will have generational benefits for all.

Q: Why do you need access to my property?

A: While the restoration itself may not take place on your property, we're in the early planning stages and need to collect survey data to better understand the creek's current condition. This includes mapping erosion, identifying wetlands, and evaluating flood risk. Access is only requested to the portion of your property that includes or borders the creek. This data will inform tailored strategies for restoration based on localized conditions, critical thresholds, and downstream effects.

Q: What will the survey work involve, who is conducting the work, and how long will it take?

A: The full data collection effort will take place in two phases and each phase may occur over several weeks as crews move along the creek corridor. No construction will occur during this phase. All field staff will carry identification and follow safety protocols. The full data collection effort will include the following types of survey during Phase I and Phase II. Not all properties surveyed in Phase I will require Phase II surveying, as the design advances from concept to more detailed design:

A. Phase I, Fall 2025

- **Design Team Field Investigations + Site Walk:** The Design Team will walk sections of the creek to identify outfall locations and erosion hot spot locations not identified via desktop analysis. Our subject matter experts in fluvial geomorphology and stream corridor ecology, (the "Creek Geeks" from the Watershed Management Plan) will conduct a rapid visual assessment of alignment stability and environmental quality, delineating endpoints of reaches. Additionally, recreational feature locations will be field assessed to understand existing conditions and inform design feasibility.

B. Phase II, Spring 2026 (schedule could shift)

- **Topographic and Bathymetric Surveys:** Property owners can expect our survey team to conduct topographic and bathymetric surveys along Carpenter Creek using specialized equipment such as GPS units and depth-sounding instruments. Our work involves measuring ground elevations and underwater features to help guide restoration efforts. The fieldwork is minimally disruptive, typically taking 1–2 days per property, and all team members will be clearly identified and respectful of private land and natural surroundings.
- **Cultural Resources Survey:** A small team from the UWF Archaeology Institute will be determining if any archaeological or historic resources are present within

the restoration project area. In general, this process will include a reconnaissance of the landscape, ground surface inspection, and small test unit excavations. These "shovel test" are spaced close to 100 ft. apart, measure 1.5 x 1.5 ft. wide, and are 3 ft. deep. The archaeologists will screen the soil from these excavations. Any diagnostic artifacts found, such as pottery fragments or building materials, will be taken to the University's lab on campus for cataloging and analysis. They will also examine the soil layers, known as stratigraphy, to understand past human activity and assess if the area has been disturbed. Once each shovel test is documented, they will refill the holes with the soil that was removed. The survey's duration will vary from less than a day to a few days, depending on the size of the lot and the number of shovel tests required. These explorations will not be occurring on all properties but rather in select locations that are to be determined. UWF is committed to clear communication and cooperation with residents throughout this process.

- **Ecological Evaluations:** During field investigations, scientists from Wetland Sciences, Inc. will travel in pairs, mostly on-foot with waders. Our scientists carry a pole mounted real time global positioning receiver, backpacks and a shovel. The three components of our ecological evaluation will all be completed as we proceed through the project areas.
 1. **Task 1 – Wetland Delineation:** We will locate wetland boundaries and mark them at 20-30 foot intervals with pink survey ribbons. The locations of the wetlands will then be digitally mapped as backup to the physical markers.
 2. **Task 2 – Protected Tree Survey:** Trees that afford protection under the City or County's Land Development Code will be identified in the field, their diameter at breast height measured, and locational data gathered via GPS. Each protected tree will be tagged in the field with surveyors' tape.
 3. **Task 3 - Invasive Species Mapping:** Individual populations of exotic and nuisance species will be located using GPS. No physical markings will be placed in the field. We will collect field notes indicating the species present, approximate coverage, and other pertinent details that will assist with the development of future management plans.
- **Geotechnical Surveys:** A limited number of geotechnical investigations will be performed over the entire project area. The preferred locations for these investigations are to be determined. Typically, field work consists of soil sampling using handheld equipment or a drill rig mounted on a small track rig or truck. The

drillers will advance a 3+ inch diameter hole and collect soil samples, and when finished, will backfill the hole with soil. This usually takes a day or two on each site. If the surveyors need to traverse your property, they will first ask for permission and will restore any impacts should any be made.

Q: Will there be any damage or disruption to my property?

A: Survey work is non-invasive and will be completed with minimal disturbance. Crews will take care to avoid landscaping, fencing, or other private features and will notify you in advance of any visit. Some branch trimming may be required in the dense forested areas around the creek to achieve instrumentation line of sight, and some temporary flagging tape and stakes will be deployed prior to survey. These markers will be removed after the survey is completed and confirmed.

Q: What is an access agreement, and what does it allow?

A: A written permission form allowing our team to enter a portion of private property for data collection. It does not allow for any construction or permanent changes to be made.

Q: What happens after the survey?

A: The information collected will help develop a restoration plan. If future work is proposed on your property, you'll be contacted and asked for additional input and permission before anything proceeds.

Q: Will I be required to participate in the restoration project?

A: Participation is voluntary. However, allowing access now ensures your property is included in the restoration planning, which can offer long-term benefits like erosion control, improved drainage, and habitat restoration.

Q: Who can I contact with questions?

A: The Carpenter Creek Restoration Project is managed by The Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program (PPBEP). The Design Team is led by Moffatt & Nichol, with collaborators in Stream Restoration (Black & Veatch), and Public Engagement and Access Design (Waggoner & Ball), known collectively as the "Design Team."

PPBEP is the managing entity for the Carpenter Creek Restoration Project. Its mission is to restore and protect the Pensacola and Perdido Bays watersheds through restoration, education, and unbiased monitoring of the health of the bays, estuaries, and watersheds. PPBEP serves as a trusted source for residents, businesses, industry, and the community on issues related to preserving, restoring, improving, and maintaining the natural habitat and ecosystem of the region. Primary responsibilities of PPBEP include oversight, coordination with City/County, public communication, final approval of agreements. For more information or to discuss any concerns about the project or access agreement, you can reach out to **Zach Schang**, Project Coordinator, Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program, zsschang@ppbep.org, 850.595.0796.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

THE CARPENTER CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

ECOSYSTEM

ec-o-sys-tem

Refers to the interrelationships and interaction among plants, animals and other organisms, as well as weather and landscape within a particular geographic area.

EROSION

e-ro-sion

The process by which soil, rock, or sediment is worn away, often by water, wind, or human activity, and transported to another location. In stream systems, erosion can degrade water quality and harm habitats.

ESTUARY

es-tu-ar-y

An estuary is simply defined as “where the river meets the sea.” In other words, an estuary is where freshwater meets saltwater. Estuaries provide nesting, breeding, and feeding habitat for a wide range of fish, shellfish, aquatic plants and animals. They also play a critical role in filtering water to remove pollutants, stabilizing shorelines, and supporting our economy.

URBAN STREAM SYNDROME

ur-ban stream syn-drome

Directly connected impervious surfaces throughout the watershed create a flashy hydrograph and have led to bank erosion and subsequent downstream sedimentation and water quality impairments. Fish and other aquatic organisms are usually harmed and their populations decline.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACE

im-per-vi-ous sur-face

A surface which is compacted or covered with material that is resistant to infiltration by water, including, but not limited to, most conventional surfaced streets, roofs, sidewalks, parking lots, and other similar structures.

RIPARIAN ZONE

ri-par-i-an zone

The vegetated area alongside a creek or river that provides shade, habitat, and water quality protection.

WATERSHED

wa-ter-shed

The area of land that drains all streams and rainfall into a common outlet, such as a bay, bayou, or a larger body of water.