

“Many years ago this site would have been a breathtaking Texas prairie.”

Today the park is planted once again with native habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Visitors can experience this state’s beautiful natural environment in the center of Dallas.”

– LAURA W. BUSH

The 15-acre park at the George W. Bush Presidential Center is a unique feature among presidential libraries and reflects President and Mrs. Bush’s love of the native Texas landscape, their longstanding commitment to environmental conservation and restoration, and their belief that the Center should contribute to the everyday life of nearby communities while enhancing the experience of visitors. The landscape, designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, contributes to the Bush Center’s ambitious sustainability objectives by increasing biodiversity, restoring native habitat, reducing the need for irrigation, and employing an organic maintenance program. These significant landscape achievements helped the Bush Center building, designed by Robert A.M. Stern, earn Platinum-LEED certification.

The Bush Center grounds are open to all: visitors can enjoy a one-mile network of paths punctuated by benches and bridges that provide places to stop and observe the landscape through the seasons. Partially shaded lawns frame the edges of the park, creating open and inviting public spaces that students, visitors, neighbors and staff can use in warmer months for relaxing, picnicking, and playing. A stone amphitheater supports events but also offers an everyday place to sit and convene.



GEORGE W. BUSH
PRESIDENTIAL CENTER
★ ★ ★

Park is open to the public from sunrise to sunset. Please stay on trails and leave wildflowers for others to enjoy. Lawn areas may be periodically closed to restore lawn health. Please respect posted signage. Guided group tours are available with advance arrangements. Inquire at 214.200.4300. Additional Information about the park can be found at www.bushcenter.org.

LANDSCAPE EDUCATION
MAP AND GUIDE



GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL PARK

THE BUSH CENTER PLANTINGS, TOPOGRAPHY, AND SITE HYDROLOGY WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A LANDSCAPE THAT IS ECOLOGICALLY RICH AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE. A CELEBRATION OF THE NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES OF NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS MAKES THE SITE A COMPELLING DESTINATION IN EVERY SEASON OF THE YEAR.

NATIVE HABITAT RE-CREATION



The Bush Center's landscape stands out from its context by design: it gives visitors an opportunity to experience native Texas ecoregions that once thrived in the area but which had in recent years disappeared, including Blackland Prairie, Post Oak Savannah and Cross Timbers Forest. The site was previously occupied by post-World-War-II housing that was densely developed, almost entirely paved, and conspicuously devoid of open green space. The new landscape puts nature itself at the center of interest for visitors, who can step away from the rush of everyday life in a major metropolis to engage all of their senses in the serene rhythms of plants and wildlife.

The site's topography is the result of the re-use of over 100,000 cubic yards of dirt that was excavated to make room for the Bush Center building. The new hills and valleys create areas with distinct balances of sun, water, and wind that, in conjunction with specially formulated horticultural soils, allows for the establishment of the different ecoregions. All of these features are designed to help several different kinds of plantings take hold and thrive on the site, but the design also anticipates some variation in appearance, since plants, water, and soils create their own micro-conditions, resulting in a subtle dynamism.



NATIVE LAWNS The nearly nine acres of lawn at the Bush Center are a mixture of short prairie grasses, making them considerably more sustainable than typical commercial lawns. The native mix—which includes Buffalo Grass, Blue Grama, Texas Grama, Poverty Dropseed and Curly Mesquite—is drought tolerant, needs limited mowing, and requires minimal fertilization.



SEEP Reminiscent of naturally occurring fractured-limestone outcrops, the stacked stone Seep serves as an outfall for water collected on the west side of the site, including the parking lot and native lawns. Stormwater is stored underground and slowly released through the joints of the limestone into a bioswale. A shady microclimate and fluctuating water levels support moisture-loving plants such as Maidenhair Fern, Wood Fern, Spiderlily and Buttonbush.



PRAIRIE One of the most widespread ecologies on the site is the tall- and short-grass Prairie, composed of Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indian Grass, and Switchgrass among many other grass species. The persistent prairie species cover both gentle and steep slopes, and are accented by seasonal wildflowers such as Horsemint, Coneflowers, Daisies, and Indian Blanket. After the establishment period, this native plant community will require no irrigation.



BIOSWALES A network of Bioswales improves water quality by collecting rainwater from parking and lawn areas and filtering contaminants through a specialized selection of grasses, sedges and planting soils. Large stone boulders slow the velocity of surface water, preventing erosion.



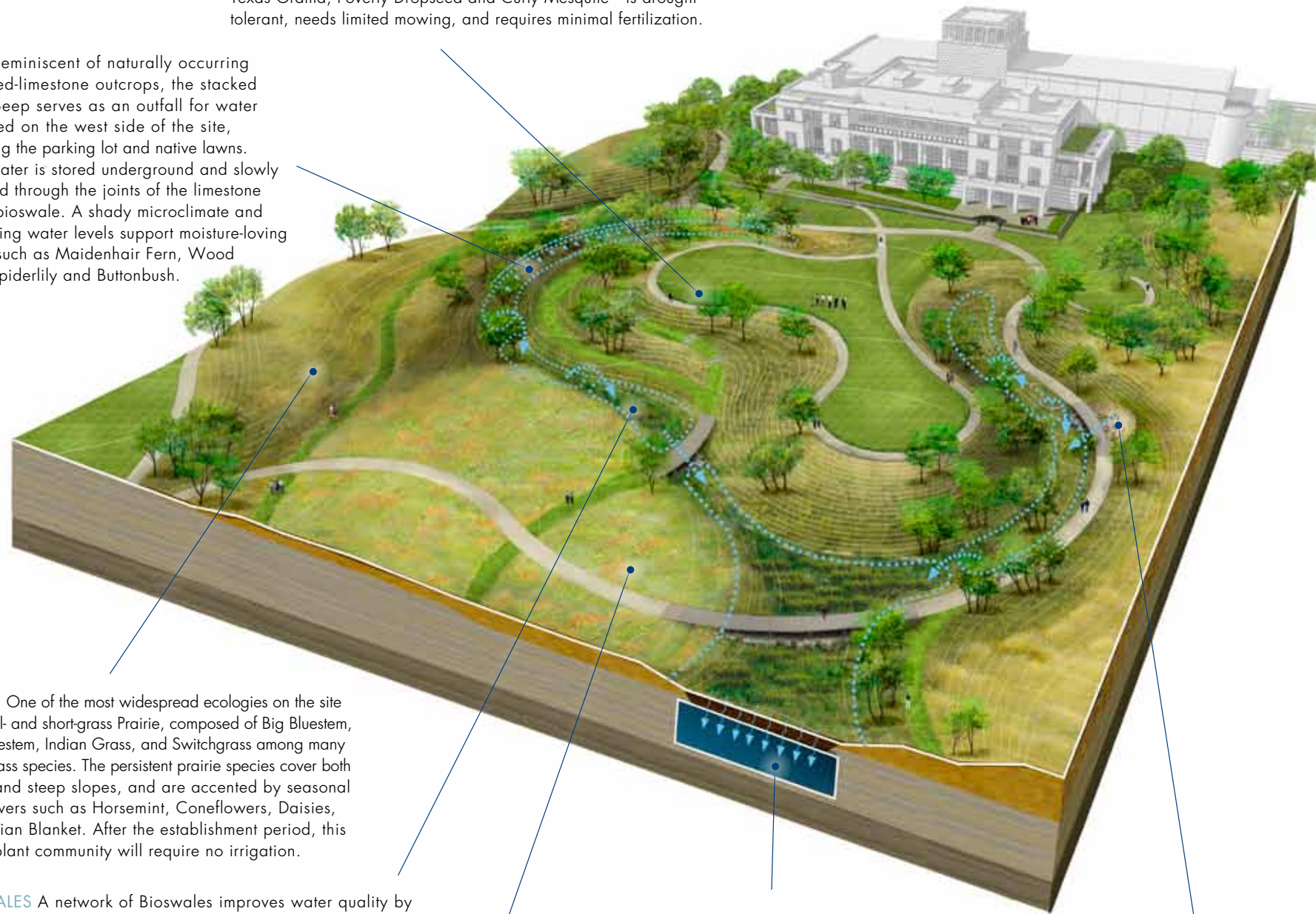
WILDFLOWER MEADOW One of the most spectacular early springtime events in Central Texas is the blooming of Bluebonnets. The Bush Center's Wildflower Meadow brings this display into the city for all to see. The Bluebonnets are accompanied by a rich spring palette of Evening Primrose, Texas Paintbrush and Scrambled Eggs. To encourage the yearly display of wildflowers, the meadow is mown in late spring and irrigated only in late fall during drought conditions.



WET PRAIRIE AND IRRIGATION The Wet Prairie is the central component of the site's stormwater strategy. Water from parking areas, paths, and planted zones is conveyed to the Wet Prairie in a series of overland bioswales and underground pipes, all leading to a 250,000-gallon collection tank, where it is reused for irrigation. Water levels fluctuate widely, necessitating a moisture-adaptable planting palette including Bushy Bluestem, Green Sprangletop, and Maximillian Sunflower.



FOREBAY Water from the paved service area and the building is filtered before it is released into the bioswales. The water is discharged into the Forebay, where large limestone blocks temporarily detain the water, slowing down its velocity and allowing sediments to settle out.



“We designed the landscape to be environmentally sound and long-lasting.”

By using native plants and a careful stormwater management plan, almost all on-site water is re-used, and irrigation demands are reduced by more than 50 percent.”

— MICHAEL VAN VALKENBURGH
BUSH CENTER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

WATER CONSERVATION



The landscape design dramatically reduces the site's draw on the municipal water system by employing drought-tolerant plantings and reusing much of the rainwater that falls on the site. Water from the landscape and parking lots flows to overland bioswales that remove sediments, and then to the Wet Prairie, which has been engineered to let water slowly infiltrate into an irrigation tank. The highly efficient irrigation system is designed to operate only in times of need. Water from the Bush Center building's roof and cooling system, which would traditionally be released into the city system, is also discharged into the landscape for reuse.

STORMWATER DIAGRAM

