

“Inspiring Exemplary Cultural Landscapes”

**3.9
Nature Areas**

Index of Nature Areas / Open Space Preserves:

17. Willis Coves

*The **Existing Parks and Open Space Map** on page 3-82a) depicts the parks, recreational facilities, open space and cemeteries in the City of Keller.*

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17.

Willis Coves Open Space

Address: 400 Rapp

Type: Open Space
Size: 4.5 Acres (Undeveloped)



Tree canopy shadows break up the sunlight, offering relief and drawing users into the wooded interior of this natural open space.

Comments

This park land is located in a residential area at the corner of Willis and Rapp Roads. The expanse is inviting with many swaths of tree covered, shady areas, separated by long, open sunny meadows.

The existing, perimeter sidewalk, which varies in width from 4 ft. to 6 feet and force narrows about a corner, should be widened to a generous 10 feet. The trail should be consistently generous throughout.

Shaded areas which presents erosion problems should be planted with the indigenous inland sea oats, (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), a native and shade tolerant grass species.

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The perimeter sidewalk is abruptly narrow, then wider, then narrow again and finally generous. Eventually, this should be widened to match the standard 10' trail width.



The transparent metal fence is a welcome acknowledgement of the park land. It also allows for informal surveillance of the park.



The trail sweeps gently through the post oak trees.

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Existing Amenities in Willis Coves	
Programmed Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail 	Natural Resources/ Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native post oak grove
Built support/ amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-street parking 	

Recommended Park Improvements for Willis Coves Open Space

Programmed Space/Support Facilities

- Consider educational signage regarding the age and value of preserving this oak grove.

Natural Resources/Open Space

- Widen sidewalks into 10 foot trails around the park perimeter, wherever existing widths are less than 8 feet.
- Correct erosion problems by planting native shade tolerant plants, such as inland sea oats.

Sustainable/LEED issues

- Place preference on the application of native plantings including trees, wildflowers and grasses.
- Introduce shade trees as part of the annual tree planting program as appropriate
- Add educational signage, perhaps created by children, to interpret native plantings.
- For maintenance place preference on the use of naturally fertile compost and protective mulch.

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**3.10
Other Open Space**

Index of Non – City Owned Open Space:

18. Bourland Cemetery

19. Mount Gilead Cemetery

*The **Existing Parks and Open Space Map** on page 3-82a) depicts the parks, recreational facilities, open space and cemeteries in the City of Keller.*

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18.

Bourland Cemetery

Address: 901 Bourland Road

Type: Other Open Space

Size: 12 Acres

NOT CITY PROPERTY



Comments

Cemeteries function as open space that provides respite to the hustle and bustle of our lives. It is a place of reflection where all citizens may benefit from the peace and calm provided by the appropriate setting. Historic cemeteries have the added value as places of cultural and educational interest.

Keller has two cemeteries: Bourland and Mount Gilead Cemetery. Although these cemeteries are not owned and maintained by the City, they certainly have open space value for the community and region, which is why they are discussed in this report.

No recommendations are made for specific improvements, other than the following:

- Provide dedicated trail connections to the cemeteries
- The City’s plans and policies should be constructed to enhance and encourage the cemeteries’ management to continue their high standard of care and maintenance of these important cultural and historic features.

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- Incorporate cemeteries as City features and destinations of cultural and educational value in the urban and rural landscape of Keller through appropriate informative articles, brochures and other various media publications.

Historic background

Aurelius Delphus Bourland, a native of North Carolina, bought land in 1873 and settled in the area that is now Keller. A veteran of the Civil War, he established a family cemetery on his farmland.

Five years before his death in 1904, Bourland sold 2.5 acres of his land, including the gravesites, to the citizens of Keller for use as a public burial ground. Additional land was later given by the families of Bourland in 1947 and by A. B. Harmonson in 1977.

The earliest known burial dates to 1886. ⁽²⁾

The elegant wrought iron gateway was a project completed in 1935 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The cemetery was designated and registered as a Texas Historic Landmark in 1981.

Sources: (1) <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txtarran/cemetery/cemetery-guide.htm>
(2) <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txtarran/cemetery/info-bourland.htm>

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19.

Mount Gilead Cemetery

Address: Bancroft and J. T. Ottinger

Type: Other Open Space

Size: 12 Acres

NOT CITY PROPERTY



*The Mount Gilead Cemetery, established in 1851 and associated with the adjacent Mount Gilead Baptist Church, is a Texas Historic Landmark.**

(*Photo Source: <http://\teafor2.com>)

Historic background

The Mount Gilead Cemetery was established in 1851. The land that it occupies contains a creek, which divides the area into two sections, east and west. A group of related families from Missouri originally created this burial ground from a tract of land first owned by Daniel Barcroft and Iraneous Neace. Having settled in this area in 1847 as members of the Peters Colony, the group was headed by a widow, Permelia Allen. Although buried here, her grave is unmarked.

Of the original 13 founders of the Mount Gilead Baptist Church, five are thought to be buried in the Mount Gilead Cemetery, adjacent to the church, although the exact location of all the graves is not now known.⁽³⁾ The earliest known burial is of William Joyce, in 1854. Other grave sites are marked by homemade markers and plain fieldstones – all indicative of the pioneer lifestyles of early settlers.

The Mount Gilead Cemetery became registered as a Texas Historic Landmark in 1981.

- Source: (1) <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txtarran/cemetery/cemetery-guide.htm>
(2) <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txtarran/cemetery/mountgilead.htm>
(3) <http://www.mgbconline.org/ourchurchhistory.shtml>