

# THE JEWEL of DALLAS

## *White Rock Lake and The White Rock Lake Task Force*

— *Susan Falvo*

**W**hite Rock Lake Park is a cherished gem that attracts visitors and outdoor enthusiasts from across the region. Located in East Dallas, we take immense pride in this stunning natural area. I recall my time as president of the Lakewood Neighborhood Association (LNA), which, with nearly 3,000 homes, remains one of the largest neighborhood associations in Dallas. Our membership meetings were always well-attended, but whenever the topic was the lake – or a speaker presented anything related to White Rock – attendance was standing-room-only.

We deeply love our lake and are delighted to share it with visitors from across the state. It's a place for family fun, friendly gatherings, hiking, running, walking, biking, birdwatching, and simply relaxing. And, of course, we can't forget Nick and Nora, a pair of bald eagles that chose White Rock Lake as their home. The community was overjoyed to welcome their eaglets and mourned together when one was lost during a severe storm. The memories, stories, and connections tied to White Rock Lake are endless, but the message is clear – it's a treasure that brings us all together.

I have always been passionate about supporting nonprofit organizations and initiatives that promote meaningful causes. Growing up, we learned that giving back not only creates positive, lasting change but also fosters a stronger sense of community. Parks, environmental preservation, and related efforts are perfect examples of how investing in these areas yields tremendous returns for future generations.

Many people may not be familiar with the White Rock Lake Task Force, so I'd like to share some history and insight into this incredible organization. The Task Force was established during Hon. Mary Poss's tenure as District 9 City Council Representative, with her Park Board Representative, Hon. Gary Griffith, playing a key role. Later, as District 9 Representative himself, Gary Griffith recognized, alongside leaders in the Dallas Park and Recreation Department, that White Rock Lake needed a dedicated advocacy group to oversee and guide all matters related to the park. This vision led to the creation of the White Rock Lake Task Force, which has served as the starting point for all initiatives and discussions concerning the park, as noted by former Dallas Park and Recreation Department Director Willis Winters.

Back in the mid-90s, Gary Griffith invited me to join the Task Force, alongside original members like Michael Jung, Becky Rader, and Joe Gillum. To this day, Michael, Becky, and I remain actively involved. The Task Force is composed of representatives from neighborhood and homeowners' associations surrounding the lake, park user groups, and organizations that support and fund park initiatives. Currently, the Task Force has close to 30 members, with new members applying through a vetting process managed by the Executive Committee and approved by a Task Force vote. Meetings are held monthly, typically on the second Tuesday from 4-6 p.m. at Winfrey Point, with breaks in July and December.



One of the Task Force's most recent collaborative successes addressed the erosion issue at White Rock Lake, a challenge also seen in other areas of Dallas. This matter was first brought to the Task Force's attention by Carol Bell Walton, a long-time East Dallas resident and former Task Force secretary. With Carol's persistence and the Task Force's support, the issue gained the attention of key decision-makers and is now being resolved. As part of the solution, the far-right lane on Garland Road heading west has been temporarily closed while work is conducted under the trail and road. A permanent barrier will be installed after the necessary repairs are completed. This project is



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a testament to the collective efforts of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department, the City of Dallas, and TxDOT.

Another key initiative the Task Force is actively working on is the Master Plan for White Rock Lake. Over the years, several important documents have been developed for the lake, including the Design Guidelines, Management Plan, and Master Plan Schedule. A few years ago, City Council Representative Paula Blackmon requested that we form a committee to review and update the Master Plan. Ted Ellis, who was the Task Force Chair at the time, led the committee and appointed me, along with Michael Jung, Becky Rader, and Carol Bell Walton, as members.

After thoroughly reviewing the 50 items listed in the Master Plan, we found that many were outdated, some had already been completed, and others were no longer relevant. This allowed us to streamline the list to 13 manageable and actionable items. To bring all these efforts together, the Dallas Park and Recreation Department hired a consulting firm, Dunaway, to consolidate the various documents into one comprehensive and accessible Master Plan document.

Currently, the Design Guidelines, Master Plan, Management Plan, “Where a River Runs,” and several other related documents are available on the Dallas Park and Recreation Department’s website. The Task Force is working closely with Dunaway and DPARD to ensure this updated Master Plan reflects the lake’s priorities and needs. Once finalized, the document will be presented to the Task

Force and shared with the broader community, including Visit East Dallas. Stay tuned for updates!

I hope this gives you a better understanding of the White Rock Lake Task Force and the important work we do. If you’d like to learn more about the organization or discuss any of the projects we’re working on, please don’t hesitate to reach out. You can also stay updated by following our Facebook page,



where we post agendas, meeting minutes, and the latest news about White Rock Lake. Let’s keep working together to make every day at White Rock a great one!

As the current Chair of the Task Force, I’m deeply invested in our mission to make White Rock Lake Park the crown jewel of Dallas parks. Alongside Vice Chair Max Davis and Secretary Betty Dunagan, I’m always happy to share updates on our initiatives. Feel free to contact me at 214.725.9300 or via email at [susan.falvo.sf@gmail.com](mailto:susan.falvo.sf@gmail.com). **ED**



**Susan Falvo** has held executive marketing and communications positions for over thirty-five years and is experienced in all aspects of the profession. Throughout her career, she has seen the relationship between marketing and community involvement and how community engagement efforts directly affect talent acquisition, employee retention, client relationships and the overall success of businesses and organizations. Susan has always been deeply involved in the community, in environmental efforts, in arts and culture organizations, and has served on numerous boards and committees. Ms. Falvo is the owner of Involved! LLC, an organization that combines marketing and communications with community involvement and social responsibility ([involved.net](http://involved.net)).