



FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Friday, May 17, 2024 Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Draft of 25May24

Members in Attendance: Ed Barrios Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Phil Huxford, Herb Myers, Dick Schaffhausen, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippet, Cris Tobola,

Members Absent: Oron Atkins, Ruby Lewis, Barbara Whaley.

Refuge Staff in Attendance: Lee Gaston, Curtis Jones

General Members/Guests in Attendance: Mike Lange

President Mary Schwartz called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

Agenda: A discussion of policy on memorials was added to the proposed agenda. This modified agenda was unanimously accepted after a move to so do by Marty and a second by Phil.

Minutes: A motion was made by Ed, seconded by Regina, to approve the minutes of the March, 2024 meeting of the board; this motion passed unanimously.

Interim Motions: There were two motions made since the March board meeting.

The first motion, made by Marty and seconded by Oron on April 18, 2024, was "The FOBWR board approves the application to the Knobloch Family Foundation for a grant of \$700,000 to be used for the purchase of the Smith Estate in Brazoria County". A call for voting has resulted in six "yea" responses, a majority, and thus this motion passed. Five board members did not vote. A motion was made by Marty, seconded by Phil, to amend the above motion to add \$50,000 to the grant, reading "The FOBWR board approves the application to the Knobloch Family Foundation for a grant of \$750,000 to be used for the purchase of the Smith Estate in Brazoria County". This amended motion passed unanimously by the board members present.

The second motion, made by Marty and seconded by Dick on April 23, 2024, is "The FOBWR board approves the application to the Horizon Foundation for a grant of \$700,000 to be used toward the purchase of the Smith Estate in Brazoria County". Mary called the question at this board meeting; the motion was unanimously approved.

Grant Activity: Marty processed the 2024 Phillips66 \$12,000 grant request for our Birds-of-Prey program on March 26th as per the instructions of Jessica Follett. Phillips uses Benevity Causes to administer their grants. As of this board meeting, notice of approval has not been received. An inquiry to the delay was made on May 10th; a response from Benevity should be forthcoming. An inquiry as to the status of our application was sent on May 15th to Jessica Follett of Phillips 66. [Note: on May 22nd we were notified that this grant had been accepted.]

Bass Pro declined our request for a \$5,000 grant to buy kayaks. We will apply again for their next round of application solicitations.

Land Acquisition: Mike Lange

Progress is stalled on closing of the L-shaped tract on the corner of FM2918 and CR306 because the FWS regional office is short-staffed on realty specialists. Funds to purchase are available, including \$10,000 from a FOBWR grant.

Title issues on the 1,600-acre Burr tract are being resolved, pending clarification of the scope of work. This land will be a conservation easement, not a fee-title purchase.

The adjoining McNeill II tract, 13,000 acres on the north side of San Bernard River, is under purchase price negotiation.

Purchase of the Brenda Smith estate, an ~390 rectangular slice of woodland with a southern boundary along FM2004 is essentially funded (North American Wetlands \$1.6 million, Knoblock Foundation \$750k, Horizon Foundation \$700K). the next step is for the USFWS to propose a contract.

The Oyster Creek Limited Partnership land, 57 acres which bridges the above Smith Estate and Dow Woods, is now under contract.

Refuge Update: Curtis Jones reported that a meeting was held with the US Corps of Engineers to build up Dressing Point Island by constructing a break water around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the island and raising its elevation. The island has shrunk two acres and is now about four acres. The Complex is also working with the Corps to armor the shores of the intracoastal canal.

Lee Gaston noted that rice farming on the northern section of the Brazoria NWR is helping to restore the natural sheet flow of water toward the coast.

Memorials: FOBWR periodically receives donations in memory of someone who has died and held our refuges in high regard; usually these people were active volunteers. Two such gifts, totaling \$1,067.71 are now being held in a reserved fund pending a decision by the board on their disbursement. This money is from friends and family of Barbara Burkhardt and Larry Lewis.

Discussion expressed differing opinions on how to handle such gifts, from placing the money of general funds to establishing a memorial area. Specific thoughts include benches with a plaque, planting a tree, a plaque where names of deceased volunteers are added, and a digital display. It was noted that at one time refuge protocol discouraged memorials. **Curtis will check on the current policy of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and report back to this board.**

Action Items are listed at the end of these minutes. New action items are **highlighted in yellow** throughout these minutes. Items completed or removed are:

- The TDECU Foundation focuses on supporting public events, rather than capital projects such as a stream trailer. They will be approached in the fall to be a sponsor of Migration Celebration.
- Our web pages has been redone to allow targeted donations.
- IDrive has been set up to store archived materials from individual personal computers.
- Maturing CDs in our Merrill Lynch account will be reinvested in money market funds.

Treasurer's Report: The April, 2024 Financial Report is attached to the end of these minutes. Regina noted that, pending a donation from Lisa Pauls, the ~\$2,000 grant from Phillips 66, and the return of the \$500 deposit on the rental of the MacLean Park pavilion, this year's Migration Celebration will be a break even event.

Other major expenses during the last two months were the stocking of the lake at Cannan Bend and our insurance premium. Our Merrill Lynch account yielded \$4,259.19 YTD in interest.

The night out at La Madaline yielded \$63.

Environmental Education: Mickey noted that Brazosport College has many unused microscopes that can be donated to us. They include those with 20X and 40X magnification and at least one projecting microscope. Lee will pick up these microscopes and store at the Discovery Center.

Web and Social Media: no report

Maintenance Committee: no report

Capital Projects: no report.

Birds of Prey: Phil reported that next week's program in Needville will complete this season of school Birds-of-Prey programs. 66 programs were held at 40 schools and six civic events. An additional program at the Camp Mohawk summer camp will be paid for by Brazoria County.

Phil announced that he will retire in two years, which will mark 25 years of his leadership with this raptor program.

Outreach: New young alligators are needed to replace our alligators that are outgrowing practical use for hands-on demonstrations. Lee needs to obtain an educational permit for our alligators. Pill will put Lee in contact with Chris Dieter of the Crocodile Encounter in Alvin to arrange for the transfer of the two large alligators housed by Ruby.

Membership: Mickey nothing new

2024 Migration Celebration: An analysis of the 2024 Migration Celebration was sent to the Planning Committee and Members of the Board. For the record, this report is attached to the end of these minutes. The MacLean Park pavilion has been reserved for April 12, 2025.

The board decided that any sales of items from our Nature Store throughout the year would be credited as Migration Celebration income.

Next Meeting July 19th, 2024 at GCBO starting at noon.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 pm

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register May 17, 2024				
Action Item	Who? Date Started	Due Date	Status	Comments
Develop text on FOBWR history for website	Ed Barrios	TBD	Fixin to	Ed has gathered old newsletters and will use this as the basis for this history
Develop a Succession Plan	Mickey	TBD	Researched succession planning; no further action	The NWRA held a webinar on this subject on September 20, 2023
Refresh the Discovery Center Display	Phil, Cris	not specified	Ongoing	The work to date (Oct23) has been paid for. Looking to add coyote and perhaps another specimen. Need a check for invoice from FWS; for a mount ready to go; taxidermist Mark Allison; \$1500 next snake and otter;
Master Contact Spreadsheet	Ed	Before MC24		Construct a searchable file of FOBWR contacts, e.g., corporate sponsors and donors, sponsors and participants for MC, BoP, ATFN, members, volunteers, outreach.

			Marty and Lisa have given lists to Ed. Ed is in the process of combining all contact lists.
Design concept for B. Burkhart memorial	Ed and Phil	\$840 in donations have been received.	<p>Ideas considered and rejected include a memorial entrance arch for the BWT pollinator garden, a granite bench with an etched design, a concrete bench with bench with imbedded tiles, and a stained glass hanging. Need a proposal to cover all deceased volunteers. Phil needs to look at site on BNWR, draw up a design.</p> <p>Funded memorials for deceased volunteers become problematic as the numbers increase. A policy is needed.</p>
Create informational PowerPoint presentation on refuges & FOBWR to present to community organizations/groups	Mary Curtis	Summer of 2024	<p>Mary will develop a new 15-min PPT with segments of drone footage if permitted. Mike Mullens is willing to fly his drone.</p> <p>Flying drones over refuge property is becoming more restrictive; Curtis will confirm current policy.</p>
Investigate using our webpage to serve as an archive	Dick and Cris Tobola	Report at Nov. 10, 2023 board meeting	<p>The latest thinking is to archive the materials on our website. No need to restrict accessibility. Jan, 2024 still looking into it</p> <p>Fat Cow no longer provides library</p>

service. The current protocol requires access to individual computers. Microsoft One Drive; \$99 a year up to six users; other friends groups using google drop box; this serves episodic events but is not a library. Do we need to hire someone to build? Need off the shelf program that would be updated. Need to develop the hierarchy

Check out the cost of a UV film to prevent sunlight degradation of the DC display	Marty	Report at Nov. 2024 board meeting	Film would be preferable to blinds Marty found films are available at several Houston outlets.
Determine if FOBWR should pursue a grant for engineering Salt Lake breakwater	Brian and Bryar	On or before Jan24 board meeting	Instigated by rejection of our grant application to Galveston Bay Foundation. 1/24 Need to apply for other grants for engineering Try again with Galveston Bay Foundation. Marty to check with Bryar
Add flora & fauna data to the report that maps oil/gas location on complex lands To satellite tracts.	Ed and Phil	Not specified	Bryan would like spiral-bound copies of the amended report. 1/24 Phil gave a few mucker surveys to Bryan Will be a separate doc one stack at a time;

Determine the desire of school districts west of the Brazos for DEEP, and limits to do this	Phil → Ed Lee in charge	Not specified	This is now the prerogative of Lee. Need to see how we would first increase our capacity. Invite Van Vleck to Brazoria. Can Angleton come back to a DEEP session?
Look into Google Workspace as a fundraising tool	Cris	Not specified	1/24 – Cris has not figured this out Dick signed up on Microsoft for non-profit; Mary checked out google website, needs to create a friends account
Update membership application forms	Cris	Not specified	1/24 Cris will work on it Work with mickey
Maintain signage on refuge trails	Lee		This could be paid for from our maintenance fund Hana has a list; we need to know what specific actions are needed.
Determine FWS policy on personal memorials on refuge property	Curtis	July, 2024 board meeting	
Pickup microscopes from Brazosport College	Lee		The college has excess inventory of microscopes
Obtain an educational permit for our alligators	Lee		

Transfer two young adult
alligators from Ruby to
Crocodile Encounter

Lee

FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT April 2024 Final

TDECU				\$49,346.87	*
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$365,354.32	A
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$100,000.00	*
Prepaid - McCoy's Deposit Account				\$3,859.88	F
ACCOUNT BALANCE				\$518,561.07	
FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS	Grantor	Total Awarded	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	345,279.33	198,051.97	147,227.36	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	157,000.00	111,269.39	45,730.61	
20130919 Poole Tract Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	101,572.19	48,427.81	
20220112 Equistar Chemicals - Motus Tower Fees	Equistar Chemicals	7,000.00	664.00	6,336.00	
20221101 Knobloch Foundation Land Acquisition	Knobloch Foundation	118,304.00	32,750.00	85,554.00	* C
20221129 Hershey Foundation Land Acquisition	Hershey Foundation	47,322.00	35,650.00	11,672.00	* C
TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS		\$834,905.33	\$479,957.55	\$354,947.78	
FOBWR PROJECTS		Amt Allocated	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	17,633.08	1,218.44	16,414.64	
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	36,742.68	13,048.08	23,694.60	
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	3,130.10	-	3,130.10	
20201231 General Donations, Membership, Etc.	Donations	10,606.21	-	10,606.21	
20210101 Barbara Burkhardt, Larry Lewis	Memorial	1,068.71	-	1,068.71	
20140403 Law Enforcement Restitution	Federal Court Fines	3,121.35	-	3,121.35	
20211112 Maintenance of Public Use Facilities	FOBWR	16,961.19	-	16,961.19	

20190601 ATFN 2019 Cannan Bend	FOBWR	211,436.29	180,082.30	31,353.99	* B
TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS		\$300,699.61	\$194,348.82	\$106,350.79	
OPERATIONS		\$44,013.48	\$4,472.71	\$39,540.77	* D
FUNDS IN TRANSIT				\$17,737.43	* E
TDECU SAVINGS				\$15.70	
TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts				\$514,716.89	

COMPLETED PROJECTS OR GRANTS

NOTES

*E Accounts Receivable/Payable & bank activity not yet posted

*A December 2022, Transferred \$100,000 from TDECU to Merrill Lynch; Oct 2023 transferred \$50,000 from Merrill Lynch to TDECU

MOTIONS

*B Mar 2020 Combined Hickner Memorial Fund \$51,570.00 & 2019 ATFN (net \$53,866.29) & added \$50,000.00 Hickner donation

Mar 2021 reclassified \$56,000.00 from McGovern Brazoria

*C Jan 2023 Per grant agreements, 5.3571% allocated to Admin expenses

*D Sept 2022 Per board approval, \$15,000 reclassified from General Donations to Operations

*F Merrill Lynch account includes two Certificates of Deposit for \$50,000 each. Maturity dates are June 21, 2024 and June 23, 2025.

Balance is net of unrealized market gains/losses and includes estimated accrued interest.



Analysis of the 27th Migration Celebration (MC24) And plans for MC25

May 10, 2024

325 Timbercreek Drive, Lake Jackson 1:00 to 4:03

Attendees: Ed Barrios, Kim Bennett, Marty Cornell, Curtis Jones, Ruby Lewis, Dick Schaffhausen, Tom Schneider, Linda Sluis, Mary Swartz, Regina Tippett, Cris Tobola, Barbara Whaley

Absent: Oron Atkins, Mickey Dufilho Herb Myers, Phil Huxford

Financial: Income at the MC event to date is \$14,250, with pending donations of \$1,958 from Phillips 66 and \$1,000 from Lisa Pauls (including her Merrill Lynch match) and the recovery of the \$500 deposit of the rental of the MacLane Park facility; this would result in a **gross income of \$17,208**. Donations contributed \$5,701 of this total, with our volunteer activities adding the \$11,506 balance.

This year, CPChem donated to Birds of Prey instead of Migration Celebration, ME Global and Dow declined their support, and there has been no response from BASF, Olin, Tenaris, or Zachery.

The net profit for Friends activity fundraising for MC24 was \$5,353, down from the \$6,190 realized for MC23. Without the minor contributions from the food trucks, the details are shown below:

	Income	Expense	Profit
Takeout Lunch			
MC23	\$6,080	\$2,247	\$3,833
MC24	\$5,815	\$2,179	\$3,636
Nature Store			
MC23	\$2,299	\$27	\$2,272
MC24	\$3,775	\$2,917	\$858
Bake Sale			
MC23	\$405	\$0	\$405
MC24	\$892	\$0	\$892
Photo Contest			
MC23	\$550	\$1,009	-\$459
MC24	\$995	\$1,058	-\$63
Totals			
MC23	\$9,334	\$3,283	\$6,051
MC24	\$11,477	\$6,154	\$5,323

Expenses to date (without the MacLane Park deposit), plus the pending charge of \$2,000 for the four Birds-of-Prey programs delivered during the event, are **\$17,697**, resulting in a **net loss of \$489** for MC24. Note that, unlike recent Migration Celebrations, MC24 did not incur significant capital costs (MC23 this included upgrading the sound system and new tents).

Future Fundraising: The Planning Committee will plan on **expenses of \$18,000 for MC25**. Assuming a gross \$11,000 of revenue from volunteer activities (Takeout lunch, nature store, bake sale, photo contest, small donations), this results in a **goal of \$7,000 from corporate benefactors**.

The TDECU Cares Foundation is a new entity engaged in community support, with a focus on event sponsorship, and especially events that could engage TDECU employee volunteers. The Foundation requires prominent recognition for sponsorship. For such recognition, the MC Planning Committee recommends a contribution of \$10,000. **Marty (as Grant Administer) will apply for such a grant this fall for MC25.**

The committee will use the *A Taste for Nature* sponsorship levels for other solicitations:

Platinum \$5,000
Gold \$2,500
Silver \$1,000
Bronze \$500

Oil & gas companies operating on refuges are an untapped source of sponsorship. **Curtis will identify corporate-level contacts at these companies** for the committee to follow with donation solicitations.

Mary, as FOBWR president, **will send a note now to potential corporate sponsors**, thank those who have given past support, and asking them to put Migration Celebration as part of their charitable community contributions for 2025. She will follow with a specific request to each corporation in the fall. These Corporations include BASF, Dow, CPChem, Freeport LNG, KBR, MEGlobal, Phillips 66, Tenaris, Zachery, and any of the oil and gas operators on refuge property. VW, with its new vehicle processing facility at the Port of Freeport, is another possibility.

Suggestions to increase private donation revenue include using QR codes on donation boxes and flyers collecting via Cash App, PayPal, or Venmo. This would compensate for less people carrying cash. Another idea is to create a Patreon or other subscription service that allows monthly donations.

Kickoff Fundraiser: Sunday, April 14, 2024

274 tickets were sold, including 15 at the event, which brought in \$5,480. Five left-over pork butts and one peach cobbler brought in an additional \$155. 249 meals were served, including 26 that were disbursed at Camp Mohawk. We had sufficient food for 300 meals.

Concern that moving the event to Sunday would diminish sales proved to be unfounded.

32 pork butts filled the GCBO smoker to capacity. Special thanks to Oron and Tom Taroni for rehabbing the smoker and power washing the area.

The preparation of meals began at 11:30 to supply the order for Camp Mohawk. Local customers began arriving before noon, with few arriving after 2:00 pm. Next year, our advertised hours will be noon to 2:00 PM. **Marty** will aim to **reserve the Maclaren Park pavilion for Saturday, April 12, 2025**; this would be two weeks ahead of the MC25 event on April 26 and 27.

Note: the pavilion was reserved on 14May24 for the Takeout fundraiser on 12Apr25.

Promotion/Advertising:

School flyers, personal contact, and social media contributed to 79% of the survey responses to awareness of the MC24 event. Facebook and our webpage dominated the social media responses; there was but one mention of Instagram.

Flyers are effective; we should thus have them ready for distribution for outreach events starting with the October KBR kids day in Houston. We had but one recognition of rack cards at hotels and only three mentions of rack cards picked up from libraries.

Print media had little impact on attendance, at least as recognized by survey responders. The one exception being Gary Clark's column in the Houston Chronical that induced recognition by ten surveys (~20 visitors)

Lisa Baker was disappointed that there was no mention of her publication The Source Weekly since she prominently promoted our event.

Future Promotion: Kim Bennett took photos of MC24; these to be used for future promotion efforts.

John Lochmann commented 16Jan24 "Having an Instagram, Facebook reel and TikTok short will make marketing to teens much easier. Have something the kids can look up (Facebook post with QR code on school flyer) and then share via social media." John suggests other items to attract teens:

- Climbing rock wall
- Skeet shooting (TPWD)
- TPWD, FWS or Life Flight helicopter
- Fire Fighting Demonstration- actual fire?
- More engaging archery demonstration. Compound bows, archery range with backstop.
- MORE ALLIGATORS- Bones, stuffed, live, all of em
- Display refuge heavy equipment (Bulldozer, Tractors, Tank thing, Skidsteer, etc.)
- Photogenic opportunities for IG. Selfie contest

To increase attendance, John suggests:

- Youth volunteers will naturally increase exposure to the event and marketing in schools is a great way to let families know about the event. HS COACH, NHS, Science Dept Heads
 - Capture emails during the event through free ticketing to send reminders and flyers for the event.
 - Increasing our presence on social media by scheduling content for the event and having contests, posting n a monthly basis and daily the two weeks before the event.
 - Cross platform posting on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X
- More engaging event layout
 - We need to group the events where possible by target age group
 - Shrink and condense the events for better photos
 - Two event layouts, fair weather and bad weather.

Migration Celebration 2024:

We had 907 guests clicker-counted for MC24, compared to 1,559 visitors last year (MC19 was a record with 1,809 guests over the two-day event.).

The low attendance at MC24 is undoubtedly a reflection of forecasted and actual blustery weather (Saturday sustained wind of 22 mph with gusts up to 32 mph; Sunday sustained wind of 20 mph with gusts up to 28 mph). 58% of those surveyed decided to attend only a week or less, with 18% deciding the day of the event.

As usual, 68% of our visitors came from southern Brazoria County (26.4% from Lake Jackson).

For half of our visitors, this was the first time to experience Migration Celebration.

There has been a steady decline in attendance by adults unaccompanied by children, reaching a low of 3.2% of attendees in MC23. But MC24 saw a rebound to 12.8 percent of adults-no-kids attendees.

The largest draw, at 32.9%, is “to enjoy nature”, followed by “child activities” (22.2%). Specific reasons for coming are the big three marsh buggies (15.9%), Butterfly Encounter (13.6%), and the raptor program (10.7%)

Volunteers: There were 66 volunteers who worked the Saturday and 57 who worked the Sunday of MC24. This compares to 84 and 66 respectively for MC23. Canceled kayaking (because of strong wind) enabled reassignment of a few volunteers, but we had no volunteers to staff the stream trailer on Sunday.

The new, online volunteer signup program, administered by Barbara, is a great improvement over our past method using an Excel spreadsheet. It makes it easy to check for openings and to adjust for changes. Barbara noted that not many logged in to check or change their volunteer status.

TMN-COT interns were not on the Master Naturalist distribution list. We will work with Melanie to insure that both recent graduates and TMN interns are included on the distribution list for MC volunteers.

Phillips 66 and Dow each wanted to know where their employees might serve as volunteers, but no such corporate volunteers signed up. TDECU's new community service program also asks for volunteer opportunities for their employees, possibly in conjunction with a grant to sponsor our event; this should be explored for next year's MC25.

John suggests reaching out to high school NHS staff for volunteers, as these students have a community service obligation. He also suggests that contacting coaches might yield volunteers. Another suggestion is to recruit science teachers, as they would draw students and their parents as visitors. Anecdotal interviews of teachers who accompany their students to DEEP programs suggest that few have been to Migration Celebration and most have never heard of the event.

Although it has been suggested that student volunteers be recruited, several past attempts to use both high school and college students have proved problematic.

Promotion/Advertising The push in Facebook advertising in the couple weeks preceding MC24 was effective, and will be repeated next year.

Possible new promotional activity includes the mailing of flyers (Ed to check on the cost to do this), handing out refrigerator magnets highlighting the Migration Celebration dates and a scannable QR code; advertising in The Facts quarterly glossy magazine, and using QR codes on all publications.

Parking: Oron Atkins could not make this meeting, but Curtis observed that everything went well with this process, save, perhaps, for the tendency for some to try to park in the handicap area. One shuttle driver had a lead foot; she will be assigned in the future to face painting, where she excels.

Vans: Four days before the event, Enterprise notified us that all 14-passenger vans around Houston had been recalled for a safety inspection and would not be available to us. They substituted five 7-passenger vans, it appears at no discount in price. This halved our capacity for Moccasin Pond tours. By cancelling kayaking (due to high wind), we were able to use two of the smaller vans (six passengers plus the driver) for each marsh buggy run. A seven-passenger refuge van was used as the hop-on-hop-off carrier to make the circuit to the San Bernard Oak and Bobcat Woods trails.

See each activity for specific comments about the impact of the use of smaller vans.

We will explore the idea of a hybrid approach, using small vans for the Moccasin Pond and trail loops, and two large vans for the kayak and marsh buggy shuttles. It might be possible to rent both sizes of vans at the Brazoria County Airport.

Photo Contest: The photo contest display remains popular with our guests. The new lighting arrangement enhanced viewing. One suggestion by Bill Huff is to increase the rope separation distance to lessen the touching of the prints. The quality of the prints did not match the quality of the electronic submissions, and some of the prints were not sized correctly; we will look for a better printer for next year.

The collection will be on display at the Brazos Mall in front of Penny's on June 22nd and June 29th. We have not been invited to display at the Center for the Arts this year.

Mary would like to engage a different judge next year.

Nature Store: Dick reported sales of:

Sold 20 Magnets Carryover to 2025, 28

Sold 25 pair of earrings. Carryover to 2025 34 pair

Sold 111 tee shirts total. 50 were sold at the April TMN meeting. Carry over to 2025 100 assorted tee shirts

Sold 14 Hats To sell during the year: 22

Dick will add brighter, butterfly t-shirts to our inventory, and more of the medium-size "blue heron/egret" t-shirts.

We will pursue the idea of selling at the November TMN-COT meeting, promoting as Christmas presents.

Information Booth:

The new posters worked well in visually showing activities to our guests. A reduced staff of six people was adequate to handle the smaller crowd this year, helped by the cancellation of kayaking, which occupies one person.

We could have used one more poster promoting butterfly kits to take home, posting at both the information booth and at the junior naturalist tent.

Exhibition Hall: The arrangement of four rows of six tables each worked well. A couple organizations thought they were only obligated to work one day; this point of participation for both Saturday and Sunday will be emphasized next year.

All exhibitors and volunteers participated in taking photos, tables, and banners down on Sunday.

Next year, volunteers will be told that they should not leave until 4:30, helping to clean up. No vehicles should be driven into the pedestrian area until the crowds dissipate. This includes food trucks. Those departing after 4:30 will be allowed to turn right after exiting.

Bake Sale: This year, there were about 28 people contributing bake goods, resulting in sufficient stock for both days and a net sale of \$892. A normal, larger crowd would have increased demand. The Lake Jackson drop-off point (Marty's home) was used by five of these bakers.

Sound Systems worked well, despite the wind. Announcements could be heard at the information booth and in the exhibition hall.

Butterfly Encounter: The new tent worked well, without having to install the zip-in floor. Large flaps along the bottom edge were held in place with 2X6 boards. For other outreach events, Tom suggests laying a tarp over the zip-in floor as it would be easier to clean. Children loved taking a "butterfly kit" home.

The traffic for the Butterfly Encounter was steady, but there were no lines, reflecting the low attendance of MC24.

Marsh Buggies: Using two 6-passenger vans per circuit enabled a full complement of guests on each buggy ride. Moving passenger to and from the back seat proved to be cumbersome. A return to the larger van for next year would solve this problem.

Special kudos for the refuge staff who worked overtime to replace a flat tire on of the marsh buggies, literally just in time board the second round of visitors on Sunday Morning!



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Van Tours: Comments by Jerry Eppner

The SUV van substitutes worked out really well in my opinion. Because they are passenger vehicles and not utility vans, they were much quieter and smoother riding. Narration on the Moccasin Pond loop was easily understood without using the speaker headset. The only drawbacks I can see is they reduce your hauling capacity by 50%, which was never an issue last weekend. The third row does mandate that children and agile twenty-somethings be asked to take those seats. Fortunately, I never had to try to put an old geezer back there. Maybe next year, SUVs for the Moccasin Pond tour and utility vans for just hauling attendees to event venues.

One minor thing, Moccasin Pond drivers theoretically have 20 minutes between trips to use the rest room and get a bite to eat. Not much time. Not a big deal for someone like me that has extra calories stored, but just something to think about. Maybe someone could get a driver's money and go purchase something so it's ready to eat upon the driver's return.

Kayaking: Cancelled this year because of gusty wind. John Lochman had repaired five kayaks that had holes in their keel. Ed has applied for a \$5,000 grant to buy new kayaks.

The Trail Circuit: We used the Complex's seven-passenger van to make the circuit to the San Bernard Oak and Bobcat Woods trails.

To increase participation, we offered a special button prize for kids, redeemable at the SB Oak after completing a special scavenger hunt card, where docents will be stationed. Promotional posters were displayed at the Jr. Naturalists booth and in the Information booth. However, only five of these buttons were earned. This experiment will need to be reworked. Only seven people walked the trail on Sunday.

Very little attention was given to spruce up the Bobcat Woods Trail. A check on the Friday set-up day showed railings and signs needing cleaning; an impromptu crew of three scrubbed them at the last minute. Power washing parts of the boardwalk was needed. The Pollinator Garden was a mess with no signage and awkward access to the plant containers.

The trail shuttle did not stop at Bobcat Woods because queried passengers only wanted to walk the SB Oak Trail. But a few others walked Bobcat Woods after their Marsh Buggy ride, expecting to be picked up by the trail shuttle.

These trails are gems of the San Bernard refuge, but it is difficult to get Migration Celebration attendees to prioritize the experience of walking them. One suggestion is to handout the trail trifold in the information booth. Our promotional effort might include a focused message directed to adult-no-kids visitors.

Stream Trailer: We went to great length this year to feature the stream trailer, only to have it sit idle on Sunday. Turns out the battery died around 2:30 on Saturday, rendering moot the lack of staffing on Sunday. It is a worthy education tool and should be staffed. Volunteers need to be trained.

FOBWR will build a portable stream unit that can fit in a 4'X8' pickup truck and stored in the Morgan building. Oron, Curtis, and John O'Connell will be asked to design this unit. It would have two pumps, one operating on batteries, and the other powered by 120 V AC.

It is suggested that this display be located next to the sea turtle exhibit where power would be available. These two activities are of particular interest to adults as well as children.

Fishing: This activity was staffed by three refuge staff. Stocking helps to insure that fish are caught.

Archery remains popular with the young ones. One suggestion is to have an additional setup for teens and adults, using compound bows, and advertise as such.

Air Rifle Moving the location this year attracted more participants.

Fire Crew trucks and target: We need to make this activity more prominent, including a banner to highlight its presence. It was joked suggested that perhaps the target be tied into a dunk seat, perhaps using teenage volunteers.

Bug Sweeping: Participation was slow, but steady.

Pond Life: One kid on the dock draws other kids, many who see this as they enter the refuge. The idea is for children to catch critters and take one to the projecting microscope. Trays to swish out the pond bugs were not provided, and thus it was difficult for kids to see their catch. Also, not enough cups and lids were provided. This attraction was understaffed and sometimes the staff did not seem to know the protocol. Volunteers should be provided the DEEP docent guide for this activity.

Sand Pile: This activity was always engaged by kids.

Reptiles under the oak mott (Ruby and Cris) remains a major attraction. The wingspan activity has become popular with both children and adults, we encourage the “whole flock” to join in. Ruby is working on getting new baby alligators.

Sea Turtle Patrol exhibit opposite the oak mott. The display had a TED with no signage and set apart from the tables where visitors were engaged. Wind created a problem with signs and some were taken down. Better mounting, such as that used for the posters at the van stop, would solve this problem. The graph of turtle nests was not apparent. It was suggested to upgrading the display to include a UTV with patrol equipment and adding a large screen video looping turtle nesting; this would require power which is accessible from the field office. Suggest a large poster to encourage guests to get involved. The small cards were a helpful give-away.

First Aide Service: The crew was totally disengaged from the visitors. It would be helpful to contract engagement, if not by the ambulance crew, then by volunteers, perhaps from the BC nursing school.

Portable toilets: These toilets were clean, and the supplied hand wash unit was appreciated.

Ruff Weather: need one for high winds;

Monday take down and cleanup: Those who volunteered to disassemble the campus on Monday were told that their help would not be needed. However, about eight volunteers showed up to take down and store signs and banners and the canopy. Curtis would like more volunteer help to take down the tents.

Exiting Traffic: On Saturday, one of the food vendors packed up and began to exit at 3:30. Marty stopped them; they said someone told them it was OK to leave. Likewise, a few volunteers began to drive through departing guests right at 4:00 pm. One volunteer drove her vehicle to her station to load

up; this stimulated a few others to begin to exit. It is suggested that the volunteers who park in the back be told not to drive before 4:20 to avoid interacting with pedestrians. The exit gate would not be opened until then.

A comment by Jerry: "Regarding exiting after 4:00, it was a bit of a hassle to have to turn left to exit. Added about 7 miles to the trip, half of which was very dusty. I could make an argument that turning right to exit is a safer alternative. Exiting cars would be in the right lane with parked cars on the left shoulder. That leaves the left lane for pedestrians and golf carts, and the last exiting visitor vehicles. When you get down to the last half dozen cars, it would sure be easier to turn right."

After 4:30, i.e., after cleanup, volunteers will be allowed to turn right.

Additional Comments by John Lochmann

- More engaging event layout
 - We need to group the events where possible by target age group
 - Shrink and condense the events for better photos
 - Two event layouts, fair weather and bad weather.
- Create, modify, update vendor request packets
 - Ask for a deposit from vendors
 - Require a % of the sales comes back as a donation or collect a flat fee. \$500 fee and 10% of sales over 500.
- Create, modify, update volunteer request packets
 - Create a marketing volunteer packet to target individual volunteer bases. School, business, individual and returning.
- Create, modify, update Donor request packets
 - Create a document to show the PR benefits of donation and explore opportunities for volunteers.
 - Create an ongoing donation opportunity for building and maintaining events.
- Social media marketing strategy
 - We need to get some awesome marketing photos of the main attraction events. Kayaking, Archery, Marsh Buggy, ect.
 - Create #(hashtag) for individual events at the event.
- Demographic data on attendees
 - Collect demographic data naturally inside of the event. Consider making it part of the event sign-up or ticketing process.
 - Allow participants to pre register for events online with a disclaimer that if you are not checked in (60 minutes?) prior to the event time they will be opened. You can make an announcement on the PA to let people know slots opened up.
- Educational binders for specific events.

- I'm thinking specifically about Bug Sweep, Microscope and Pond life. A laminated binder with the most common things participants will find/see. Even if they don't find it, they can learn about it. I'm thinking like museum style blips of information and cool pictures.
- Permanent slides for the microscope.
- Consider a paid Executive Director
 - Having a full time employee for the NPO will take a huge burden off of the volunteer force and increase the capabilities of the organization. Multiple events, increased donations and year round support for ongoing activities.

Members & Tentative Roles – Ed Barrios

Ed Barrios – Chair

Curtis Jones – Refuge representative

Marty Cornell – signs, information booth, fundraising lunch

Micky Dufilho – registration, Passport

Mary Schwartz – fund raising

Regina Tippet – treasurer

Linda Sluis – Exhibitors, Food Trucks

Oron Atkins – parking, golf carts

Dich Schaffhausen – Store, Facebook

Barbara Whaley – Volunteers

Phil Huxford – Birds of Prey, Sound system

John Lochmann – Kayaking, (sent update by email)

Herb Myers – Trails

Ruby Lewis – Reptiles

Cris Tobola – Social Media

Tom Schneider - Vans

Donna Jablecki, Becky Huff – Bake Sales