



FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

Minutes of the Board of Directors

Friday, July 16, 2021 Venue: Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Board Members in Attendance: Oron Atkins, Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Phil Huxford, Ruby Lewis, Lisa Myers, Kim Richardson, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippet

Absent Members of the Board: Herb Myers (excused) Dick Schaffhausen (excused); Ed Barrios (excused)

Refuge Staff in Attendance: Jennifer Sanchez, Tom Schneider

Guest in Attendance: Mike Lange

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 pm by President Lisa Myers

The **Agenda** was accepted.

Minutes for the May 14, 2021 Meeting of the Board of Directors, and the April 30, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board were unanimously approved after a motion by Mickey and a second by Phil.

E-mail Motions: Two motions were made and approved during the interim between the May 14th meeting of the board and today:

- “The FOBWR board approves the expenditure of \$402.00 for the printing of 1,000 trifold pamphlets that promote the use of refuge trails. Funds will come from general revenues” passed with 9 yeas and 2 no responses.
- “The FOBWR board authorizes applying for a \$78,000 reimbursement grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service for herbicide enhancement of habitats of Black Rails, Mottled Ducks and other birds on the Brazoria and San Bernard National Wildlife Refuges. The grant would authorize an administration fee of two percent of the grant.” passed with 9 yeas and 2 no responses.

Discovery and Land Acquisition: Mike Lange reported that:

- An appraisal of \$106,000 was received for the ten-acre Poole Tract on corner of FM 2918 and CR306. The FOBWR \$10,000 grant from the Trull Foundation will be used as part of the purchase funding.
- At the end of August, the FWS will close on the purchase of 250 acres of the Speers tract that adjoins the Speers conservation easement donated to refuge in 2005. This property is a wonderful wetlands frontage on Oyster Creek.
- Funding sources are lining up for the 50% match (~\$679k) required to for the \$1,375 million grant from the Knobloch Foundation; all going toward the purchase of the 4,628-acre Peach Creek Forest (a.k.a. McNeil) Tract. NFWF would pledge \$255k from a migration account and another sum from NFWF Acres for America fund. The Brown Foundation has pledged about \$200k. The Mitchell and Hershey foundations are willing, if needed, to supply the remaining ~\$206k.
- Purchase of the 5,755-acre Kbar Ranch is progressing with the Department of Agriculture NRCS approving funding of over half of the cost of purchase and restoration under their wetland reserve easement program. This property, which adjoins the Bid Pond Unit, is presently only about one third forested.
- The NAWCA grant for \$2 million has been approved; this will allow purchase of tracts in the Columbia Bottomlands.
- The \$35,000 Damuth Foundation grant has been approved.

Grants and Projects:

- FOBWR has been awarded the \$78,000 Coastal Solutions cooperative agreement, “Enhancement of Black Rail and Mottled Duck Habitat at Texas Mid-coast Refuge Complex”. This is a reimbursement grant that will be managed by Woody Woodrow as project officer. It consists of arial herbicide spraying of woody vegetation in targeted areas, which will likely occur in the spring and summer of 2022. **Regina will create an account to receive reimbursement from the FWS program.**

Contract with Ernest Cook: Marty moved that “**The FOBWR board approves a Consultant Agreement with Ernest Cook, modified to require approval by the FOBWR treasurer of expenses over \$200, and to cover his activity relating to the Columbia Bottomlands Forest.**” The motion was seconded by Kim and unanimously approved.

Refuge Update: Jennifer

- Beginning August 15th, Ivy Road south of Bobcat Woods will be closed for about three weeks while culvert structures are installed to replace low water crossing. The task is to be completed before the opening of teal season mid-September.
- LyondellBasell, Chocolate Bayou, will be holding a volunteer day at the Brazoria NWR on September 19th; 50 to 75 volunteers are expected to participate in a half-day cleanup. Jennifer will offer the support of FOBWR to supply food and beverage.
- Considerable progress has been made in the eradication of Apple Snails from Smith Lake in Hudson Woods, due to two members of the American Conservation Experience (Ethan and Will) and Friends volunteers.
- Concept signs for the Cedar Lake Plantation Trail have been send to a vendor, with final drafts expected mid-July.
- Signs for Big Slough Trail are being made and should be received in August. Tom will provide an updated placement map to Oron.
- Jennifer, Tom, and Lisa are designing signs for Cannan Bend, including six, 2’X3’ signs for the kiosk.
- Efforts have resumed to expand Big Boggy NWR, targeted about 20,000 acres from the adjoining Hawkins ranch.
- Jennifer has asked that FOBWR provide public comment to the US Army Corps of Engineers plan, to be published in August, to modify the Cowtrap Lakes area for enhanced protection from hurricanes. Concern is the ecological impact on the SBNWR and insurance that refuge boundaries will be protected and that the proposed shallow dredging will have minimal damage on oyster reefs. The complex would also prefer that spoilage be spread in a thin layer rather than mounding.
- The FWS is targeting the first of October to be fully open to pre-Covid status, with partial opening occurring in the interim. This will allow Refuge Saturday events.
- A workday is scheduled at the Discovery Center for next Wednesday, July 21st.

New Friends Reporting Requirements. The impact of the new Friends Policy protocol on Friends reporting requirements was reviewed. The financial part of the report is to be based on IRS Form 990 data, which is typically not available until May of the following year. The protocol also requires an annual budget. **Marty will forward the full policy to all board members.**

Monthly Refuge Walk:

- The July kayak tour will be postponed to the fall because of the summer heat.

Financial update: Treasurer Regina Tippettt reviewed the June, 2021 Financial Statement (attached at the end of these minutes), noting that may final payment was made on our Cedar Lake grant. Since our account at TDCEU is down to \$78k, Regina will transfer \$50k from our Merrill Lynch account to TDCEU; this will also lower the funds at Merrill Lynch to under the insured upper boundary of \$250k.

Regina expressed concern over spending of money from our fourth and fifth Houston Endowment grants on activity in geographic areas not specifically designated in the grants, i.e., outside of Brazoria and Fort Bend Counties. The grants are intended to support pre-purchase discovery research on lands in the Columbia Bottomlands Forest; such property extends beyond Brazoria and Fort Bend Counts into adjoining Wharton and Matagorda Counties. Neither the fourth nor the fifth Houston Endowment grants are clear on geographical constraints, although the preceding three such grants constrained reimbursable activity to Brazoria and Fort Bend Counties. **Mike Lange will contact Houston Endowment for**

clarification of the geographical scope of our current Houston Endowment grants and he will generate a report that shows discovery activity for 2020 in Brazoria and adjoining counties.

Bylaw update: Kim presented proposed rewording and clarification of our bylaws, noting that sanction of the changes will be requested at the November meeting of the board. Approval would be requested by the general membership at the January, 2022 board meeting.

Membership: Mickey motioned that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of up to \$2,500 for the printing of 5,000 membership brochures, with funding to come from operating reserves.”** Marty seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. **Lisa will update the brochures with our new logo and arrange for the printing.**

Outreach: Ruby motioned that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of up to \$1,000 for the printing of 2,000 refuge trails trifolds, with the cost to be evenly split between the Brazoria and San Bernard McGovern reserves.”** Kim seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. **Lisa will update the trifold and arrange for the printing.**

Upcoming outreach events are:

- August ??: Our booth at the Brazos Mall
- September 11th: Hudson Woods Refuge Saturday
- September 19th; LyondellBasell cleanup day at Discovery Center
- on September 18th and 25th: XHX at GCBO
- October 9th: a “bird bash” at Angleton Northside Elementary
- October 9th: the 3rd annual Nature Fest at Surfside
- October 16th: the Grand Opening of Cannan Bend.
- October 23rd: KBR Kids Day in Houston.
- November 13: Refuge Saturday at Bobcat Woods.
- December 26 through January 2nd, Christmas Discovery Center open house.

Birds of Prey: Phil is looking for an assistant that can run the raptor programs at schools. He also suggested that we purchase additional table cloths that contain a Friends promotional message. Mickey moved that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of up to \$150 for the purchase of Friends table cloths, with funding to come from our Birds-of-Prey account.”** Regina seconded the motion, which passed with unanimous consent.

Projects: Oron met with Curtis to begin the process of defining desired repair work needed on the San Bernard Oak Trail; priority would be repairing the last boardwalk section ending at the SB Oak. Heavy rain has prevented a detailed survey. This study is to form the basis for requesting a \$200,000 Recreational Trails grant from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

TMN Project Fair Submission: The Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter has submitted our Bobcat Woods Trail project as their entry for the October TMN state convention. Jennifer has agreed to using a drone to film the trail; the video will become the media of their presentation.

Action Register: The updated status of pending items is shown below. New action items are also **highlighted** in the above text. Items completed since the May board meeting are:

- Cleanup days at the Discovery Center are periodically occurring; it is recommended that the beds in parking lot islands be redone to eliminate weed growth.
- Signs for the Cedar Lake Plantation Trail are being made.

The next board meeting will be on September 10, 2021 at GCBO.

Lisa adjourned the meeting at 4:35PM.

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register 16July21

Action Item	Who? Date Started?	Due Date?	Status	Comments
Develop a New Outdoor Environmental Education Display for our canopy	David/Lisa/Marty	Target July 2021 for concept proposal	No action has yet occurred	Committee to define aesthetics and variations in content/message modules. Material options for signs and displays to be defined as basis for cost estimates. Check spring-mounted signs and GCBO-pipe frame type.
Upgrade the FOBWR website	Phil (took over from Lisa)	Date not specified	Ongoing	David Stark of Overnite Software has offered his services pro bono, using the Weebly format to create a duplicate prototype. He will be using more photos to provide visual candy. Security for online sales will be a feature; the cost of the security feature TBD. Board approval required for any upgrades
Develop text on FOBWR history for website	Ed Barrios	Sometime in 2021	Fixin to	Ed has reviewed documents back to 1994 (the start of FOBWR), and scanned newsletters through 2003. He will put these archives on our web site.
Develop a Succession Plan	Lisa, Mickey	Sometime in 2021	Researched succession planning	Kim is looking into protocol (bylaws, P&P), board consensus is needed to define skill needs.

Arrange a thankyou meeting with 1st grader Alex Grogard	Lisa	As soon as convenient	Action pending	path to recognition is needed.
Download financial records to our archives	Dick	not specified	Action pending	Dick needs to provide path and permissions. Current site on Weebly does not have storage capacity
Download Migration Records to our archives	Marty	not specified	Action pending	Awaiting access protocol
Download ATFN Records to our archives	Marty	not specified	Action pending	Awaiting access protocol
Download Governance items into our Archives	Marty	May 2020 board meeting	As soon as convenient	Awaiting access protocol

Board to develop annual goals	Lisa	As soon as convenient	Actively Working	Lisa will set up a meeting. [Marty note: Goals are not time-bound, whereas Objectives are; they should be SMART]
Provide cost estimate for demolishing the Hudson Woods boardwalk and replacing with concrete	Jennifer	May, 2021 board meeting	TBD	Jennifer is looking into funding from several sources, and may not need to tap into FOBWR McGovern reserves
Refresh the Discovery Center Display	Lisa, Phil, Tom, Herb	not specified	Ongoing	"Working on costs from taxidermist and his availability" 12Mar21 same status no change
Membership of FOBWR, including a plan to attract new members	Lisa and Mickey	not specified		Lisa and Mickey will develop a recruitment plan. Refuge walks and Newsletter are designed to encourage membership
More promotion of refuges	Lisa	not specified	not stated	Need to discuss and work out plan.
Signage at BNWR trails	Jennifer	not specified		Signs are being made by Vender
Send letter to The Facts on the naming of the Hickner Trail on Cannan Bend	Lisa and Phil, 13Mar20	O/B 30Mar20	in progress	Sanctioned by the Hickner Family; this celebration will occur during the opening of Cannan Bend, target for the October of 2021
Spec. a wireless communication system for monthly walks	Ed	As soon as convenient		Ed looking at practicality of implementation
Determine scope of work on the San Bernard Oak Trail that can be done for \$250K	Oron and Curtis	Not Specified		TPWD Recreational Trails grant maximum is \$200K, requiring a 20% match = \$50K
Determine if we can get a grant from Center Point Energy to cover cost of delivering electricity to Cannan Bend	Ed	Not Specified		Ed has identified the CenterPoint contact person and is attempting to contact her.

Determine need for a new UTC for sea turtle patrols	Oron, Roland, Curtis	Not Specified		Typical 3-year life of UTV in beach service suggests a replacement vehicle is needed.
Send photos of deteriorated signs on Cross Trail to Tom	Mary	Not Specified		
Determine the cost of poop stations	Lisa	Not Specified		Stations are especially needed at Dow Woods.
Supply source for birdwing banner	Jennifer	Not Specified		
Arrange for purchase of birdwing banner	Phil	Not Specified		This banner is very popular at outreach events.
Get sanction of Houston Endowment to use grant funds for pre-purchase discovery of lands in counties adjoining Brazoria County	Mike Lange	Not Specified	In progress	Active HE4 and HE5 grants are not clear on geographical limits.
Create account to receive FWS reimbursements	Regina	Not specified		
Update membership brochures	Lisa	ASAP		Print 5,000
Update trail trifold	Lisa			Print 2,000

FOBWR Financial Statement for June 2021

TDECU				\$78,470.33	
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$295,157.90	
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$149,826.78	*G
ACCOUNT BALANCE	-			\$523,455.01	
-	-				
FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS	Grantor	Total Awarded	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	214,279.33	110,832.37	103,446.96	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	127,000.00	69,271.29	57,728.71	
20130919 Poole Track Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	
20181231 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 4	Houston Endowment	325,000.00	276,872.19	48,127.81	*E
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	-	150,000.00	
20170811 Cedar Lake Plantation Trail	ATFN 17 FOBWR	62,155.96	40,771.60	21,384.36	
20160728 Cedar Lake Cut Lands See NOTES \$30,000.00 Reimbursement	USFWS	30,000.00	30,000.00	-	*A
20161205 Bobcat Woods Matching \$ Rec 152,000.00	FOBWR	246,694.90	246,146.44	548.46	
plus ATFN 2015 funds \$53,641.0					
plus Grant Receivable of 8,000.00					
Plus McGovern Funds of 17,000.00					
Plus refunds deposit acct 16053.90					
TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS		\$1,165,130.19	\$773,893.89	\$391,236.30	
FOBWR PROJECTS		Amt Allocated	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	34,417.27	22,771.37	11,645.90	*C
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	39,014.78	11,844.31	27,170.47	*D
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	1,796.16	716.86	1,079.30	
20201231 General Donations, Membership Fees, Etc.	Donations	2,055.10	-	2,055.10	*H
20210101 Barb Burkhardt	Memorial	840.00	-	840.00	
20140403 Law Enforcement Restitution	Federal Court Fines	7,916.11	6,080.76	1,835.35	
20190601 ATFN 2019 Cannan Bend	FOBWR	211,941.99	138,546.95	73,395.04	*B
TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS		\$297,981.41	\$179,960.25	\$118,021.16	
OPERATIONS		\$27,267.64	\$13,036.87	\$14,230.77	*E,F
FUNDS IN TRANSIT				-\$33.22	*I
TDECU SAVINGS				\$15.70	
TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts				\$523,470.71	

**COMPLETED PROJECTS OR GRANTS
NOTES**

20161205 Bobcat Woods Trail is a receivable. Grant 160,000.00 plus \$53,641.00 ATFN fundraiser

*A 20160728 Cedar Lake Cut Lands is now complete. Final reimbursement was received May 2021.

*C 46400 Birds of Prey 2021 beginning funds balance \$21,396.00

*D Migration celebration 2021 beginning balance \$19,051.00

*F 12/31/20 A blank check was stolen from a check book and made out for \$4,437.94 and cashed by TDECU

A fraud report has been filed with TDECU and the Lake Jackson police dept. 1/4/20. Reimbursed January 2021 full amount

*H Added new line to fully capture misc revenue & expenses; beginning balance consists of Dec 31, 2020 Excess Funds Available for Projects (-1,317.92), which was temporarily decreased due to stolen check on TDECU account (\$4,437.94)

*I Accounts Receivable & bank activity not yet posted

MOTIONS

*B Mar 2020 Combined Hickner Memorial Fund \$51,540.00 & ATFN net \$53,866.29; Mar 2021 reclassified \$56,000 from McGovern Brazoria to Cannan Bend

*E 11/13/20 Per Board guidelines 7% was allocated to Admin expenses from Houston Endowment 4

*G Merrill Lynch account now includes three Certificates of Deposit for \$50,000 each. Maturity dates are Feb 03, 2022, Feb 03, 2023, Feb 20, 2024

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