



FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

**Minutes of the Board Meeting**

**Friday, July 18, 2025 Gulf Coast Bird Observatory**

**Members in Attendance:** Oron Atkins, Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Phil Huxford, Ruby Lewis, Herb Myers, Dick Schaffhausen, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippett, Cris Tobola, Barbara Whaley

**Members Absent:** Micky Dufilho

**Refuge Staff in Attendance:** Bryan Winton

**General Members/Guests in Attendance:** Emily Howard

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

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Phil, seconded by Oron, to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2025 meeting of the Board. The motion passed unanimously.

**Interim Motions:** There were none

**Grant Application Update:** no report

**Grant Activity:** no activity

**Land Acquisition.** The FWS will close on the Oyster Creek unit this week and is close to finalizing the purchase of the Brenda Smith tract.

Approximately 300 acres of mitigation sites surrounded by Slop Bowl will be donated to the Brazoria NWR by the Chocolate Bay Foundation.

**Refuge Update:** Bryan reported that:

TxDOT has been instructed to transfer payment to FOBWR for refuge lands that were transferred to the state to allow the widening of Highway 36.

Acquisition of the Pool Tract is still progressing, but slowly.

Hard copies of the Complex Tract Maps were distributed to board members. **Bryan will send an electronic copy to Marty for reference in reports and for archiving.**

David Chisholm has retired. The current hiring freeze through October 15<sup>th</sup> will retard recruiting his replacement.



San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge  
Proposed Additions to the Dow Woods Unit:  
Oyster Creek Limited (Dalal) Tract - 57 acres  
Brenda M. Smith Estate Tract - 390 acres

The FWS hardship relocation policy has enabled Robrt Little to join the Brazoria NWR maintenance crew. Robert is experienced in heavy equipment operation.

**Financial Report:** Regina noted that our TDECU account has grown to \$187,795.72 because of the transfer of \$143,109.35 from NFWF. This transfer funds are to be used for land purchases within the Columbia Bottomlands. Regina is working with Oak Financial in Angleton to set up a higher interest account for both the NFWF and TxDOT reserves.

We have received the \$12,000 grant (minus processing fees) from Phillips 66 for our Birds of Prey programs, split \$1,958.33 for MC25 and \$9,791.67 for school programs.

The Damuth Foundation donated \$20,000 to be used for the purchase of the Wilson tract.

\$560 was received for MC25 Takeout ticket sales. Income for MC25 is now slightly over expenses and an additional \$500 is expected as a Bank of America match to the donation from Lisa Pauls.

\$2,250 was received for unauthorized activities by Mr. Karl Smith. Bryan recommends using this money to pay for the new water fountain at the Discovery Center.

#### **Handling FWS Reimbursements:**

Regina and Mary are in discussions with Oak Financial for investment options for the ~\$708,000 from TxDOT and NFWF. Our investment is to be conservative and accessible. Six-month CDs would fit these criteria. Oak would charge less than 1% of earnings as their management fee. An account would be opened after we receive the TxDOT funds.

#### **Professional Financial Services:**

With the infusion of over \$700,000 added to our balance of ~\$480, our bookkeeping and IRS reporting as a nonprofit requires professional assistance for Form 990 and financial statements and P&L reports. **Dick and Regina will approach Trich Patton to possibly provide this service;** they will report at the September 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

**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:

- We will not be working with Mossman Production to develop short videos for DEEP, Migration Celebration, Introduction to the refuges.
- Phil motioned and Ed seconded the motion that **“The FOBWR board authorized the expenditure of up to \$5,500 for the restocking of Cannan Bend with foraging bait fish, with funding to come from the Cannan Bend subaccount.”** The motion passes by unanimous consent.

**Web and Social Media:** No report.

**Capital Projects:** There are no active projects. Oron will be contacted to install the Discovery Center water fountain.

**Birds of Prey:** A summer program by Blessing featured birds of prey and our menagerie of reptiles. ~150 people attended. Blessing paid Friends \$600 (includes a \$100 tip).

Phil displayed his collection of feathers, bones, etc. at a summer camp at Smitty's Pottery Shop in Brazoria and received a \$100 donation. On another day of this camp, Ruby presented our reptiles and also got a \$100 donation. Attendees paid a fee to attend.

**Membership:** No report

**Outreach:** Ruby's list:

- There is one summer library program scheduled; this will end another season of high attendance albeit somewhat limited by fire marshal rules.
- Our reptile outreach at the Brazos Mall is tentatively scheduled for August 2<sup>nd</sup>, but this is in conflict with the August 2<sup>nd</sup> event (11 am to 2 pm) at Sea Center Texas.
- XHX will be in September on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>
- KBR Kids Day is scheduled for Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. Ed will update flyers for MC26 to be available for this outreach event.
- Spootktacular will be at Sea Center Texas in October.

**Migration Celebration:**

The MC26 planning committee will recruit sponsors for most activities, ranking categories at different values. A special planning meeting to draft the concept will be held on July 25<sup>th</sup> at Ed's home. Sponsor recognition will be part of the discussion.

Dick noted that some candidates, like Murdoch Outdoor, will not donate cash but would be inclined to give in-kind materials. John Lochmann has approached Bass Pro for donations of kayaks (our current fleet needs to be replaced).

There is still a desire to add activities to attract teenagers. The rock-climbing wall was deemed to be too expensive for MC25, but an inflatable version needs to be explored. Skeet shooting is another possibility.

Updated flyers including new activities will be needed to recruit activity sponsors.

**Other Topics:**

- After four years the Discovery Center Display project was completed by adding the last piece (a rattlesnake);
- The specimen in the DC corner display are molting. It was suggested that a diorama featuring a black rail be created for this spot. Woodie Woodrow could be recruited to do the artwork. Bryan will discuss this with Woodie.
- Chinese tallow are becoming a problem at Cannan Bend. It was suggested that Jim Calvert be recruited for tallow eradication, as Jim's efforts successfully controlled tallow that once was abundant at Brazos Bend State Park. Dick will connect Jim with Bryan and Lee to get Jim on Lee's

license for chemical treatments. A survey of Cannan Bend would enable Jim to estimate needs for chemicals and equipment. [Jim's phone is 281-242-0797 and email is Jacalvert@live.com]

- Individuals may order shirts with our FOBWR logo
- The Gulf Coast Transit District has advertising space for rent on their busses. Nonprofits are not charged a fee but would need to pay for 1.5 foot by 6 foot signs (\$135 each), a \$65 set up fee, and if used a design fee of \$65 per hour. We would use this to advertise Migration Celebration and possibly the December open house at the Discovery Center. [a representative from GCTD spoke to the MC26 planning committee on July 25<sup>th</sup>].

Concern was expressed that our Bylaws posted on our web page might be a draft copy. A check shows that this document is labeled "clean copy" and is in fact the final board-approved version. Per the 14Jan22 General Meeting of the Membership, "**Amendments to the Bylaws:** Kim Richardson presented proposed amendments to the FOBWR Bylaws for approval of the general membership. Mickey Dufilho moved and Larry Peterson seconded the motion to accept the Bylaws as amended. The motion was unanimously approved. The Bylaws, as amended, are attached." This version is the same as posted on our web site.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm

The **next board meeting** will be held on **September 19, 2025**

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

## Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register July18, 2025

Action Item	Who? Date Started	Due Date	Comments
Develop text on FOBWR history for website	Ed Barrios	TBD	Ed has gathered some old newsletters and will use this as the basis for this history. He is still looking for older newsletters.
Master Contact Spreadsheet	Ed	Before spring break 2026	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. Take a computer/iPad to enter email addresses at events to solve the issue of so many illegible entries. Ed has purchased two Chromebooks to use at outreach events. <b>Ed will play with. Will need a hot spot.</b>
Design concept for B. Burkhart memorial	Ed and Phil		A suggestion from the general membership meeting was to use the practice of Sea Center that erects an annual marker for passed volunteers. Contact Tommy Matheson of Palms Funeral Home for ideas. Ask Tom Taroni about "Find a Grave" On hold pending refuge staff; need FWS proposal for location. Palms Matheson funeral home. Jerry eppner suggestion monument per year. Phil will get in touch with Matheson <b>Phil is leaning toward durable stone markers, perhaps granite.</b>
Create informational PowerPoint presentation <b>and/or videos</b> on refuges & FOBWR to present to community organizations/groups	Mary, Curtis	????	Mary will develop a new 15-min PPT with segments of drone footage if permitted. Mike Mullens is willing to fly his drone. Flying drones over refuge property is becoming more restrictive; Curtis will confirm current policy.

			<p>Now need a FAA pilot license. Can't launch from public land without a refuge permit. Perhaps use Sam Dufilho who has pilot license could serve as our pilot. <b>Alyssa Lange, a professional videographer and COT TMN will be contacted</b></p> <p><b>Bryan has another point of contact to do drone footage.</b></p>
Investigate using Box.com	Dick and Cris Tobola Mary	Ongoing July 25	<p>Minutes now are on the website. Waiting on decision for other documents. The latest thinking is to archive the materials on our website. No need to restrict accessibility.</p> <p>Fat Cow no longer provides library 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.</p>
Look into Google Workspace as a fundraising tool	Mary	19Sep25	<p>18Jul25: Mary has created a friends account. It is <b>ready to go, comes with 100 terabytes. Under Brazoria refuge friends at gmail.com. not for archives. For now, we will only use this service for fundraising. Mary will demonstrate at next board meeting on 19Sep25.</b></p>
Maintain signage on refuge trails	Lee and Bryan		<p>This could be paid for from our maintenance fund</p> <p>Have 12 signs ordered; Lee will give us a list for other signs and Oron will post. Replacing sun bleached first. Lee has a list. Signs for Bobcat Woods have been installed. <b>Bryan will get a list of other signage needs from Lee.</b></p>
Obtain an educational permit for our alligators	Lee		<p>Lee applied for the permit, waiting for a response from TPWD.</p> <p><b>Ed follow up.</b></p> <p><b>Bryan will send a response to us after checking with Lee</b></p>

Update flyer for San Bernard Oak, include QR codes on trail signs	Herb, Lee, Cris		Herb will coordinate with Lee. Fixin to get intent on QR code; Cris will make content for the objects once they are identified
Explore the possibility of getting annual grants from the John P. McGovern Foundation.	Marty		This is to replace the donations from Kathrine McGovern, which ended when she died.
Look into our By-laws to determine how to handle the disbursement of designated funds.	Regina		Bylaw revision may be needed. To be done as of July 2025 meeting.
Update Migration Celebration flyers	Ed	Before October,	Printed flyers to be distributed at the October KBR Kids Day
Explore a new diorama, featuring a black rail, for the corner display in the Discovery Center	Bryan, Woodie	Report 19Sep25 board meeting	The current display is disintegrating.
Contract professional service to do our financial statements, P&L reports, and IRS Form 990 filings.	Regina & Dick	Report 19Sep25 board meeting.	Trish Patton will be consulted.

**June 2025 Final**

**FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

TDECU	187,795.72	*A
Merrill Lynch Cash	434,186.34	
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit	-	*F
Prepaid - McCoy's Lumber Deposit Account	3,840.53	
<b>ACCOUNT BALANCES</b>	<b>625,822.59</b>	

<b>FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS</b>	<b>Grantor</b>	<b>Total Awarded</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Amt Available</b>
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	345,279.33	219,621.01	125,658.32
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	157,000.00	111,874.33	45,125.67
20130919 Poole Tract Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	119,972.19	30,027.81
20220112 Equistar Chemicals - Motus Tower Fees	Equistar Chemicals	7,000.00	1,969.80	5,030.20
20221101 Knobloch Foundation Land Acquisition	Knobloch Foundation	118,304.00	67,800.00	50,504.00
20221129 Hershey Foundation Land Acquisition	Hershey Foundation	94,644.00	74,200.00	20,444.00
20250212 Community Foundation of Brazoria County	Community Found.	8,807.74	-	8,807.74
20250616 Damuth Foundation Land Acquisition	Damuth Foundation	20,000.00	-	20,000.00
20250616 National Fish & Wildlife Foundation	NFWF	143,109.35	-	143,109.35
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS</b>		<b>1,054,144.42</b>	<b>595,437.33</b>	<b>458,707.09</b>

<b>FOBWR PROJECTS</b>		<b>Amt Allocated</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Amt Available</b>
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	24,916.04	23,032.04	1,884.00
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	44,209.45	14,066.08	30,143.37
760000 Misc FOBWR Projects	FOBWR	(714.94)	-	(714.94)
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	3,538.70	-	3,538.70
20201231 General Donations, Membership, Etc.	Donations	13,364.97	-	13,364.97
20210101 Barbara Burkhardt, Larry Lewis, Kim Richardson	Memorial	1,634.34	-	1,634.34
20140403 Law Enforcement Restitution	Federal Court Fines	5,371.35	-	5,371.35
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</b>		<b>320,717.39</b>	<b>217,180.42</b>	<b>103,536.97</b>

**OPERATIONS** 69,435.39 5,841.16 **63,594.23** \*D

**TOTAL VARIANCE** 0.00 \*E

<b>TDECU SAVINGS</b>	<b>15.70</b>
<b>TOTAL Funds in Deposit Accounts</b>	<b>625,838.29</b>

**NOTES**

- \*E Variance between Cash and Activities Recorded - Dec 2024 moved variance of \$7,113.60 dating from 2020 or earlier to Operations Revenue while being researched
- \*A December 2022, Transferred \$100,000 from TDECU to Merrill Lynch; Oct 2023 transferred \$50,000 from Merrill Lynch to TDECU June 2024 transferred \$50,000 from Merrill Lynch to TDECU
- \*G Grant for cleanup of Hurrican Beryl damage
- \*H Wilson Wetlands Project land acquisition costs
- \*I NFWF funds earmarked for Columbia Bottomlands land acquisition - Poole Tract

**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 & July 2024 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 Certificate of Deposit for \$50,000 was redeemed June 23, 2025.