



FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Friday, September 20, 2024 Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Members in Attendance: Oron Atkins, Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Phil Huxford, Herb Myers, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippet, Cris Tobola

Members Absent: Ed Barrios, Ruby Lewis, Dick Schaffhausen, Barbara Whaley

Refuge Staff in Attendance: Lee Gaston, Bryan Winton

General Members/Guests in Attendance: Mike Lange

President Mary Schwartz called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

Agenda: The agenda was unanimously accepted after a move to so do by Mickey and a second by Herb.

Minutes: A motion was made by Mickey, seconded by Herb, to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2024 meeting of the board; this motion passed unanimously.

Interim Motions: There were two motions made in the interim between the July board meeting and this September, 2024 meeting of the board:

- A motion was made by Ed and seconded by Herb that “The FOBWR board authorizes \$420 to order 2,000 “Join the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges” trifolds with funds coming from McGovern accounts for San Bernard & Brazoria.” The motion passed with 8 yeas. Three votes were not cast.
- A motion was made by Marty, seconded by Mickey, that “The FOBWR board authorized the expenditure of up to \$25,000 for the purchase of a propane-fueled generator to provide auxiliary power to the Discovery Center. Brazoria-McGovern funds shall be used for the purchase and installation of this generator.” This motion passed unanimously with 11 yeas.

Grant Activity: On September 18th, Bryar Johnson and Marty Cornell met with the Natural Resource Uses (NRU) Subcommittee of the Galveston Bay Estuary Program to present our request for a \$30,000 grant to provide for a study on alternatives to protect the shoreline of Salt Lake from erosion. Our application was one of eight competing for ~\$350 of available funds. The consensus of the Subcommittee was to grant our request. Approval of the GBEP board is required for granting these funds.

Land Acquisition: Mike Lange updated the board on the progress of land acquisition.

Acquisition of the McNeill II tract is in suspension after the major land owner died. Control now rests with the McNeill Family Trust who want to keep this property. This property is located along the north bank of Peach Creek in Wharton County.

The 2 ½ -year effort continues to convert the 1,600-acre Burr Tract, also adjoining the Peach Creek Unit, into property controlled by the Nature Conservancy. It is currently owned by the Harrison Foundation and is used for environmental education.

Having purchased the K-Bar property, the refuge is working with American Forest for them to get a grant toward reforestation of much of the property and to restore the hydrology of the land to pre-cattle ranching conditions.

Progress continues on the acquisition of the 57-acre tract owned by Dr. Dalal (Oyster Creek Limited Partnership). It is currently being surveyed.

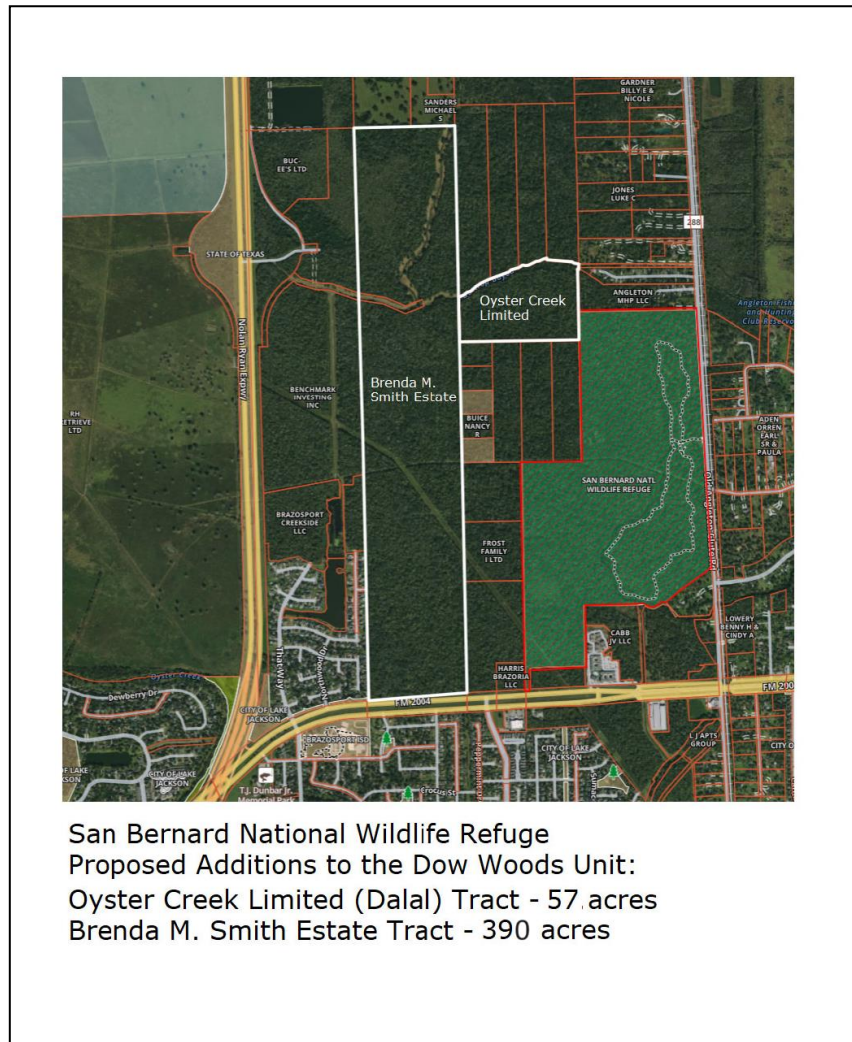
To the west of this tract is the 390-acre Brenda M. Smith Estate, also old growth hardwood forest. Declaration of this land to be in the 100-year floodplain has reduced its value to ~\$8,000 per acre.

Action on completing the purchase of the Wilson Tract near the mouth of the San Bernard River is held up by inaction of Region 2 realty officers.

Mike continues to work on behalf of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept in cooperation with the

Galveston Bay Foundation to purchase tracts on Follets Island, now including parcels on the north-east tip of the island.

He is also working with the TPWD, the TPWD Foundation, and the Nature Conservancy to secure tracts near the mouth of the Colorado River.



Another target are tracts to add to the Big Boggy NWR and Aransas NWR.

Refuge Update: Bryan noted

- That there has been no feedback on the strategic stakeholders meeting held in August
- Post Hurricane Beryl, the auto loops on the BNWR and SBNWR are now reopened as is the Bobcat Woods Trail. Dow Woods and Hudson Woods are still closed.
- All refuges in Region 2 were asked to prioritize activities to reflect the reality of limited staff. The results for the TMCNWR are:

STAFF REPORTS: Refuge Management Priorities During Staff and Annual Funding Limitations

TMC Staff:	CC	BW	CD	CJ	RD	LG	JW	BJ	DC	RV	MH	VY	CH	DG	DD	TP	JP	TOTALS	%
ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS	80	19	20	15	15	5	0	5	4	40	15	20	3	5	5	0	10	261	15.35
SAFETY	5	2	5	2	5	3	0	0	4	10	15	5	0	10	5	0	5	76	04.47
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT / TEAM BLDG / COMM.	5	25	10	15	5	5	0	0	25	0	10	5	1	5	5	0	5	121	07.18
LAW ENFORCEMENT / COORDINATION	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	00.29
FIRE MANAGEMENT	2	8	5	5	0	5	5	10	30	20	30	60	0	10	0	0	0	190	11.18
HABITAT MANAGEMENT	3	12	10	15	10	2	15	10	29	10	20	0	12	40	5	0	0	193	11.35
MAINTENANCE PROGRAM / FACILITIES MGMT	0	1	15	15	20	0	0	10	1	10	5	0	69	15	10	90	60	321	18.88
PUBLIC USE FACILITIES / VISITOR PROGRAMS	2	1	20	10	20	35	0	5	0	0	3	0	14	10	70	10	10	210	12.35
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	0	1	0	1	0	40	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43	02.53
BIOLOGICAL PRIORITIES	0	6	5	2	10	0	80	40	5	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	153	9.0
PARTNERSHIPS	0	1	3	5	15	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	01.76
LAND ACQUISITION	0	18	2	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	01.52
OIL & GAS PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	01.35
R2 LEADERSHIP / PROG COORD / INITIATIVES	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	10	18	01.06
TRAINING / TRAVEL / DETAILS	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	0	5	0	10	0	5	0	0	0	0	30	01.76
TOTALS:																		1700	99.97

Lee Gaston reported that the DEEP program will start on October 22nd. Only a few schools have signed up for this school year. One of these is a school from AISD.

Lee noted that the hot water heater and the water foundation need to be replaced; the new fountain would include a water bottle refill feature. Lee will make a proposal to the board for the installed cost of this equipment.

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:

- Board members input on the strategic development of refuge infrastructure for August meeting is now moot.
- New membership application forms have been delivered.
- Three stereo microscopes have been picked up from Brazosport College.

Treasurer's Report: The August, 2024 Financial Report is attached to the end of these minutes. The \$89,811.25 in cash at TDECU is used to pay expenses, predominately for the work of Mike Lange's prepurchase discovery activities. Regina thinks that perhaps \$40,000 could be moved to our Merrill Lynch account for its higher interest payment.

The uncertainty of future donations from Mrs. McGovern's estate needs to be considered for our expenditures.

Bryan noted that the Complex has a pool of \$8.800 from The Brazoria County Community Foundation that he would like to transfer to FOBWR as a restricted account.

Web and Social Media: no report

Maintenance Committee: The Morgan storage building has a water leak staining rafters in the left rear of the shed, and the rear door is dangling from one hinge and cannot be closed. The center floor is now used for storage of canopy poles and bulky items used for Migration Celebration. **Oron will look at securing the back door and repairing the leak.** Costs will be covered by our maintenance fund. **Marty will schedule a general cleanup of the shed, targeting a Friday in October.**

Capital Projects: Mickey will provide Oron specifications of the stream trailer owned by TAMU AgriLife. **Oron will design a version that would fit into a pickup truck.** Consideration for its storage will be addressed. no current activity.

Birds of Prey: Phil is looking for help that would handle the physical set up for Birds of Prey programs. Hiring an intern to do this work was mentioned. Phil would continue to do the fundraising and scheduling.

Membership: Mickey reported that YTD there are 26 annually-paid members and 22 business (gratis) along with 45 life members.

Outreach: Ruby was not present, but it was noted that the second day for this years XHX will be tomorrow and that the KBR Kids Day in Houston will be on October 19th

Next Meeting November 15, 2024 at GCBO starting at noon.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 pm

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register September 20, 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 . Ed is leaning toward using board meeting minutes as the basis for this archive.
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; Looking good; eta of final specimen, a cayote and wood duck, should be installed in August. Next might be a river otter and a rattlesnake. Mark is getting really close, should finish in next 30 days.

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. Many of these lists have expired email. For new additions, we could use a Chromebook to enter their contact info. Use this at every outreach event.
Design concept for B. Burkhart memorial	Ed and Phil	\$840 in donations have been received.	Need a proposal to cover all deceased volunteers. Phil needs to look at site on BNWR, draw up a design. Funded memorials for deceased volunteers become problematic as the numbers increase. A policy is needed. Waiting for Curtis clarification on policy. There is no standard plan from FWS. Phil will consult for ideas. More durable markers? Bryan noted that any plan must be uniformly applied to all memorialized.
Create informational PowerPoint presentation on refuges & FOBWR to present to community organizations/groups	Mary Curtis	Summer of 2024	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. Now need a FAA pilot license. Can't launch from public land without a refuge permit.
Investigate using our webpage to serve as an archive	Dick and Cris Tobola Mary	Ongoing 26Jul24	The latest thinking is to archive the materials on our website. No need to restrict accessibility. Jan, 2024 still looking into it. 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.
 Need to develop the hierarchy (can use the hierarchy of Fat Cow)
A suggestion was to use Dropbox, 9TB capacity; \$15 per user per month. Mary will check searchability

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.
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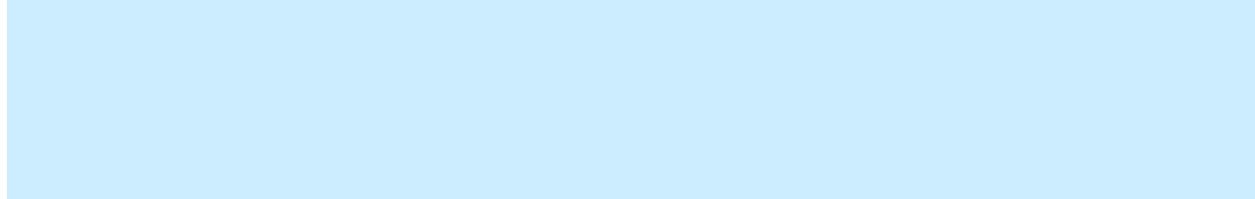
Add flora & fauna data to the report that maps oil/gas location on complex lands To satellite tracts.	Ed and Phil	Not specified	Bryan would like spiral-bound copies of the amended report. 1/24 Phil gave a few mucker surveys to Bryan Will be a separate doc one stack at a time. Bring to Bryan and he will make copies.
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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? One Angleton school has scheduled for 24-25
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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
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Maintain signage on refuge trails	Lee	Fixin to using list of signs. Will prioritize storm damage money?	This could be paid for from our maintenance fund Hana has a list; we need to know what specific actions are needed. Have 12 signs ordered; Lee will give us a list for other signs and Oron will post. Replacing sun bleached first. Marty to put together a BCW photo montage.
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Determine FWS policy on personal memorials on refuge property	Curtis	July, 2024 board meeting	Curtis
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Obtain an educational permit for our alligators	Lee	Fixin to	Lee applied for the permit, waiting for a response from TPWD.
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Transfer two young adult alligators from Ruby to Crocodile Encounter	Ruby		Chris Dieter of Croc Encounter will pick them up. Still waiting for Chris to pick up.
Clear cattail blocking fishing piers at Cannan Bend	Lee		Lee will consult with Cody; perhaps using herbicide per 7Jul24 MOB Bryar Johnson will herbicide treat.
Submit installed cost proposal for a new water heater and water fountain for the Discovery Center	Lee		This will be converted by a board member to an email motion to purchase
Secure back door of Morgan Bldg. and fix water leak.	Oron		
Schedule a clean up day for the Morgan Bldg.	Marty	O/B year end 2024	Target a Friday in October
Design a stream effect display to fit a pickup truck bed	Oron	O/B Nov. 2024 board meeting	Proposal should include storage options and a cost estimate.

FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT; August 2024 Final

TDECU				\$89,811.25	* A
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$373,297.04	
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$50,000.00	*F
Prepaid - McCoy's Deposit Account				\$3,859.88	
ACCOUNT BALANCE				\$516,968.17	
FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS	Grantor	Total Awarded	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	345,279.33	199,037.49	146,241.84	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	157,000.00	111,563.72	45,436.28	
20130919 Poole Tract Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	109,972.19	40,027.81	
20220112 Equistar Chemicals - Motus Tower Fees	Equistar Chemicals	7,000.00	1,417.00	5,583.00	
20221101 Knobloch Foundation Land Acquisition	Knobloch Foundation	118,304.00	50,700.00	67,604.00	* C
20221129 Hershey Foundation Land Acquisition	Hershey Foundation	94,644.00	50,650.00	43,994.00	* C
TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS		\$882,227.33	\$523,340.40	\$358,886.93	
FOBWR PROJECTS		Amt Allocated	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	28,624.75	27,234.44	1,390.31	
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	41,066.01	19,043.14	22,022.87	
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	3,167.10	-	3,167.10	
20201231 General Donations, Membership, Etc.	Donations	11,108.02	-	11,108.02	
20210101 Barbara Burkhardt, Larry Lewis	Memorial	1,534.34	-	1,534.34	
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		\$317,019.05	\$226,359.88	\$90,659.17	
OPERATIONS		\$54,640.33	\$4,939.99	\$49,700.34	* D
FUNDS IN TRANSIT				\$17,737.43	*E
TDECU SAVINGS				\$15.70	
TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts				\$513,123.99	

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
 June 2024 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 & 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 includes one Certificate of Deposit for \$50,000. Maturity date is June 23, 2025.