



## FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

### Minutes of the Board Meeting

Friday, November 15, 2024 Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

**Members in Attendance:** Ed Barrios, Phil Huxford, Herb Myers, Dick Schaffhausen, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippett, Cris Tobola, Barbara Whaley

**Members Absent:** Oron Atkins, Marty Cornell, Micky Dufhilo, Ruby Lewis

**Refuge Staff in Attendance:** Bryan Winton

**General Members/Guests in Attendance:** Mike Lange

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

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Phil seconded by Ed to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2024 meeting of the board; this motion passed unanimously.

#### **Interim Motions:**

- Marty moved, and Dick seconded the motion that "The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of \$4,000 to manipulate approximately 75 acres in the first Moist Soil Unit in the Wolfweed Wetland Complex at San Bernard NWR. Funding will come from General Donations". The motion passed with all nine members of the board voting in the affirmative. Two board members did not vote.
- Dick moved, and Marty seconded the motion that "The FOBWR board authorizes the payment of up to \$900.00 for the purchase and shipping of Migration Celebration tee shirts. Payment from the Migration Celebration account". The motion passed unanimously with eleven votes.

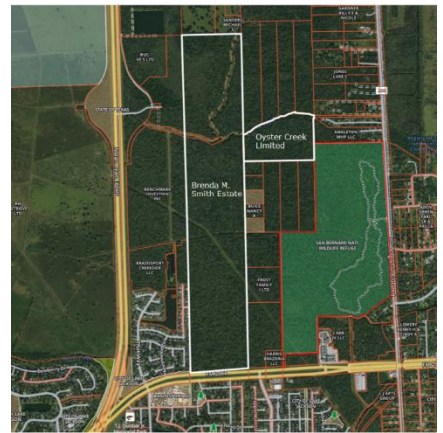
Mary clarified that the \$4,000 grant was needed to match other funds the refuge had received. Also, Mary requested that when replying to a motion be sure and use **"Reply to All"** option.

**Grant Activity:** No updates on grants.

**Land Acquisition:** Mike Lange updated the board on the progress of land acquisitions and was upbeat because significant progress is being made.



Burr Tract (Proposed CE) - 1,600 acres



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

- Significant progress being made on the Burr Tract conservation easement with respect to securing funding.
- Oyster Creek Limited, 57 acres, will close within 2 months.
- Brenda Smith estate 390 acres, the Nature Conservancy helping with funding along with various foundations and NACA money.
- After many years, the Poole track is about to close. The tract is at the corner of the SB refuge. Friends has been holding a \$10M foundation donation for years plus \$96M from NFWF. The Cradle of Texas Conservancy will take ownership and donate the property to the SB refuge.
- Other activity is in progress to acquire land including the Kbar ranch, McNeill II, Follets Island, at the mouth of the Colorado River and in Matagorda and Aransas counties.



### Project Area Expansions



## Refuge Update:

- Bryan noted that Dow Woods and Hudson Woods are still closed. They are seeking a contractor to clear all the fallen trees.
- The refuge has lost another maintenance employee that bid on another job. In the last 15 years or so the refuge has lost 30% of their employees.
- Bryan Winton and Bryan Frazier, Director Brazoria County Parks are close to signing a Memorandum of Understanding, MOU. This will cover the partnership involving the Hanson Riverside County Park and adjacent Bell Unit of the San Bernard NWR.
- Lee Gaston has a project to replace all weathered, damaged or missing signage on all Mid-coast units.
- Lee Gaston to work on social media platforms to get “RV volunteers” The goal is to keep the Discovery Center open year round.
- It was discussed we need to promote the DEEP program with developing flyers for the schools.

**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:

- Secure back door of Morgan Bldg. and fix water leak.
- Schedule a clean up day for the Morgan building.
- Determine FWS policy on personal memorials on refuge property.
- Clear cattail blocking fishing piers at Cannan Bend.
- Investigate using our webpage to serve as an archive.
- Design a stream effect display to fit a pickup truck bed.
- No FWS standard protocol for handling memorials for deceased volunteers.

**Treasurer’s Report:** The October, 2024 Financial Report is attached to the end of these minutes. The \$77,554.85 in cash at TDECU is used to pay expenses, predominately for the work of Mike Lange’s prepurchase discovery activities.

No donations have been made so far from Mrs. McGovern’s estate.

Changes in accounting are impacting past statements.

**Web and Social Media:** Dick commented that if someone wants something on the webpage contact him.

**Maintenance Committee:** No report.

**Capital Projects:** No report.

**Birds of Prey:** No report.

**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. Upcoming events include Freeport Elementary visit, KBR Kids Day & Sea Center Spooktacular.

**New Business:** Phil reported working with Mike Moss of Messman Production who has volunteered to produce some videos promoting the refuge. It was suggested that Phil, Cris and Dick work with Mike Moss to produce short videos of featuring DEEP, Migration Celebration and other topics.

**Annual Meeting January 17, 2025 starting at noon.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm

Submitted by Ed Barrios, Acting Secretary

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

<b>Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register November 15, 2024</b>				
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Who? Date Started</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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. <b>Mark is getting really close, should finish in next 30 days.</b>
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. <b>Take a computer/iPad to enter email addresses at events to solve the issue of so many illegible entries.</b>	
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. <b>Contact Tommy Matheson of Palms Funeral Home for ideas.</b>
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	Minutes now are on the website. <b>Waiting on decision for other documents.</b> 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	

			<p>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)</p> <p><b>A suggestion was to use Dropbox, 9TB capacity; \$15 per user per month. Mary will check searchability</b></p>
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.
Add flora & fauna data to the report that maps oil/gas location on complex lands To satellite tracts.	Ed and Phil	Not specified	<p>Bryan would like spiral-bound copies of the amended report.</p> <p>1/24 Phil gave a few mucker surveys to Bryan Will be a separate doc one stack at a time.</p> <p><b>Bring to Bryan and he will make copies.</b></p>
Determine the desire of school districts west of the Brazos for DEEP, and limits to do this	Lee Gaston	Not specified	<p>Need to see how me 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</p>
Look into Google Workspace as a fundraising tool	Cris	Not specified	<p>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</p>

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 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.
Obtain an educational permit for our alligators	Lee	Fixin to	Lee applied for the permit, waiting for a response from TPWD.
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.
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
Update flyer for San Bernard Oak, include QR codes on trail signs	Herb, Ed	O/B year end 2025	
Work with Messman Production to develop short videos for DEEP, Migration Celebration, Introduction to the refuges	Phil, Cris, Dick	O/B year end 2025	Phil has worked with Mike Moss of Messman Production to create a short video about the local refuges.

<b>October 2024 Final</b>	<b>FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT</b>			
TDECU				\$77,554.85 *A
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$375,095.87
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$50,000.00 *F
Prepaid - McCoy's Lumber Deposit Account				\$3,859.88
<b>ACCOUNT BALANCE</b>				<b>\$506,510.60</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	199,616.33	145,663.00
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	157,000.00	111,766.81	45,233.19
20130919 Poole Tract Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	112,272.19	37,727.81
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	59,150.00	35,494.00 *C
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS</b>		<b>\$882,227.33</b>	<b>\$534,922.33</b>	<b>\$347,305.00</b>
<b>FOBWR PROJECTS</b>		<b>Amt Allocated</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Amt Available</b>
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	29,124.75	27,234.44	1,890.31
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	49,495.73	20,143.29	29,352.44
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	3,167.10	-	3,167.10
20201231 General Donations, Membership, Etc.	Donations	11,182.49	-	11,182.49
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
<b>TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS</b>		<b>\$326,023.24</b>	<b>\$227,460.03</b>	<b>\$98,563.21</b>
<b>OPERATIONS</b>		\$58,786.16	\$5,241.67	\$53,544.49 *D
<b>FUNDS IN TRANSIT</b>				<b>\$7,113.60</b> *E
<b>TDECU SAVINGS</b>				<b>\$15.70</b>
<b>TOTAL Funds in Deposit Accounts</b>				<b>\$506,526.30</b>
<b>COMPLETED PROJECTS OR GRANTS</b>				
<b>NOTES</b>				
*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				
<b>MOTIONS</b>				
*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.				