



Minutes of the Board of Directors

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge November 9, 2018

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Lake Jackson, 1:00 to 4:32 pm

In Attendance: Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Phil Huxford, Lisa Myers, Kim Richardson, Dick Schaffhausen

Absent (excused): Orin Atkins, Mickey Dufilho, David Plunkett (**Unexcused**) Torry Tvedt

Refuge Staff in Attendance: Jennifer Sanchez

Guests and FOBWR members in Attendance: Mike Lange, Warren Pruess, Tom Smith, Tom Taroni

A quorum being present, President Ed Barrios called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm

The **Minutes of the September 14, 2018 Board Meeting**, as amended during the interim since the last board meeting, were unanimously approved after a motion by Dick and a second by Lisa.

An **Email Motion**, “The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of up to \$2,000 for the purchase of a Dell Inspiron 27 7000 computer and a Dell Seagate 4 TB USB 3.0 Seagate Expansion desktop external hard drive for use in the Discovery Center, financed from General Funds.”, was made on October 16th by Marty and seconded by Kim. The motion passed with 8 in favor and one board member not responding. The hardware has been purchased, received, and installed for a cost of \$1,147.08.

Financial Reports were reviewed by Treasurer Dick Schaffhausen. Highlights include receiving the promised \$12,000 grant from Phillips 66 and the \$2,000 donation from Olin. These funds make the cash flow positive for both MC18 and BoP18. Marty moved to approve this financial report, the motion was seconded by Phil, and it was passed with 4 yeas and one nay.

2019 budget: The financial committee of Dick, Ed, and Marty have been charged to propose a 2019 budget to the board via an email motion. This task is to be completed prior to the January 11, 2019 board meeting.

Audit: Dick reviewed a proposal by Curtis Craig, CPA from Rosenberg, to perform an audit of the FOBWR 2018 financial statements, estimating the fee to be around \$9,000 the first year, and would anticipate the fee being around \$8,000 in subsequent years. Mr. Craig notes that these fee estimates are based on the following:

Quote:

- 1) It is my understanding that you [Dick], or another individual, will continue to prepare the annual 990 tax return. I will not prepare the 990 tax return.

- 2) My fee estimate is based on my review of the 2016 review report, and the 2018 financials that you provided.
- 3) It is my understanding that a single audit will not be required, as we previously discussed.

Unquote.

Phil moved that “**The board of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges authorizes the expenditure of up to \$10,000 for an audit of our 2018 financial records, with payment to come from our general funds.**” The motion was seconded by Kim and approved with 4 yeas and one nay.

Grant Activity over the last two months has been minor, but significant. **Houston Endowment** has approved a forth grant to continue pre-purchase discovery activity on possible land purchases. The amount was increased by \$25,000 to cover some of the cost of paying for the service of Mike Lange, making the total Grant \$325,000. These funds should be received in November, 2018, but Houston Endowment has given us permission to pay for work that predates receipt of funds so that the work of land purchase discovery would not be disrupted.

Also the \$12,000 grant from Phillips 66 for supporting MC18 and BoP18 has been received.

Advertisement in The Facts for bids on the concrete sections of the **Bobcat Woods Loop Trail** were made, but no responses were received. Oron has been discussing our project with several contractors. Bo Franklin did recent concrete work at the Dingee Plumbing office and Oron thinks it looks really good. Oron will meet with Mr. Franklin at the refuge next week.

Water-saturated land is preventing the building of the boardwalk crossing over Cocklebur Slough. Most of the needed materials are at the refuge.

Six volunteers with the American Hiking Society have dispersed gravel and granite fines on the parking lot and east side of the **Cedar Lake Plantation Trail**. This surface material is not yet compacted. They were also able to construct a short boardwalk section has been installed over the north end of the slough that bisects the trail area. Dry weather is needed to access the west leg of the trail for surfacing. A contractor will be hired to produce the desired interpretive signs. Jennifer expects this project, which is financed with ATFN17 funds, will come in on budget.

Mickey has ordered the bench dedicated to Leon Skeets; it will be place behind the Discovery Center.

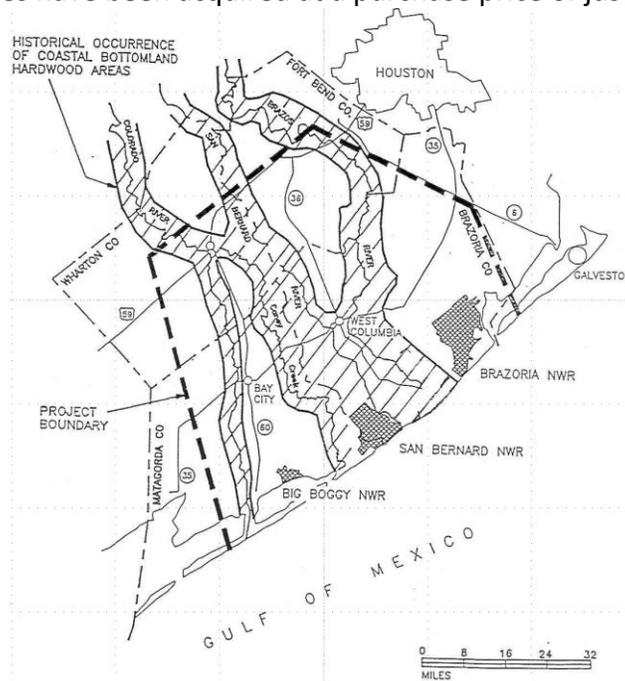
Dick confessed that he has been inflicted with “a bird up his bottom” that has compelled him to ask for an inventory of FOBWR property now stored in member’s homes that will be moved to our **Morgan building**. This inventory will be used to design racks and shelving to be installed by the end of March 2019. The pursuit of insurance quotes for the building and contents was tabled pending the completion of the inventory of the proposed contents.

Construction of the **Bryan Adams Memorial Water Garden** is essentially complete. Final work includes connecting the electrical circuits to new solar panels and landscaping. A 16" X 20" bronze plaque dedicating this work to Bryan has been ordered with delivery expected in January. A formal dedication ceremony is targeted to occur in January.

In keeping with our plan to annually purchase a UTV to replace the oldest UTV in our three-vehicle **Sea Turtle Patrol** fleet, Oron obtained a quote of \$14,799.00 from Velocity Power Sports for a 2019 model year Yamaha Viking model. The price includes \$799 for a service contract. Dick moved that **"The board of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges authorizes the expenditure of up to \$15,000 for the purchase of a Yamaha Viking UTV, with financing to come from McGovern funds"**. Phil seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by the board.

Butterfly Lab: Kim reported that our current partnership agreement with the Complex does not cover any FOBWR buildings on Brazoria NWR, nor any commercial activity such as our raising and selling butterflies. The buildings and business would require an amendment of our partnership agreement. Tom Schneider will be providing estimates of building cost using a reserve HVAC unit owned by the Complex. He is also asked to describe a business model for raising and dispensing butterflies from this facility.

Land Acquisition Report: Mike Lange reviewed the history of the Columbia Bottomlands acquisition project that began as the Columbia Bottomlands Hardwoods Project in 1995 a.k.a. Austin Woods Project. The project is authorized to acquire up to 70,000 acres within an acquisition boundary shown below, and now includes coastal prairie lands as well as hardwood forests. To date, with the recent purchase of the Snow tract, renamed the Cannon Bend Unit of the SBNWR, 36,350 acres have been acquired at a purchase price of just under \$52 million.



Pending activity in the Columbia Bottomlands project include:

- Poole (500 acres)/Ducros (323 acres) properties adjoining the SBNWR near the mouth of the San Bernard River. Closing on the Poole portion is likely to occur in December.
- The 692-acre Doss estate adjoining the Big Boggy NWR will use BP restitution funds for purchase and may close within the next three months.
- Properties near West Columbia are acquisition targets and include the 232-acre Coddou tract on the Brazos River adjoining the existing Brothers Unit and a 334-acre tract next to the existing Holman Unit and adjoining Hanson County Park, all on the San Bernard River.
- The Wade Mc Neill Exempt Unitrust owns 4,452 acres of hardwood swampland and is being considered as an acquisition into the SBNWR.

The Follets Island Coastal Preserve now has 1,009 acres as part of the Texas Parks and Wildlife lands. The newest addition is the 42-acre Glockenmeier tract.

The Angleton Prairie consists of 162 acres of virgin prairie (never plowed, never cowed) on CR213 north of the FM2004 boundary of the BNWR. Mike is looking at this land with Brazoria County for a potential new county park.

Refuge Update: Jennifer reported that:

- Ducks Unlimited will provide a \$500,000 grant matching the same amount from Texas Parks and Wildlife to extend Intracoastal Waterway shore protection near Sargent with rock-boulder rip rap. Such shoreline protection is critical because of the need to prevent salt-water intrusion into fresh water wetlands.
- The refuge is working with TxDOT on widening the section of Hwy 36 through the River Ranch tract north of Brazoria. The proposed project would widen the highway to a four-lane divided highway to aid in hurricane evacuation. Jennifer is asking that this road section not be divided to minimize space that would be taken from refuge property. The Service is also requesting that the road contain under-highway crossings for wildlife to safely move to either side of the highway.
- All three contracts with hurricane funds have been completed. The fishing pier on Bastrop Bayou at the BNWR has just been completed and will be open on Monday.
- The refuge is looking at installing culverts on Ivey Lane on the SBNWR to replace “dips” in the road utilizing remaining Hurricane Harvey disaster relief funds.
- Jennifer's Wilson and Sanchez have been smashing apple snails that have invaded Scoby Lake and Willow Oxbow at Hudson Woods. Since the snails must lay their eggs above the water, a herbicide treatment might work more efficiently to remove the egg-laying substrate.

The Secretary of the Interior has asked the refuges to review the inventory of animals that may be hunted on refuge property. The Complex is considering seasons to hunt feral hogs, deer, squirrels, rabbits, sandhill crane, alligators, doves, and pigeons. The hunting regulations would

be aligned with state protocol, which may prevent the hunting of Sandhill Crane to the east of Hwy 35. [Jennifer has since checked on the Sandhill crane hunting. Only Calhoun, Aransas and Nueces Counties have the closure east of SH35 closed to Sandhill Crane hunting. The San Bernard and Brazoria Refuge are within a hunting zone.]

- The NRCS was to have modified the topography of the Eagle Nest Lake Unit to facilitate draining, but they ran out of funds to do this work. Hence, the USFWS will take over this project.

The **revisions to Job Descriptions** proposed for the FOBWR Policies and Procedures were presented by Kim and lack only a description of the role of the leader of our school outreach program, which is currently our Birds of Prey program run by Phil. Phil and Marty are charged to define a more encompassing description that would reflect potential changes in content with a change of leadership of this activity. Kim moved that **“The FOBWR board adopts the Job Description revisions to the FOBWR Policy and Procedures as presented.”** This motion was seconded by Dick and unanimously approved. The description of the role of School Outreach Leader would be added at a future date.

ATFN19: The board agreed to conduct or biennial ATFN in the fall of 2019, with the date to be determined by the availability of our honorary chairman and Hall D of the Dow Academic Center. Timing is also constrained by previously committed travel by Ed. Ed was charged to contact Rich Wells to serve as Honorary Chairman of ATFN19. Rich is Vice President of U.S. Gulf Coast and Texas Operations of the Dow Chemical Company. [Rich has since confirmed his willingness to serve, and has reserved Friday, October 18th and Saturday, October 19th on his calendar.] The availability of the DAC (Mickey) and potential conflicts with performances at the Clarion for these dates (Marty) will be checked.

Per the desire of Jennifer Sanchez, our target for the net proceeds from ATFN19 will be the development of trails and other facilities on the Cannon Bend Unit of the SBNWR.

The **2019 Migration Celebration** will mark the 25th year of the event. Coincidentally, the office of the Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, has asked refuges to propose opportunities to publically promote national wildlife refuges. Jennifer has thus submitted a request for Secretary Zinke to participate in our April 12th kickoff event where we would highlight the impact of major corporate sponsors that have supported the Complex and FOBWR during this quarter century. The corporations include Dow, Phillips 66, BASF, and Freeport LNG, and also Brazoria County. Should Secretary Zinke accept, other dignitaries would be invited including Congressman Randy Weber, State Representative (and possibly Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives) Dennis Bonnen, and County Commissioners.

A speaker for MC19 has not yet been booked. [Cliff Schakelford, the Texas State Ornithologist, has since declined due to scheduling conflicts.] Ed will continue his search for an alternative.

The October 9th **Business After Hours** mixer with Brazosport Chamber of Commerce members was deemed successful, having exposed many members to their first visit to the Discovery Center. It was agreed that such outreach to smaller businesses should continue.

Action items were reviewed and revised; they are summarized at the end of this report. **New Action Items are highlighted in this report** and are **bolded** in the Action Register.

President Ed Barrion adjourned this board meeting at 4:32 pm.

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary, Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register Updated 9Nov18				
Action Item	Who?	Due Date?	Status	Comments
Movie on BNWR, highlighting EE opportunities	Tom Schneider, Torry Tvedt	Progress report Jan. 2019 board meeting	On Going	Torry has copy and will get with Tom week of Sept. 17th for subtitle additions. Need Spanish version
Develop a New Outdoor Environmental Education Display for our canopy	David/Tom/Lisa/Marty	ASAP	Lisa presented display options	Lisa asked to propose itemized budget for specific display options including a sign like the one Oron made for GCBO. Velcro attachment likely. Need work on message content
Contract for temporary webmaster	Lisa Myers and every board member	Website to be completed by end of July	Ongoing	Christina Rivers has produced basic revision to website, but there is little content and link issues remain. Need to find someone to maintain content. Each board member needs to critique.
Develop text on FOBWR history for website	Ed Barrios	O/B 1march19	Fixin to	Ed will review Friends archives stored at Complex office for early history (see J. Sanchez)
Develop a Succession Plan	Lisa Myers, Mickey	January board meeting	No action up to 9Nov18	The Board needs a succession plan for Officers and Board Members and needs to set up a committee to do so. The committee also needs to work on ways to increase membership
Install shelving and racks in the Friends storage shed	Oron	On/before 1Mar19	in progress	Dick assembling inventory, including stuff stored in members' homes.
Draft an operating budget for 2019	Finance Committee	31-Dec-18		Finance committee of Dick, Ed, and Marty will draft and motion to accept by email before year end.

Approach Mrs. McGovern to be able to use her funds targeted for BNWR on SBNWR Projects	Ed Barrios	1-Jan-19	Ongoing	Carol Jones has provided contact info. of Mrs. McGovern's secretary.
Determine cost of finished butterfly labs without the HVAC unit, and the extra cost of providing a separate room for locked storage.	Tom Schneider	Jan board mtg	No action up to 9Nov18	Tom was not present at Nov. board meeting.
Provide an estimate of operational costs for supplying butterflies.	Tom Schneider	Jan board mtg	No action up to 9Nov18	Utilities, materials and supplies. Not insurance.
Provide estimates of cost of insuring the butterfly lab	Kim	after jan board mtg		Including flood insurance.
Define role and responsibility of School Outreach	Phil and Marty	13-Nov-18	No action up to 9Nov18	Phil is currently a one-man committee leading the BoP program. Vision might expand to other in-school nature topics.

