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Grant for Pre-purchase Discovery of Over-wash Lands of the Cedar Lake Cut.

The Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (Friends) requests a grant of \$30,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be used for completing tasks that facilitate the acquisition of lands in the over-wash area of Cedar Lake Cut along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico in Matagorda County, Texas. Such tasks involve pre-acquisition due-diligence completed to federal requirements, such as discovery activities including title searches through finalizing purchase contracts with landowners. We expect that this work would be completed within five years after the awarding of the grant.

Friends has managed and is currently managing similar grants from The Houston Endowment, a philanthropic donor, for pre-purchase discovery that has resulted in over 7,000 acres being added to the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex. However these grants are restricted to investigate lands in Brazoria and Warton Counties in Texas.

73 species of waterbirds have been documented using the Cedar Lake Cut site, many in significantly abundant numbers. It is an important roosting site for the Piping Plover, as well as for the Wilson's Plover, the Snowy Plover, and the Reddish Egret. With proper management, this over-wash and pass will continue to be used by these species as a breeding, foraging and roosting habitat.

This important habitat is increasingly threatened by off-road use and other human disturbance. It is thus imperative that this land be brought under the protection of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge, which is immediately adjacent to the Cedar Lake Cut over-wash. Experience has shown that the timely completion of discovery requirements significantly expedites sourcing of funding for actual land purchases.

We appreciate your consideration for the requested grant, and would be pleased to provide further detail if needed.

Martin Cornell

Grant Administrator,
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