

Board Meeting & General Meeting*
***(Election of the Board)**

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges

Friday, January 20, 2012; Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Attendees at the Meeting of the Board: Ed Barrios, Ron Bisbee, Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Sarah Heller, Phil Huxford, Donna Jablecki, Neal McLain, Denis Mudderman, David Plunkett, Krissy Plunkett, Jennifer Sanchez, Tom Schneider, Tom Taroni.

President Ed Barrios opened the board meeting at 12:30 with an announcement that Edgar Johnson has resigned from the board, and thus as the secretary of the board. A request was made for a volunteer to assume the role of secretary. Later in this meeting, Mickey Dufilho accepted this office.

The Minutes of the November 4th Board Meeting, as amended via e-mail comments, were accepted by acclimation.

The Financial Report was presented by Treasurer Krissy Plunkett:

FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES
 FINANCIAL REPORT
 January 20, 2012

ACCOUNT BALANCE	GRANT	\$465,439.68
<u>RESTRICTED FUNDS</u>		
Deerslayer Program		\$150.00
Cox Native Tree Restoration	20080303 Native Tree Restoration	\$500.00
Dow Woods Pavilion	201006623 Dow Woods Pavilion	\$6,383.38
McGovern Brazoria Refuge		\$27,250.00
McGovern San Bernard Refuge		\$31,100.00
Reforestation Program	20110401 Reforestation	\$2,500.00
Houston Endowment	20070803 Revolving Reimbursement, Houston Endowment	\$20,000.00
Otter Slough Boardwalk	20110825 Otter Slough Boardwalk	\$25,000.00

Al Clarke Pavilion	20110928 Fish Casting Shelter	\$3,000.00
Dow Foundation	20091123 Dow Woods Trail	\$17,912.52
Houston Endowment	20111115 Land Acquisition Discovery	\$300,000.00
Birding Initiative	20110926 Brazoria Birding Initiative	\$4,000.00
TOTAL		\$437,795.90
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS		\$27,643.78

Krissy noted that a check for \$23,738.94 was received from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), which completes their \$200,000 obligation from our Dow Woods Trail grant (20091123). To-date expenditures on this project are a little over \$202,000. Costs exceeding the TPWD funding are now being covered from the \$20,000 match of The Dow Chemical Company, the \$6,383.38 remaining in Challenge Cost Share funds for facilities development at the SBNWR (mostly spent on the Dow Woods pavilion), and \$23,100 of McGovern funds reserved for this project as approved at the 4Nov11 board meeting.

Use of PayPal for Donations: Krissy has found that we may set up a donation button through PayPal for no charge. Donors do not need to have a PayPal account. Neal McLain moved and Ron Bisbee seconded a motion to authorize Krissy to set up this account; the motion passed with no objection.

Kathrine McGovern Recognition: Krissy reported that in December Mrs. McGovern donated \$16,000 to be spent evenly at the Brazoria and San Bernard NWRs. Since January of 2008, Mrs. McGovern has donated a total of \$74,000. The board discussed ways to thank her for this support, and decided to develop a photo book showing the use of her gifts. Marty Cornell volunteered to lead the effort to develop this book, with a target of April 13, 2012 for completion (the date of the Migration Celebration (MC) kickoff dinner. Mrs. McGovern will be invited to attend this dinner, but should she decline, Ed Barrios and Jennifer Sanchez will arrange a meeting with her (possibly a lunch) to deliver the photo album and our thanks.

Grants: Marty Cornell reviewed several active grants, noting as above that the funding from TPWD is completed for the **Dow Woods Trail** grant, although our contract obligates us to complete the culvert crossing of Bastrop Bayou. Jennifer Sanchez indicated this will be done after engineering approval of the structure.

The location of the **boardwalk across Otter Slough** (grant 20110815) has been determined. The 350 foot length is a reduction of the grant application estimate of 430 feet (saving money), but USFWS regional engineering will require a more extensive support structure (adding cost).

Discussions are underway with the region office to settle on a structural design. Volunteers will be needed to help deck the boardwalk.

The **Birding Initiative** grant (20110927) contains elements tied into the Otter Slough trail, e.g. a kiosk at the entrance road off of Highway 2004, and a photo blind. The refuge staff, led by Jim Payne, will be constructing these items within the next several months, and Denis Mudderman has begun the development of other grant elements.

The **Fish Casting Shelter** (20110928) will be built by the refuge staff, including the concrete slab work, by mimicking the dimensions of the Bug Sweeping shelter next to the Discovery Center. Funding is from a \$3,000 donation from the Al Clarke family, and will most likely need to be augmented by allocating money from the McGovern gift.

Jennifer Sanchez noted that Torry Tvedt has received invoices for the final payment of the **Discovery Center Exhibit** (grant 20100909); Torry has yet to pass these invoices on to Krissy for payment. Krissy will contact Torry for these invoices, or get acceptable copies from Jennifer.

Jennifer noted that there is about \$25,000 in **Challenge Cost Share** money available augment funding interpretive materials.

Ron Bisbee reported that most of the work has been done to restore the Pentagon Marsh at the Sergeant Unit of the SBNWR, under **GCJV Mottled Duck Conservation Plan-IV** (\$32,000 grant 20110709). There is a little more dirt work to do, and an old irrigation well will be examined see if it might be rehabilitated; the quote for this is \$7,250. It would cost another \$13,000 to \$14,000 to bring this well back to working order.

Migration Celebration 2012 (MC12) David Plunkett reported that, while TPWD will not staff a Coastal Expo exhibit at MC12, Sea Center Texas will bring their touch tank.

David presented a proposed \$30,000 MC12 budget, and moved for its acceptance. This motion was seconded by Phil Huxford. Discussion focused on the desirability to include the EarthQuest® birds-of-prey (BoP) school program costs and donations in the MC12 budget. References were made to the January 16th MC12 planning committee discussion that included suggestions to adopt a "pay as you go" policy for the school BoP events. Phil Huxford reported that he has pledges worth \$10,400 to date, and that he expects to exceed \$14,000 in total direct support (at \$400 a show = 35 programs, including some civic events.). The proposed MC12 budget listed \$16,500 for all shows, including four BoP demonstrations at the event (\$500 each) and \$400 for miscellaneous expenses related to these shows.

Marty Cornell moved and Ron Bisbee seconded a motion to remove non-event BoP shows from the MC12 budget and to accept a MC12 budget of \$15,900. This motion passed unanimously. Below is the resultant budget approved by the Friends board.

Migration Celebration 2012 Budget			
Item			
	2011	Proposed 2012	Final 2012
Newspaper Ads	\$ 1,738.63	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00
Flyers	\$ 640.00	\$ 1,188.00	\$ 1,188.00
Street Banners	\$ 269.25	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Yard Signs		\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00
Posters, Signs & Displays	\$ 1,695.69	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 1,700.00
Field Guide Giveaway	\$ 48.00		
Promotional	\$ 4,391.57	\$ 4,863.00	\$ 4,863.00
EarthQuest®	\$ 16,600.00	\$ 16,100.00	\$ 2,000.00
Birds-of-Prey support costs	\$ 366.40	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00
Cost of BoP shows	\$ 16,966.40	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 2,400.00
Photo Contest	\$ 1,519.03	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Dinner	\$ 1,165.76	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
Silent Auction	\$ 46.04	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Friends Store	\$ 2,591.05	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00
Food Booth	\$ 1,363.86	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1,400.00
Bake Sale	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total	\$ 6,685.74	\$ 5,200.00	\$ 5,200.00
Freeport River Place Rental & Cleaning	\$ 617.00	\$ 625.00	\$ 625.00
Sound System, stage, podium			
Van Rental			
Junior Naturalist Costs, wristbands	\$ 225.00	\$ -	\$ -
Fuel			
Guest Expense Reimbursement	\$ 129.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Portable Restrooms	\$ 934.07	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Hay Bails		\$ -	\$ -
Tent Rental, Repair	\$ 649.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
San Bernard Oak Trail Guide		\$ -	\$ -
Magnetic Van Signs	\$ 350.00	\$ -	\$ -
Misc. Small Charges	\$ 49.99	\$ -	\$ -
Name Badges	\$ 151.72	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Total Other	\$ 3,105.78	\$ 3,075.00	\$ 3,075.00
Total Expenses	\$31,149.49	\$ 29,638.00	\$ 15,538.00
Total Income	\$35,444.75		
Budget Request Approved		\$30,000.00	\$15,900.00

Krissy Plunkett moved and Sarah Heller seconded a motion that Birds-of-Prey shows away from the MC12 event will be paid for from dedicated donations and accounted for separately from Migration Celebrations. This motion passed with none opposed.

2012 Outreach David Plunkett reviewed a list of planned and potential Friends outreach events for the year. Friends participation at the February 25th Gulf Coast Adventure Weekend is still pending. The MC12 Lake Jackson Wal-Mart bake sale will be on Friday, March 30th.

2012 Initial Outreach Planning

February

- **Saturday, February 25: Gulf Coast Adventure Weekend/Outdoor Expo at BP College????**

March

- **Saturday, March 3: Heritage Day, Brazoria**
- **Saturday, March 3: Sea Center Nature Day**
- **Friday, March 30: Wal-Mart Bake Sale**

April

- **Good Friday, April 6: Brazos Mall**
- **Saturday, April 7, 2012: Open**
- **Friday, April 13: Migration Celebration/RiverPlace**
- **Saturday, April 14, Brazos Mall**
- **Saturday/Sunday, April 21-22: Migration Celebration**

May

- **Saturday, May 5: Sweeny Pride Day**
- **Thursday/Friday, May 10-11: Coastal Expo-Beach Festival at the Matagorda Bay Nature Park**

July

- **Friday Afternoon July 6 (?) and Saturday, July 7: Coastal Expo, RiverPlace in Freeport**

September

- **Saturdays, September 8 and 15, 2012: XHX at GCBO (mornings only)?**

October

- ~~**Sunday, October 28: Sea Center Texas Spooktacular (afternoon)?**~~
- **October X, 2012: Outdoors Houston at Discovery Green????**

November

- **November 3: Prairie Day/Brazos Bend State Park????**
- **November 3: Kids Day on Buffalo Bayou*????**
- **Saturday 10: BC Parks Family Day/Hanson Riverside Park????**
- **Saturday, November 17 – LJ Festival of Lights????**

December

- **December ? – Kids Unlimited, Pearland**

[*http://www.buffalobayou.org/kidsday.html](http://www.buffalobayou.org/kidsday.html)

Partners: Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge

Holiday Open House: Over the Christmas holiday period, Denis Mudderman, along with RV volunteer Gabriella McRae, opened up the Discovery Center lab to the general public. They had 256 visitors, several who returned with more friends and family. Denis proposed that we add another open house over spring break, and include both events on our outreach calendar.

Refuge Report: Jennifer Sanchez distributed a list of ongoing and proposed Friends projects for 2012 (see below). She noted that refuges budgets, for the second year in a row, are cut by two percent, thus emphasizing the need for grants.

Friends Group Projects - 2012

Existing Projects

- Dow Woods Culvert Crossing to complete the TPWD Grant
- NFWF Birding initiative - \$5,000 with a variety of commitments
- Dow Grant for Otter Slough - \$25,000 to construct boardwalk (complete by May 1)
- Fish Casting Shelter - \$3,000
- Challenge Cost Share with FWS is available to cost share on interpretive materials (\$25,000 est.)

Complex Wide:

- Professional Exhibit for the Mall- interchangeable
- Refuge Junior Naturalist annual support grant. \$5,000 for food for special events, vans, etc.
- Hire a graphics technician to produce interpretive panels, brochures, RJN websites (\$5,000)

San Bernard NWR

- Replace Interpretive kiosks on entrance road.
- Construct extension of Bobcat Wood Trail across slough to Wolfweed Wetlands and adding interpretive panels. (\$10,000 to \$15,000?)
- Replace interpretive material in the foyer at San Bernard and screened shelter.
- Construct observation deck at Rail Pond.
- Prairie restoration at Eagle Nest Lake (1,000 acres will require restoration - ground work, purchase seed or hay and plant or spread). [probably a NFWF restoration grant similar to that used to restore the Halls Bayou prairie.]

Brazoria NWR:

- 4 Stereo Microscopes @ \$2,000 each [Mickey Dufilho has used microscopes from her Brazosport College lab that may prove suitable]
- Tarp for Crosstrails Shelter (roll up and stow away)
- Computer kiosk (\$2,000) at the Discovery Center

Jennifer noted that the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex (TMCNWRC) has been designated to develop and maintain a Facebook page; this will require posting at least three times per week. She will appreciate help with content.

The TMCNWRC is working with those developing the Lone Star Recreation Area, a multi-county initiative on the Texas coast administered by the National Park service. Jennifer, who is part of the development committee, stated that the recreation area will be compatible with our refuges.

A phone conference call, led by the Region 2 office, was made to update Friends groups on current issues that might impact them. The goal is to hold these conferences on a quarterly. One issue discussed was a suit against a Friends group by a participant in an activity sponsored by that Friends group. This initiated a discussion on adequate liability insurance to cover Friends members. It was decided that our volunteer agreements need to include hold-harmless clauses specific to special tasks like driving vans.

It was agreed that Friends President Ed Barrios would be our designee to attend the national refuge academy.

The Board Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

The General Meeting of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges began at 2:44 pm. There were 25 attendees, including members of the refuge staff.

Election of Board Members: Ron Bisbee moved and Sharon Stewart seconded a motion to re-elect all current members of the board to serve in 2012, with the exception of Edgar Johnson who has resigned from the board. This motion passed unanimously.

Abbreviated updates on Friends finances and our active grants were given to the general membership.

Mike Lange of the USFWS gave a presentation on the history and current initiatives to preserve and restore sections of our Columbia Bottomland forests.

The General Meeting adjourned around 3:45 pm

Marty Cornell,
Substitute Secretary for this meeting.