

Houston Endowment Annual Report

H.E. Grant 2012-331-0332-01

September 29, 2014

Significant changes to our organization (leadership, major programming, financial position, etc.) since receiving this grant.

Since the Fall of 2013, three board members have resigned (Sarah Heller, Krissy Plunkett and Sandy Henderson), and two members of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges have accepted positions on our Board of Directors (Jeanne Manry and Dick Schaffhausen). Ms. Manry has assumed the position of Treasurer.

List, with amounts, how remaining funds will be spent:

Based on our experience with the similar completed Houston Endowment Grant, awarded on October 3, 2011, our spending can be estimated to be:

Anticipated Use of Funds Remaining* in H.E. Grant 2012-331-0332-01

*($\$196,863.22$ as of September 29, 2014)

Category	Percent	Amount
Surveys	42.0	$\$82,682.55$
NFWF Support**	34.8	$\$68,508.40$
Title Searches	4.1	$\$8,071.39$
Appraisals	14.8	$\$29,135.76$
Retainers	2.6	$\$5,118.44$
Miscellaneous	1.7	$\$3,346.67$
	100.0	$\$196,863.22$

**Support from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Update on the work of FOBWR since Last Report to H.E.

The last report of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR) to the Houston Endowment was our application for this grant submitted on February 14, 2013. From this date to the present, our work continued on our four areas of focus: Environmental Education, Community Outreach, Fundraising, and the prosecution of grants awarded to us for land conservation and public use.

During the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, about 5,000 3rd, 4th, and 7th grade children from area school districts participated in our Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP) held at the Brazoria and San Bernard National Wildlife refuges. This program engages students in several hands-on nature activities throughout their six-hour visits. For two weekend days in April, 2013 and April, 2014, we conducted our annual Migration Celebrations which each drew over 1,600 visitors to the San Bernard NWR. About half of the participants are families with young children, and the other half adults unaccompanied by children, and over 40% of the attendees are first-time visitors. Preceding and during

Migration Celebration, FOBWR sponsors visits to area schools by EarthQuest, who display birds-of-prey and teach their habits including demonstration flight of these birds. For these two years, 75 performances occurred at local schools and civic organizations having a total attendance of 30,000 people. In October of 2013, FOBWR participated at the Kellogg Brown, and Root “Kids Day” on Buffalo Bayou where an estimated 5,000 visitors had close encounters with reptiles and butterflies and were informed about the National Wildlife Refuges in the Houston area. In November 2013, we held our first “A Taste for Nature” fundraiser featuring fine wines and matching food, with the \$15,000 net proceeds used to support the above environmental education and outreach activities.

During the 19 months from February, 2013 to the present, remaining funds from a \$300,000 grant from the Houston Endowment, awarded on October 3, 2011, were used for pre-purchase discovery that resulted in the acquisition of three tracts of land totaling 1495.1 acres. The current Houston Endowment grant has been used for pre-purchase discovery of an additional five tracts of land totaling 783.5 acres. During this period, smaller grants from other funders were used for land rehabilitation and in support of the Woods Project, which engages urban teenagers from Houston in outdoor activities on our refuges. Other active grants are being used to expand trails at the Dow Woods Unit of the San Bernard NWR and to augment and upgrade equipment and facilities used for our DEEP program.

Update on this specific project. Has the Program been completed? If so, provide a summary of the work that was accomplished and the benefits currently being provided as a consequence.

If the project or program has not been completed, provide a report on the progress of the initiative thus far and detail what work remains.

Using the funds of this grant for pre-purchase discovery, five of the fifteen tracts of land targeted for acquisition, totaling 783.5 acres, have been purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and added to the San Bernard NWR. An additional five land tracts totaling 249 acres are under contract pending purchase. Negotiations are underway on another five tracts of land totaling 4,899 acres. Table 1 below lists these tracts and figure 1 shows the location of these tracts within the acquisition boundary in Brazoria and Fort Bend counties as authorized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The process of completing the purchase of the targeted ten tracts of land is expected to take another year, into the fall of 2015.

In total, over 34,000 acres of the authorized 70,000 acres of prime riparian forest and adjoining prairies in the Columbia Bottomlands have been added since the acceptance of the 1997 Decision Document of the Austin’s Woods [a.k.a. Columbia Bottomland Forest] Conservation Plan. It is believed that this 70,000 acres would be sufficient to sustain the biodiversity on which substantial populations of migratory and native birds and other wildlife depend. The grants of the Houston Endowment significantly facilitate the process of this land acquisition.

Table 1
Status of Land Acquisition using Houston Endowment funds for Discovery.
Houston Endowment Grant 2012-331-0332-01

Purchased Using HE Funds for Pre-Purchase Discovery				
Tract	Date Closed	Acres	Value	Source(s) of Purchase Funds
Conwell Sandpit	7/12/2013	14.30	\$125,000	Donation

BSR-RRG	8/5/2013	212.63	\$372,000	MBCC
Gilbert (CE)	12/6/2013	12.74	\$44,600	Donation
Yelderman	8/29/2014	118.80	\$217,132	MBCC
Braniff	9/19/2014	425.00	\$1,500,000	NAWCA, Chevron Phillips Chemical Co.
Sub-Totals		783.47	\$2,258,732	

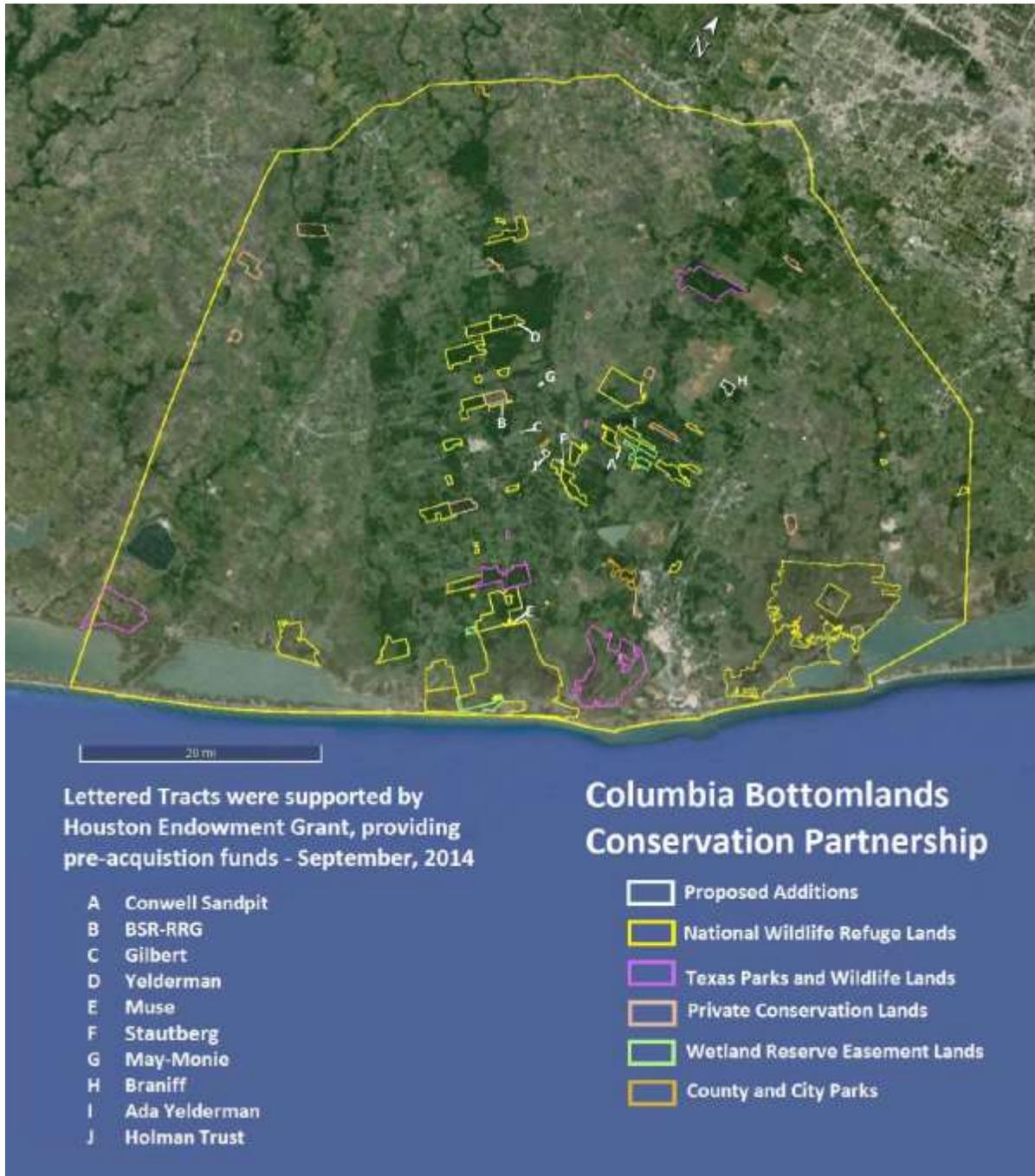
Tracts Under Purchase Agreement

Muse		56.00	\$116,800	MBCC
Stoutberg		35.00	\$138,500	MBCC
May-Monie (CE)		35.00	\$75,000	Donation
Ada Yelderman		2.00	\$5,000	Donation
Holman Trust		121.00	\$665,500	Unknown
Sub-Totals		249.00	\$1,000,800	

Proposed Additions Appraised But Not Under Contract

5 tracts		4,899.00	\$11,320,000	
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Figure 1. Conserved Parcels of Land within the Acquisition Boundary of the San Bernard NWR



Note: the purchase of tract "H", Braniff, was completed on September 19, 2014.

Additional Learnings