

# Houston Endowment Annual Report

H.E. Grant, Application Number 2015-327-0229, awarded to the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges

July 24, 2017

## Organization Financials

When did your last fiscal year end?

December 31, 2016

For that year, what were your:

**Total Operating Expenses: \$182,503**

**Total Operating Revenues: \$513,055**

**Financial Documents:** Please see below for the use of grant funds by the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR).

Expenditures charged to this grant from Houston Endowment are shown below:

1:08 PM  
07/21/17  
Cash Basis

**Friends of Brazoria National Wildlife Refuges  
Profit & Loss Detail  
January 2016 through July 2017**

Type	Date	Name	Memo	Original Amount	Paid Amount
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>					
<b>Expense</b>					
<b>600001 - Grants for Specific Projects</b>					
<b>6160219 - Houston Endowment</b>					
<b>6160220 - Foletts Island</b>					
Bill	07/26/2016	Steve Hughes, Apprai...		5,000.00	5,000.00
Bill	11/14/2016	Steve Hughes, Apprai...	Folette Island Appraisals	5,000.00	5,000.00
Total 6160220 - Foletts Island					10,000.00
<b>6160219 - Houston Endowment - Other</b>					
Bill	05/16/2016	National Fish and Wild...	Tom Smith Columbia Bottomlands Project	19,747.17	19,747.17
Bill	07/20/2016	National Fish and Wild...	April 2016	5,997.38	5,997.38
Bill	07/20/2016	National Fish and Wild...	May 2016	5,450.88	5,450.88
Bill	07/20/2016	National Fish and Wild...	June 2016	12,344.11	12,344.11
Bill	09/22/2016	National Fish and Wild...	Tom Smith	27,043.26	27,043.26
Bill	02/22/2017	National Fish and Wild...	Reimbursement for Tom Smith Consulting fees	21,923.86	21,923.86
Bill	04/24/2017	National Fish and Wild...	Tom Smith quarterly bill	27,435.69	27,435.69
Bill	07/19/2017	Tom Smith	Reimbursement for appraisal fees	19,000.00	19,000.00
Bill	07/19/2017	National Fish and Wild...	Tom Smith consulting fees and expenses	22,985.92	22,985.92
Total 6160219 - Houston Endowment - Other					161,928.27
Total 6160219 - Houston Endowment					171,928.27
Total 600001 - Grants for Specific Projects					171,928.27
Total Expense					171,928.27

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

FOBWR have had some changes of the Members of the Board of Directors. The current board is:

## Board of Directors of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Duties</b>	<b>Background</b>
President	Edward Barrios	Chairman of the Board	Retired, Dow Chemical Co. Chemical Engineer, Health and Environmental Safety
Vice President	Ron Bisbee	Program Chairman	Retired USF&WS Refuge Mgr.; Consultant- seismology
Secretary	Mickey Dufilho	Documentation of official proceedings	Retired, Dow Chemical Co.; Professor of Microbiology, Brazosport College
Treasurer	Richard Schaffhausen	Financial transactions	Retired, Financial Advisor
Member-at-Large	Oron Atkins	Coordinator, Capital Projects	Retired, Dow Chemical Co., Production Maintenance
Member-at-Large	Martin Cornell	Grant Administrator; Chairman, A Taste for Nature Fundraiser	Retired, Dow Chemical Co., Senior Scientist, Dow Automotive
Member-at-Large	Phil Huxford	Chairman, Birds-of-Prey Programs	Retired, Landscape contractor
Member-at-Large	Judy Green		Retired, reporting and public relations
Member-at-Large	Jeanne Manry		Retired business owner; data processing & analysis
Member-at-Large	David Plunkett	Chairman, Migration Celebration	Retired, Dow Chemical Co., Health and Environmental Safety
Member-at-Large	Kim Richardson	Insurance and Contracts	Retired, Attorney
Member-at-Large	Torry Tvedt		Retired, Dow Chemical Co., Process Engineer.

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

As of June 30, 2017, \$171,928.27 of this \$300,000 Houston Endowment Grant has been spent on pre-land purchase discovery activities. It is expected that these remaining \$128,071.73 will be spent by the end of the first quarter of 2018 to cover costs of support from Thomas Smith of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and appraisals of potential land purchases for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Specific pending discovery activities are described below.

**Update on the work of FOBWR since Last Report to H.E. (authored by Mike Lange, Trust for Public Lands)**

The project area covers four Texas Mid-Coast Counties; i.e., Brazoria, Fort Bend, Matagorda and Wharton, which includes four units of the National Wildlife Refuge System; i.e. Big Boggy National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Brazoria NWR, Columbia Bottomlands Unit of San Bernard NWR plus the San Bernard NWR. Houston Endowment funds only support pre-purchase discovery on lands in Brazoria, Fort Bend, and Wharton Counties. Activity in Matagorda County is included to provide a complete overview of the whole project to preserve lands in the Columbia Bottomlands and adjoining properties.

To date, a total of 60-plus private properties have been acquired by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) by purchase and donation, totaling 36,138.03-acres, at \$50,688,116 market value and now managed as part of the Refuge System. This land preservation project includes numerous major partners i.e., Houston Endowment, Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR), the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), The Trust For Public Land (TPL), Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Houston Sierra Club, Houston Audubon, etc. Funding sources include Houston Endowment Grants to Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, 18 fee and/or conservation easement land donations from private landowners, mitigation funds, money donated to acquire lands from oil and gas companies in Texas, plus the use of federal Migratory Bird, Land & Water Conservation Funds, and NAWCA Grants, etc.

In 2016 fee title to three tracts were acquired by the FWS; i.e., the 1,080-acre Westcap property, the 270-acre Freeport LNG property, and the 84.20-acre Willy Family property. The Westcap tract was acquired by TPL and transferred to FWS with Migratory Bird (MBCC) funding. The Freeport LNG tract was owned by Freeport LNG and transferred to FWS as mitigation for their nearby plant development. The Willy Family tract was acquired for \$168,400 by FWS using part of the \$215,000 donation to NFWF Columbia Bottomlands NFWF/FWS land preservation account by Texas Gas Company (TGC). The Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR) continues to help cover the pre-acquisition land costs; i.e., the market value appraisal reports, title insurance policies, closing costs, and land surveys, for all three of the 2016 purchases.

In 2017, NFWF is working with the CB Project partners on acquiring fee purchase of the remaining properties within the boundary of the San Bernard Refuge, shown on attached maps, using available Houston Endowment/FOBWR pre-acquisition Grant Funds and the \$46,600 remaining donated money from TGC. Following is status and list of these private inholdings that are planned to be approved for purchase at the September Migratory Bird Conservation Commission Meeting (MBCC):

- The Century Assets 5-acre inholding in the Sargent Ventures Unit of the refuge located on the County Road about 1 mile north of the town of Sargent Beach. NFWF contracted the market value appraisal report of the subject property with fee appraiser James Jeffries. The \$92,500 appraised value has been approved and FWS has provided the landowner a purchase agreement to acquire the property with Fiscal year 2017 Migratory Bird Funds.
- The 17.32-acre Olson property inholding located along the County Road in the southeast portion of the San Bernard NWR. Property was also appraised by James Jeffries per contract with NFWF and the \$103,900 value approved and accepted by the landowners. FWS is sending the purchase agreement to the landowners to acquire the property with MBCC September funding.

- NFWF is also working with the Poole/Ducroz landowner's attorneys on their remaining private ownerships within the southeast boundary of the San Bernard Refuge, containing approximately 850-acres, more or less, (as shown on the attached map).

This land has a complex, long-standing private ownership problem for the San Bernard Refuge since its establishment in the 1970's. This problem is an artifact of the State of Texas original land survey patent errors, private ownership claims, uncertain location of US Army Corps of Engineers Intracoastal Waterway and Spoil Easements on the land, etc. NFWF and the FWS Realty Office are working with the landowners in efforts to obtain current legal descriptions of their ownerships in order to contract market value appraisal reports and obtain approval to acquire the subject lands with future MBCC funding.

Activity is also underway to acquire tracts of land in the Big Boggy and Brazoria National Wildlife Refuges:

- At the recent request from FWS, the NFWF has initiated pre-acquisition steps to acquire approximately 150-acres of Piping Plover Endangered Species Critical Habitat located at Cedar Lake Cut inholding at the San Bernard Refuge in Matagorda County. Because this land is outside of the four-county area stipulated in the Houston Endowment grant, FOBWR has received a \$30,000 from the FWS to help cover preservation costs of the subject lands that may contain numerous private owners with undivided ownership interests and potential claim by the State of Texas, being a former part of Cedar Lakes.
- The Trust for Public Land is working as a partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Consultant Tom Smith (NFWF) to acquire the 190 -acre Snow Tract. This is a high priority addition to the Refuge Complex, located just west of the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. The tract will greatly enhance the public use programs of Brazoria NWR providing excellent birding as well as fresh water fishing and a location for environmental education programs. The Trust for Public Land has the land under contract and the project will be going to the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission along with the two other refuge tracts at San Bernard. Houston Endowment funds held by the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges covered the very extensive and complicated appraisal needed for this project.
- The Alattar tract is an exciting potential acquisition and addition to the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. This 9,360-acre marsh and prairie landscape is one of the last large intact, pristine marsh systems remaining on the Coast near Houston. The Trust for Public Land is taking the lead on this project. The Galveston Bay Foundation is partnering on this project as well as Tom Smith with NFWF, and the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. Currently we are all working together to provide a market value analysis/partial appraisal, which will allow the Trust for Public Land to get the land under a 2-year option agreement. Hopefully the project can be funded from several sources over the next 2 years including Deep Water Horizon funds, Migratory Bird Conservation Funds and other funding from private foundations and individual donors to match public grant funding.
- The Doss Tract is another Trust for Public Land project in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NFWF consultant Tom Smith. The project is a 714- acre marsh and prairie tract adjacent to the Big Boggy National Wildlife Refuge. It will connect the refuge to Lake Austin providing a large area of frontage on the lake. The project has been approved for funding

through the Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) process which is part of the Deep - Water Horizon settlement. Because this tract is in Matagorda County, funds from the Houston Endowment grant to the FOBWR will not be used for pre-acquisition discovery activities.

- The Trust for Public Land is leading an effort to preserve marsh, bay, and beach habitats on Follets Island adjacent to the Follets Island Conservation Initiative. The land is on the south shores of Christmas and Drum Bays, and each tract reaches from the gulf to the bay waters. The Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, with the concurrence of Houston Endowment, have provided approximately \$16,500 from the grant funds for due-diligence appraisals for 3 ownerships on the Island establishing the market value for these tracts. To date, the Trust for Public Land has acquired all three tracts and will be transferring all three, a total of approximately 385 acres, to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for permanent protection as part of the Initiative. This land protection greatly enhances the conservation of the adjacent Refuge lands at the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge, preventing over-development of Follets Island and Christmas and Drum Bays.

**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.**

Please see the above summary.

**Attachments:**



Projects in the Brazoria NWR Vacinity





Follets Island Conservation Project  
 The Pauls Tracts - Proposed Additions  
 Approximate acres - 247



Stellar Tract - 134 acres



Westcap and Freeport LNG Tracts



The Snow Tract - approximately 190 acres

Submitted by Marty Cornell

Grant Administrator  
Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges  
P.O. Box 505  
Lake Jackson, Texas 77566