

Date: 22 January 2013
Name: Tom Ketcham
Title: R2 Contracting Officer
Address: 500 Gold Avenue SW
Albuquerque, MN 87103

RE: Request for Extension of Challenge Cost Share Grant F10AC00159, Discovery Center Display.

On June 1, 2010, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Region 2, granted \$20,000, and modified the contract on 9 September 2010 to add another 30,000, under contract F10AC00159 to the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (hereinafter Friends), for the purpose of developing environmental education exhibits at the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge (BNWR). As of the date of this letter, \$17,250.00 has been spent for these exhibits, with half of the cost being paid each from funds of the grant and from funds from the Friends. \$32,750.00 of this Challenge Cost Share (CCS) grant remains unspent, and the grant has been suspended because no activity has occurred since 19 August 2011.

Friends requests that this CCS grant be extended, with \$32,750.00 of matching funds to be dedicated by the Friends to this project, so that we may expand the development of environmental education displays and capabilities on the BNWR. Our proposed projects include:

- Shutters for the Information Shelter adjoining the Discovery Center. This 25 ft by 16 ft structure is frequently used as a teaching station during our Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP) sessions, which typically engage ~100 fourth or seventh grade students for a day at the refuge. Over 25 such sessions are scheduled for the 2012-2013 school year. In inclement weather, this structure cannot be used. We propose to install rollup shutters on the openings to provide protection from wind and blowing rain.
- Interpretative signs for the boardwalk traversing Big Slough. This boardwalk, which is next to the Discovery Center and is thus utilized during DEEP sessions and by casual visitors to the BNWR. We propose to install a series of displays that will describe the flora and fauna of this fresh water lake.
- Interpretative signs for the [Invasive Species] Trail. A 0.6 mile loop of this trail is used in our DEEP sessions to highlight the impact of invasive plants that intermix with native plant species and the resulting competition for resources. Supportive signage would reinforce this message and provide an overview of this concept to casual visitors. One sign would discuss mosquitoes.
- An exhibit in the Discovery Center that addresses the impact of varying amount and type of water, from drought to flood to salt water tidal surge, on the refuge ecology and water table. The concept would include the benefits of drought-resistant native prairie grasses.
- A large map of the BNWR for one wall in the laboratory of the Discovery Center.
- A table with lockable storage underneath for a projecting microscope.
- A high-definition large format wall-mounted television to display the objects of the projecting microscope.
- A tank and associated equipment to grow algae for use in DEEP sessions.

- A digital movie giving an overview of the Brazoria and adjoining National Wildlife Refuges and highlighting environmental education opportunities.
- Interpretative exhibits along the Cross Trails Auto Loop. This road transects the transition from coastal prairie and fresh water marsh to the brackish estuary of the BNWR. Three shelters are located along the auto loop that is used as stations in DEEP sessions. We propose to add an exhibit at each of these three shelters to highlight three factors important to the ecology of the BNWR:
 - the function and importance of estuaries (nursery for seafood, filtration of water, buffer from Gulf storms, etc.),
 - the roll and importance of water types and abundance in the ecological niches of the refuge, and
 - an overview of the geology of the gulf coastal prairies and estuaries as evolved from the last interglacial to the present. This would include a display of soils.
- Roll up shutters for these three shelters to extend their use during inclement weather.
- An interpretive sign along the Otter Slough Trail, near the office complex of the BNWR, which would discuss major characteristics of the Gulf Coastal Prairie.

We look forward to your expedient consideration of our request of this grant extension.

Sincerely Yours

Edward Barrios, President

/S/ Edward Barrios

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges

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Martin Cornell, Member of the Board
and Grant Administrator

/S/ Martin Cornell

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