

Strategic Planning Session

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges

Discovery Center, Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge, December 4, 2015

Actionable Output:

Conservation and Restoration

Participants: Thomas Adams, Ron Bisbee, Tom Morris, Tom Taroni, Jennifer Wilson

Goal: Assist Refuge Biological Staff in establishing MOTUS Network

Objective:

- Establish 3 monitoring stations in 2016
- Cost of \$3,000 for each tower, \$9,000 total

Strategy:

- Jennifer Wilson assigned as refuge leader.
- Partner with GCBO to plan layout of monitoring stations
- Obtain grant from NFWF for 50/50 cost share
- Volunteers from Friends to set up monitoring stations and gather data.

Limitations:

- Plan for 3 stations 1st year but expect to expand significantly in the future [this is not a limitation, but rather an objective]

Goal: Assist refuge staff with restoration of old rice fields to 300 Acre upland prairie at Eagle Nest Lake Unit of San Bernard NWR

Objective:

- Remove levees
- Reconstruction mima mounds in restoration
- Remove invasive plants
- Reseed 100 acres
- Complete in 2018
- \$20,000 in materials, equipment, and contract labor

Strategy:

- Curtis Jones assigned as refuge leader

- Friends contract for levee removal for \$5,000
- Purchase seed harvester for \$10,000
- Assist with seed collection and reseed

Limitations:

- Weather delays

Goal: Restore another 900 acres [this was a point made under limitations]

Objective: TBD

Advocacy and Outreach

Participants: Cody Dingee, Phil Huxford, Neal McLain, David Plunkett

Goal: Increase Outreach volunteers

Objective:

- By January, 2017 using minimal staff overtime
- [note quantification of “increase” was not given.]

Strategy:

- Monthly tours at refuges conducted [by] volunteers and/or staff,
- Open to public
- Promote volunteer opportunities
- 1 Newspaper –Things to Do (The Facts)
- 2 Facebook – FOBWR –TMN-Cot
- 3 Schedule Published in TMN Newsletter

Limitations:

- Getting tour leaders
- Scheduling

Goal: Increase support for Refuges

Objective:

- Annual
- \$2,000
- [note: quantification of “increase” was not given.]

Strategy:

- Use Migration Celebration Photo Contest for “Billboard Ads” around refuge (on/off refuge land).

Limitations:

- Cost?
- Locations for displays

Public Use

Participants: Marty Cornell, Curtis Jones, Jeanne Manry, Torry Tvedt

Goal: Improve the San Bernard Oak Trail

Objective:

- Install an automatic gate by April 1, 2016 at an estimated cost of \$6,000.

Strategy:

- Curtis Jones assigned as Refuge leader.
- Get board approval with email motion process ASAP.
- Friends contract with supplier ASAP.

Limitations:

- Possible weather delays

Objective:

- Replace pine decking with TanDek plastic composite by August, 2018
- Estimated cost \$180,000

Strategy:

- Obtain a grant covering 80% of the cost (possibly a Texas Recreational Trails Grant); fundraise and/or use discretionary funds for 20%.
- Use volunteer labor for re-decking
- Use refuge staff for repair of understructure.

Limitations:

- Finding a grant source
- Weather delays
- Staff availability

Objective:

- Extend the trail to make it a loop.

- After July 2018
- Estimated cost \$200,000

Strategy

- Plot location of trail extension, determining sections requiring decking, and develop a detailed design and bill of materials.
- Find a grant source.
- Use volunteer labor for re-decking.
- Use refuge staff for building understructure.

Limitations:

- Finding a grant source
- Weather delays
- Staff availability

Goal: Create a Kayak/Canoe Launch Site on Cedar Lake Creek at the end of CR318

Objective:

- Construct a six-vehicle parking lot, floating dock, and concrete launch ramp for an estimated cost of \$35,000
- Mid-2017

Strategy:

- Use a combination of a grant and McGovern money for financing.
- Build a hard structure for anchoring the floating dock to the shore.
- Clear land and build parking lot.
- Contract concrete work (look at recent ramp built at Hanson County Park).
- Use FWS staff for labor and equipment.

Limitations:

- Need a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers
- Availability of FWS staff
- Grant source.

Goal: Re-deck the Big Slough Boardwalk and Bastrop Bayou Fishing Pier

Objective:

- Complete by the second quarter of 2017
- Cost of \$25,000

Strategy:

- Cody Dingee assigned as refuge leader.
- Polish the basis for costs.
- Obtain a Dow Community Grant during next application period in May, 2016.

Limitations:

- Obtaining the Grant
- Weather delays
- Possibly needing a boat for the pier reconstruction.

Environmental Education

Participants: Ed Barrios, Mickey Dufilho, Mary Hoffman, Kelly Koch, Tom Schneider

Goal: Build a Learning & Visitor Center next to the Gerhart Prairie

Objective:

- Purchase the 16-acre Gerhart Prairie by the end of 2017
- Cost of the Gerhart Prairie is \$80,000
- Learning Center to be opened by 2025
- [purchase of land for the center and the building costs were not addressed]

Strategy:

- Jennifer Sanchez assigned as refuge leader.
- Work with the Trust for Public Land (Mike Lange) and NFWF (Tom Smith) to acquire property.
- Solicit the Migratory Bird Funds, the Nature Conservancy, and the Katy Prairie Conservancy for funding.
- Use the Friends Houston Endowment grant for costs of pre-acquisition discovery.

Limitations:

- Cost per acre increases
- Not for sale
- Regional support

Goal: Provide Hands-on butterfly kits to local schools by S.Y. 2016/2017

Objectives:

- Raise 12 breeding pairs of Pink Lady butterflies during summer 2016

- \$3,000 for supplies and butterflies
- Contact schools to establish need

Strategy:

- Tom Schneider assigned as refuge leader
- Friends provides funds and write grants.
- School contact during field trips
- Train school teachers
- Employee time and Friends volunteer time

Limitations:

- Weather
- Insect illness
- Low school interest
- Lack of volunteers.

GOAL: Raise 1,000 monarchs and 1,000 milkweed plants [note: a goal should be qualitative, not quantitative. This goal might be better stated "Provide a sustainable in-house supply of butterflies for our environmental education activities". The quantity of butterflies and plants are objectives, not goals. Marty]

Objectives:

- Build green house by fall 2016
- \$6,000 from friends or grants

Strategy:

- Friends funds & grants
- Greenhouse built by Friends or [refuge] maintenance [personnel]
- Raise plants
- Raise Monarchs

Limitations:

- [Insect] illness
- Weather
- Volunteer commitment.