

The Poole Tract is the last of 36 private, in-holding lots along F.M. 2611 targeted for acquisition. Almost all of the landowners are related. In the late 1970s, they subdivided the land among family members, planning to sell it. Having sold no lots, in 2010 they approached the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS), which, to date, has purchased 28 lots. Of the eight remaining, seven are under contract with USF&WS and will close soon. The Poole family also is engaged in the acquisition process.

To facilitate this purchase, the Friends Group used funds from a Houston Endowment grant that are targeted for pre-acquisition due diligence (e.g., survey, appraisal, title report, title policy). USF&WS is securing signatures approving the sale from all heirs. A licensed appraiser valued the tract at \$31,500. We will send a copy of the appraisal upon request. Of that amount, we have secured \$5,000 from the Community Foundation of Brazoria County.

Two individuals will perform all project activities. Michael Lange, Project Officer and Wildlife Biologist of Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex (USF&WS), will oversee the project with the expert assistance of Thomas E. Smith, land consultant for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Pre-acquisition, Mr. Lange and Mr. Smith conduct due diligence required to secure clear title. The USF&WS Region 2 Realty Division undertakes pre-acquisition activities under the coordination of Mr. Lange. He performs biological ascertainments, site inspections, and environmental assessments on each tract slated for acquisition. Mr. Lange draws upon a long-standing, highly-effective collaboration with Mr. Smith, who negotiates with landowners and obtains documents required to finalize purchases. Both Mr. Lange and Mr. Smith office at the Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Brazoria. Jay Wright, Account Manager, of NFWF, provides support from NFWF offices at 1133 15th Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005.

This project's evaluation focuses on three goals: (1) completing pre-acquisition due diligence, (2) raising \$31,500 to acquire the tract through fee title purchase, and (3) adding 11.05 acres to the Refuge. Evaluation criteria center on obtaining information: a completed survey, appraisal, title report, and title policy; a finalized contract; closing documents, and finally, a filed deed that places the acres into the Refuge system. Mr. Lange and Mr. Smith not only gather these documents but also monitor each step in the pre-acquisition and acquisition processes. We measure success by determining the completion of these activities. When we close on the tract, we will have achieved our goals. Ours is a one-time request for a single acquisition. Because this project will end at closing on the Poole Tract, it will require no additional funding.

Ultimately, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will hold title to, protect, and preserve the land, in perpetuity, as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. A grant of \$26,500 from the Trull Foundation will complete the purchase. Your commitment to coastal Texas habitats and to the wildlife that depend on its preservation suggests an alliance on this project. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Ed Barrios
President