



FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Friday, May 5, 2022 Venue: Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Members in Attendance: Oron Atkins, Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Ruby Lewis, Lisa Myers, Kim Richardson, Dick Schaffhausen, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippet

Members Absent: Phil Huxford

Refuge Staff in Attendance: Cody Dingee, Curtis Jones, Tom Schneider

General Members/Guests in Attendance: none

Lisa Myers called the meeting to order at 1:12 PM.

The proposed **agenda** was accepted after the addition of several business items

The **minutes** of the March 11, 2022 meeting of the board were unanimously approved after minor corrections and a motion by Mickey and a second by Ed.

Interim Motions: Since the January board meeting, there were no interim motions.

Land Acquisition Update: Curtis reported that the Migratory Bird Commission has approved \$7 million toward the purchase of the 5,640-acre K-bar Ranch property, and they are considering funding an additional \$10 million.

FOBWR Funding of Refuge Projects: Cody (for the BNWR) and Curtis (for the SBNWR) were asked to present projects that could be funded by Friends.

Cody would like to replace **two shelters** that were destroyed or damaged by our latest hurricane. They would mimic the style of the Seining shelter in dimension, having sufficient length to accommodate two eight-foot-long picnic tables bolted to a concrete slab and have a metal roof over a frame of marine-grade lumber. Marty moved that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the spending of up to \$15,000 for the construction of two shelters on the Crosstrails Loop of the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge and for four picnic tables, with funding to come from the Brazoria McGovern reserves.”** Ed seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

Cody would like to construct a **birding platform** on the east bank of the Cannan Bend Lake, accessed by a spur bridge from the existing Hickner Loop Trail. The platform would have one bench. Additionally, two more benches are desired to locate along the loop trail. Marty moved that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of up to \$7,000 for the construction of a birding platform on the east shore of Cannan Bend Lake and for the purchase of three benches for the trail and platform, with funding to come from the Cannan Bend Project reserves.”** Mickey seconded the motion, which was passed with a unanimous vote.

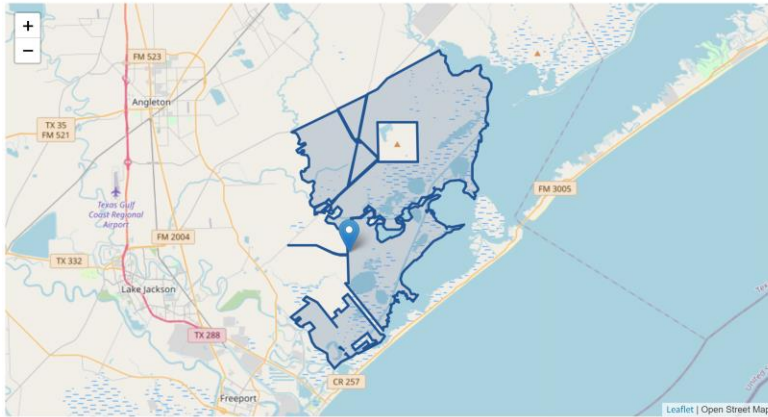
Cody noted that the current drought necessitates **pumping water** to keep a minimum water level in Teal Pond for waterfowl and other wildlife. The current diesel-powered pump at the Maddox Monument consumes about 48 gallons of fuel in 24 hours; at the current \$5.20 per gallon cost of diesel fuel = \$250 per day or ~\$7,500 for 30 days of pumping. A budget for the refuge is still pending, resulting in the lack of refuge funds for this current need. Marty moved that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the spending of up to \$7,500 for diesel fuel to power the pump supplying water to Teal Pond, with funding to come from the Brazoria-McGovern reserves.”** Longer term, the installation of a solar-powered pump will be investigated.

With the recent grading/pothole filling of the Crosstrails loop road, the Brazoria refuge’s stockpile of road limestone has been depleted. Any significant rain deteriorates the road surface. Lacking a budget that would allow restocking of caliche, Cody asked Friends to consider the purchase of 16 loads at about \$20,000. During discussion, it was noted that the Federal Highway Administration conducted their periodic audit of refuge roads last year; such audits occasionally result in FHA grants for road maintenance and improvement. The board decided to put this request on hold pending the approval of a budget for the BNWR, funding by the FHA, or of the weather-induced need without other funding sources.

Similar needs of the San Bernard NWR were outlined in minutes (attached below) of an ad hoc meeting with Curtis on April 25, 2022. Marty moved that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of up to \$30,000 for maintenance and upgrades of public use facilities on the San Bernard NWR. The specific facilities are: repairing/replacing boardwalk on the San Bernard Oak Trail, re-decking the fishing pier on Cedar Lake Creek and modifying the floating pier to prevent accumulation of material underneath, refurbishing the Moccasin Pond observation deck, rebuilding a photo blind at Hudson Woods, and surfacing a trail spur linking the Bobcat Woods boardwalk with the pollinator garden. Funds would come from the San Bernard-McGovern reserve.”** The motion was seconded by Ed and was approved by unanimous vote.

Refuge Update: Cody noted:

- The standardization of all refuge websites went live on April 1st; for us, the address for the BNWR is now the Discovery Center rather than the historical misleading refuge field office on FM2004.



· Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge

(979) 964-4011

2022 County Road 227
Freeport, TX 77541

- About 80 American Beautiful Passes are sold each year by the Complex; specific days and times to purchase the passes are noted on the refuge web pages.
- Cody expressed a special thanks to Oron and his crew for constructing the fishing piers at Cannan Bend
- Bryar Johnson, who has been the Complex's liaison on oil and gas activities, has accepted the position of Wildlife Biologist, filling the role created by the retirement of Thomas Adams.
- The new Project Leader has been filled, with an announcement to be made next week [welcome aboard Bryan Winton!]
- The spraying of cattail is occurring in Otter Slough and impoundments, as is spraying for yaupon near the BNWR field office.
- Construction of breakwater protection continues, albeit slowly per the dictates of the Army Corps of Engineers.
- Bill Stransky of the Texas Rice Industry Coalition for the Environment (Texas RICE) is developing a grant application for the rehabilitation of ponds west of CR208 near Mottled Duck Marsh. The grant will include in-kind contributions of refuge manpower and equipment as needed.

Curtis noted that:

- Work will commence on the low water crossings on Ivy Road and the fishing pier on Cedar Lake Creek.
- Aerial herbicide spraying of the black rail habitat is in limbo pending contracting a helicopter to substitute for the crash of the original contracted helicopter.

Tom reported that:

- The final DEEP session will be on May 17th with Freeport Intermediate 7th grade students
- A special field walk on May 18th will occur at the Peach Creek Unit near Wharton.
- The volunteer appreciation lunch will be held at the Discovery Pavilion on May 24th.

Ed Barrios will contact the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce to correct their information about trails on our refuges.

Action Register: The action register is attached at the end of these minutes. New action items are highlighted above and below. One action item was removed:

- The Friends brochure has been updated

Financial Report: The Financial Report for April, 2022 is attached to these minutes. Regina noted that:

- Phil received \$4,275 in donations for the Birds of Prey program in the March-April period. Expenditures for this year's program will be ~\$25,500 (which approaches the current BoP reserves). The \$12,000 annual donation traditionally granted from Phillips 66 has not been received. Marty will check with Phil and Phillips 66 to determine the status of this year's grant.
- Per board authorization, a contribution of \$1,000 has been sent to the National Wildlife Refuge Association.
- Our annual liability insurance payment has been made (\$2,454).
- Our auditor will be contacted in the fall, after Regina has reconciled our books.
- A TDECU debit card has been issued to Regina; this will facilitate payments.
- Our Form 990 has been filed for the 2021 fiscal year.

Web and Facebook: Dick reported that only minor modifications have been made to our web page; this includes adding a promotion of the upcoming open house at the Cedar Lake Plantation Trail. A page on the 2020 Migration Celebration Photo Contest will be added.

Weebly, our web host, is still less than desirable for ease of modification. Dick will explore the web hosting services of Proforma in Sweeny as an alternative. Protocol is now established for archiving files on the Weebly site; Marty will get with Dick to learn the process.

Maintenance Committee: Dick has received no interest from COT members to participate on the Maintenance Committee. He intends to meet with the new Project Leader for clarification of needs and objectives of where Friends might contribute.

Projects: Oron noted that:

- Construction of the fishing piers at Cannan Bend is finished
- Fallen trees across the San Bernard Oak Trail have been removed
- Existing funds already approved will be sufficient to build a short, ~100-yard boardwalk across a re-routed path to tie into the existing trail. This change would avoid rebuilding the 230-yard boardwalk section that was demolished.
- A new UTV is needed for turtle patrols as the current heavily-used UTV stored at Mat-Pen, while usable, would not be worth repairing. Oron moved that **"The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of up to \$20,000 for the purchase of a Polaris Ranger wide-body UTV, with funding to come from the San Bernard McGovern reserves."** Mickey seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous vote of the board.

Takeout Lunch Fundraiser: Marty reported that the net profit from this year’s Takeout Lunch fundraiser netted a profit of \$4,897, which exceeded last year’s profit by \$408. The results compared to 2021 and the 2019 Kickoff dinner are shown below. Increasing ticket sales and attendance remain as opportunities for future fundraisers. Customer satisfaction is high with the meal being popular with our guests.

Takeout Lunch Results			
	TO22	TO21	MC19
Volunteers	29	32	49
Tickets Sold	272	281	198
Tickets mailed to Sponsors	0	24	10
Attendance	247	233	165
Ticket Price	\$20	\$20	\$30
Ticket Income	\$5,440	\$5,620	\$5,858
Small Donations	\$888	\$506	\$720
Total Income	\$6,328	\$6,126	\$6,578
Expenses	\$1,431	\$1,646	\$3,520
(Venue Rental & Setup)	(\$275)	(\$275)	(\$1,745)
Profit	\$4,897	\$4,489	\$3,058

Photo Contest: This year’s photo contest drew 16 photographers who electronically submitted 110 photos and \$658 in entry fees. Photos of the 42 contest winners will be printed and mounted for display at the Brazos Mall on June 4th and June 11th. The cost for printing/mounting will be about \$400. Mary is writing congratulatory letters and will mail them, along with ribbons, to the winners. The free-standing display at the mall will require staffing for security; this event also provides an opportunity to promote our refuges.

Refuge Saturdays: The last of this season’s Refuge Saturdays will be held on May 14th at the Cedar Lake Plantation Trail. Volunteer staffing is arranged.

Other Outreach: Ruby reported that the next outreach event will be on June 16th at the Nature Center in Matagorda. Phil is organizing the program which will include Birds-of-Prey.

The Texas Master Naturalist, COT summer library program will begin in June. Refuge flyers will be given to adult participants.

Membership: Mickey’s latest newsletter highlighted our five new lifetime members. To date, 72 people are paid-up members.

Monthly Walks: Ed noted that the next walk will be on May 18th at the Peach Creek Forest Unit; this will be the last of the season, resuming the walks in the fall with the arrival of cooler weather. Attendance of these walks has been minimal. Invitation has been restricted to FOBWR members, with the intention to provide a unique benefit to them. Ed will open the invitation to include TMN-COT members. He will also explore inviting employees of our business sponsors.

New Business:

- Ed's year-end solicitation letters sent to major area corporations resulted in \$11,000 in donations. In the future, he intends to expand this initiative with a prospective emphasizing the benefit of our refuges to our community and the challenges from budget resource constraints (a "Did you know?" statement). It was suggested that engagement of the community might be enhanced by the formation of a Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP).
- Our Partnership Agreement has been signed by Cody, and has been submitted to the Regional FWS office in Albuquerque.
- Lisa submitted a \$76,000 grant proposal to the NWRA for the development of three prairie parcels in visitor-accessible areas at the Brazoria and San Bernard NWRs. This grant used verbiage written for our recent grant request from NEEF, which was not accepted.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 pm.

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary

MINUTES OF AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING WITH REFUGE PERSONNEL

Purpose: Refuge priorities for future projects

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022, 10:30 a.m., SBNWR Field Office

Attending Refuge: Curtis Jones, SBNWR Manager; Roland Davis; Tom Schneider

Attending FOBWR: Oron Atkins, Ed Barrios, Ruby Lewis, Lisa Myers, Kim Richardson

San Bernard Oak Trail: We discussed at length the SB Oak Trail. Although a new path on ridges has been made to avoid some water, there is still a large area that almost always has deep standing water.

The trail is too long for a complete boardwalk; Curtis does not want to ruin the pristine woods with a concrete path and the cost would be prohibitive.

What is needed and recommended is a rehab of existing boardwalk and addition of benches. A rough guesstimate would be \$150k depending on the status of the substructure. This does not solve the persistent water area.

Hudson Woods: A high priority is repairing/replacing the Photo Blind / Viewing Deck. It is at least 10-12 years old and in bad shape. A concrete trail replacing the removed boardwalk trail is not worth the cost given the low visitation.

- Cabin: A walkway leading to the door would be nice; adding steps near the door (presently only a long dog-leg ramp; ramp needs no-slip strips/coating or straighten the ramp and redesign the railings to eliminate leaves
- Restroom: It will need to be replaced in the future
- Education building (EE): Needs a concrete slab in the front where it is hard to mow (about 6' x 30' or fill the area with rock and a slab in front of door only; add an outdoor or indoor sink (there used to be an indoor sink)

Habitat:

- Pipe replacement is an ongoing need
- Hiring contractor(s) for maintenance issues a possibility
- Overall, getting units in shape for black rail habitat
- Areas of need:
 - Buffalo Creek
 - Eagle Nest Lake
 - Sargent Marsh: fix subsidence and erosion (habitat restoration)
 - Pentagon Marsh: fix levies to maintain fresh water (habitat restoration)
 - Less urgent: Wolfweed pavilion—corners of steel roof; swallow nest prevention (Oron will look at and make recommendations)

Expand Deer/Other Hunting:

- Planning going on now for youth hunts
- Need 8 blinds now \$2k each single, \$3.5k fiberglass double
- Another 8-20 blinds needed in the future

- San Bernard—Improve hunt areas for lottery hunts (waterfowl); need to replace the permanent blinds (maybe put on skids?) (these are the 8 blinds noted above)
- McNeal
- Bloodworth Units

Turtle Patrol: Need one UTV now (3-year life expectancy); this is the third of the 3 Friends planned to buy; Oron will address board

Top Priorities Summarized:

#1 San Bernard Oak—Repair all boardwalk that needs it (Oron and Roland will assess)

#2 Fishing Pier at Cedar Lake Creek—redeck (refuge might have enough material for this); redesign the floating pier (water level fluctuates and difficulty cleaning out deposited material underneath)

#3 Moccasin Pond Observation Deck—(refuge may have enough materials to refurbish)

#4 Hudson Woods Photo Blind—Turn into an observation deck only (maybe leave one wall)

#5 Bobcat Woods Trail link to native garden

Future (big ticket item)—water management; perhaps seek large grant \$1.5 to 2 million; perhaps tie it to habitat restoration

All of this could likely be accomplished with up to \$30k from McGovern funds. Those board members present agreed that we should seek board vote asap. Perhaps there will be enough funds left to buy one or more hunting blinds.

Not a priority to the refuges: Extending ACE interns past the summer (too expensive; the program keeps half of the fee)

Also not a priority: Any new projects that add more maintenance activity. We should seek grants that address current and ongoing refuge management needs. Maybe seek corporate funding.

Later in the day, Lisa sought and received approval from Curtis and Cody to submit to NFWF the preliminary proposal on three plots to be rehabilitate for bird, butterfly, and wildflower habitat. The deadline is May 5, and Lisa intends to submit.

Submitted by Lisa L. Myers, FOBWR President

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register May 13, 2022

Action Item	Who? Date Started?	Due Date?	Status	Comments
Develop a New Outdoor Environmental Education Display for our canopy	Lisa/ Marty	Target for concept proposal?	No action has yet occurred	Committee to define aesthetics and variations in content/message modules. Material options for signs and displays to be defined as basis for cost estimates. Check spring-mounted signs and GCBO-pipe frame type. Need high quality images; pull
Develop text on FOBWR history for website	Ed Barrios	Sometime in 2021	Fixin to	Ed has reviewed documents back to 1994 (the start of FOBWR), and scanned newsletters through 2003. He will put these archives on our web site. When tax season ends this year.
Develop a Succession Plan	Lisa, Mickey	Sometime in 2021	Researched succession planning	Kim is looking into protocol (bylaws, P&P), board consensus is needed to define skill needs. <i>Want thoughts for November meeting. Want diversity to broaden pool. We need someone with Ravi's contact expertise. Hire executive director.? Hire part time for corporate and community involvement. New tmn disease kapline; grant writer; back of brain; how could it work.</i>
Arrange a thankyou meeting with 1st grader Alex Grogard	Lisa	As soon as convenient	Action pending	It was suggested at the 12Nov21 board meeting that we could present Alex with a plaque including an honorary life membership.
Download Migration Records to our archives	Marty	Planned to do during the 2022 summer doldrums.	Action pending	Awaiting access protocol. Dick is charged to find a site with public viewing access and with restricted editing access. Dick was going to order idrive cloud storage; stymied by need for email address. Refugefriends1994@gmail.com perhaps next week. Marty to get with Dick to learn access protocol
Download ATFN Records to our archives	Marty	not specified	Action pending	Awaiting access protocol
Download Governance items into our Archives	Marty	May 2020 board meeting	As soon as convenient	Awaiting access protocol

Refresh the Discovery Center Display	Lisa, Phil, Tom, Herb	not specified	Ongoing	Still looking for a taxidermist. Tom will look for.
More promotion of refuges	Lisa	not specified	not stated	Another Open House for the Chamber of Commerce is suggested for this spring . Personal invitations preferred. A friends CAP? Construct a searchable file of FOBWR contacts, e.g., corporate sponsors and donors, sponsors and participants for MC, BoP, ATFN, members, volunteers, outreach. Marty and Lisa have given lists to Ed.
Master Contact Spreadsheet	Ed	Ongoing		
Create a Grant Solutions account to enable applying for federal grants	Regina	Not specified		The ASAP system is used for reimbursements. Regina will pursue a Grant Solutions account. Need to get reimbursed for black rail herbicide application grant.
Design concept for B. Burkhart memorial	Oron and Lisa			A idea is a memorial entrance arch for the BWT pollinator garden. Powder-coated metal for the arch is preferred, mounted to treated-wood posts. Cost is likely to exceed the \$840 of donations, extra donation could be solicited.
Design rack card with all trails	Lisa			Guests like them and easy to hand out
Define the role/cost of a paid Community Liaison Director	Not specified			This role would contract for work performed by Ravi and Phil in soliciting donations. Must avoid creating an employee status.
Correct the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce information about trails on our refuges.	Ed			

FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT, April 2022 Final

TDECU				\$131,110.27	
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$295,261.65	
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$97,438.55	*
<u>ACCOUNT BALANCE</u>				\$523,810.47	G
FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS	Grantor	Total Awarded	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	295,279.33	172,863.87	122,415.46	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	137,000.00	71,014.68	65,985.32	
20130919 Poole Track Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	
20181231 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 4	Houston Endowment	325,000.00	285,472.19	39,527.81	*
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	39,900.00	110,100.00	E
20211229 Damuth Foundation Land Acquisition	Damuth Foundation	35,000.00	19,850.00	15,150.00	
20220112 Equistar Chemicals - Motus Tower Fees	Equistar Chemicals	7,000.00	-	7,000.00	
20210722 Black Rail Habitat (\$78,000 Reimbursable grant)	USFWS	-	-	-	
TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS		\$959,279.33	\$589,100.74	\$363,178.59	
FOBWR PROJECTS		Amt Allocated	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
46400 Birds of Prey Migration Celebration	FOBWR	25,713.00	1,610.99	24,102.01	
	FOBWR	28,399.58	1,625.03	26,774.55	
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	1,814.35	-	1,814.35	
20201231 General Donations, Membership Fees, Etc.	Donations	17,932.71	-	17,932.71	
20210101 Barbara Burkhardt	Memorial	840.00	-	840.00	
20140403 Law Enforcement Restitution	Federal Court Fines	1,835.35	-	1,835.35	
20211112 Maintenance of Public Use Facilities	FOBWR	18,399.86	-	18,399.86	
20190601 ATFN 2019 Cannan Bend	FOBWR	211,436.29	171,323.64	40,112.65	*
TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS		\$306,371.14	\$174,559.66	\$131,811.48	B
OPERATIONS		\$12,498.98	\$4,376.12	\$8,122.86	*
					E
FUNDS IN TRANSIT				\$20,697.54	*I
TDECU SAVINGS				\$15.70	
TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts				\$523,826.17	

COMPLETED PROJECTS OR GRANTS

NOTES

*I Accounts Receivable/Payable & bank activity not yet posted

MOTIONS

*B Mar 2020 Combined Hickner Memorial Fund \$51,570.00 & 2019 ATFN (net \$53,866.29) & added \$50,000.00 Hickner donation

Mar 2021 reclassified \$56,000.00 from McGovern Brazoria

*E 11/13/20 Per Board guidelines 7% was allocated to Admin expenses from Houston Endowment # 4

*G Merrill Lynch account now includes two Certificates of Deposit for \$50,000 each. Maturity dates are Feb 03, 2023, Feb 20, 2024

Balance is net of unrealized market gains/losses and includes estimated accrued interest.