



FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Friday, July 14, 2023 Venue: Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Members in Attendance: Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Kim Richardson, Dick Schaffhausen, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippett, Mickey Dufilho Ruby Lewis,

Members Absent: Oron Atkins, Phil Huxford,

Refuge Staff in Attendance: Bryan Winton. Bryar Johnson

General Members/Guests in Attendance: Mike Lange, Chris Tobola

President Mary Schwartz called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

Agenda: the agenda was unanimously accepted after a move to so do by Marty and a second by Ed.

Minutes: A motion was made by Kim, seconded by Ed to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2023 meeting of the board. This motion passed unanimously.

Interim Motions: Two motions were made and approved in the interim since the May 12th board meeting:

- Dick moved, and Marty seconded the motion that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the purchase of a one-year \$50,000 CD and a two-year \$50,000 CD with funds from our Merrill Lynch money market account.”** The motion passed with 8 yeas. One member of the board did not vote.
- Marty moved, and Kim seconded the motion that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the expenditure of up to \$1,400 for the purchase of an all-in-one computer to replace the existing computer at the Discovery Center with funds coming from the Brazoria McGovern Fund.”** The motion passed with 8 yeas. One member of the board did not vote.

Land Acquisition: Mike Lange reported that:

- The purchase of the Kbar Ranch has been completed. At \$3,100 per acre, it was the most expensive tract purchase per area funded by the Migratory Bird Commission. Hoskin Mound was the largest tract addition to Complex land, but at a much lower per-acre cost.
- The Brenda M Smith tract is for sale, so Mike wants to expedite the appraisal process. This land, near the Dow Woods unit, has been reclassified from being in a 500-year floodplain to a 100-year floodplain, thus lowering its value. Mike suggested that the costs for pre-purchase discovery activities be charged to our Hershey and/or Knobloch

grants to show these philanthropic organizations that their donations are being actively used. The Nature Conservancy might be engaged to buy and hold until DOI funds become available.

- The next step toward acquiring the ~1,300-acre McNeill Tract II will be to get appraisals. This land adjoins the Peach Creek Unit.
- The 1,600-acre Burr tract, adjoining the west side of the Peach Creek Unit, is also awaiting appraisal. It would become part of the San Bernard NWR land as a conservation easement.
- The owners of the ~1,000-acre Danza del Rio mitigation bank, next to the Dance Bayou unit, have approached the service to buy the remaining interest in this property. The current owners have been restoring this cleared land, blocking drainage to recreate wetlands. It contains uncommon willow oaks.
- The channeling some of the Colorado River flow into Matagorda Bay has resulted in the expansion of land habitat of three R Trust tracts, attracting whooping cranes. These parcels would be owned by the State of Texas and adjoin the Big Boggy NWR and the 1,300 McNabb tract.

Refuge Update: Bryar Johnson would like to engage Friends to get grants in support of refuge projects. He mentioned three projects that could use financial and volunteer support:

- Planting cordgrass behind new breakwater along the intracoastal canal to form a living shoreline and enhance coastal resiliency
- Funding pre-construction engineering studies; The General Land Office often funds such advance work, which for the next 14 miles of breakwater might cost \$50k to \$100k per year over three years. Perhaps Ike-Dyke funds could be applied to this need.
- Contract discing moist soil land during dry times.

Bryar will meet with the refuge staff to develop a prioritized list of projects that might be supported with FOBWR funding. This list will be discussed an hour before the September board meeting.

Bryan reported that:

- The third phase, 1.4 miles of the Sargent breakwater has been completed.
- The low visitation to the Discovery Center during these hot summer months does not warrant staffing on weekends.
- Region II has approved the hiring of public liaison staff member to replace Tom Schneider. This position will be advertised in the FWS/DOI network.
- Complex discretionary funds will be used to extend Hana's contract through March.
- TEXDOT has officially agreed to install two additional bridges under the section of Hwy 36 passing through refuge lands as this road is being widened to four lanes. The State of Texas will also compensate the refuge for taking 16 acres at up to \$30,000 per acre.

Ed was contacted by a botanist from the Houston Botanical Gardens who is interested in collecting samples of iris grown on the refuge to determine if any are rare varieties. Bryan suggested that this botanist be accompanied with Jennifer Wilson when he does this sampling is occurring.

Action Items are listed at the end of these minutes. New action items are highlighted in yellow throughout these minutes. Items completed or removed are:

- 3 benches for the Big Slough Trail and two benches for the Cannan Bend Trail have been delivered.
- Dick presented the data on fixed CD investments; this resulted in the above motion.
- Clarify the use of corporate contribution for BoP programs at parochial schools. The board noted that this concern was moot as donations from individuals can be used to avoid corporate donation restrictions. The \$12,000 annual grants from Phillips 66 for birds of prey programs have no restrictions.
- The list of members of the board have been added to our website.
- Dick has found no other FWS Friends groups that have a corporate membership classification. We are free to create such a status if the opportunity arises.
- Staffing the Discover Center during summer weekends is not needed because of low visitation during these hot months.
- 2000 trail trifolds have been ordered
- Action items to download FOBWR documents to an accessible archive have been removed. A new action item to select an archive site and protocol has been added.

Refuge **Treasurer's Report:** The June, 2023 Financial Report is attached to the end of these minutes. Regina noted that we have three CDs; two mature next year and one will mature in 2025. Significant expenses included a new mower for the Brazoria refuge and benches for the Cannan Bend trail. Two interns began their summer work to eradicate invasive species, paid for with \$14,000 of FOBWR funds as approved by the board.

The \$12,000 annual grant (minus \$250 processing fee) from Phillips 66 has been received. Per the grant, the funds will be allocated to MC23 (\$2,000) and the Birds of Prey program (\$10,000)

It was noted that we have not had an **audit** of our books since 2018. Indications from attendees at the recent Friends Academy held at the end of April were that few Friends groups conduct an audit. It was also noted that many grant sources request audit statements as part of their application packages. Some grantees accept a current financial statement.

Web and Social Media: Dick is toying with idea to expand the section "About FOBWR". He is improving the section on the Complex.

Dick will publish the 2022 FOBWR Year in Review report on our web site. This document was prepared by Lisa Myers.

Maintenance Committee: No activity this period

Legal / Agreements: Kim looked at recent amendments to Texas business organization code to see if any changes in our protocol are warranted. No action is needed at this time.

Outreach: Ruby noted that Shark Day at Sea Center Texas will occur tomorrow, Saturday July 15. This event typically draws over 1,500 visitors. Three more library programs are scheduled for this summer. Our annual outreach at the Brazos Mall during their back-to-school promotion will be on August 12th. The GCBO XHX will again be held on two Saturdays in September. KBR Kids Day will be held on October 21st

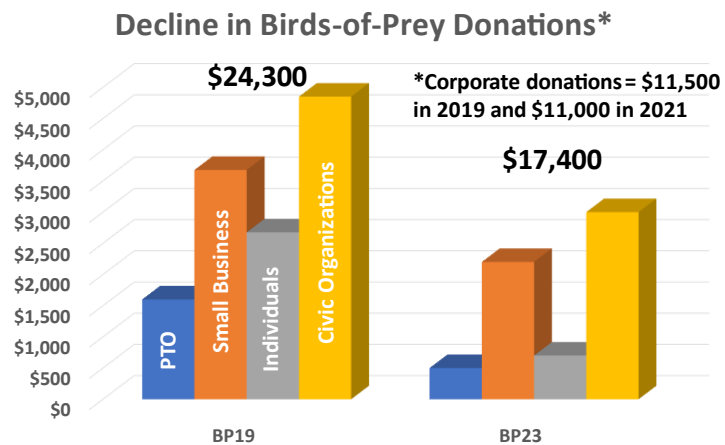
Capital Projects:

- Oron’s crew has re-decked the boat dock at Cedar Lake Creek and are presently working on the observation deck on the Moccasin Pond loop road.

Birds of Prey. Residual funds for our Birds-of-Prey programs have been depleted. Donations compared to 2019 pre-Covid were off 28%. The ration of

number of school PTO contributors in 2023 vs. 2019 was 2/4; for small business was 7/14; for individuals was 2/8, for civic organizations was 5/5, and for corporate donors was 2/3. The relative dollar sources are shown in the figure, without corporate contributors to better

highlight the differences. The board concluded that scheduling programs next year must be based upon committed funding sources. A committee will be formed to define these sources in the 4th quarter of this year [report at the November 10th board meeting? Committee members were not defined.]



Membership: Mickey reported that we have 28 members who renew annually, including eight new members, 42 life members including three or four new lifers. The newsletter spurred the recruitment of several past members who were in arrears with their dues.

Advertising/Marketing: Mary has been investigation ways to improve the impact of our advertising and marketing campaigns. The Macklin Medium Group specializes in this task for nonprofits, and is locally owned. **Mary will schedule a presentation by Macklin at the September 8th board meeting.**

Kathern McGovern: The board is grateful for the strong financial support of Mrs. McGovern over the last 15 years. As an appreciation, Mickey will draft a Shutterfly memento that shows the many projects that were supported by her gifts.

Monthly Walks: The next walk will be in September, after the weather begins to cool. It was suggested that these walks occur on Saturdays to accommodate those that work

Next Meeting September 8, 2023; starting at noon with the Macklin presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:51

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register July 14, 2023				
Action Item	Who? Date Started	Due Date	Status	Comments
Develop a New Outdoor Environmental Education Display for our canopy	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	After April, 2023	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. Ed has material
Develop a Succession Plan	Mickey	TBD	Researched succession planning; no further action	[Marty note: Kathy Allan, The Board Dr., has a process of first defining needs, followed by identifying potential candidates with the needed qualifications.] marty send mickey allan's presentation

Refresh the Discovery Center Display	Phil	not specified	Ongoing	Phil will meet with taxidermist on 11Mar23 progressing, looking for more content. As of july
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Master Contact Spreadsheet	Ed	Before MC23		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. Ed is in the process of combining all contact lists.
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Create a Grant Solutions account to enable applying for federal grants	Regina and Marty	When need emerges.		The ASAP system is used for reimbursements. Regina will pursue a Grant Solutions account. ASAP is up and running. GS current grant is there. We are not in yet. Have not set up an account yet; difficult; woody did last one.
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			Don't need until we get a grand from the feds
Design concept for B. Burkhart memorial	Oron	\$840 in donations have been received.	Ideas considered and rejected include a memorial entrance arch for the BWT pollinator garden, a granite bench with an etched design, a concrete bench with bench with imbedded tiles, and a stained glass hanging
Correct the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce information about trails on the refuges.	Ed	This summer of 2023	
Create informational PowerPoint presentation on refuges & FOBWR to present to community organizations/groups	Marty	Summer of 2023	Marty will develop a new 15-min PPT with segments of drone footage.
Develop a budget for MC24	MC Planning Committee	Not specified	Include plan to increase corporate donations.
Recommend an archive system for FOBWR documents	Mary & Ed	O/B July board Meeting.	Mary looked at a variety of things; Not ready to make an recommendation. Whatever we do will cost a little money, maybe up to \$50 per month.
Investigate using our webpage to serve as an archive	Dick and Chris Tobola	Report at Sept 8, 2023 board meeting	Perhaps setting a documents section that functions like Microsoft Explorer folders. Folders could be made secure as needed.

Develop a prioritized list of projects that might be supported with FOBWR funding.

Bryar
Johnson

Sept 8,
2023
board
Meeting

Bryar will meet with the refuge staff to

Schedule board presentation by Macklin Medium Group

Mary

Sept 8,
2023
board
meeting

Nonprofit advertising and marketing.

Publish 2022 Annual Review on our website

Dick

ASAP

This document was written by Lisa Myers; Mickey will send to MOB

Make a Shutterfly memento book of the use of McGovern funds

Mickey

To thank Mrs. McGovern for her generous support

FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT, June 2023 Final

TDECU				\$71,172.13	*A
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$353,765.90	
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$147,932.65	*G
Prepaid - McCoy's Deposit Account				\$4,333.00	
ACCOUNT BALANCE				\$577,203.68	
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FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS	Grantor	Total Awarded	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	320,279.33	196,177.74	124,101.59	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	147,000.00	103,759.79	43,240.21	
20130919 Poole Tract Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	
20181231 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 4	Houston Endowment	325,000.00	305,072.19	19,927.81	*E
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	75,800.00	74,200.00	
20211229 Damuth Foundation Land Acquisition	Damuth Foundation	35,000.00	35,000.00	-	
20220112 Equistar Chemicals - Motus Tower Fees	Equistar Chemicals	7,000.00	664.00	6,336.00	
20221101 Knobloch Foundation Land Acquisition	Knobloch Foundation	118,304.00	4,800.00	113,504.00	*C
20221129 Hershey Foundation Land Acquisition	Hershey Foundation	47,322.00	2,200.00	45,122.00	*C
20210722 Black Rail Habitat (\$78,000 Reimbursable grant)	USFWS	76,438.92	76,438.92	-	*H
TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS		\$1,236,344.25	\$799,912.64	\$436,431.61	
FOBWR PROJECTS		Amt Allocated	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	28,875.10	26,056.71	2,818.39	
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	36,904.53	15,413.68	21,490.85	
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	2,652.85	-	2,652.85	

20201231 General Donations, Membership, Etc.	Donations	8,182.06	-	8,182.06	
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	1,438.67	16,961.19	
20190601 ATFN 2019 Cannan Bend	FOBWR	211,436.29	175,688.26	35,748.03	*B
TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS		\$309,126.04	\$218,597.32	\$90,528.72	
OPERATIONS		\$39,319.03	\$3,998.69	\$35,320.34	*E, *F
FUNDS IN TRANSIT				\$14,938.71	*I
TDECU SAVINGS				\$15.70	
TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts				\$572,886.38	

COMPLETED PROJECTS OR GRANTS

NOTES

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

*A December 2022, Transferred \$100,000 from TDECU to Merrill Lynch

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

*C Jan 2023 Per grant agreements, 5.3571% allocated to Admin expenses

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

*F Sept 2022 Per board approval, \$15,000 reclassified from General Donations to Operations

*G Merrill Lynch account includes three Certificates of Deposit for \$50,000 each. Maturity dates are Feb 20, 2024, June 21, 2024, June 23, 2025.

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

*H Total Grant = \$78,000: \$76,440 for program costs plus \$1,560 for FOBWR indirect costs (reclassified to Operations Oct 2022)