



FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Friday, September 9, 2022 Venue: Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Members in Attendance: Oron Atkins, Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Phil Huxford, Lisa Myers, Kim Richardson, Dick Schaffhausen, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippet

Members Absent: Ed Barrios, Ruby Lewis

Refuge Staff in Attendance: Bryan Winton

General Members/Guests in Attendance: Mike Lange

Lisa Myers called the meeting to order at 12:45 PM.

The proposed **agenda** was accepted.

The **minutes** of the July 8, 2022 meeting of the board were unanimously approved after a motion by Phil and a second by Mickey

Interim Motions: Since the July meeting, we have processed one motion; made by Kim Richardson and seconded by Ed Barrios on September 6, that "The FOBWR Board agrees to enter into an Independent Contractor Agreement between FOBWR and Ethan Davis dated on/about September 6, 2022, for "Pre-application vegetation monitoring per the 7-22-2021 NOA FOBWR Black Rail and Mottled Duck Habitat Award Grant #F21AC02463-00. The total fee of \$2,500 is to be paid via NOA reimbursement funds." The motion passed with 8 yeas (and two no votes).

Land Acquisition Update: Mike Lange noted that two projects were closed during the last calendar year:

- The 4,679-acre Peach Creek Forest tract (a.k.a. the McNeal tract) in Wharton County, and
- The 250-acre Spears tract.

At the April, 2022 meeting of the Migratory Bird Commission, the commission increased their funding to cover the full \$17.5 million purchase price of the Alligator Slough (a.k.a. Kbar Ranch) ~5,600-acre tract that adjoins the Big Pond Unit of the San Bernard NWR. This land is about 1/3 forested and has drainage ditches that will be plugged to restore wetland swamp areas within the tract.

Another 439 acres of land adjoining the Alligator Slough tract, owned by the Harrison James Burr Estate, is being pursued; it will be known as the Pledger Tract.

There are two parcels of land next to Peach Creek Forest that are being processed for purchase: Peach Creek Two (1,400 acres to the north) and 1,600 acres to the west that is currently used by the Harrison Foundation for environmental education (it contains man-made lakes that serve as rookeries).

Mike is also working under contract with the National Wildlife Refuge Association, funded by the USFWS, to expand the Big Boggy and Aransas NWRs. Other activities include adding tracts on Follets Island for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and adding 1,000 acres to Armand Bayou.

Knobloch Grant Application: Mike Lange submitted a proposal for FOBWR to apply for a grant from the Knobloch Family Foundation to support discovery activities toward the purchase of lands in the Texas Coastal Bend from Mission Bay (Aransas NWR) to the Brazoria NWR (the TMCNWRC). After discussion, Marty moved that **“The FOBWR board approves the submission of a request for a \$125,000 grant from the Knobloch Family Foundation for pre-purchase discovery activity in the Texas Coastal Bend.”** Mickey seconded the motion, which then passed with unanimous approval by attending members of the board.

Refuge Update:

- Lisa thanked Kim for helping to draft a subcontractor agreement document. This will be used to engage Ethan Davis to survey black rail and mottled duck habitat prior to aerial herbicide application.
- No activity has occurred on the maintenance priorities list, but the work items have not changed. Oron is coordinating with Cody and Curtis on the start of work.
- Bryan Winton noted that the refuge is in discussion with the Corps of Engineers to find another site for spoil from dredging the Intracoastal Waterway. The current site has resulted in a high-quality habitat that must now be left undisturbed.
- The Complex has decided to suspend its Facebook page as too much time was required to keep it current. Friends asked Bryan to include a link on the Brazoria and San Bernard web sites to our Facebook postings.

Action Register: The action register is attached at the end of these minutes. One action item was removed:

- As almost two years have passed, it was decided to not proceed with awarding a plaque of thanks and honorary life membership to then 1st grader Alex Grogard for his donation. A letter of thanks was sent to him.

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

- Higher interest rates on our Merrill Lynch CDs have yielded income of \$448.
- The new ATV for sea turtle patrols has been paid for (~\$19,000) and is ready to pick up and have the title transferred to the USFWS.
- There has been no activity on our \$7k grant for maintenance of Motus towers; Regina will check with GCBO who has yet to bill us for our share of operation fees (\$30/month), and she will consult with Jennifer Wilson on possible other use of these funds on the Motus project.
- Noting that our bylaws require an official audit of our books every three years, Regina will proceed to set this up. The cost is expected to be around \$10k. Lisa noted that discussions at the most recent Friends Academy indicated that audits are necessary when an organization has paid employees and/or runs a nature store. Since FOBWR has neither employees nor a store, the opportunity for fraud is small. Periodic certification that our books follow sound financial practices is helpful, and sometimes required to obtain grants.

Web and Social Media: Dick was pleased to report that the donation buttons on our web site are now fully functional.

Maintenance Committee: Bryan will work with Dick to develop a list of maintenance projects that can be done with volunteers. This would include trail grooming (cleaning signs), mowing, and weeding the pollinator gardens.

Projects: Phil reported that Cannan Bend has been stocked with about 20k minnows, 2,000 bluegills, and 200 four to five-inch bass.

Birds of Prey: Phil will recontact Chveron Phillips on the status of their promised \$5,000 donation for this season. Upcoming activity, paid for by the host organizations, include KBR Kids Day in Houston on October 22nd, Qunitana County Park on October 16th, Brazos Bend State Park on November 5th, an the COT Faimly Day at Camp Mohawk on November 6th.

Membership: Mickey noted that 2 more past members have renewed their membership, and that Karen Cornell will be adde to our membership rolls as a result of her \$100 donation. 9 past members have yet to pay.

Legal/Agreements: Kim and Lisa encouraged all members of the board to read our new partnership agreement that was (finally!) approved by the FWS regional office in Albuquerque.

It was decided that we do not want to pay for insurance on the Morgan Building and its contents.

Outreach: Lisa covered upcoming activities:

- The GCBO XHX will be Saturday, September 17th and 24th. Marty and David Plunkett will staff the Friends display on the 17th and Kim and David will staff on the 24th. Christina Hartman will organize COT activities with reptiles in the adjoining popup.
- Ed and Lisa will staff a Friends table at the October 18th Chamber of Commerce Shop Local Showcase at the Dow Center. (10 to 2)
- Friends will staff a booth with reptiles at the October 22nd KBR Kids Day, and Phil will host a Birds of Prey program.
- Also on October 22nd, Lisa and her husband will provide lunch (hot dogs, chips, and water0 for the ~20 disabled veterans brought by Easter Seals for fishing at Cannan Bend
- Friends will host an open house at the Discovery Center on October 28th, inviting area chambers of commerce. The event will be promoted as a welcome introduction of our new Project Leader, Bryan Winton. Marty, Mickey, and Lisa will serve on the planning committee. In support of this initiative, Phil moved and Mickey seconded the motion that **“The FOBWR will become a member of the Angleton, Brazoria, and Hispanic chambers of commerce, paying the annual membership fees from our general funds.”** This motion passed with unanimous consent of the board.

Events:

- Although many Friends groups will host a Walk for the Wild fundraiser in late October; it is too late for us to do so for this year. We might want to consider a version of this activity in the future.
- The 2023 Migration Celebration, returned to full activity, will be held on April 29th and 30th. A fundraising meal will be held two weeks before. A planning meeting will be held on September 19th; one item is to decide if the fundraiser will be a dinner or takeout.
- Bryan supports the resumption of monthly refuge walks. Ed will need to coordinate the details with him.

Friends Academy: Lisa previously sent a PowerPoint summarizing her experience at this year's Friends Academy. She will forward the training material from the August Friends Academy. She noted that there are 190 Friends groups in the FWS system. Recommended are the teachings of Kathy Allen, The Board Doctor.

The 2023 Board: Lisa asked that all board members provide suggestions for new board members. The discussion included the importance of defining skill needs first to ensure board candidates would fill these rolls. Diversity is desired. A meeting focused on board development will be held at noon on November 11th prior to the regular scheduled board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 pm.

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register September 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. Ed has material
Develop a Succession Plan	Lisa, Mickey	Before the end of 2022	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.</i>
Download Migration Records to our archives	Marty	Almost done Sep22	Action pending	Files are now backed up to our cloud server automatically as added to or amended. Protocol needs to be defined to provide access by any board member.

Download ATFN Records to our archives	Marty	Almost done Sep22	Action pending	As above
Download Governance items into our Archives	Marty	Almost done Sep22	As soon as convenient	As above
Refresh the Discovery Center Display	Phil	not specified	Ongoing	Phil met with Mark Allison at the DC, Priced animals wants to charge per size, then 20% discount. So far bobcat on stump, redo inside base. \$1,300. Bryan committed to \$1500 for this project this year; possibly same amount for next year.
More promotion of refuges	Lisa, Mickey, Marty	Oct. 2022	not stated	A open house for area chambers of commerce will be held on October 28 th 2022.
Master Contact Spreadsheet	Ed	Ongoing		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.
Create a Grant Solutions account to enable applying for federal grants	Regina	Before end of 2022		The ASAP system is used for reimbursements. Regina will pursue a Grant Solutions account. ASAP up and running. GS current grant is there. We are not in yet.
Design concept for B. Burkhart memorial	Oron and Lisa			An idea is a memorial entrance arch for the BWT pollinator garden. Metal options have been rejected. Now exploring a granite bench with an etched design. Or perhaps a concrete bench with bench with imbedded tiles

Design rack card with all trails	Lisa	ongoing	Guests like them and easy to hand out 7/22 Note: Lisa reprinted refuge trifold and bookmark
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. Thinking a paid part time position.
Correct the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce information about trails on the refuges.	Ed		
Create informational PowerPoint presentation on refuges & FOBWR to present to community organizations/groups	Lisa	Soon	Cody will look for Jennifer's refuge presentation; Ed will look for FOBWR's; Marty supplied Lisa with a PwrPt on 8/25 collecting info
Check on ability to hold hybrid board meetings when members cannot attend in person	Lisa		Check with GCBO. Ok for voice. Could use zoom. Need for bylaws to allow.
Chambers of Commerce Open House 10/28/22	Mickey, Marty, Lisa	Oct 28	Ed to reach out to Braz. Hispanic Chamber need committee. At DC, dick, a welcome for bryan, chamber, commissioners, committee.
Easter Seals Disabled Veteran fishing at Cannan Bend	Lisa + spouse	Oct 22	Supply hot dog lunch for ~20; later, only date possible was 10/22 no change 12 to 15 vetern families
Fall/Winter Refuge Saturdays Open Houses	Mickey	Oct 29— Dow Nov 19— Bobcat Woods	Mickey volunteered. 11 to 3 Oron will lead the BW event
Winter Break Open House at Discovery Center	Ruby + _____	12/26 thru 1/1	

FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT August 2022 Final

TDECU				\$86,284.69	
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$296,099.88	
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$97,203.03	*
ACCOUNT BALANCE				\$479,587.60	G
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FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS	Grantor	Total Awarded	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	295,279.33	173,229.40	122,049.93	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	137,000.00	71,705.20	65,294.80	
20130919 Poole Track Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	
20181231 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 4	Houston Endowment	325,000.00	288,672.19	36,327.81	*
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	51,500.00	98,500.00	E
20211229 Damuth Foundation Land Acquisition	Damuth Foundation	35,000.00	26,050.00	8,950.00	
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	\$611,156.79	\$348,122.54	
FOBWR PROJECTS		Amt Allocated	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	30,693.40	27,734.20	2,959.20	
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	28,679.58	2,954.14	25,725.44	
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	1,814.35	-	1,814.35	
20201231 General Donations, Membership Fees, Etc.	Donations	17,909.90	-	17,909.90	
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	* B
TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS		\$311,608.73	\$202,011.98	\$109,596.75	
OPERATIONS		\$13,522.91	\$5,116.62	\$8,406.29	* E
FUNDS IN TRANSIT				\$13,462.02	* I
TDECU SAVINGS				\$15.70	
TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts				\$479,603.30	

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.