



## FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

### Minutes of the Board Meeting

Monday, November 20, 2023    Venue: Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

**Members in Attendance:** Ed Barrios Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Phil Huxford, Ruby Lewis, Dick Schaffhausen, Mary Schwartz, Regina Tippett, Cris Tobola.

**Members Absent:** Oron Atkins Kim Richardson

**Refuge Staff in Attendance:** Brian Winton,

**General Members/Guests in Attendance:** Mike Lange

President Mary Schwartz called the meeting to order at 1:00 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 Mickey, seconded by Phil, to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2023 meeting of the board. This motion passed unanimously.

**Interim Motions:** There were no motions made since the September board meeting.

**Grant Activity:** The Galveston Bay Estuary Program chose to combine our grant request for cordgrass planting along the section of the intercoastal canal passing through the Brazoria NWR with a similar grant application from the Galveston Bay Foundation for adjacent property in the Bay. The two projects combined as proposed would have been \$293,840, and they were only allocated \$175,000. GBEP decided to use the GBF as the administrator. Friends will thus have no fiduciary responsibility for this grant. Marty and Bryar will be in a meeting on Nov. 28 to clarify the execution plans.

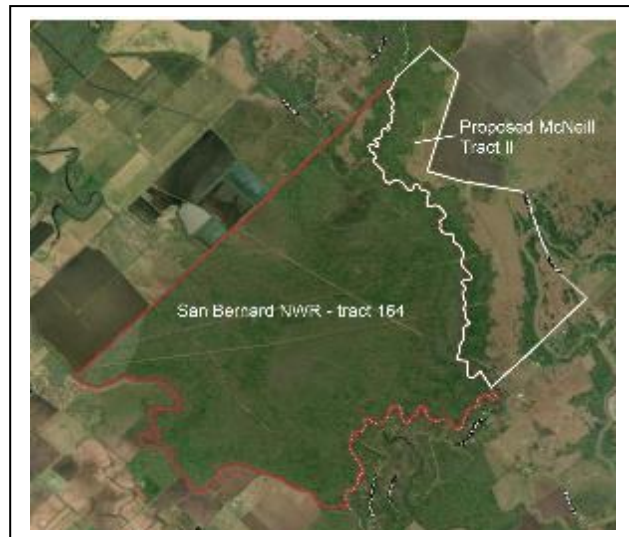
Our second grant request to fund engineering for a breakwater structure on the shore of Salt Lake was not granted. Brian will discuss with Bryar about FOBWR pursuing a grant for this engineering work from other sources

**Land Acquisition:** Mike Lange.

The 57-acre Oyster Creek Ltd parcel adjoining the northwest corner of Dow Woods has been appraised. A NACA grant would be used for its purchase. The owners of the Smith property adjacent to the west side of Dow Woods have aspirations to develop this land, however, according to the Lake Jackson city manager, it is in a 100-year flood plain, thus diminishing its value.



The appraisal of the McNeill II tract will be difficult as the work must also include the value of adjoining lands not wanted by the San Bernard NWR. The desired 1,360 acres is heavily wooded along the east bank of the Peach Creek.



Money from the Migratory Bird Commission would be used to purchase the 1,600-acre Burr Tract from the Herrington Foundation. This land adjoins the northwest boundary of the Peach Creek Unit of the SBNWR. It would be a “conservation easement refuge” and maintain its current focus on environmental education, having trails and other public use facilities.

After many years, title issues have been cleared to enable an appraisal of the 11 acres of the Poole tract on the corner of CR306 and FM2918. FOBWR received a \$10,000 grant from the Trull Foundation in September, 2013 to be used toward its purchase, which might be completed within the next three months.



The SBNWR has entered into an agreement with American Forest, who will establish a nursery on the newly acquired Kbar ranch. The facility will be staffed and focused on the reforestation of much of this property.

The proposed expanded acquisition boundary for areas around the Aransas and Big Boggy NWRs are announced in public notice. After this thirty-day period, the director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service will approve the plan.

Habitat for the expanding population of whooping cranes around the delta of the Colorado River will be purchased by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department using NACA funds. Money from the FOBWR grants from the Hershey and Knobloch Foundations was used for pre-purchase discovery activities.

#### **Refuge Update:** Bryan

- Kudos to Bryan who was recognized for his 30 years at the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Curtis successfully negotiated a price of \$33,000 per acre for the refuge land transferred to TexDot for the widening of Hwy 35. This amounts to \$510,932, which will be used to acquire other property.
- There has been no response from refuge manager on potential targets of grants. Friends should work with those items submitted by Bryan.
- The BOEM will expand their offering of wind leases in the western Gulf of Mexico from the original three Wind Energy Areas submitted for public comment to as many as thirteen WEAs. This agency does not believe it necessary ask for additional comments. In addition, three WEAs are proposed for state-controlled water off the coast of Louisiana. As expected, we have had no response from the BOEM on our letter of concern.
- Adrian Medellin will be leaving to take a job with the State of Texas. He has finished his task to map the oil and gas locations on refuge property. Adrian will forward an electric

copy of the report to Ed through Hana, who will add flora and fauna information as found in “Mucker” reports (Phil will assist) and other surveys. Friends will then print several spiral-bound copies of this amended report.

- The Complex partnership with the Brazoria County Parks Department is progressing with nothing new to report
- Resolution of the issue of Corps of Engineers dredge spoils on Big Boggy lands is still a work-in-progress.
- The planned October visit of Randy Weber did not occur. A reschedule date has not been set.
- The Complex must dispose of many out-of-service UTVs. The simplest way would be to donate them to, e.g., the Friends, who may find value in them. Phil will look at these vehicles and if feasible will arrange to remove them from refuge property.
- The Complex is concerned about the impact of a proposed facility to raise monkeys on 500 acres of land adjacent to the Big Pond Unit. A major issue would be dealing with escaped animals being a source of infection that would limit public access. Mickey will send a letter of concern on behalf of FOBWR to Count Judge Matt Sebesta.

**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:

- Mickey has sent a document to Mrs. McGovern that details the use of her generous donations.
- A list of potential targets for grants was provided by Bryar; refuge managers did not respond.
- Mickey set letter of concern on the Monkey farm to County Judge Sebesta.
- Marty drafted a prospectus describing major funding needs of projects of FOBWR

Refuge **Treasurer’s Report:** The October, 2023 Financial Report is attached to the end of these minutes. Regina noted that \$50,000 was transferred from our Merrill Lynch account to TDECU to augment the remaining \$20,000 in the credit union account, which is used to pay bill.

**Chambers of Commerce:** Discussion on the cost and return of investment of membership in area chamber led to the clarification of Friends interfacing with each one. Phil will continue to be the lead for both the Brazosport (\$195/year) and Brazoria CoC. Ed will deal with the Hispanic CoC (\$300/year). Cris will be the interface with the Angleton CoC (\$325/year).

Marty made a motion, seconded by Phil, that **“The FOBWR board authorizes an annual donation of \$500, payable each December, to the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory.”** The motion passed with unanimous consent of the board members present. The source of the funding was not specified.

Ed motioned, seconded by Phil that **“The FOBWR board authorizes an annual donation of \$1,000, payable each December, to the National Wildlife Refuge Association.”** The motion

passed with unanimous consent of the board members present. The source of the funding was not specified.

**Web and Social Media:** no report

**Maintenance Committee:** no report

**Capital Projects:** no report.

**Birds of Prey:** Phil report that Jessica Follet of Phillips66 has confirmed their \$12,000 grant for our 2024 BoP programs (\$10,000 for school programs and \$2,000 for Migration Celebration). Jessica asked about the cost per program, implying that P66 would consider an inflation adjustment. Jessica indicated that we should suggest other programs for them to support.

Wendy Irwin of Chevron/Phillips also committed to support BoP in 2024. They gave \$1,250 for BoP23. She also inquired about other opportunities to support Friends, and asked about a future A Taste for Nature fundraiser.

Phil has been approached separately by four members of the Brazosport Rotary about supporting BoP, perhaps as much as \$5,000. They gave \$500 last year to pay for birding books that Phil distributes to schools as part of each BoP program. It is best if the books are school-approved.

Mr. Perryman of the 1<sup>st</sup> State Bank, Clute Branch indicated that they might be willing to support BoP24; no amount was discussed. Phil will follow up on this opportunity.

**Friends Project Prospectus:** The request for additional projects to support by Phillips66 and Chevron/Phillips generated several ideas:

- Perhaps funding for bus transport would enable schools in the western part of Brazoria County to participate in DEEP programs at the SBNWR. Phil will explore the desire of these school districts for such an environmental education program and the factors that prohibit such field trips. If transportation costs are the limiting factor, we would explore grants to cover this cost and a preferred method of funding over corporate donations.
- Migration Celebration beyond Birds-of-Prey
- UTVs for sea turtle patrols
- \$5,000 to stock Cannan Bend each year.

Marty will draft a prospectus describing the major funding needs of FOBWR projects. Oil and Gas companies who operate on the refuge should be solicited.

**2024 Migration Celebration:** Jessica Follet noted that Phillips 66 can provide volunteers ready to serve at community service events; MC24 could be a good fit for them. She also inquired about future “A Taste for Nature” fundraisers, noting that P66 enjoyed this event. A give-back program valued at perhaps \$25 per hour per person would be a promotional aspect to induce volunteering.

**Membership:** Mickey reported that we have 42 life members, one new member (Chris Mitchel), and 18 previous members who have yet to pay. Three people have paid for next year.

Mickey noted that she receives essentially no feedback on her **newsletter**; board members are encouraged to reply to her RSVP for comments on her draft.

**Outreach:** The Christmas holiday open house at the Discovery Center is the remaining outreach event of 2023. Volunteers are still needed. Cris will help with the placement of directional signs at road intersections and of the Atkins-framed trail banners at the entrance to the DC. Ruby will coordinate with Chris on publishing notices on Facebook and Instagram. Dick will send a press release to The Facts a week before the event; their front-page coverage has been instrumental in stimulating attendance. Mary will get more labels for the wingspan activity.

Marty noted that Mayor Roznowski of Lake Jackson would ensure that Friends would have no charge to participate in future Festival of Lights.

The **San Bernard Christmas Bird Count** will be held on Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, and Friends will be cooking the traditional sea food and chicken-sausage gumbos, paid for by a \$500 donation from Phillips 66.

**Monthly Walks:** The next Monthly Wald will be on Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Peach Creek Unit.

**Migration Celebration 2024:** Ed will schedule a MC24 planning session in December. Ed has a volunteer coordinator. He has asked Tom Schneider to arrange for vans as soon as possible as availability is a potential issue. Ed will send out solicitation letters for financial support this year.

**Fundraising for FOBWR:** Immediately before this board meeting, Josh Macklin of Macklin associates presented his proposed strategic marketing plan for Friends. He was asked to target an annual income stream of \$200,000. His fee would be \$18,000 per year. The strategy would, among other things, use the free Google Workspace program, as well as targeted messaging using social messaging and email. Clear messaging on the reasons for donating and options for targeted donations would be given.

The board decided to attempt to do this marketing ourselves, with **Cris** taking the lead. She **will look into the Google Workspace offering for nonprofits. Dick and Cris will look at redoing our web page to include directed donations.**

**literature:** Mickey has the master for our membership application forms. She will update the membership fee information and arrange to publish copies.

**Next Meeting January 12, 2023.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary  
 Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

<b>Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register November 17, 2023</b>				
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Who? Date Started</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Develop text on FOBWR history for website	Ed Barrios	TBD	Fixin to	Ed has gathered old newsletters and will use this as the basis for this history
Develop a Succession Plan	Mickey	TBD	Researched succession planning; no further action	The NWRA will hold a webinar on this subject on September 20, 2023
Refresh the Discovery Center Display	Phil Marty, Cris	not specified	Ongoing	The work to date (Oct23) has been paid for. Looking to add coyote and perhaps another specimen.
Master Contact Spreadsheet	Ed	Before MC24		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.
Design concept for B. Burkhart memorial And Neal	Ed and Phil		\$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  
 Need a proposal to cover all deceased volunteers. Phil needs to look at site on BNWR, draw up a design.

Correct the Brazosport Chamber of Commerce information about trails on the refuges.	Ed	By April 2024	Made initial contact and update
Create informational PowerPoint presentation on refuges & FOBWR to present to community organizations/groups	Mary	Summer of 2024	Mary will develop a new 15-min PPT with segments of drone footage.
Develop a budget for MC24	MC Planning Committee	Fall 2023	Include plan to increase corporate donations. First meeting in December. Barbara Wailey vol to get volunteers.
Investigate using our webpage to serve as an archive	Dick and Cris Tobola	Report at Nov. 10, 2023 board meeting	The latest thinking is to archive the materials on our website. No need to restrict accessibility.
Determine if now is a good time to stock Cannan Bend with bait fish.	Bryan, Curtis	As soon as convenient	Idea is to stock bass in the spring.
Check viability of a “safe mothball” to preserve the display in the Discovery Center	Cris	Report at Nov. 2023 board meeting.	No progress



Check out the cost of a UV film to prevent sunlight degradation of the DC display	Marty	Report at Nov. 2023 board meeting	Film would be preferable to blinds <b>Marty to pursue</b>
Determine if FOBWR should pursue a grant for engineering Salt Lake breakwater	Brian and Bryar	On or before Jan23 board meeting	Instigated by rejection of our grant application to Galveston Bay Foundation.
Add flora & fauna data to the report that maps oil/gas location on complex lands	Ed and Phil	Not specified	Bryan would like spiral-bound copies of the amended report.
Recover out-of-service UTVs donated from the Complex to FOBWR	Phil	Not specified	The Complex must dispose of these vehicles; donating them would be the most expedient method.
Determine the desire of school districts west of the Brazos for DEEP, and limits to do this	Phil	Not specified	Stimulated by desire of P66, CPCChem for fund more programs
Look into Google Workspace as a fundraising tool	Cris	Not specified	
Redo web page for targeted donation	Cris and Dick	Not specified	
Update membership application forms	Mickey	Not specified	



## FOBWR Financial Statement, October 2023 Final

TDECU				\$64,405.99	*A
Merrill Lynch Cash				\$307,820.69	
Merrill Lynch Certificates of Deposit				\$150,287.94	*G
Prepaid - McCoy's Deposit Account				\$3,859.88	
<b>ACCOUNT BALANCE</b>				<b>\$526,374.50</b>	
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<b>FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS</b>	<b>Grantor</b>	<b>Total Awarded</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Amt Available</b>	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Katherine McGovern	320,279.33	197,377.72	122,901.61	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	147,000.00	111,163.87	35,836.13	
20130919 Poole Tract Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	
20181231 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 4	Houston Endowment	325,000.00	320,472.19	4,527.81	*E
20201228 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 5	Houston Endowment	150,000.00	84,600.00	65,400.00	
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	29,350.00	88,954.00	*C
20221129 Hershey Foundation Land Acquisition	Hershey Foundation	47,322.00	4,000.00	43,322.00	*C
20210722 Black Rail Habitat (\$78,000 Reimbursable grant)	USFWS	76,440.00	76,440.00	-	*H
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS</b>		<b>\$1,236,345.33</b>	<b>\$859,067.78</b>	<b>\$377,277.55</b>	
<b>FOBWR PROJECTS</b>		<b>Amt Allocated</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Amt Available</b>	
46400 Birds of Prey	FOBWR	27,916.77	26,056.71	1,860.06	
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	38,862.86	15,413.68	23,449.18	
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	2,773.85	-	2,773.85	
20201231 General Donations, Membership, Etc.	Donations	8,052.88	-	8,052.88	
20210101 Barbara Burkhardt	Memorial	840.00	-	840.00	
20140403 Law Enforcement Restitution	Federal Court Fines	3,121.35	-	3,121.35	

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	175,862.30	35,573.99	*B
<b>TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS</b>		<b>\$311,403.86</b>	<b>\$218,771.36</b>	<b>\$92,632.50</b>	
<b>OPERATIONS</b>		\$43,527.11	\$4,340.96	<b>\$39,186.15</b>	*E, *F
<b>FUNDS IN TRANSIT</b>				<b>\$17,294.00</b>	*I
<b>TDECU SAVINGS</b>				<b>\$15.70</b>	
<b>TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts</b>				<b>\$522,530.32</b>	

**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; Oct 2023 transferred \$50,000 from Merrill Lynch to TDECU

**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)