



FRIENDS OF BRAZORIA WILDLIFE REFUGES

Minutes of the Board of Directors

Friday, November 13, 2020

Virtual via MS Teams

Board Attendees: Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Phil Huxford, Herb Myers, Lisa Myers, Kim Richardson, Dick Schaffhausen,

Absent Board Members: Oron Adkins, Mickey Dufilho. It is noted that David Plunkett has resigned from the board after over two decades of dedicated service. We are grateful for his many contributions and leadership over these years.

Staff Attendees: Jennifer Sanchez, Tom Schneider

General Member Attendee: Mike Lange, Ernest Cook, (Land/Water Associates); Ruby Lewis

A quorum being present, President Lisa Myers starting the meeting at 1:02 pm 12:27

The **Agenda** as offered by Lisa was accepted with no modifications.

The **Minutes of the September 11, 2020 meeting of the Board** were unanimously approved, after a motion by Marty and a second by Herb. The motion passed unanimously.

An **email motion** was made by Marty on 12Oct20, seconded by Ed, and approved by a unanimous vote of the board on 14Oct20, to wit:

“The FOBWR board authorizes Ernest Cook of Land/Water Associates to apply, in our behalf, for a \$25,000 grant from the Malcolm Damuth Foundation for fundraising efforts toward the purchase of the McNeill Tract by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”

Financials: The financial statement for October, 2020 was presented and approved with no discussion; it is attached to these minutes. Per the request of the program manager, the \$20,022.35 remaining in the Every Kid in the Park grant was returned and is thus no longer carried on our financial report. Sherie Young agreed that we could move the remaining \$1,173.22 in the Bryan Adams memorial fund to the FOBWR general funds. This action would be considered to be a donation; **Dick will send an acknowledgement to Sherie.** The \$88.87 donation from Alex Grogard will be spent on sea turtle patrol expenses.

Administration expenses: Discussion on funding FOBWR administration expenses resulted in a motion by Dick that “**It shall be the policy of FOBWR to request allocation of between 5% and 10% of grants, as permitted, for administrative fees.**” Phil seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by the six voting board members present. It was decided to allocate seven percent of the third and fourth Houston Endowment grants for administration costs.

Action Items are listed as an attachment to these minutes. New features are **bolded**. Completed actions are:

- Steps to the Morgan building were constructed by Oron and Tom Taroni on November 23rd. Dick Schaffhausen constructed racks for the storage of posters and banners.
- The Bobcat Woods Loop Trail has been finished and the final report has been sent to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

- The board has approved the grant request to the NRCS-RCPP.
- We were not able to get any of the HGAC poop stations; demand exceeded supply.
- Signs on the BWTrail have been installed.

Ernest Cook reviewed the draft **Columbia Bottomlands Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Proposal** for \$7 million for conservation easements, which would obligate FOBWR to be its lead partner and to provide \$40,000 of in-kind support. Although the proposal lists the pending \$25,000 Damuth grant as a matching source, this funding is not critical to the ability to execute the proposal and other funds would be sought for this in-kind commitment.

A motion was made by Marty that **“The FOBWR board authorizes the commitment of \$40,000 of in-kind funding and our assumption as the Lead Partner in a proposed Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) titled “Columbia Bottomlands Conservation and Restoration”. Funding would come from existing and pending grants from Houston Endowment and the Malcolm Damuth Foundation.”** This motion was seconded by Kim, and passed unanimously.

Upon acceptance of the RCPP proposal, funding for the payment by FOBWR, as lead partner, of technical services to secure the conservation easements would be negotiated with the NRCS. Toward this effect a motion was made by Marty that **“The FOBWR board, upon the establishment of a contract with the NRCS to provide reimbursement funding, agrees to pay for Technical Assistance professional services in support of the Columbia Bottomlands Conservation and Restoration Project.”** This motion was seconded by Herb, and passed unanimously.

Mike Lange – Land acquisition:

Mike and Curtis Jones hosted a tour of the McNeil Tract (a.k.a. Peach Creek Forest) for the staff of the Texas Nature Conservancy, who are very excited to be involved in this project. They have been awarded \$2.25 million from the Migratory Bird fund and will pursue an additional \$2.25 million toward the purchase of this land.

Mike has secured another contract on the Speers Tract; another \$700,000 is needed to complete the purchase. Mike is assisting the NRCS in looking at five large tracts that would become conservation easements, some of which might become part of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge.

Our Cedar Lake Cut grant is being used for pre-purchase discovery of a 1,000-acre tract on Matagorda island,

Refuge Update – Jennifer –

- Jennifer reviewed the findings of a recent Office of Inspector General audit of the FWS oversight of Friends groups fiduciary activities. The FWS director has committed to insuring that policy protocols are being met. No issues were found in Region 2. FOBWR protocols are fully in compliance.
- On November 9th, the Black Rail was officially listed as threatened species; which initiated the preparation of a biological assessment of all refuge activities having an impact on this bird. Jennifer Wilson has been studying Black Rails for over twenty years; which led to the current practice of sectional burning of grasslands while preserving adjacent sections that serve as a safe canopy for the rails. Planned activities, like using low parts of Sargent Marsh for dredge spoil disposal, will need to be reassessed.
- Cannan bend restrooms are to be delivered late November; their pad is in place. A new entrance sign is ready. The road needs improvement and the entrance gate will be moved west to the tree line. The refuge staff will shortly be identifying opportunities for volunteer work in preparation for a fall 2021 opening to the public. Since the unit has now officially been made a part of the Brazoria NWR, our Brazoria McGovern funds can be used for public use development. Tom want sign for hickner trail; possible more donation.

- The San Bernard Oak Trail is still closed. An assessment of repairs/reconstruction needs is needed as the next step toward reopening.

Birds-of-Prey: Phil noted our application for another \$12,000 grant from Phillips66, with \$10,000 to be used of school programs, and \$2,000 for Migration Celebration [the grant money was awarded at the end of November].

Monthly Refuge Walks: Covid19 restrictions will not be an impediment for the Friday refuge walks held each month as long as attendance continues to be 15 or less. Ed will investigate the use of tour guide-style microphone systems such as used by Mary Swartz with the COT intern field trips; these would improve social distancing.

Facebook: Dick will take over the FOBWR Facebook site from David Plunkett, who has retired.

MC21: The protocol for the April, 2021 Migration Celebration will be dependent on the condition of the Covid19 pandemic at that time. The weekend outdoor event and the promise of widespread vaccination by then suggests that a conventional execution may be possible. The indoor kickoff fundraiser might be more problematic. Contingency planning is in order.

The **Annual Membership Meeting** in January will be virtual. Subsequent board meetings on the second Friday of odd-months will be scheduled at the GCBO conference room.

Ed Barrios has accepted an invitation to join the NWRA board for a two-year term.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Marty Cornell, Secretary
Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

FOBWR FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR OCTOBER 31, 2020

TDECU				\$167,214.98	
Merrill Lynch				\$259,519.63	
Cedar Lake Cut Lands Receivable				\$5,600.00	*
Bobcat Woods Grant Receivable				\$8,000.00	A
ACCOUNT BALANCE	-			\$440,334.61	
-	-				
FUNDED GRANTS and ALLOCATED FUNDS	Grantor	Total Awarded	Amount Spent	Amt Available	
20131230 McGovern Brazoria NWR non committed	Kathrine McGovern	\$245,279.33	\$109,578.27	\$135,701.06	
20131220 McGovern San Bernard NWR	Katherine McGovern	\$117,000.00	\$69,271.29	\$47,728.71	
20130919 Poole Track Land Acquisition	Trull Foundation	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	
20181231 Houston Endowment Land Acquisition 4	Houston Endowment	\$325,000.00	\$212,822.19	\$112,177.81	
20170811 Cedar Lake Plantation Trail	ATFN 17 FOBWR	\$62,155.96	\$35,437.57	\$26,718.39	
20160728 Cedar Lake Cut Lands See NOTES \$30,000.00 Reimbursement	USFWS	\$21,600.00	\$21,600.00	\$0.00	*
20161205 Bobcat Woods Matching \$ Rec \$152,000.00	FOBWR	\$246,330.52	\$246,076.88	\$253.64	A
plus ATFN 2015 funds \$53,641.0					
plus Grant Receivable of \$8,000.00					
Plus McGovern Funds of \$17,000.00					
Plus refunds deposit acct \$15,689.52					
TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS		\$1,027,365.81	\$694,786.20	\$332,579.61	
FOBWR PROJECTS		Allocated	Spent		
46400 Birds of Prey 2019	FOBWR	\$21,904.28	\$9,997.15	\$11,907.13	*
Migration Celebration	FOBWR	\$25,181.00	\$8,881.64	\$16,299.36	*
20161205 Morgan Storage Building San Bernard	FOBWR General Funds	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	D
20171104 Bryan Adams Memorial Fund	Donations	\$16,759.00	\$15,585.78	\$1,173.22	
20170101 BNWR Donation Box	Donations	\$1,688.88	\$591.99	\$1,096.89	
20140403 Law Enforcement Restitution	Federal Court Fines	\$7,916.11	\$6,080.76	\$1,835.35	
20190428 Alex Grogard Kemp Ridley Fund	Donations	\$88.87	\$0.00	\$88.87	
OPERATIONS Merrill Lynch Dividend income		\$3,453.95	\$3,952.38	-\$498.43	
20190601 ATFN 2019 Cannan Bend	FOBWR	\$155,406.29	\$78,013.95	\$77,392.34	*
TOTAL FOBWR PROJECTS		\$232,898.38	\$123,103.65	\$109,794.73	B
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECTS				-\$2,039.73	

TDECU SAVINGS

TOTAL Funds in Bank Accounts

15.08

\$426,749.69

COMPLETED PROJECTS OR GRANTS

NOTES

20161205 Bobcat Woods Trail is a receivable. Grant 160,000.00 plus \$53,641.00 ATFN fundraiser

*A 20160728 Cedar Lake Cut Lands is a receivable. We will receive funds as invoices are turned in.

*C 46400 Birds of Prey 2020 beginning funds balance \$13,911.28

*D Migration celebration 2020 beginning balance \$12,000.00

January Moved \$1,595.00 negative web site maintenance balance from 2019 motion to operational expense account

9/1/19 Using Merrill Lynch dividend income for operational expenses.

*B 3/1/2020 Combined Hickner Memorial Fund \$51,540.00 and ATFN net \$53,866.29

7/17/2020 closed out EKIP grant. Transferred funds to another entity.

Motions

3/13/20 \$500.00 for purchase of owl pellets. Funds from McGovern San Bernard acct.

4/9/20 \$15,000.00 to cover additional costs of Bobcat woods trail. Funds from McGovern San Bernard acct.

5/4/20 \$2,000.00 to cover bonus to Galvan's Construction. Funds from McGovern San Bernard acct.

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuge Board Action Register 13Nov20

Action Item	Who? Date Started?	Due Date?	Status	Comments
Develop a New Outdoor Environmental Education Display for our canopy	David/Lisa/ Marty	Target Jan, 2021 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. Multiple events on the 7Mar20 illustrate the need for target-specific displays.
Upgrade the FOBWR website	Phil (took over from Lisa)	Date not specified	Ongoing	David Stark of Overnite Software has offered his services pro bono, using the Weebly format to create a duplicate prototype. He will be using more photos to provide visual candy. Security for online sales will be a feature; the cost of the security feature TBD. Board approval required for any upgrades
Develop text on FOBWR history for website	Ed Barrios	Sometime in 2020	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.
Develop a Succession Plan	Lisa, Mickey	Sometime in 2020	Researched succession planning	Kim is looking into protocol (bylaws, P&P), board consensus is needed to define skill needs. Mickey will approach David Heinicke on his interest to be involved. Mary Swartz is also highly thought of.
Define role and responsibility of School Outreach Chair	Phil and Marty	On/Before 31Dec20	Action pending	Marty is to draft a statement for Phil to review.

Explore Outreach Trunks	Ed, Ruby, & Tom	On/Before 31Dec21	Action pending	Outreach trunks should be considered; one being about butterflies. Tom to meet with BISD science administrator to discuss the concept.
Provide suggestions for a FOBWR logo and more formal shirts for board member to wear an business-type forums.	Lisa and Herb	Due date target not specified	Action pending	Lisa's graphic artist contact did not respond to our suggestions. Need another approach. [perhaps a high school art class project? Marty]
Arrange a thankyou meeting with 1st grader Alex Grogard	Lisa	As soon as convenient	Action pending	path to recognition is needed.
Download financial records to our archives	Dick	not specified	Action pending	Marty will provide path for folders.Password protections have now been removed.
Download Migration Records to our archives	Marty	not specified	Action pending	Now possible with password protection removed.
Download ATFN Records to our archives	Marty	not specified	Action pending	Now possible with password protection removed.
Download Governance items into our Archives	Marty	May, 2020 board meeting	As soon as convenient	
Board to develop annual goals	Lisa	As soon as convenient	Actively Working	Lisa will set up a meeting. [Marty note: Goals are not time-bound, whereas Objectives are; they should be SMART]
Provide cost estimate for demolishing the Hudson Woods boardwalk and replacing with granite fines	Jennifer	January board meeting	TBD	Funds to come from McGovern pool

Refresh the Discovery Center Display	Lisa, Phil, Tom, Herb	not specified	Ongoing	"Working on costs from taxidermist and his availability" 10Jan20
TDECU Relationship	Lisa	not specified	Working	
Membership of FOBWR	this action item needs clarification. Minutes suggest a discussion but no action			
More promotion of refuges	Lisa	not specified	not stated	Need to discuss and work out plan. Spring break option.
Signage at BNWR trails	Jennifer	not specified		Visitors frequently ask about trails near the Discovery Center; Alligator Marsh could be developed as a loop trail.
Send letter to The Facts on the naming of the Hickner Trail on Cannan Bend	Lisa and Phil, 13Mar20	O/B 30Mar20	in progress	Sanctioned by the Hickner Family
Send acknowledgment to Sherie Young for donation of residual funds in the Bryan Adams Memorial fund	Dick	As soon as convenient		\$1,173.22 remained in the BA fund after the project was completed.
Spec. a wireless communication system for monthly walks	Ed	Before next walk		Consult with Mary Swartz on the COT system