

# Land Conservation Efforts within the Galveston Bay Watershed





# **GALVESTON BAY FOUNDATION**

**PROTECT TODAY. PRESERVE TOMORROW.**

Guardian of Galveston Bay Since 1987

*Matt Singer, Director of Conservation*



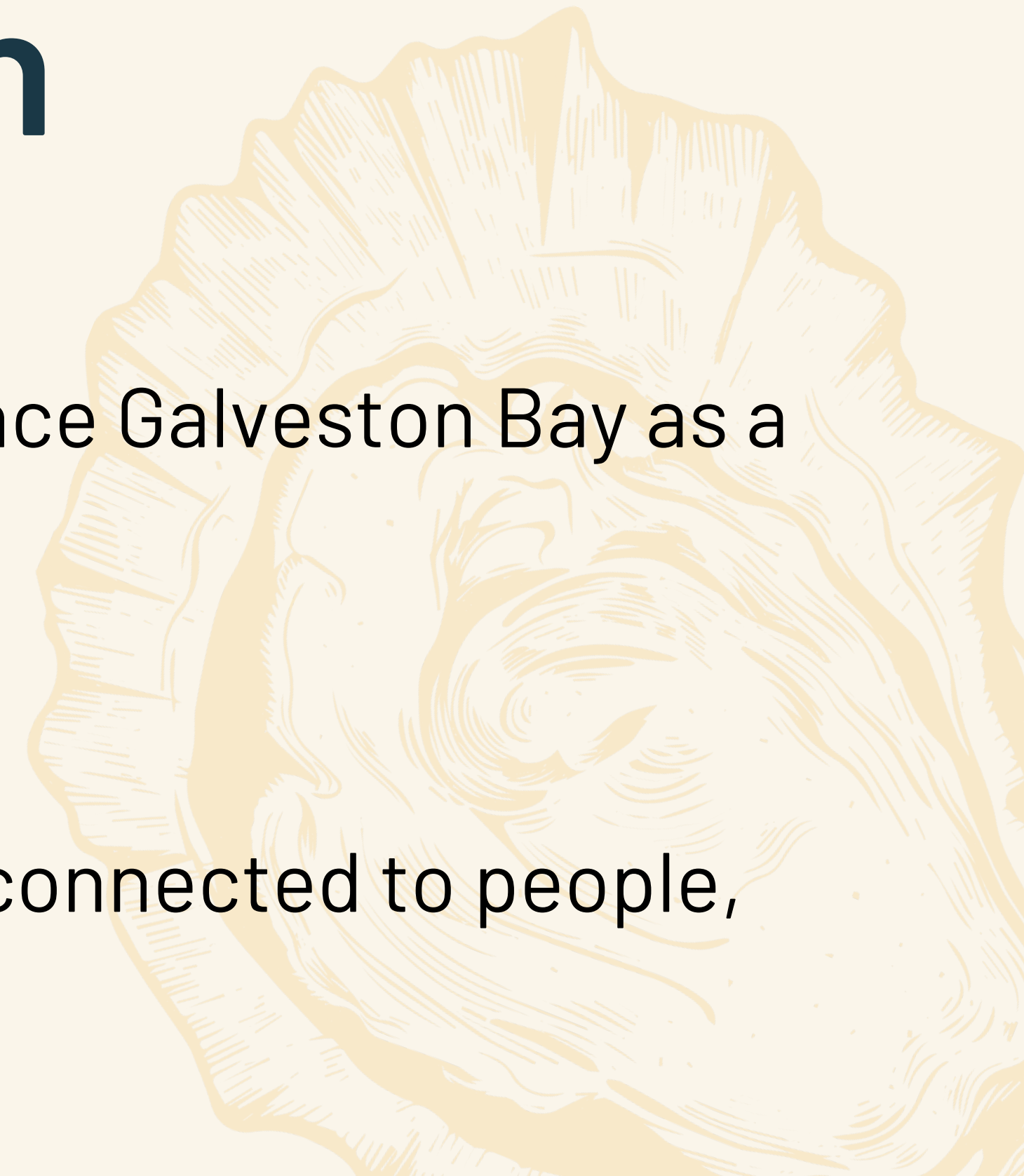
# Our Mission & Vision

## *Mission*

The mission of Galveston Bay Foundation is to preserve and enhance Galveston Bay as a healthy and productive place for generations to come.

## *Vision*

We envision a future Galveston Bay that is brimming with vitality, connected to people, and contributing to the community in every possible way.



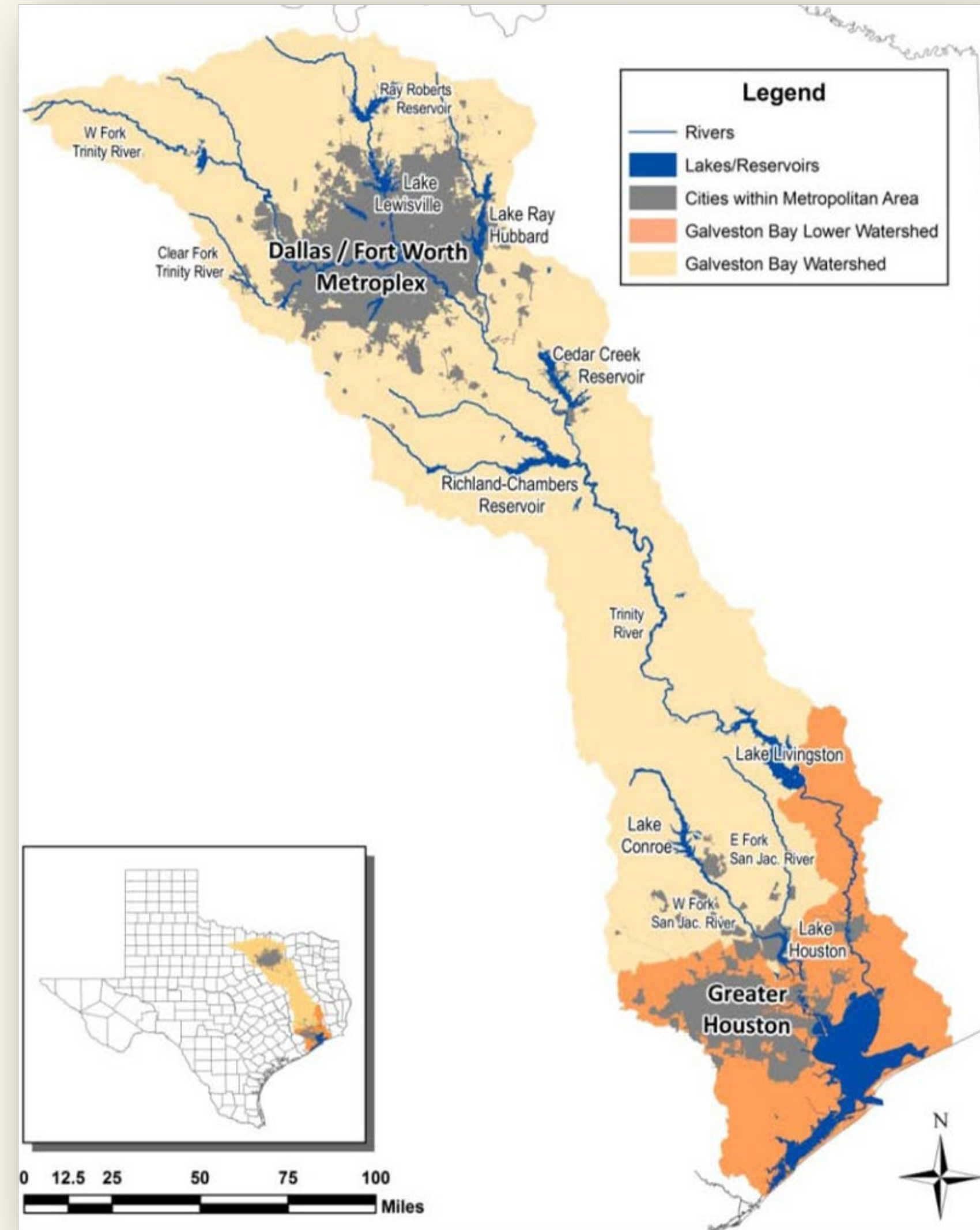
# Our Bay and Estuary

- Largest estuary in Texas (660 square miles) and 7<sup>th</sup> largest in United States
- Average depth of bay is 8 feet
- 4 major sub-bays: Galveston, Trinity, East, West
- 4 counties: Brazoria, Harris, Chambers, Galveston
- Freshwater inflows from San Jacinto (28%) and Trinity (54%) Rivers and local bayous and creeks (18%)
- Tidal exchange from Bolivar Roads and San Luis Pass



# Our Watershed

- 24,000 square mile watershed from Greater Houston to north of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex along the Trinity River basin
- About half of the population of Texas lives in the Galveston Bay watershed





# Program Areas



Education



Habitat Restoration



Land Conservation



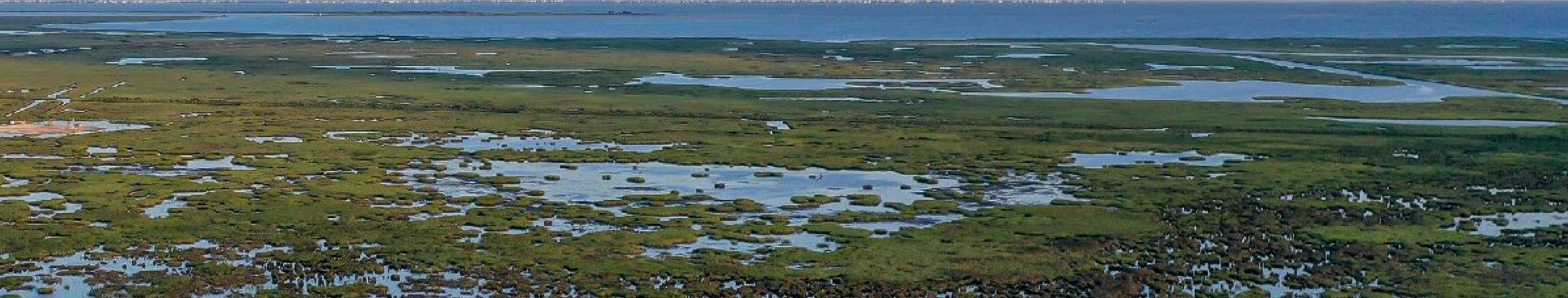
Water Protection



Research



Advocacy



# Land Conservation



- 
- Sound Finances
  - Ethical Conduct
  - Responsible Governance
  - Lasting Stewardship
- 

**Total Land Conserved 19,179 acres**

Fee Simple Preserves 9,340 acres

Conservation Easements 7,668 acres

Lands Transferred to Partner 2,019 acres





# Land Protection Basics



## *Land Protection Strategies*

Fee Simple Acquisition

Conservation Easements



## *Due Diligence*

Survey

Environmental Site Assessment

Appraisal

Legal Title Review



## *Funding Conservation Transactions*

Federal Funding Sources

State Funding Sources

Private Investment / Philanthropy



# Conservation Assistance Program

## ➤ *Strategic Conservation Planning*

Galveston Bay Plan, defining regional priorities and conservation opportunities

## ➤ *Land Protection Capacity*

Building expertise within the region to improve pace and permanence of land protection efforts

## ➤ *Conservation Workgroup*

Collaborative effort of regional partners to review and prioritize meaningful conservation priorities

## ➤ *Due Diligence Financial Support*

Cost sharing with project partners to facilitate successful transactions

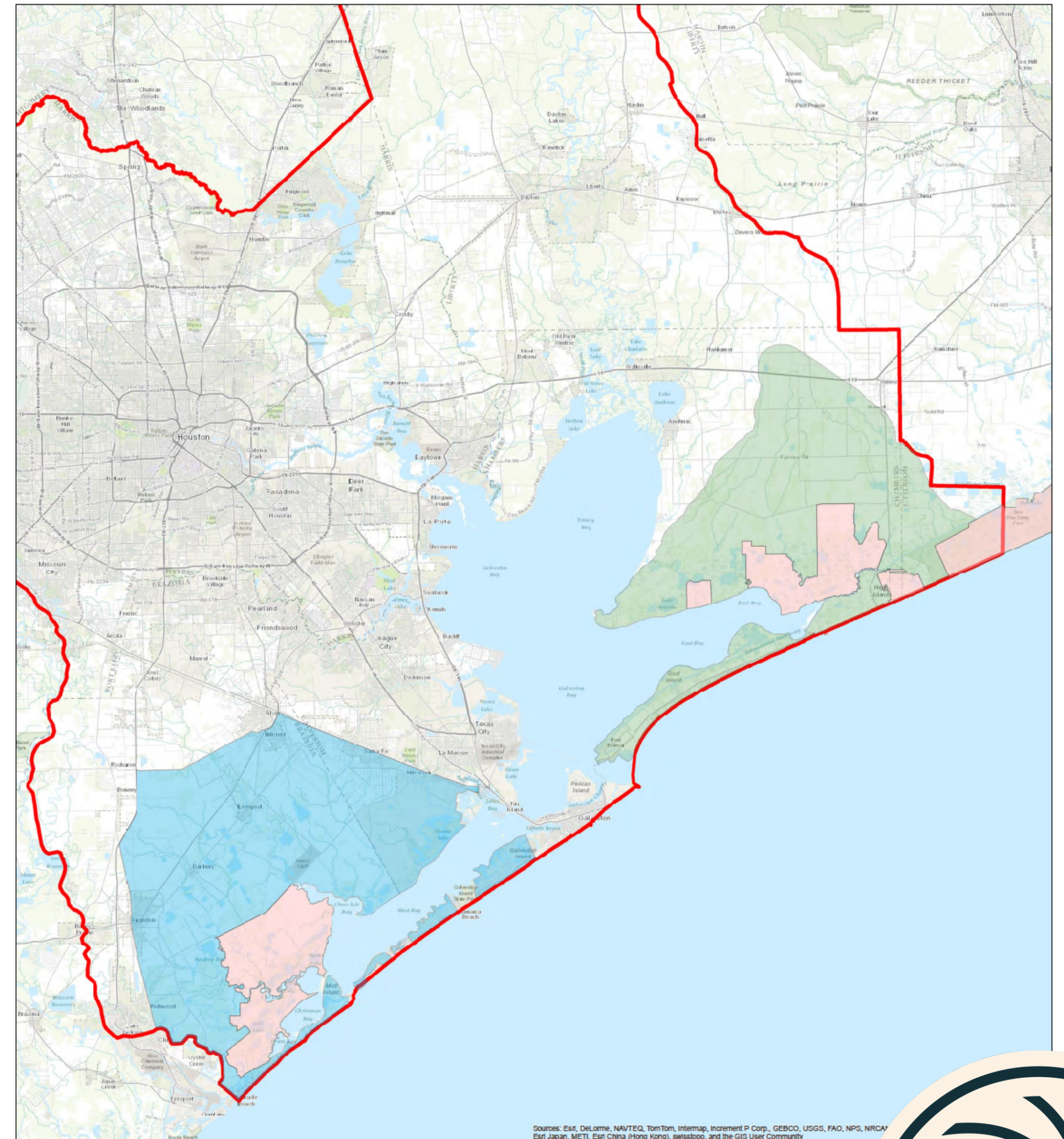


# East Bay and West Bay Watershed Initiatives

Prioritized for:

- Parcel size
- Connectivity with existing conservation lands
- Habitat quality
- Feasibility

## Conservation Assistance Program Land Conservation Priority Areas



### Legend

- Wildlife Refuge
- East Bay Initiative
- West Bay Initiative
- GBF Operating Area

### Land Conservation Initiative Areas

0 5 10 20 Miles



# Conservation Success!

## Supported Project Totals

- Over 15,000 acres of land protected (34 individual projects)
- Financial support to 9 separate conservation organizations
- Tens of Millions of federal, state, and private dollars leveraged
- Over 18,000 acres in active projects





**GALVESTON BAY**  
FOUNDATION

Protect Today.  
Preserve Tomorrow.

# Increasing the Pace of Conservation



**Coastal  
Prairie**   
**Conservancy**  
Formerly Katy Prairie Conservancy

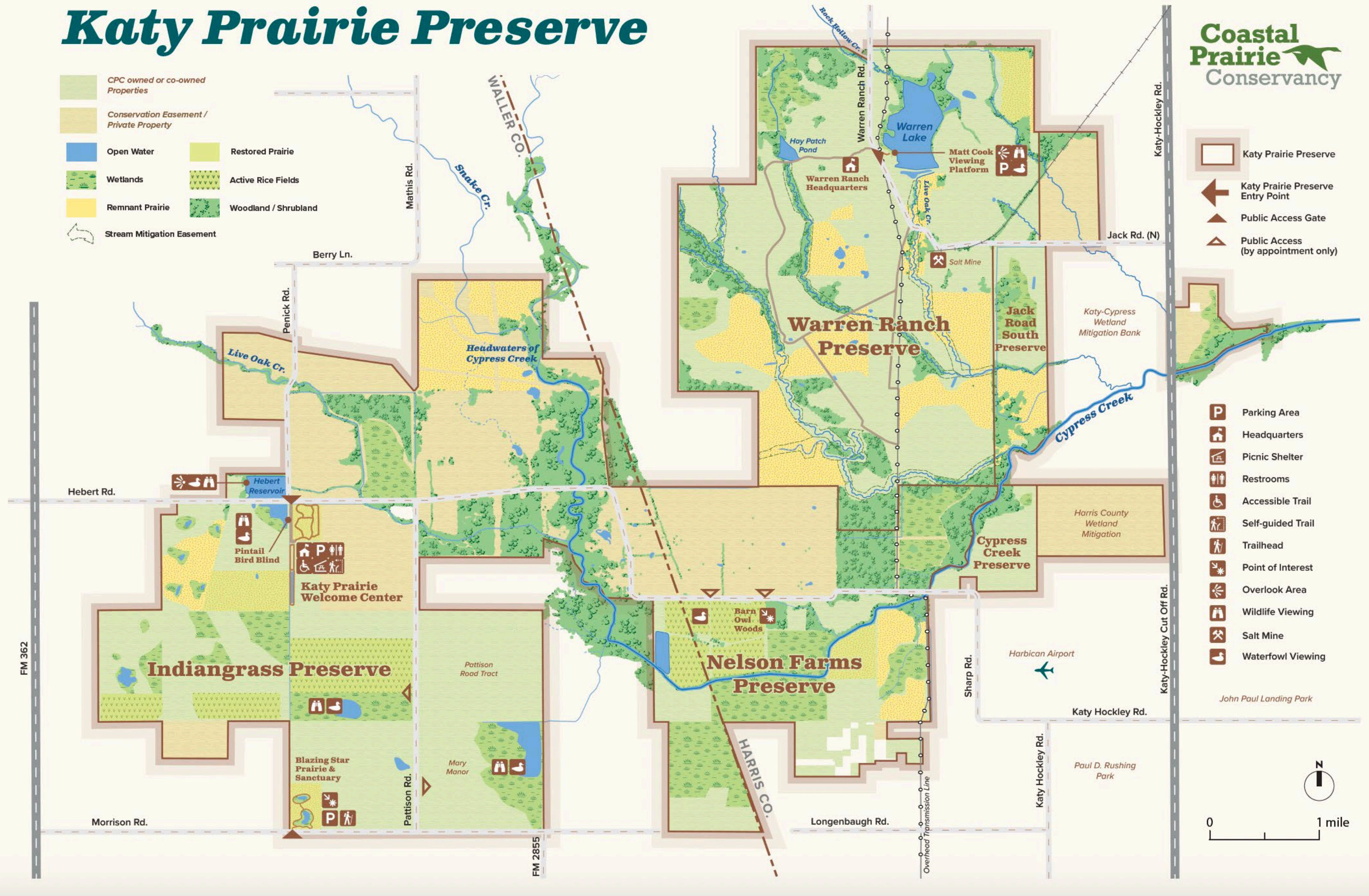
# The Coastal Prairie Conservancy

- Originally the Katy Prairie Conservancy
- Accredited, nonprofit land trust founded in 1992
- Mission – sustain a resilient Texas by preserving coastal prairies, wetlands, farms, and ranches to benefit people and wildlife forever
- **34,048 conserved acres**



# Katy Prairie Preserve

- CPC owned or co-owned Properties
- Conservation Easement / Private Property
- Open Water
- Restored Prairie
- Wetlands
- Active Rice Fields
- Remnant Prairie
- Woodland / Shrubland
- Stream Mitigation Easement



**Coastal  
Prairie** Conservancy

- Katy Prairie Preserve
- Katy Prairie Preserve Entry Point
- Public Access Gate
- Public Access (by appointment only)
- P Parking Area
- H Headquarters
- P Picnic Shelter
- R Restrooms
- A Accessible Trail
- S Self-guided Trail
- T Trailhead
- I Point of Interest
- O Overlook Area
- W Wildlife Viewing
- S Salt Mine
- W Waterfowl Viewing

John Paul Landing Park

Katy Hockley Rd.

Paul D. Rushing Park

0 1 mile

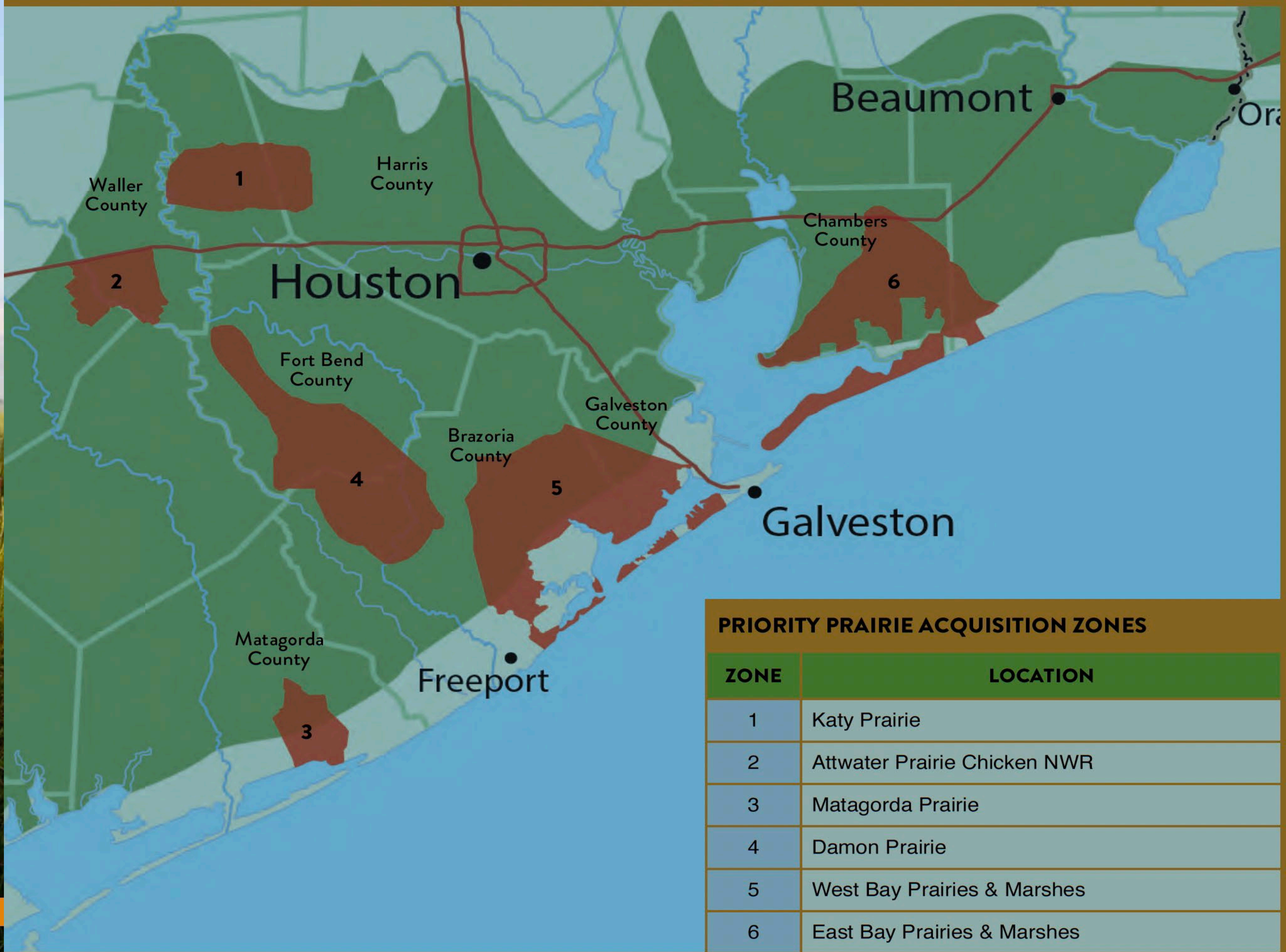




2015

# PRAIRIE CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COASTAL CENTER



# 2017 – Move to the Coast



# What happens inland can affect the Coast

- Supports migratory birds of the Gulf Coast
- The Katy Prairie and other inland coastal prairies provide essential feeding and resting habitat for migratory birds that depend on the Texas coast.
- During storms, drought, or high tides, inland habitats serve as critical refuge for coastal and waterbirds.
- Protecting prairie and wetland habitat across the landscape ensures birds can move safely between inland and coastal areas.



# What happens inland can affect the Coast

- Protects the health of bays and estuaries
- Coastal prairie soils and wetlands naturally filter pollutants before they reach Galveston Bay and other estuaries.
- Clean freshwater flowing from inland prairies helps maintain the salinity balance that sustains shrimp, oysters, and fish.
- Reducing sediment runoff helps protect coastal marshes, oyster reefs, and seagrass beds.



# What happens inland can affect the Coast

- Coastal prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems in North America, and its protection inland is essential to the health of the entire Gulf Coast.
- Connected prairie and wetland systems support wildlife that depend on both inland and coastal habitats throughout their life cycles.
- Protecting inland coastal prairie ensures the long-term resilience of the Texas coast in the face of development, storms, and sea-level rise.



# 2021: Texas Coastal Prairie Initiative (TCPI) CPC + 24 partner organizations



[coastalprairieconservancy.org](http://coastalprairieconservancy.org)  
[prairiepartner.org](http://prairiepartner.org)



Blackwell Ranch. Photo by Coastal Prairie Conservancy



Onion Bayou. Photo by Galveston Bay Foundation



## Permanent Land Protection Through TCPI Conservation Easements

Six projects have been found eligible for NRCS Conservation Easement Cost-Share, totaling 5,398 acres. TCPI will provide \$4,520,200 in funding to landowners.

Three projects have closed (Matagorda and Chambers Counties); three are pending (Wharton and Chambers Counties).



# TCPI Habitat Management Activities

Seventeen projects were eligible for NRCS Habitat Management Cost-Share, totaling 30,398 acres and providing for \$795,818 in funding to landowners.

Land Management Project Examples include:

- Restoration of pasture to native grassland
- Enhancement of wetlands
- Prescribed Burns
- Prescribed Grazing



# Texas Grasslands and Savannas Initiative

\$25 million in funding awarded from NRCS under its Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

\$3,000,000 - Habitat Management

\$16,850,000 - Conservation Easements

Technical Assistance for Implementation, Pre-Application, Planning, Design, Contracting

Outreach and Education, Outcomes, Project Management

Rescinded; Appeal Pending

## TGSI Partner Organizations

- Audubon Of Texas
- Bayou Land Conservancy
- Coastal Prairie Conservancy
- Environmental Institute of Houston @ University of Houston-Clear Lake
- Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust
- Gulf Coast Joint Venture
- Harris County Precinct 4
- Houston-Galveston Area Council
- Houston Wilderness
- Native Prairies Association of Texas
- The Nature Conservancy – Texas
- Texas A&M Natural Resource Institute
- Texas Agricultural Land Trust
- Texas Coalition of Rural Landowners
- Texas Land Conservancy
- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Texas Rice Industry Coalition For The Environment
- Yardstick
- Wildlife Habitat Federation





- TGSI PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**
- AUDUBON OF TEXAS
  - BAYOU LAND CONSERVANCY
  - COASTAL PRAIRIE CONSERVANCY
  - ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTE OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE
  - GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER TRUST
  - GULF COAST JOINT VENTURE
  - HARRIS COUNTY PRECINCT 4
  - HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT
  - HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL
  - HOUSTON WILDERNESS
  - NATIVE PRAIRIES ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS
  - THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
  - TEXAS AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST
  - TEXAS A&M NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE
  - TEXAS COALITION OF RURAL LANDOWNERS
  - TEXAS LAND CONSERVANCY
  - TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
  - TEXAS RICE INDUSTRY COALITION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
  - YARDSTICK
- TGSI PLANNING ASSISTANCE**
- WILDLIFE HABITAT FEDERATION

# PRESERVING THE TEXAS GRASSLANDS AND SAVANNAS

## OVERVIEW

Grasslands and savannas are rich ecosystems, serving as home for a quarter of the world's population and habitat for diverse wildlife. They also offer critical benefits for people and nature by storing carbon, supporting agriculture, and providing recreation. Texas Grasslands & Savannas and its partners are providing permanent protection for their lands and provide funding to help landowners. This initiative, funded by Resources Conservation Service, Post Oak Savanna ecoregion development. The program is essential grassland bird habitat enhancing the overall biodiversity of these lands today means safe legacy of Texas for tomorrow.

## SAVING LAND AND STR

Well-managed grazing by cattle improve soil health and biodiversity. Grazing practices allow for proper rest and periods not only increase productivity of lands to cattle, they also create a mosaic of habitats that benefit wildlife. grazing practices such as controlled developing a grazing plan to resources. These actions help protect local food supplies.



# Texas Coastal Prairie Conference PRESERVING LANDS AND LEGACIES



From conservation agreements to native prairies, the Texas Coastal Prairie Initiative is excited to discuss the future of wide-open spaces in Texas! Conference registration includes field visits to remnant and restored prairies as well as working ranches and farms, complimentary continental breakfast, lunch, and a networking dinner.

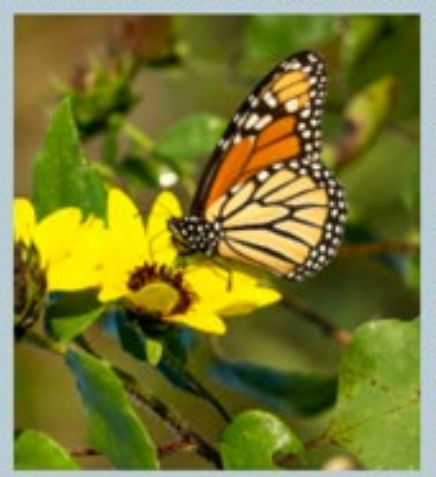
- Friday, October 28th  
Saturday, October 29th
- University of Houston  
Clear Lake
- \$85 - General Admission  
\$45 - Student Ticket

## WHY CONSERVING THIS REGION

The coastal prairies, savannas, and grasslands are critical ecosystems that were historically shaped by fire. These landscapes not only support a rich history of our state but also provide essential wildlife — from migratory birds to native plants. The years following European settlement, these landscapes have been significantly altered by development of cropland and pasture. The surviving tallgrass prairie and savanna are dwindling in number and under threat from fragmentation and rapid development. These once abundant, are becoming rarer with each year. The best hope for conserving these ecosystems are instrumental in ensuring these vital part of Texas heritage.

## Benefiting A Critical Ecosystem

Pollinators like bees and butterflies are vital to the health of our ecosystems. Native grasslands support a diverse array of essential pollinators. The importance of these lands for pollinators is often overlooked. These spaces are critical for our communities. Developing a grazing plan that connects our communities to these areas for connection.



Register Today at [prairiepartner.org/conference](http://prairiepartner.org/conference)  
Sponsorship Opportunities Available



This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Regional Conservation Partnership Program Supplemental Agreement number 2332-A-0651. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition, any reference to specific brands or types of products or services does not constitute or imply an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for those products or services. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## HOW TO APPLY?

Please contact [info@coastalprairieconservancy.org](mailto:info@coastalprairieconservancy.org) or fill out the contact form on [prairiepartner.org](http://prairiepartner.org). We will contact you with next steps.



TEXAS GRASSLANDS AND SAVANNAS INITIATIVE

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# Flyers; Postcards, Events

### Preserving the Natural Heritage of Texas Farms and Ranches

The Texas Coastal Prairie Initiative (TCPI) and the Texas Grasslands and Savannas Initiative (TGSI) are regional initiatives that provide funding to private landowners to conserve farms, ranches, and natural areas. Funding is available for Conservation Easements and Habitat Management Practices.

**Apply for Funding TODAY!**

Connect with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy or a TCPI/TGSI partner organization at:

- [TCPI-info@coastalprairieconservancy.org](mailto:TCPI-info@coastalprairieconservancy.org)
- (713) 523 - 6135

### ELIGIBILITY

Farmers, ranchers, and landowners who own natural or agricultural lands in the following regions may be eligible:

Austin, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, Fort Bend, Galveston, Gonzales, Grimes, Harris, Jackson, Lavaca, Matagorda, Montgomery, Victoria, Waller, Washington, and Wharton Counties.

Scan the QR code or visit [prairiepartner.org](http://prairiepartner.org) for more information.

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Landowners and Producers will work with a TCPI/TGSI Partner to determine eligibility for funding programs:

#### CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Landowners may enter voluntary conservation easements with a qualified land trust to permanently protect their private lands, which they may continue to use for agricultural uses, such as cattle grazing, or recreational uses, such as hunting. Funds would pay landowners 50% of the appraised value of a conservation easement.

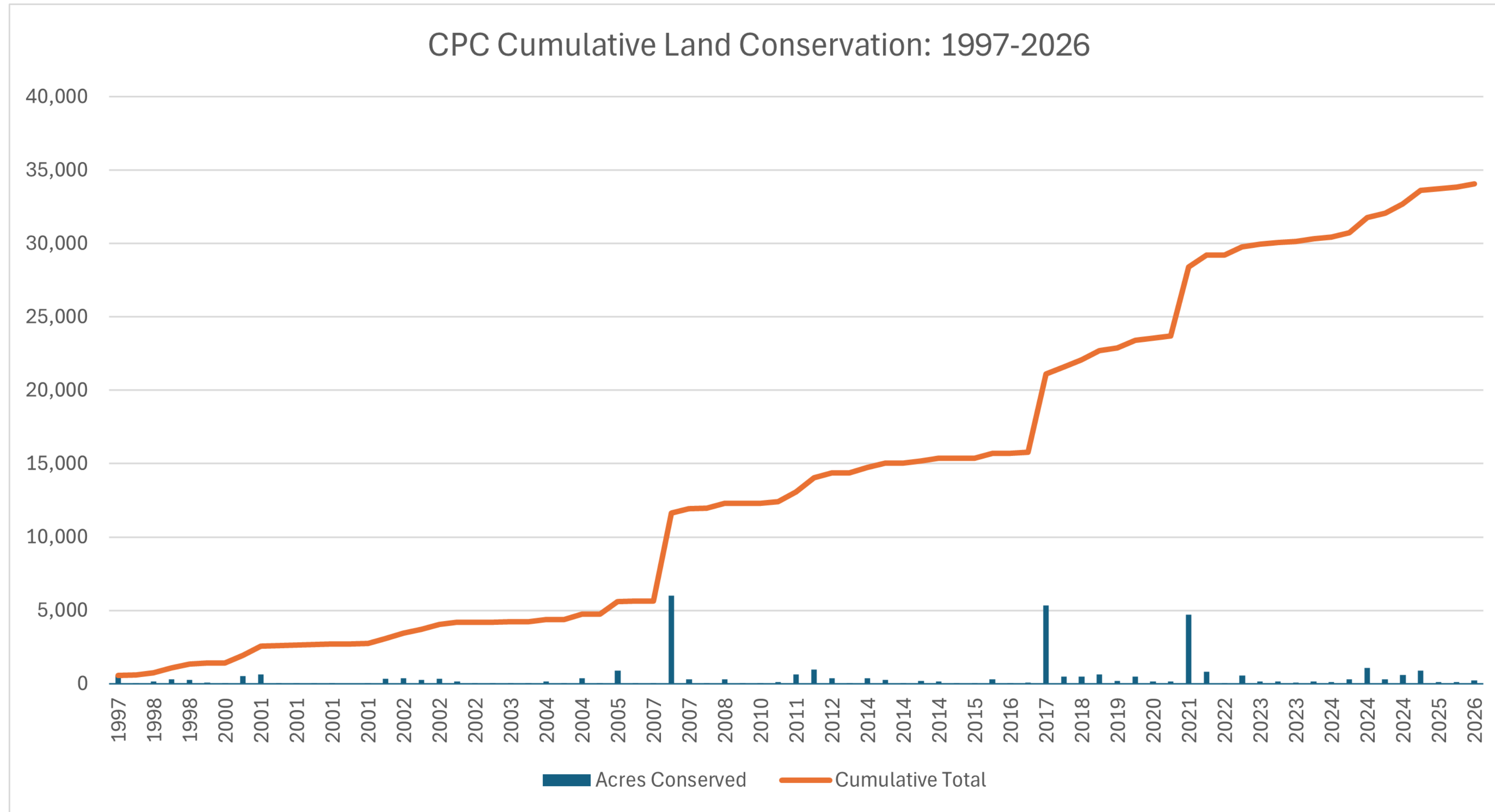
#### HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Landowners may receive free assistance to develop plans to enhance and improve wildlife habitat. Funds are available to reimburse private landowners most of the cost of beneficial practices, such as brush control, prescribed fire, or cattle cross-fencing, according to NRCS payment rates.

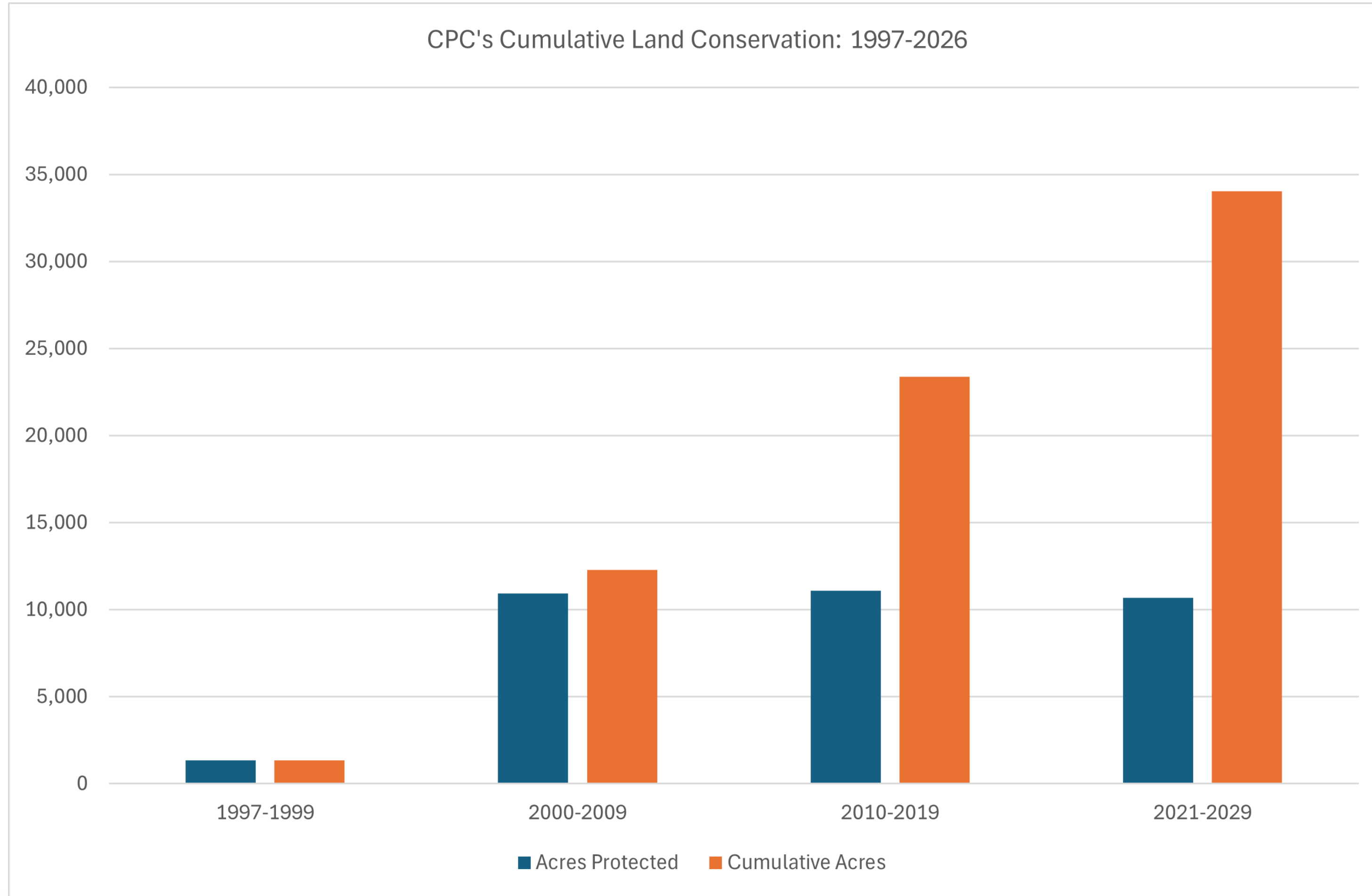
5615 Kirby Drive, Suite 867  
Houston, Texas 77005-2458

[coastalprairieconservancy.org](http://coastalprairieconservancy.org)  
(713) 523-6135

# Land Conservation – 30 Year History



# Increase in CPC's Conserved lands



## Let's Stay in Touch!



[maryanne@coastalprairieconservancy.org](mailto:maryanne@coastalprairieconservancy.org)



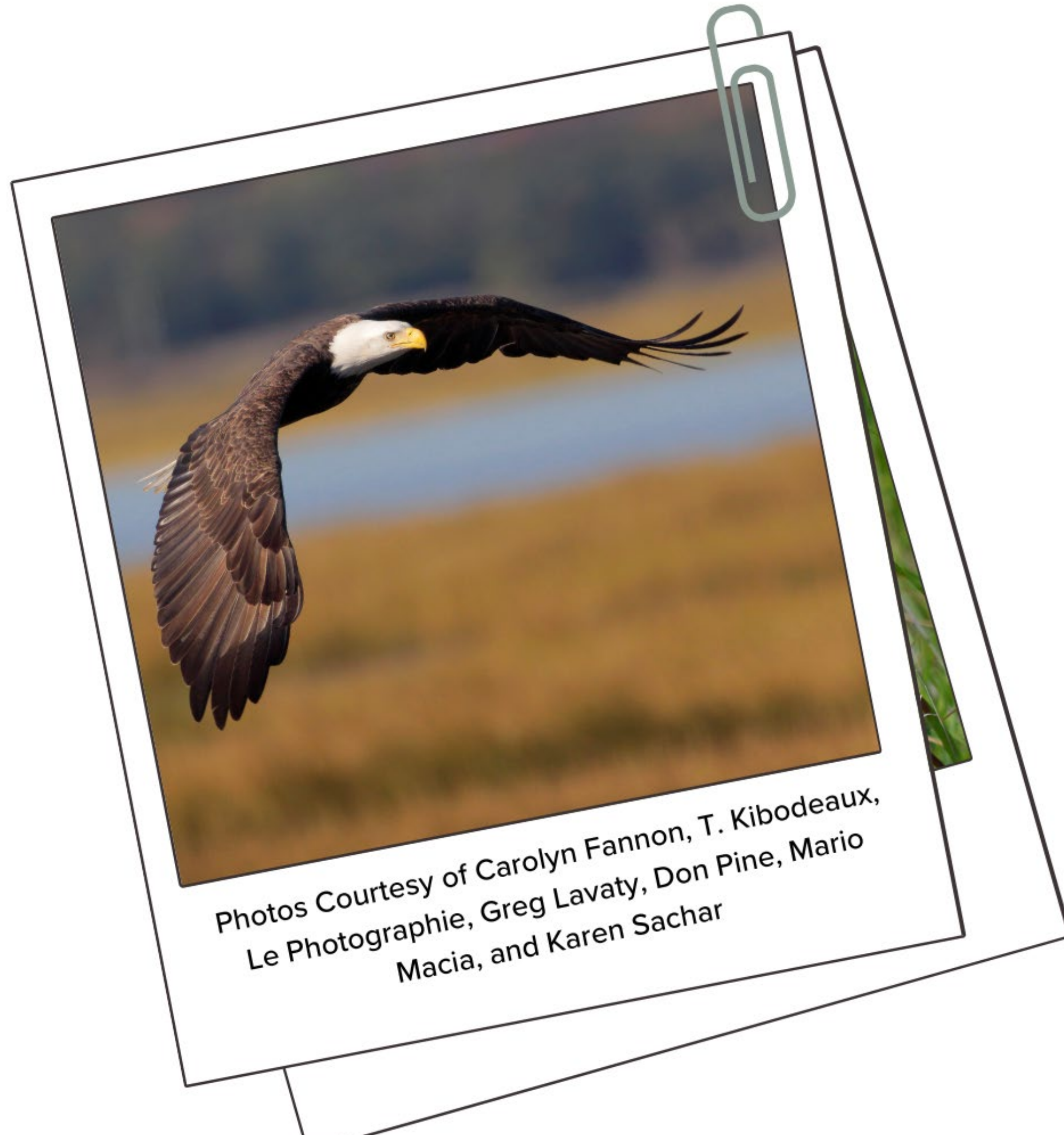
[coastalprairieconservancy.org](http://coastalprairieconservancy.org)



[@coastalprairieconservancy](https://www.instagram.com/coastalprairieconservancy)



[@coastalprairieconservancy](https://www.facebook.com/coastalprairieconservancy)



# Land Acquisition for Conservation and Management





*We protect our Gulf Coast through conservation and fun, educational, inspiring adventures that spark creativity, awareness and action such as exploring nature and creating eco-art.*



**Mission:** *manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*

- Youth Eco-Art Workshops
- Youth Eco-Art Adventures
- Professional Development
- Eco-Art Residencies
- Project S.I.T.
- Public & Private Eco-Art Adventures
- **Coastal Heritage Preserve**
- Habitat Restoration Adventures
- Outreach & Engagement

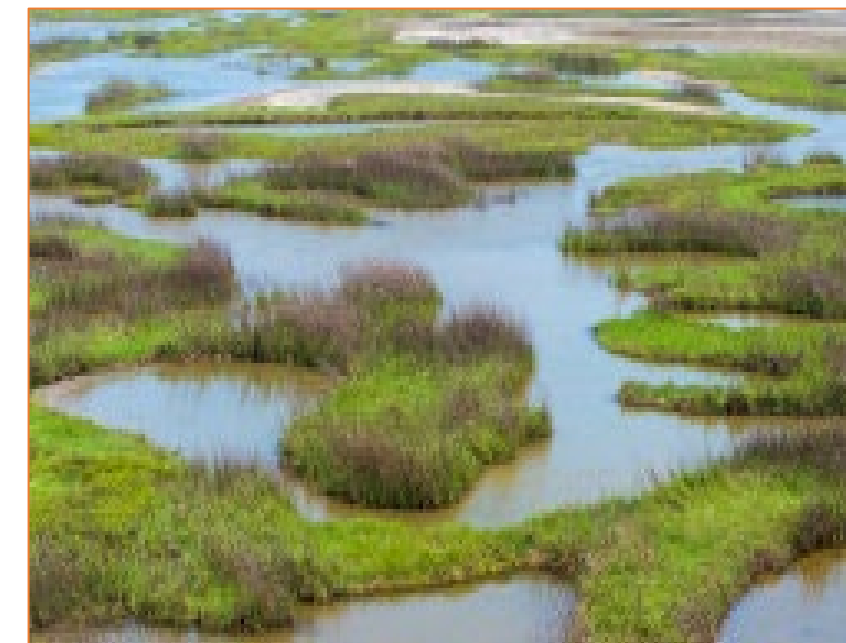
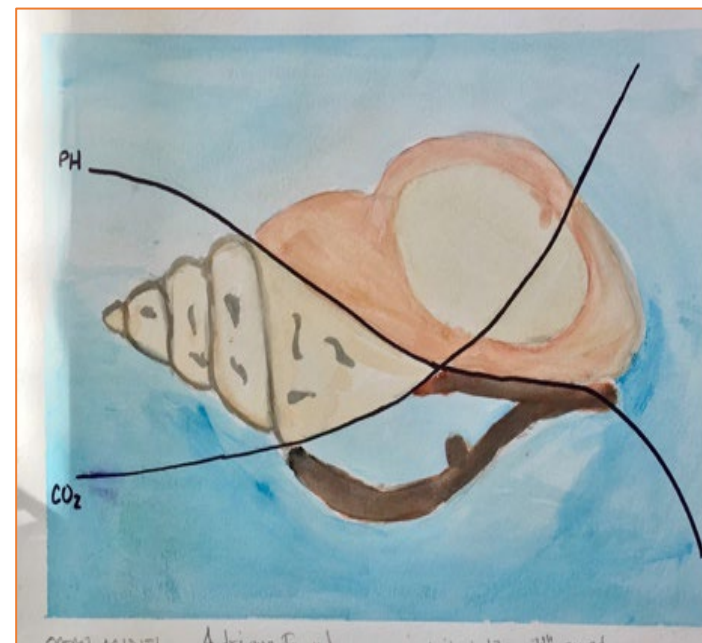


Photo and Map Source: Artist Boat and TPWD

# Galveston Island

**Figure 1.** The proposed project location. Between West Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico along the south shoreline of West Galveston Island, in the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes ecoregion of Texas.

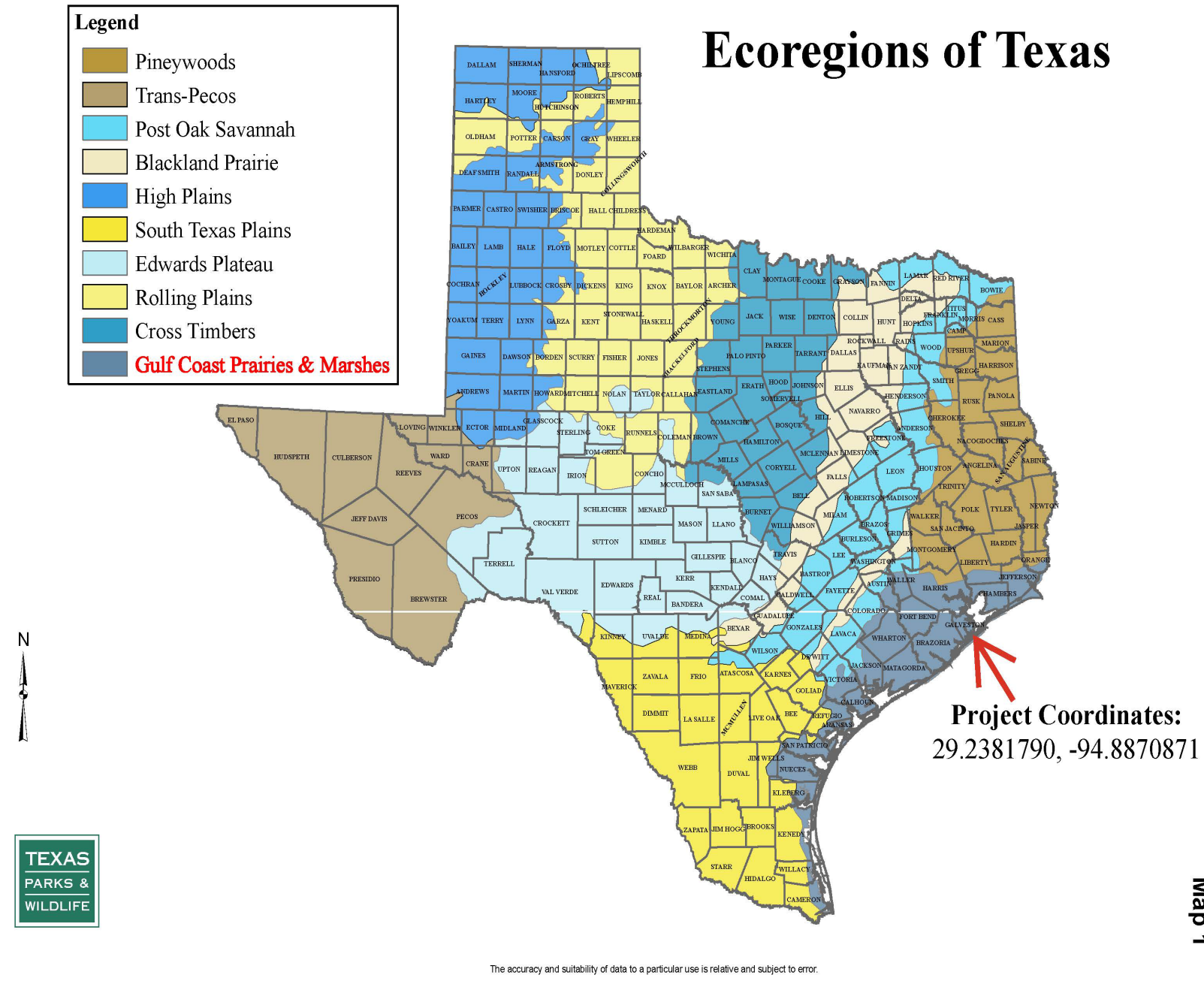


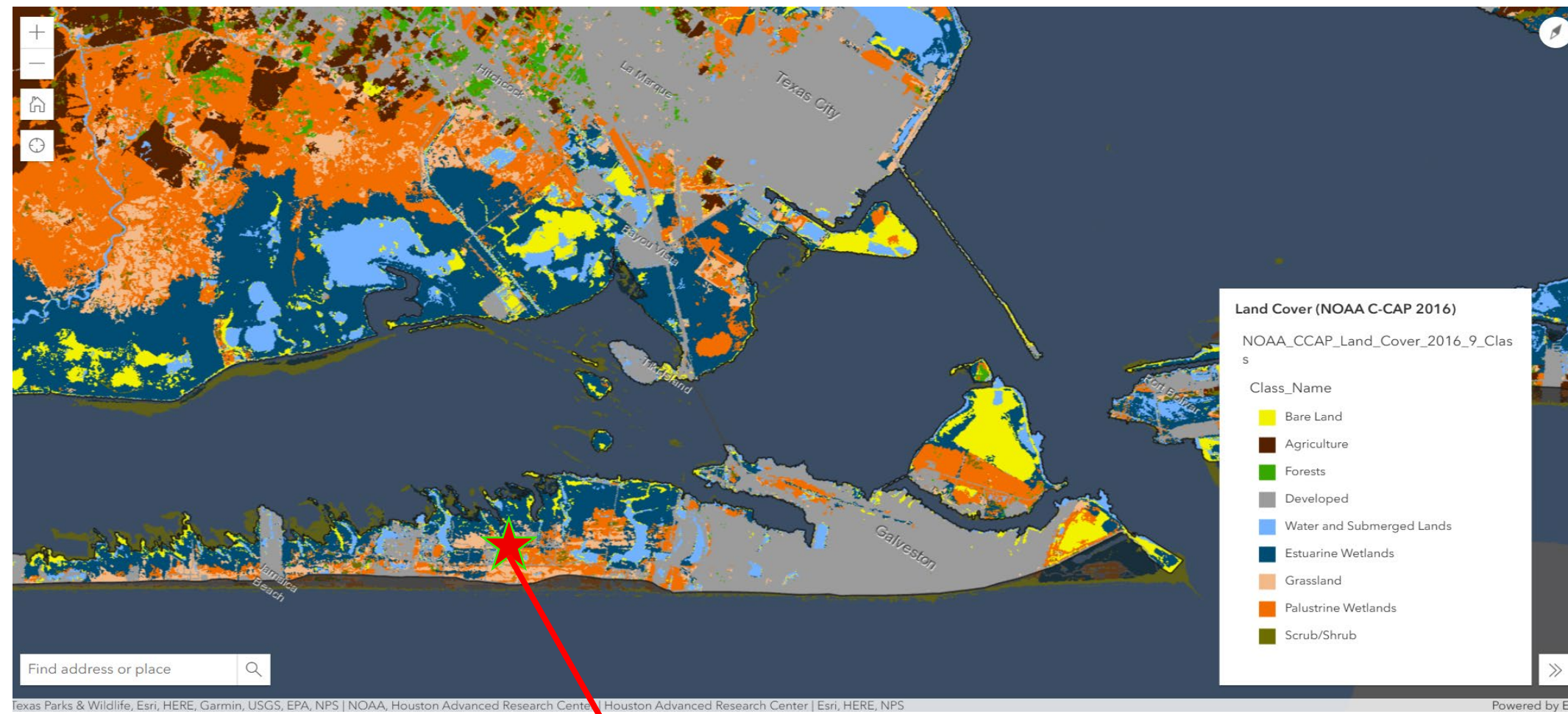
Photo and Map Source: Artist Boat and TPWD

# Galveston Island - Habitat Loss & Development

## Pressure

Habitats and developed lands - NOAA's Coastal Change Analysis Program (C-CAP) land use cover data

Acreeage and change of estuarine and freshwater wetlands 1996-2016



| Wetland Class          | 1996 (Acres) | 2006 (Acres) | 2016 (Acres) | Total Change 1996 - 2016 (Acres) | Annual Change 1996 - 2016 (Acres) | Percent Change 1996 - 2016 |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Estuarine Emergent     | 121,845      | 123,194      | 122,827      | 982                              | 49                                | 0.8%                       |
| Estuarine Forested     | 476          | 74           | 34           | -442                             | -22                               | -92.9%                     |
| Estuarine Scrub-Shrub  | 75           | 74           | 56           | -19                              | -1                                | -25.7%                     |
| Freshwater Emergent    | 152,370      | 151,700      | 150,669      | -1,701                           | -85                               | -1.1%                      |
| Freshwater Forested    | 351,815      | 334,072      | 322,994      | -28,821                          | -1,441                            | -8.2%                      |
| Freshwater Scrub-Shrub | 33,414       | 34,112       | 36,870       | 3,456                            | 173                               | 10.3%                      |

Sources: GBEP, State of Bay, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (2018-2026), Map - HARC, Data – NOAA (2016)



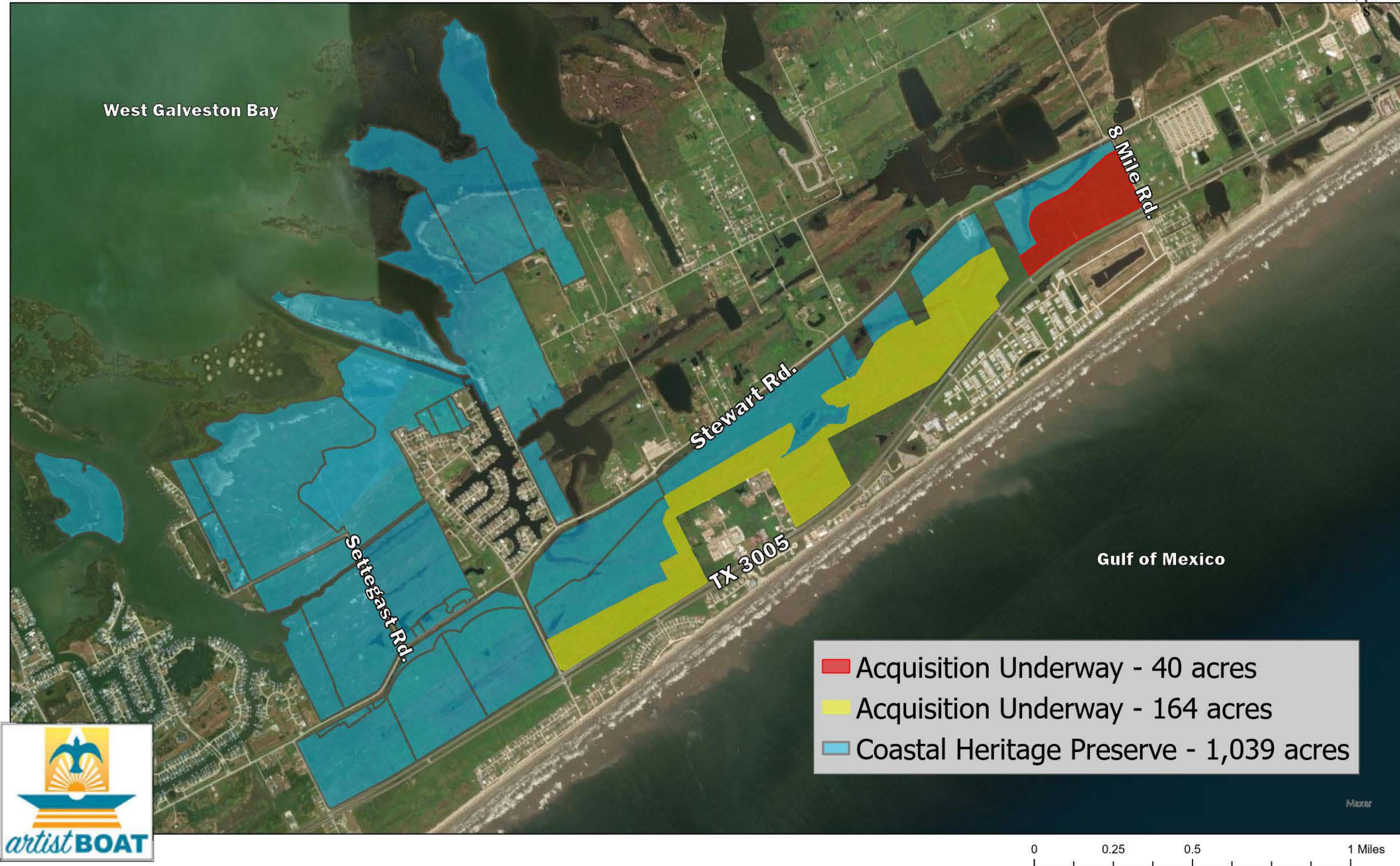
Example proposed development – 9,000 units on canal and beach. 3 miles of habitat, 2 miles bay to beach.

Source: Artist Boat

# What are we doing to Address this?

Land acquisition: protect land prior to disturbance and degradation

## Coastal Heritage Preserve - 1,039 Acres Saved



# What Have We Protected?

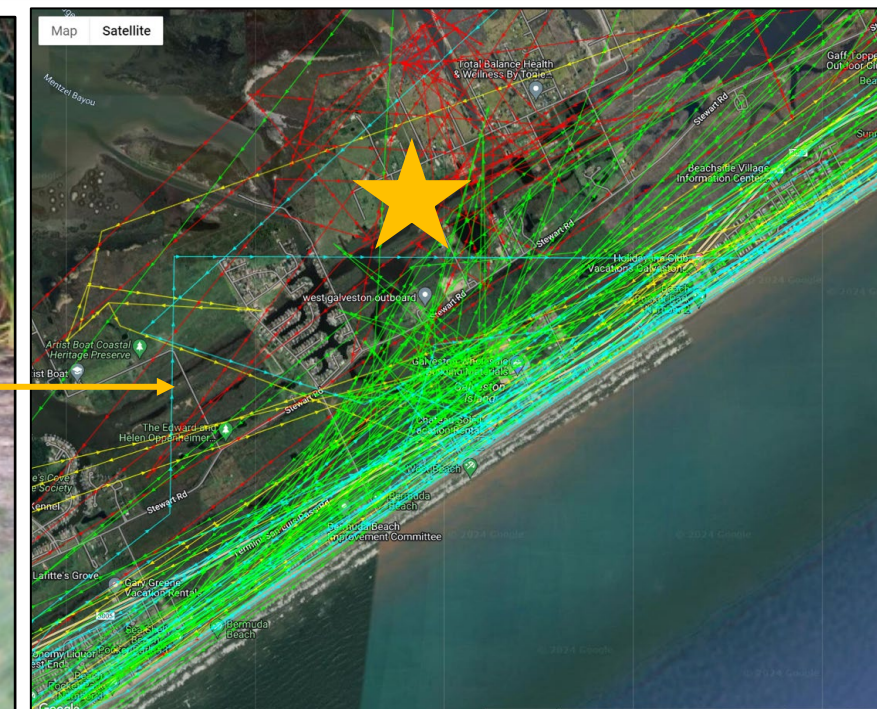
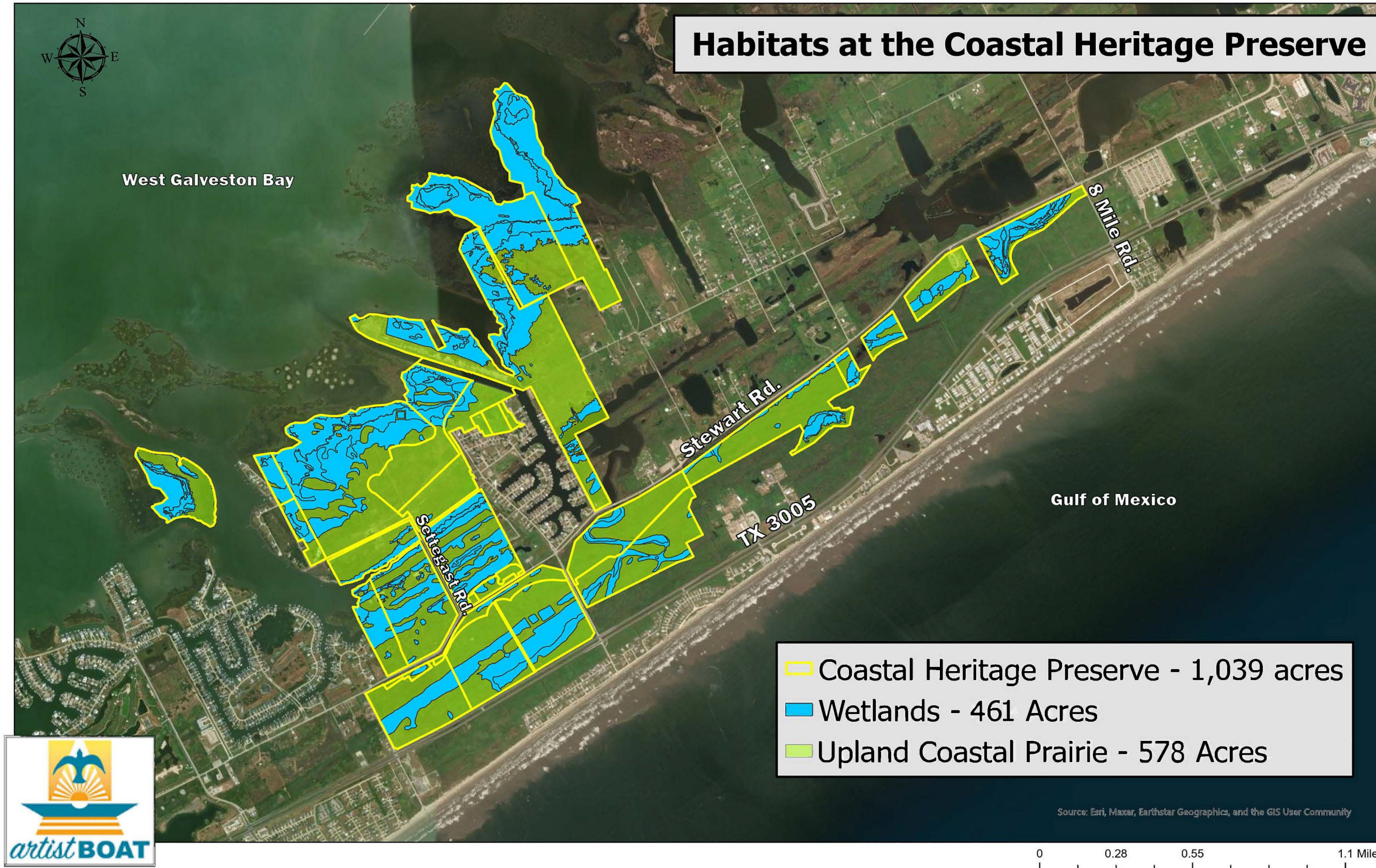


Photo Source: Artist Boat, Woody Woodrow, Ron Wooten

# Key to Success



The Edward and Helen Oppenheimer Foundation

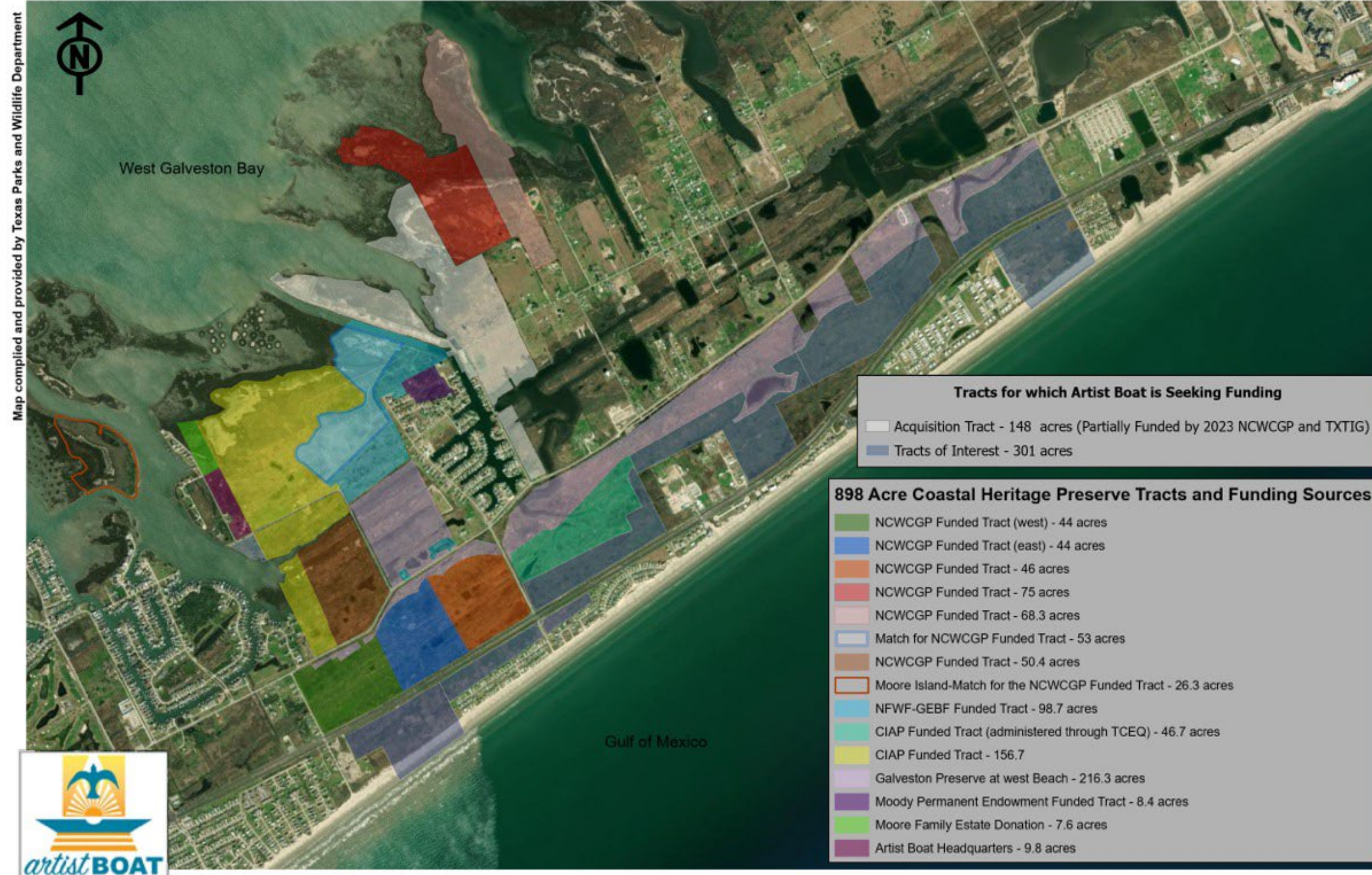


MALCOLM C. DAMU FOUNDATION

Harry L. Willett Foundation



Edward J Hudson Jr Foundation



- Partners!
- Start anyway you can
- Connect to local knowledge, information, and willing sellers.
- Always be on the lookout for funding sources and land, use connections.
- Establish or join workgroups focused on conservation acquisitions to expand connections and foster support with organizations that have a similar goal.



Artist Boat has raised \$12.5 million dollars of the \$16 million dollars needed to save the the next 204 acres bringing the Preserve to 1,243 acres.

We're more than 75% of the way to meeting our goal. We can't slow down.

We've worked with people across the country to save 1,039 acres of land and create the Coastal Heritage Preserve. To date, we've made incredible progress toward our goal of purchasing and forever protecting 1,400 acres of wilds! You can join the fight and be a conservationist.



We have just 18 months to raise the money needed to buy 204 acres of Ancient Dune Swale.

■ 1,039 Acres ■ 204 Acres



We need 1 million people to give \$10 to save the Ancient Dune Swale.

We have the opportunity to preserve 204 acres of Ancient Dune Swale. If we don't, this vital piece of land will be developed into 2,000 vacation homes. Most importantly, it will destroy the homes of all the animals that live in the coastal prairies woven into the environment. Wildlife and plants that depend on the land will be gone. But it doesn't have to be this way. We have the power to protect and preserve the Galveston Island ecosystem.

TODAY'S CONSERVATION CAN ENSURE TOMORROW'S BEAUTY.

We invite you to come alongside us again and Be One in a Million to save the Ancient Dune Swale. Every \$10

# Vision & Future Goals

- Acquire and protect 1,400 acres for the Coastal Heritage Preserve
  - 204 acres to be added to the 1,039 in 2026
- Stewardship of protected land
- Continue to connect people to the Gulf Coast through exploration and eco-art
- Inform and inspire people to appreciate and protect the Texas Coast



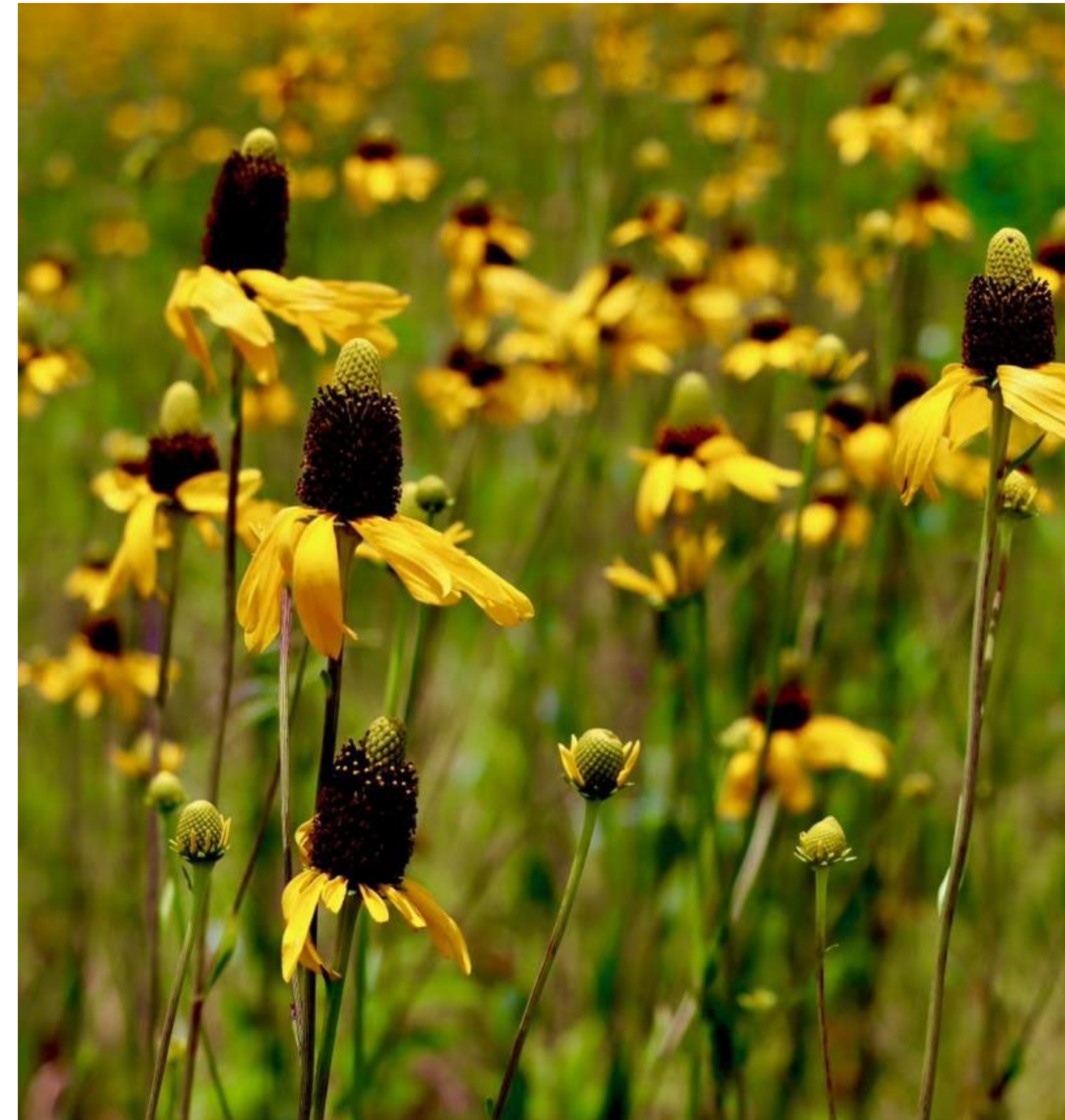
# Thank You!



Karla Klay, Executive Director, [executive.director@artistboat.org](mailto:executive.director@artistboat.org), 409-632-0388



Savannah Horton, Coastal Ecologist, [savannah.horton@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:savannah.horton@tpwd.texas.gov), 346-733-3400



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# LAND ACQUISITION AT ABNC

A presentation by Tim Pylate, Executive Director ABNC



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# MISSION

**The mission of Armand Bayou Nature Center is twofold: to preserve the habitats with which we have been entrusted, and to provide opportunities for people to experience and understand the local ecosystem.**

**Through preservation and education, we strive to *reconnect people with nature.***

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# URBAN WILDERNESS





**THE MOST BEAUTIFUL  
BAYOU IN TOWN**



Armand Yramategui



Hana Ginzburg



1,900 ACRES



1,900 ACRES

767 ACRES

**24 ACRES**

**767 ACRES**

**1,900 ACRES**



**24 ACRES**

**767 ACRES**  
**175 ACRES**

**1,900 ACRES**





**24 ACRES**

**1,147 ACRES**

**767 ACRES**

**175 ACRES**

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**24 ACRES**

**1,147 ACRES**

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**1,900 ACRES**



**24 ACRES**

**106 ACRES**

**1,147 ACRES**

**175 ACRES**

**767 ACRES**

**175 ACRES**

**1,900 ACRES**

# Lessons Learned

- There are LOTS of ownership/preservation scenarios. If one won't work, try another.
- There are LOTS of funding scenarios. Most acquisitions are a patchwork of funding.
- Reach out to your fellow conservationists. They want to help.
- Land acquisition is complicated. Be patient. Don't give up.
- The payoff is big....











































