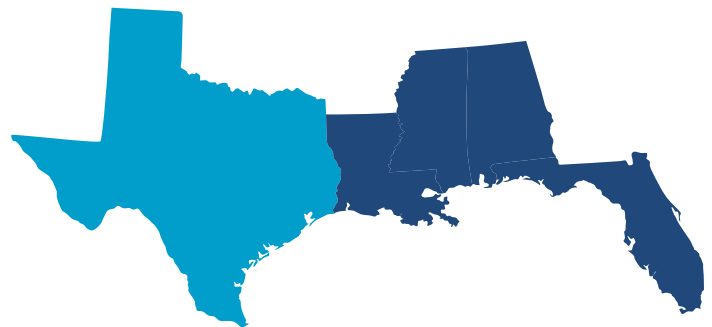


TxCC crew leader Bianca Enriquez leads crew members in transplanting native marsh grasses for shoreline restoration at Virginia Point, Galveston County, Texas on April 23, 2024. © Karrie Arnold/The Nature Conservancy

In 2018, GulfCorps launched in Texas with a crew from American Youthworks, Texas Conservation Corps (TxCC), based in Galveston. American Conservation Experience (ACE) added a crew in Corpus Christi in Year 2. Both TxCC and ACE ran crews in Years 2 - 4. In April 2021, the RESTORE Council approved a new award and GulfCorps 2.0 launched in the fall of 2021. ACE exited the program after Year 4 and Student Conservation Association (SCA TX) set up a crew in Corpus Christi. These crews partner with federal, state, county and municipal agencies as well as local nonprofits to implement restoration and conservation projects throughout the Texas Gulf Coast. The work includes mapping and treating invasive plant species; planting native vegetation; participating in prescribed burns; and building and maintaining trails and boardwalks. Since the GulfCorps Program started, TxCC, ACE, and SCA-TX crews have impacted over 3,800 acres of coastal habitats on 27 project sites.



LOCATION Texas

INVESTMENT \$2.432 million over 8 years

PROGRAM PARTNERS The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Student Conservation Association (SCA), The Corps Network (TCN), The Ember Alliance (TEA)

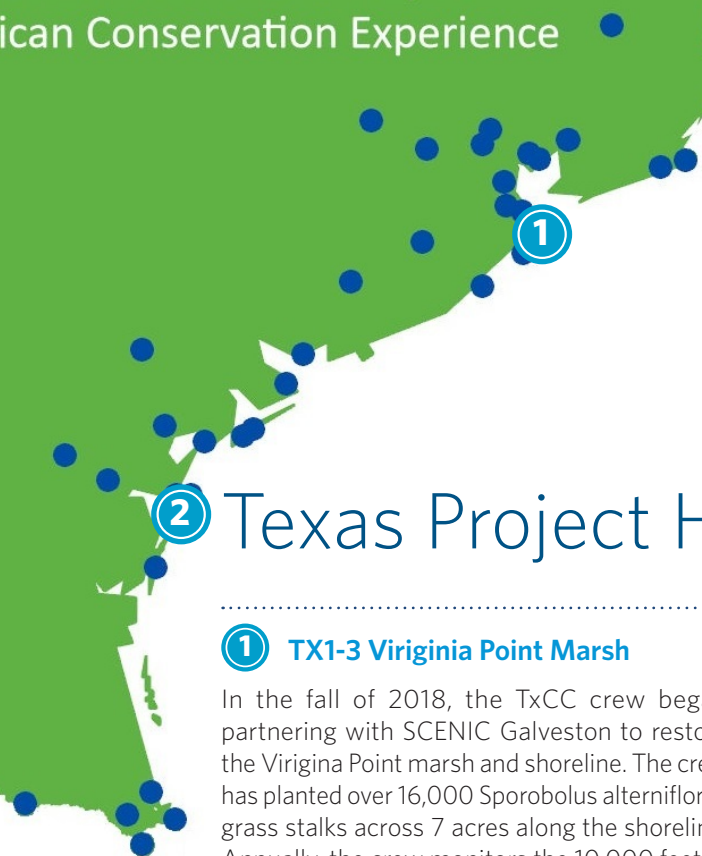
FUNDING AGENCIES Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (RESTORE), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

PROJECT DATES 2017 - 2025

This factsheet was prepared by The Nature Conservancy using federal funds under award number IA3CP21CM0001 from the RESTORE Council, and award number NA21NMF4630551 from the NOAA Restoration Center, U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA, the U.S. Department of Commerce, or the RESTORE Council.

TEXAS

Student Conservation Association,
Texas Conservation Corps &
American Conservation Experience



② Texas Project Highlights

① TX1-3 Virginia Point Marsh

In the fall of 2018, the TxCC crew began partnering with SCENIC Galveston to restore the Virginia Point marsh and shoreline. The crew has planted over 16,000 *Sporobolus alterniflorus* grass stalks across 7 acres along the shoreline. Annually, the crew monitors the 10,000 feet of shoreline to assess survival of the grasses and erosion. Crews have also removed invasive tallow trees across 13 acres of the inland marsh habitat. This has allowed for native trees to reemerge, which are important for migrating birds that often visit the marsh.



TxCC crew member Jari McCoy transplants grass at Virginia Point, Texas City, Texas, April 23, 2024. © Karrie Arnold/TNC

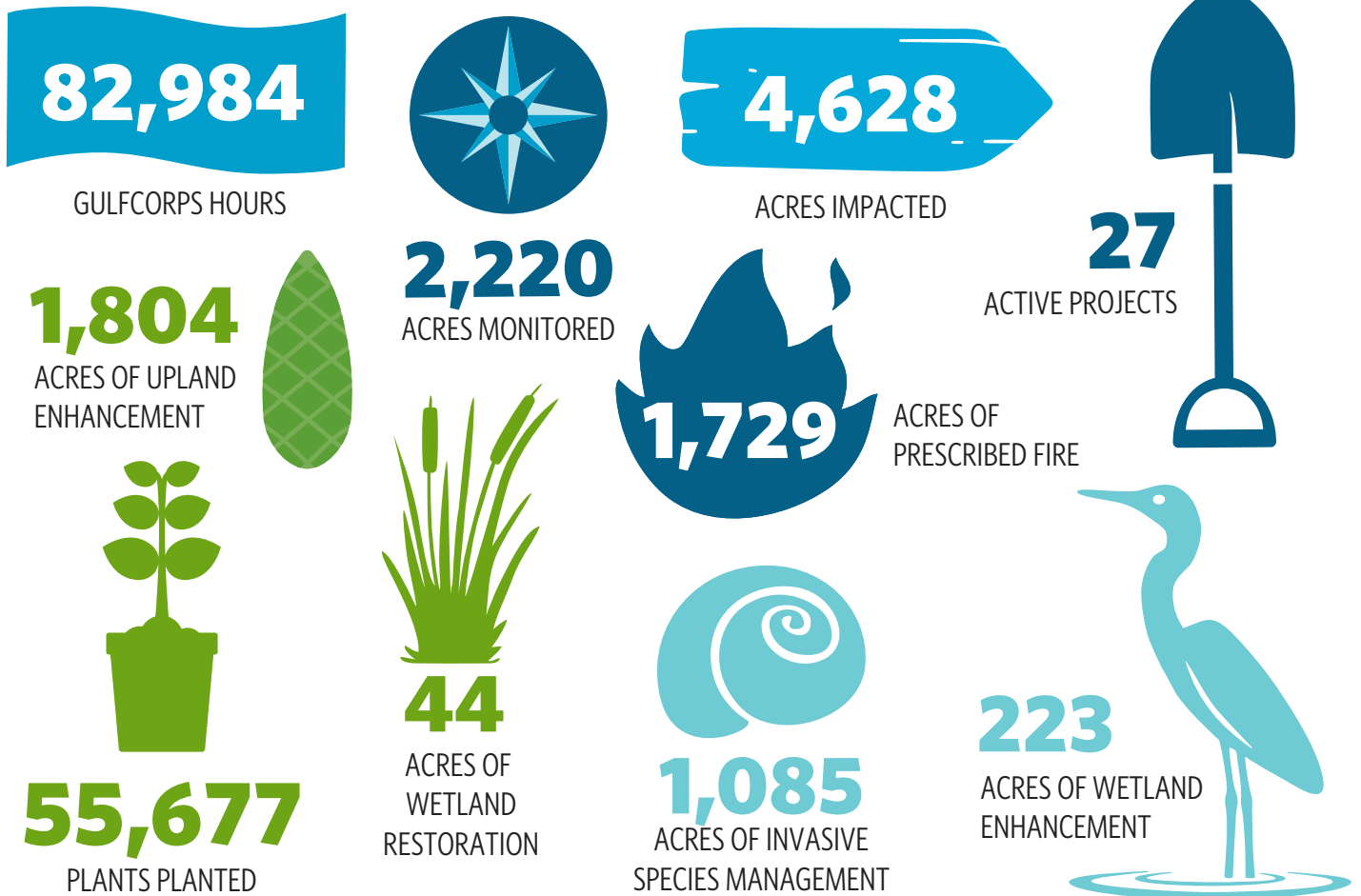
② TX2-1 Port Aransas Nature Preserve

GulfCorps crews have been partnering with the City of Port Aransas since fall of 2019. Both ACE and SCA crews have worked to control invasive species at the Clay's Hill property, annually treating and monitoring over 85 acres. As part of this management, crews have assisted in an 18-acre controlled burn and a mile of fire line preparation. These efforts are showing a decline in invasive populations allowing the crews to perform other activities including: planting 4.5 acres of native grasses and trees across several city properties, installing boundary signage along the 3,000-acre boundary of the nature preserve, and assembling and installing multiple viewing scopes at public observation decks.



SCA-TX members install a Hi-Spy Viewing Machine at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center in Charlie's Pasture at the City of Port Aransas Nature Preserve. © Port Aransas Nature Preserve staff

Texas by the Numbers



		As the COVID-19 pandemic began, the GulfCorps Program staff worked to ensure crews remained engaged by developing a virtual curriculum for members that they could use when they were unable to work in the field. Year 3 successfully ended in summer 2020.	Year 4 launched in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic with a virtual orientation and smaller crews. Despite these obstacles, staff and partners delivered an engaging experience for members via a virtual workforce development curriculum and in-person trainings at the corps level. In April 2021, the RESTORE Council approved a second \$11.9M award for GulfCorps to continue for an additional four years.	The second award for the GulfCorps program (GC2.0) launched in fall 2021. Crews remained smaller as the economy was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ember Alliance was added as a program partner and SCA created a crew in the Corpus Christi area after American Conservation Experience exited the program. Forty-nine members successfully completed the program during this challenging year.	Year 6 saw the return of in-person orientation with all corps and staff meeting up at Beckwith Camp and Conference Center in Fairhope, Alabama. Additionally, The Ember Alliance delivered a hybrid curriculum (online and in-person) of wildfire and chainsaw training to all crews. This year resulted in 53 standard graduates and the first All-Star graduate!	In Year 7, the program continued to build partnerships with community-based partners and Tribal entities. The crews monitored and/or restored 6,912 acres—the greatest number of acres than any other season. Additionally, TNC secured \$12M from NOAA's Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience grant program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. This funds 4 more years of GulfCorps work!
2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7
GulfCorps launched in 2017 when NOAA awarded a \$7 million grant to TNC for the creation of the program.	Year 2 started in September 2018 and doubled in size to two crews per state, each working for about 7 months. Year 2 ended in summer 2019.	In Year 3, 11 crews worked for 8-9 months —the biggest year, yet. Project partners included state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, local/municipal agencies, and academic institutions. TNC, SCA and TCN worked closely with NOAA to plan and execute sound conservation and restoration projects and to create a high-quality restoration workforce that had proven field experience.				

2017
YEAR 1
GulfCorps launched in 2017 when NOAA awarded a \$7 million grant to TNC for the creation of the program.

2018
YEAR 2
Year 2 started in September 2018 and doubled in size to two crews per state, each working for about 7 months. Year 2 ended in summer 2019.

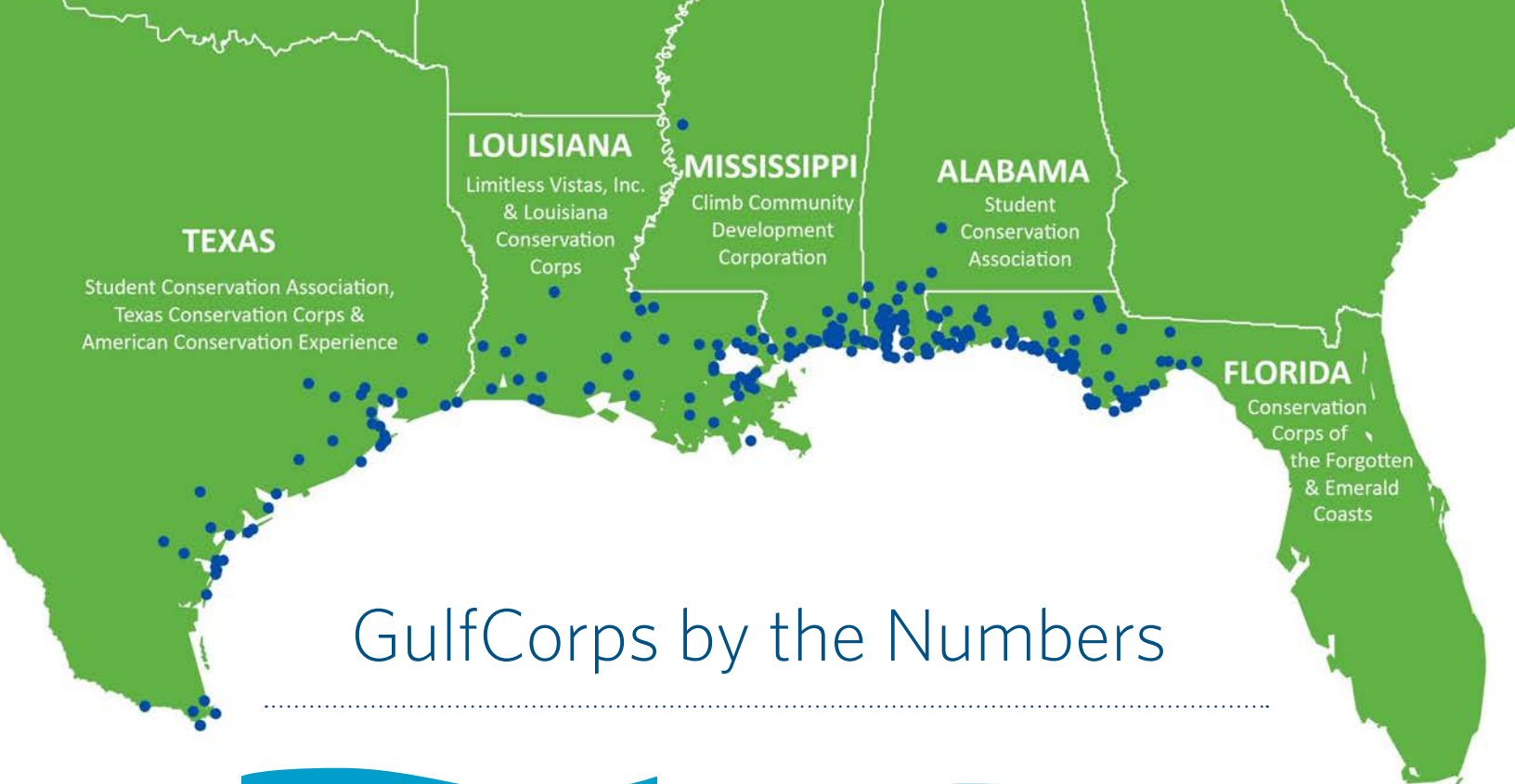
2019
YEAR 3
In Year 3, 11 crews worked for 8-9 months —the biggest year, yet. Project partners included state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, local/municipal agencies, and academic institutions. TNC, SCA and TCN worked closely with NOAA to plan and execute sound conservation and restoration projects and to create a high-quality restoration workforce that had proven field experience.

2020
YEAR 4

2021
YEAR 5

2022
YEAR 6

2023
YEAR 7



GulfCorps by the Numbers

529,248

TOTAL GULFCORPS HOURS

29,738

TOTAL ACRES IMPACTED



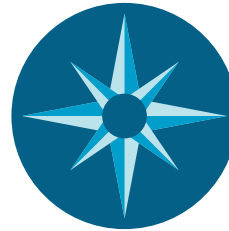
119,142

PAID TRAINING HOURS



188

ACRES OF WETLAND RESTORATION



20,404

ACRES BEING MONITORED



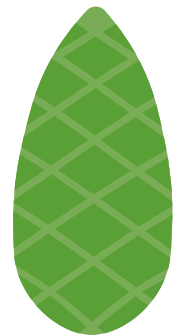
7,397

ACRES OF WETLAND ENHANCEMENT



3,121

ACRES OF INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT



12,759

ACRES OF UPLAND ENHANCEMENT



TxCC crew group photo during orientation at Beckwith Camp and Conference Center on September 18, 2023, Fairhope, Alabama. © Mike Dumas Image Arts

Texas Project Partners

During Years 1 – 7, TxCC, ACE, and SCA TX crews worked on meaningful coastal restoration projects under the direction of a range of federal, state, and community partners:

- Armand Bayou Nature Center
- Artist Boat
- Texas General Land Office and SCENIC Galveston
- Galveston Bay Foundation
- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- The Nature Conservancy in Texas
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Spread Oaks Ranch
- Coastal Prairie Conservancy
- Houston Parks Board
- Houston Audubon
- City of Port Aransas
- Mission Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service

Local Crews, Local Communities

At its heart, GulfCorps is about rebuilding the environment and local communities. This means working with and relying on organizations that know and are deeply rooted in the local communities GulfCorps is helping.

In the Houston/Galveston area, GulfCorps works with **Texas Conservation Corps**, part of American Youthworks. Established in 1975, AYW was founded with a mission to provide young people with opportunities to build careers, strengthen communities, and improve the environment through education, on-the-job training, and service to others. TxCC began in 1993 and includes the GulfCorps crew as well as other conservation crews, summer youth programs, and individual placements that provide job training and experience.

In the Corpus Christi area, GulfCorps worked with **American Conservation Experience (ACE)** in Years 2 – 4. ACE is a nonprofit organization formed in 2004 dedicated to providing rewarding environmental service opportunities that harness the idealism and energy of a volunteer force to help restore America’s public lands.

Beginning in 2021, the **Student Conservation Association** established a crew to continue the GulfCorps Program’s work in the Corpus Christi area. Founded in 1957, SCA’s mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of the environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land. SCA efforts in the Gulf of Mexico have included everglades restoration after Hurricane Andrew in 1992, sea turtle protection, and, more recently, helping the Gulf states recover from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in Texas and Alabama.

Member Highlights



© Mike Dumas Image Arts

Sarah Doty

SCA-TX member Sarah Doty gained hard skills through training such as S-212 Wildland Fire Chainsaws, Operating UTVs/ATVs, and Wilderness First Aid but said the Goals and Strategies sessions that are part of the Workforce Development curriculum really pushed her to do more than she might have done by herself. The cumulative effect of the training she received helped her secure a position as an intern at the New Mexico Wildlife Center in Española, NM, assisting rehabilitation staff working with injured and/or abandoned animals.



© Mike Dumas Image Arts

Angelina Gonzalez

TxCC member Angelina Gonzalez said finding her GulfCorps position was like finding her dream job: she could camp, be in the water, and do different things to gain experience. While she gained hard skills through training in Wilderness Remote First Aid and herbicide application, it was the communication skills she developed through working with the other crew members and project partners that stuck with her. Her combined experience, training, and background helped her land the crew supervisor position for the newly founded American Youthworks’ Asian American Pacific Islander Crew.



SCA-TX crew group photo during orientation at Beckwith Camp and Conference Center, Fairhope, Alabama, on September 18, 2023. © Michael Dumas Image Arts (MDIA)

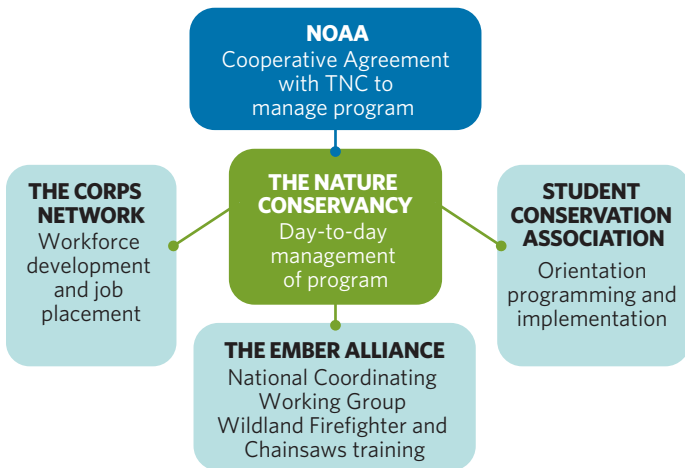
The GulfCorps Program Team

- NOAA Fisheries – Fiscal sponsor, environmental compliance, program advisor
- The Nature Conservancy – Program day-to-day operations, conservation and project planning, monitoring, implementation
- The Corps Network – Workforce development, member preparation to pursue careers in conservation and restoration, job placement, post-program tracking
- Student Conservation Association – Orientation programming and implementation
- The Ember Alliance – National Wildfire Coordinating Group Wildland Fire and Chainsaws training

Through this project, NOAA, TNC and partners are

- Providing support to local conservation corps that recruit young adults from their communities. These young adults want to better their communities through restoration and conservation work. GulfCorps aims to recruit 75% of each crew from Gulf Coast communities.
- Providing young adults with the highest quality training, including project-related training, industry-recognized certifications, and workforce development opportunities. This combination of training, work experience and professional development fuels placements in environmental jobs, internships, externships and post-secondary educational opportunities.
- Working with stakeholders to select restoration projects that address ecological impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and that are consistent with the RESTORE Act’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Monitoring progress over the course of the entire program to make certain the work is producing the desired environmental results.

Partner Roles



Sample Project Partners

US Fish and Wildlife Service (FL, AL, LA, MS, TX) National Forest Service (FL, LA, MS), National Park Service (FL, MS, LA, TX), National Estuarine Research Reserves (FL, AL, TX)

Florida – St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve, Escambia County, Northwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Alabama – Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Mobile County Environmental Services, South Alabama Land Trust, Forever Wild

Mississippi – Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, University of Southern Mississippi

Louisiana – City of New Orleans, Louisiana Office of State Parks, Woodlands Conservancy, Recreation & Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC)

Texas – Armand Bayou Nature Center, Galveston Bay Foundation, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Houston Parks Board, Houston Audubon, City of Port Aransas



For more information, contact:

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