COASTAL PROTECTION NEWSLETTER

July 2026

Texas Sites and Coastal Sights

The Turnbull Flamingo – Not a Case of Mistaken Identity

By: Kristin Hames, Texas General Land Office

American flamingo (Phoenicopterus ruber) feeds at dusk at the Turnbull Birding Center. There is no flamingo population in Texas, and no one knows where this bird came from.

The Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center in Port Aransas is a well-known birding hot spot with 348 bird species documented to date. Visitors can walk over the marsh on an elevated boardwalk, rest under the shaded observation towers, and watch wildlife using the spotting scopes. Avian residents in the marsh include endangered whooping cranes, overwintering waterfowl, and migrating warblers. Lately, visitors to the birding center have been doing a double-take regarding what appears to be an unusually large and disproportionate roseate spoonbill. With their hot pink wings, spatula shaped faces, and feeding strategies that resemble electronic dance party moves, roseate spoonbills are a common but treasured site on the Texas coast. However, this specific magenta bird seen at Turnbull is in fact an American Flamingo.

The origin of the Turnbull flamingo is debated. Where did it come from? Despite their name there are very few American Flamingos found in the United States, and there is no flamingo population in Texas. Established populations once existed in the Florida Keys, but those populations were extirpated during hunting activities in the 1800s. Was it blown in on the winds of a hurricane? American Flamingos live in the Caribbean and Galapagos Islands and these large, tough, birds could survive hurricane transport and be deposited in our wetlands relatively unharmed. Was it a zoo escapee? This is a popular theory, but there currently is no evidence to support it.

The flamingo has been seen randomly for the past several years at Turnbull. Port Aransas residents are very proud of their flamingo, and its activities are a hot topic of conversation. Where it's located in the marsh, when it goes missing for a while, when it's seen regularly, or even more mysteriously, when additional flamingos show up (as happened in 2023), the news makes a splash in the community. Birders travel from across Texas in hopes of seeing the misplaced flamingo. The flamingo seems quite content to forage in the marsh and ignore the birding paparazzi who can be found daily, telephoto lens in hand, hanging off the boardwalk to photograph the local celebrity.

If the flamingo is not in residence when you visit, don't despair! During the spring and summer months, you can find Black-necked Stilts and Common Gallinule nesting and raising their babies. Over the winter months, thousands of ducks flock to the marsh. An occasional alligator wanders through, though the previous alligator resident has been relocated. The panoramic views of marsh and flats are beautiful at sunrise and sunset – and remember to always keep an eye out for a stray flamingo! To plan your trip, visit: https://cityofportaransas.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/nature-preserve/birding-center/

Birders and photographers watching birds at the Turnbull Birding Center. The flamingo has been seen sporadically at Turnbull for the past several years

Federal Activities in Coastal Waters

Texas Deepwater Port News

By: Leslie Koza, Texas General Land Office

Texas has three pending, and two issued, deepwater port (DWP) license applications. All DWP applications are required to be consistent with the Texas Coastal Management Program, and the Texas Governor must approve or deny each Texas DWP application. The status for each DWP application is listed below.

Pending

Bluewater (Bluewater Texas Terminals, LLC):

Bluewater has applied to own, construct, and operate a DWP to export domestically produced crude oil approximately 15 nautical miles off the coast of San Patricio County. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published for public notice and comment October 28, 2021, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers public notice was published November 18, 2021. The supplemental DEIS was published January 23, 2026, and a public scoping meeting was held on February 3, 2026, in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Blue Marlin Onshore Port, LLC:

Blue Marlin Onshore Port (BMOP) has applied to develop the BMOP Project in the Gulf to provide crude oil transportation and loading services for crude oil produced in the continental United States. The project extends from Nederland, Texas to Cameron Parish, Louisiana. The application was deemed administratively complete on October 22, 2020, and two public scoping meetings were held on December 2, 2020, and December 3, 2020, for the communities of Cameron Parish, Louisiana and Jefferson County and Orange County, Texas.

The BMOP DEIS was published February 21, 2025, and public scoping meetings were held on March 11, 2025, in Louisiana and March 12, 2025, in Port Arthur, Texas. The Texas General Land Office (GLO) issued a concurrence October 17, 2025. The final hearing is expected to occur at end of August 2026. Additional information can be found at: www.bluemarlinnepaprocess.com

ST LNG:

ST LNG has applied to own, construct, and operate a DWP for the export of liquefied natural gas (LNG) approximately 10.4 nautical miles (19.2 kilometers) offshore Matagorda, Texas. Public scoping meetings were held on July 31, 2025, and May 6, 2026, in Bay City, Texas. The DEIS was published for a 45-day public notice and comment period on April 17, 2026.

License Issued

SPOT (Sea Port Oil Terminal, LLC):

SPOT applied to own, construct, and operate a DWP to export domestically produced crude oil approximately 27.2 to 30.8 nautical miles off the coast of Freeport. The GLO issued a conditional concurrence June 21, 2021. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published August 23, 2022. On August 31, 2022, Governor Abbott issued his approval for the issuance of the deepwater port license. On November 21, 2022, the Maritime Administrator issued the SPOT Record of Decision, with conditions. The Maritime Administrator signed the SPOT Terminal Services LLC Deepwater Port License April 8, 2024.

GulfLink (Texas GulfLink, LLC):

Gulflink applied to own, construct, and operate a DWP to export domestically produced crude oil approximately 26.6 nautical miles off the coast of Brazoria County. The GLO's conditional concurrence was issued April 13, 2023. The FEIS was published July 4, 2024. Governor Abbott issued his approval for the issuance of the deepwater port license on October 2, 2024. On February 14, 2025, the Maritime Administrator issued the GulfLink Record of Decision, with conditions. The Maritime Administrator signed the GulfLink Terminal Services LLC Deepwater Port License January 29, 2026. More information on the applications can be found at www.regulations.gov using the docket number in the table below.

DWP Applicant	Docket No MARAD-	Date Application Submitted to MARAD
SPOT (Sea Port Oil Terminal, LLC.)	2019-0011	1/31/2019
GulfLink (Texas GulfLink, LLC)	2019-0093	5/30/2019
Bluewater (Bluewater Texas Terminals, LLC)	2019-0094	5/30/2019
Blue Marlin Offshore Port, LLC (BMOP)	2020-0127	10/1/2020
ST LNG	2025-0096	6/9/2025

Breakwaters completed in 2010 show oyster growth on the left side of the breakwater and the buffering effects on wave energy to the right of the breakwater.

Living Shoreline Lowdown

Mad Island Living Shoreline Results in 6.7 miles of Protection

By: Kristin Hames, Texas General Land Office

The Mad Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Mad Island Preserve received GLO funding to construct nearshore breakwaters along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) shoreline. These rock rubble breakwaters provide substrate for oyster settlement and block wave action to protect valuable marsh and coastal prairie habitat. Early phases of the project were funded by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the GLO, and the National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF). In 2010, approximately 1.8 miles of breakwater was constructed along the eastern side of the WMA, followed by an additional 0.04 miles installed in 2018. In March 2026, Ducks Unlimited (DU) completed an additional 2.2 miles of breakwater in partnership with the GLO Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act (CEPRA) program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NFWF, and TPWD.

This summer, living shoreline construction will begin at the Mad Island Preserve, a property adjacent to the western side of the WMA and owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Approximately 2 miles of breakwater will be constructed by TNC, in partnership with the GLO CEPRA program. Kathy Sweezey, the TNC Coastal Restoration Project Director, is excited to see this project come to fruition to protect this critical wildlife habitat:

“The Mad Island Marsh Preserve contains highly endangered coastal prairie habitat that used to span across nine million acres between Texas and Louisiana. With only 2% of this habitat remaining today, it is important to protect and restore this land that provides a resting place for migratory birds, nursery habitat for commercially important fish, and recreational opportunities for coastal communities around Matagorda Bay. We’re excited for this project to hit the water this year and to continue to conserve this vital habitat for many years to come!”

Once this latest iteration of breakwater construction is complete, approximately 6.7 miles of continuous shoreline will be protected across the Mad Island WMA and the Mad Island Preserve. The two properties combined contain approximately 14,500 acres of coastal prairie, freshwater wetland, and salt marshes that serve as critical habitat to native Texas wildlife. This multi-year interagency coordination is an amazing example of large-scale coastal protection.

Newly constructed breakwaters completed in March 2026 protect the Mad Island WMA property.

Beach Dune Digest

Sand Dune Restoration Tips and Reminders

By: Michelle Leslie, Texas General Land Office

It's the time of year again when residents and visitors alike flock to Texas beaches to cool off from the summer heat. Unfortunately, summertime also means that we're in the middle of hurricane season. While the Atlantic hurricane season started on June 1 and runs through November 30, the season typically peaks in Texas in August and September, so there is still time to take proactive steps to prepare for possible storm events.

Coastal communities and property owners are encouraged to restore and enhance the dunes on Gulf beaches to help provide a protective barrier from waves and wind. Not only are sand dunes the best natural defense against storm surge and beach erosion, but they also serve as vital habitat for a diverse range of native plants and animals.

Dunes can be restored or enhanced through a variety of methods, although the most effective restoration method will depend on site conditions. In areas where there is sufficient sand supply, native vegetation or sand fencing can be used to accelerate sand accumulation. Planting dune vegetation should be the primary method of restoring dunes, as sand fencing is required to be removed once damaged or when restoration is completed. Where the local sand supply is insufficient, dunes can be artificially constructed using beach-quality sand from off-site. Native dune vegetation should also be planted to help stabilize the placed sand.

Native dune vegetation can help stabilize the dunes.

Additional recommendations for dune restoration methods are available in the GLO's Dune Protection and Improvement Manual for the Texas Gulf Coast. The Manual includes planting guidelines, information on where different species should be planted within the dune system, and further details on the protection dunes provide. The Manual is on the GLO's website: https://www.glo.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2026-01/Dune%20Protection%20Manual%20Sixth%20Edition%20Jan%202026.pdf

A Beachfront Construction Certificate and Dune Protection Permit is required to be obtained from the local government before beginning any dune restoration activities. If you have questions on dune restoration methods or permitting requirements, please contact Michelle Leslie (michelle.leslie@glo.texas.gov).

Not only are sand dunes the best natural defense against storm surge and beach erosion, but they also serve as vital habitat for a diverse range of native plants and animals.

Stories from the Surf

Karla Klay: Protecting the Gulf Coast

By: Jessica McKeehan, Texas General Land Office

Klay teaching art and science from a kayak. Artist Boat was founded to integrate art and science and to teach people about both in the coastal area.

Since 2008, Artist Boat, a nonprofit organization, has preserved 1,039 acres for the Coastal Heritage Preserve on West Galveston Island. And recently, the nonprofit pooled together enough funds to purchase an additional 204 acres for the preserve, with $8.2 million coming from the GLO. So, it was surprising to hear from Karla Klay, the founder and executive director of Artist Boat, that "it was never the plan to conserve land."

Klay started Artist Boat back in 2003 at the urging of her husband and a close friend. She had been teaching marine education through art as a contractor, and there was a high demand for her classes from both schools and nonprofits in the area. "There weren't many people integrating art and science 25 years ago," Klay said. Thus, Artist Boat was founded to integrate art and science and to teach people about both in the coastal area. The nonprofit was also created to help educate more people and encourage environmental conservation. Klay's background was well suited for this endeavor. She holds an art degree from Southern Methodist University (SMU) and a marine biology degree from Texas A&M University - Galveston. Klay also spent her childhood in the Florida Keys, seeing first-hand the importance of education and conservation through the work of her father, a famous shark biologist.

Thanks to her childhood along the Florida coast, Klay knew land acquisition was an effective way to protect and preserve property; however, when Klay moved to Galveston, she was surprised that no one was doing this on the island. "I would ask who conserves land, and the answer was 'no one'", she explained. It was clear that someone should be conserving land in this area, but Klay never thought it would be her. That changed in 2006, when the former Chapoton Ranch on West Galveston Island was sold to developers. The developer planned to construct more than 6,000 homes with boat access to the bay. "I called everyone I could think of to try to save the land," Klay said, "But they all gave a different reason why they weren't interested in conserving it." Finally, she reached out to the developer directly and he agreed to meet with her. Klay explained the importance of the land and how locals had been birding, fishing, paddling, and even hunting on the land for decades. At the end of the meeting, the developer agreed to sell the land to Klay for $16 million if she could come up with the funds. But he warned her, "If you fail, we will develop it".

Klay applied for grants and even got Galveston homeowner associations to fax so many letters of support to the Governor's office that they tried to turn off the fax machine at one point. "Governor Perry said that was the most faxes his office had ever received in support of a project," Klay said with a smile. Unfortunately, all the faxes didn't lead to Artist Boat receiving the grant. But Klay didn't lose hope. "I knew from my past that once you have an idea, it never works out right the first time. Usually, you have to go back and modify it," she explained. Eventually, Klay received a Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) grant that allowed Artist Boat to purchase its first 156 acres from the developer, and Klay has continued to fundraise to buy more acres ever since. To date, Arist Boat has closed 14 land transactions, with two more in progress.

Although Klay may not have started out to be a land conservationist, it's clear that she will continue to protect land whenever she can, and she is inspiring others to do the same along the way. "If you have a place you want to save, get started," Klay emphasized. "No one is coming behind you."

To learn more about the Coastal Heritage Preserve, visit: https://www.artistboat.org/coastal-heritage-preserve/

Oil Spill Spotlight

The GLO's Drone Program

By: D'Anne Stites, Texas General Land Office

Drone view of a spill containment (boom) inspection. Drone flights provide new vantage points to aid spill response while minimizing additional environmental disruption.

The GLO's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division initiated the GLO's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV or drone) program in 2019. The division has 14 Federal Avian Administration (FAA) Part 107-certified pilots, with at least two pilots in each of the five Oil Spill regions along the coast.

The program currently flies with six Skydio X10 systems equipped with a narrow field camera, telephoto camera, and a radiometric thermal sensor. This multi sensor configuration enables high precision detection of oil and spill sources, improved situational awareness during active spill events, and detailed documentation ability. For non-spill opportunities, such as media or derelict vessel turn-in events, the division uses a Skydio X2+.

GLO's Oil Spill uses the drones for oil spill assessments, boom deployments, situational awareness/live streaming to command or headquarters, storm response, shoreline assessments, offshore platform inspections, mapping (orthomosaics), and outreach.

Drone flights provide new vantage points to aid spill response while minimizing additional environmental disruption, reducing the need for access in sensitive areas and minimizing the response footprint. Responder safety is also improved.

The Oil Spill division assists other GLO programs, including conducting beach reclamation flights for Coastal Field Operations and ranch/open land inspection flights for the GLO's Asset Enhancement division.

Oil Spill's skilled pilots have also helped with other calls to action. In August 2025, the division was tasked with drone support to search for the remaining victims of the July 4th flooding along the Guadalupe River in Kerr County. The challenging operation involved dense terrain, submerged vehicles, large debris piles, snakes, insects, heat, and humidity. The Oil Spill drone team leader Austin Dulany and team member Marshall Hawkins walked the riverbed and bank areas, staring into tree cover to monitor the drone's flight and evaluating the view on an iPad. The thick canopy required precise flight, slow progress, and intense effort. Weather conditions caused the drones to overheat. Despite the physical and emotional toll, both Dulany and Hawkins stated they were proud to help and committed to future missions to assist communities and families.

Whether for environmental or disaster response, prevention efforts, or education, the Oil Spill drone program has proven to be an asset for the GLO and will continue to serve when called. For more information, email the Oil Spill Division at oilspills@glo.texas.gov.

Drone view of the rescue of the Buccaneer shrimp boat from Crystal Beach in May 2026. GLO's Oil Spill uses the drones to complete several tasks, including situational awareness/live streaming to command.

GLO staff at the 2026 Roundup. The event would not have been possible without all the help from volunteers.

The Deeper Dive

Coastal Roundup 2026: The Best Yet!

By: Julie McEntire, Texas General Land Office

The GLO hosted the 2026 Texas Coastal Roundup at East Beach (R.A. Apffel Park) in Galveston on Saturday, April 18. During this family-friendly event, more than 800 attendees enjoyed fun and educational exhibits from 48 organizations dedicated to coastal preservation.

Notable exhibits included Houston Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Wildlife Center of Texas' talk on birds of prey with three rescue birds, including an owl, hawk, and falcon, onsite, the Texana Center's exciting display of live snakes and an alligator and learning about the Archimedes' Principle of buoyancy at the Freese and Nichols Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering Inc. booth.

Beach enthusiasts also learned that the ocean water in Texas is more brown than blue due to naturally occurring sediment during demonstrations by Tetra Tech and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showcased a sea turtle carapace and several unique animal specimens and discussed coastal bird conservation. This event would not have been made possible without the helping hands of both GLO staff and the amazing Galveston Park Board team.

Houston SPCA Wildlife Center of Texas staff holds a rescue owl during a bird of prey talk

New Tools and Tech

CINDI: Protecting Texas Waterbird Habitat

By: Dr. Diana Del Angel, Harte Research Institute, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi

Each year, roughly 300,000 colonial waterbirds return to over 300 small islands in Texas bays to nest and raise their young. The Harte Research Institute is leading a five-year project known as Colony Island Network Design and Implementation (CINDI), funded by the NOAA RESTORE Science Program, to secure a future for these critical bird habitats in the face of threats from erosion and habitat loss.

The heart of the CINDI project is a science-based prioritization tool designed to help resource managers make strategic decisions about where to direct restoration resources. By combining ecological and social-economic data—like island traits, foraging habitat, breeding productivity, cost, and human disturbance—with the expertise of on-the-ground managers, this tool maximizes the conservation benefit of every restoration dollar. In doing so, it will help ensure healthier bird populations and a more resilient coastline.

Recent research by the CINDI team reports that between 1995 and 2018, the majority of Texas colony islands lost ground. Using aerial imagery, researchers measured habitat changes at 300 islands, discovering that 88% lost some of their elevated, or "supratidal," habitat during that period. Bare ground for nesting shrank by about 2.5% per year, while vegetated nesting areas declined by 1.6% per year. For

Deadman rookery island located in Aransas Bay. The island is one of the many Texas colony islands that lost ground between 1995 to 2018. Photo credit: Katie Swanson, Mission-Aransas NERR Manager

Texas colonial waterbirds, these losses matter—fewer safe places to nest means smaller and less stable populations. With millions invested annually in coastal restoration, tools like CINDI's prioritization model are critical for turning effort into impact. By arming decision-makers with robust, up-to-date information on which islands are shrinking fastest and which provide the greatest benefit to wildlife, CINDI is poised to transform waterbird conservation along the coast.

The project will be completed in December of 2027, but data is being published as it becomes available. Visit the CINDI website at www.birdislands.org to learn more or join the project listserv. Direct inquiries can be sent to Diana Del Angel at Diana.delangel@tamucc.edu.

Reddish egrets are one of many species of colonial waterbirds that nest on rookery islands.

Cabins managed by the GLO's Cabin Program. These cabins are usually located on small islands or shell outcroppings in the bays.

Notes from the Field Office

The GLO's Cabin Program

By: Erin Mueller, Texas General Land Office

Unique to Texas, the GLO's Cabin Program manages boat-only accessible fishing cabins along the Texas coast. There are 402 state-owned cabins located in nine coastal Texas counties. Cabin sites are permitted to individuals and have a long history with the State of Texas. Many cabin sites have been in use since the early 1900s and have provided recreational enjoyment for multiple generations of Texas fishermen and coastal enthusiasts. These cabins were usually built on small islands or shell outcroppings in the bays.

In 1949, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completed the dredging of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) to provide safe shipping access from Corpus Christi to Brownsville. New land was created from the dredged spoils all along the edge of the GIWW. The number of cabins increased as people began building on these new spoil islands. In 1973, the Texas Legislature enacted Chapter 33 of the Texas Natural Resources Code, and charged the School Land Board (Board), acting through the GLO, with the management of these cabins.

Today, cabin permits are issued to permit holders for 5-year terms for recreation purposes only. At the end of the 5-year term, the cabin permit holder may apply for renewal if the cabin structures follow all guidelines and rules. Alternatively, cabin permit holders may apply for a transfer of their permit to another interested party. Permit holders may also apply for amendments to their cabin structures at any time in the permitted term. Final approval is required by the Board for cabin amendments and transfers.

GLO Coastal Field Operations staff conduct all coordination, inspections, reporting, tracking, and management for the Cabin Program. Staff works with permit holders on proposed modifications or rebuilds following coastal storm events, to ensure compliance and to minimize impacts on natural resources, such as seagrass. Additionally, multiple removal projects have been completed in the bays to address debris and derelict structures. The GLO continues to work with agencies, nonprofit organizations, and cabin permit holders to ensure a successful and environmentally conscious program.

Permit holders act as stewards of the coast, often contacting the GLO to report issues or concerns in the bays. Through this partnership, the Cabin Program remains a prominent program within the GLO. Today, the GLO continues to proactively manage the Cabin Program with existing staff and resources, serving permit holders in a timely and efficient manner, and balancing the needs of permit holders and those of natural resources.

To learn more about the Cabin Program, visit https://www.glo.texas.gov/coastal/coastal-leasing-easements

Natural Resource Damage Assessment Program

Texas TIG Restoration Successes

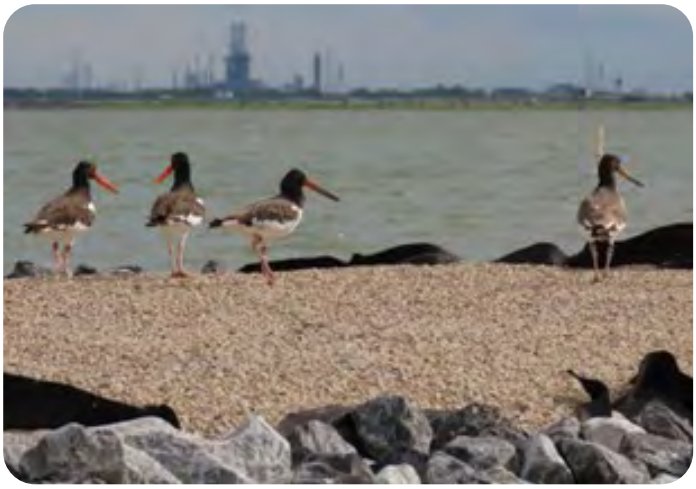
By: Tara Whittle, Texas General Land Office

On February 25, 2026, the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) Texas Trustee Implementation Group (TIG) had its annual public meeting in Galveston. These meetings are held every year to provide updates on planning and restoration efforts in the Texas Restoration Area. To date, the Texas TIG has completed 11 projects, resulting in 4,827 acres of preserved habitat, ~270,000 cubic yards of dredge material used to restore marsh, ~20,000 linear feet of breakwater constructed, and 14+ miles of beach nourishment. Public engagement remains a core component of Trustee efforts. Texas TIG restoration work was recently highlighted at the State of the Bay Symposium (Galveston, TX) and GulfCon (Mobile, AL).

In January 2026, over 1,000 cold-stunned sea turtles were rescued along the Texas coast after air temperatures dropped to 27°F. The rescue and recovery operation lasted several days and spanned the coast from Galveston to South Padre Island. This coordinated effort was part of the Sea Turtle Early Restoration Project, funded by the DWH Natural Resource Damage Assessment settlement. Learn more about Texas TIG projects online at: https://gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/texas

Additionally, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has created an ArcGIS Story Map showcasing completed non-DWH Natural Resource Damage Assessment restoration projects. The map features both Texas coastal and inland projects, from dune creation at the Mustang Island State Park to habitat restoration in Gainesville. View the Story Map at https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/0fccdb6f5f9d455885febe41f338fb0f

Over 1,000 cold-stunned sea turtles were rescued along the Texas coast as part of the Sea Turtle Early Restoration Project, funded by the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment settlement.



To date, the Texas Trustee Implementation Group (TIG) has completed 11 projects, resulting in roughly 20,000 linear feet of breakwater constructed.

Congratulations to our CMP Cycle 31 NOAA Funds Award Recipients!

- **Bejarano McFarland Memorial Park Living Shoreline Protection**
  Cameron County
- **Extent, Causes and Effects of Coastal OSSF Failures**
  Texas A&M University
- **Galveston Bay Foundation Oyster Shell Recycling Program & Citizen Science**
  Galveston Bay Foundation
- **Identification of Critical Source Areas for Nonpoint Pollution to Caney Creek**
  University of Texas at Arlington
- **Integrated Ecosystem Modeling for South Texas Nonpoint Pollution**
  University of Texas- Rio Grande Valley
- **Modeling OSSF Maintenance Behaviors to Inform Policy & Program Intervention**
  Texas A&M University - AgriLife Extension Service
- **Monitoring and Modeling of Nonpoint Source Pollution in Oso Creek and Bay**
  Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi
- **Reduce Bacteria Loading from OSSFs in Sabine River Watershed**
  Lamar University
- **Texas High School Coastal Monitoring Program**
  University of Texas at Austin
- **ADA Beach Access Engineering**
  City of South Padre Island
- **IOB Pocket Park**
  City of Ingleside on the Bay

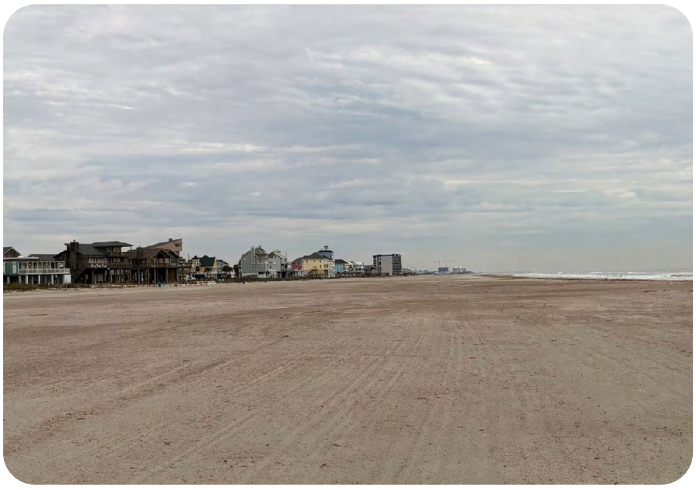
Keeping up with CEPRA

CAP 204 West Galveston Beach Nourishment Complete

By: Carver Wray, Texas General Land Office

The GLO, the City of Galveston, and the Galveston Park Board partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to oversee the placement of Beneficial Use of Dredge Material (BUDM) beach quality sand at West Galveston Beach. The project used sand dredged from the Galveston Ship Channel to nourish 1.83 miles of beach from 11-Mile Road to Sunbather Lane. Approximately 717,000 cubic yards of material was placed to help the project area that experiences approximately 6.86 feet of erosion per year. The project was completed December 22, 2025. Contact Carver Wray, CEPRA project manager, with questions on this project (carver.wray@glo.texas.gov).

The GLO, the City of Galveston, and the Galveston Park Board partnered with the US Army Corps of Engineers to oversee the placement of Beneficial Use of Dredge Material beach quality sand.



The project nourished 1 mile of beach, from approximately John Reynolds Road to Sunbather Lane. This area has an erosion rate of approximately 6.86 feet per year.

Clean Coast Texas Corner

Clean Coast Texas Partners with Coastal Towns

By: Ryan Ono, Texas General Land Office

The Clean Coast Texas Collaborative helped install a rain garden at the Keach Family Library in Robstown. Green stormwater infrastructure project design and construction are one of the many services the Collaborative assists coastal communities with.

Clean Coast Texas (CCT) is the Texas General Land Office's non-regulatory initiative to support thriving economies, and healthy ecosystems within the Texas coastal zone by providing stormwater management and water quality expertise to communities interested in its free services.

These services include assistance with stormwater drainage planning, engineering, design, and construction of demonstration-scale green stormwater infrastructure projects, community outreach and engagement, water quality monitoring, grant writing assistance, marine debris reduction, and wastewater treatment plant enhancements in the Coastal Bend region.

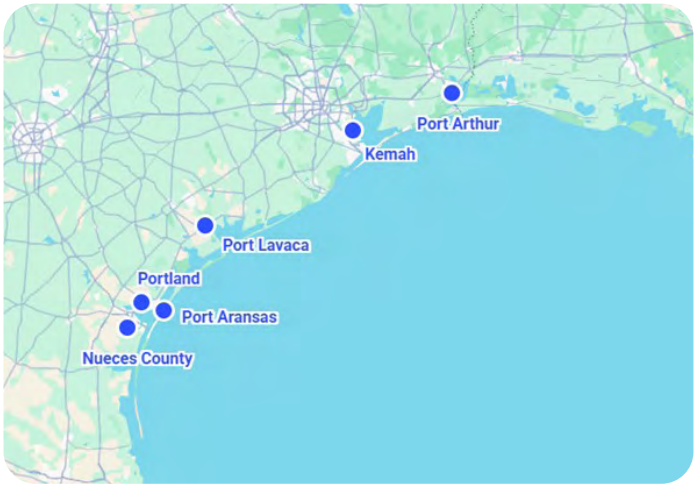
Much of this work is carried out via the CCT Collaborative, led by Texas A&M University's Harte Research Institute, and its partners. Over the course of the past six years, the Collaborative has worked with many coastal communities up and down the coast on short- and long-term projects. Some have formalized this working relationship with the CCT Collaborative through Memorandums of Understanding. Most recently, Port Arthur and Port Aransas have joined Kemah, Port Lavaca, Portland, and Nueces County in committing to improve local water quality and coastal resilience in ways tailored to their unique needs.

In the City of Rockport, the Collaborative is helping restore Tule Creek to a more natural state and redirect stormwater runoff away from Little Bay's sensitive seagrass meadows. Improving runoff and water quality supports long-term recreational opportunities such as swimming, boating, fishing, and birding—benefits that strengthen both community wellbeing and local tourism.

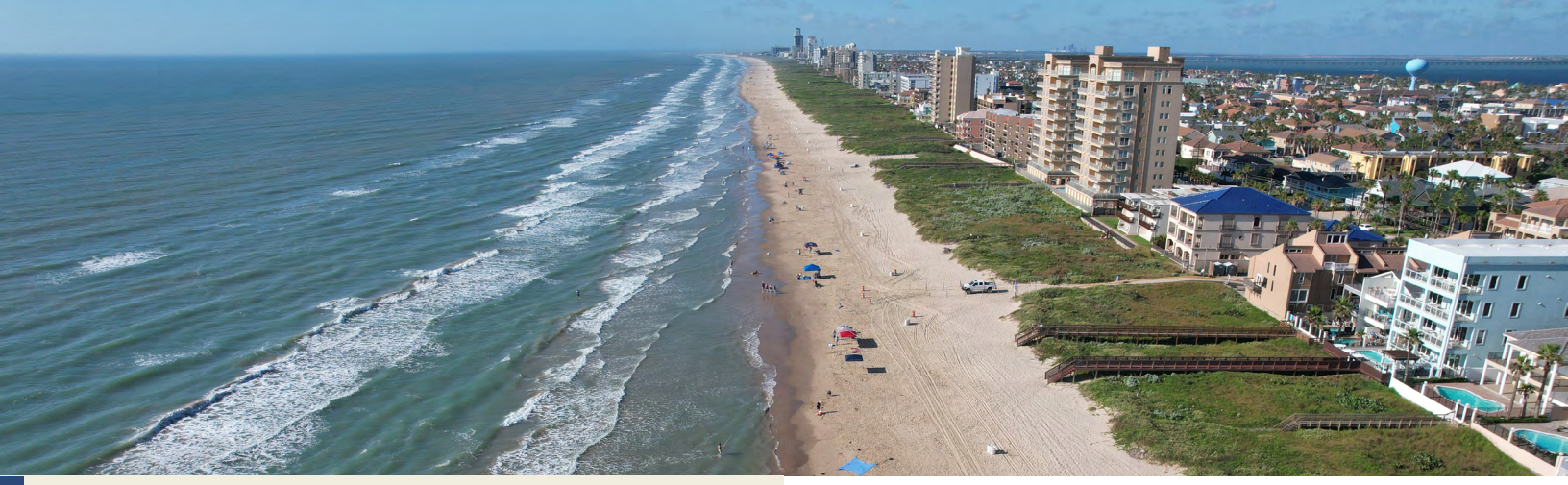
The City of Port Arthur has requested wetland habitat restoration assistance at an old golf course from the Collaborative. After the local Palms at Pleasure Island Golf Course suffered damage from Hurricanes Rita and Ike, forcing it to close, the golf course fell into further disrepair. Now, fifteen years later, the City is seeking to convert the site along Sabine Lake into a nature center complete with walking trails.

Across the coast, the Collaborative is reviewing municipal stormwater management codes and ordinances for new and retrofit development work to help communities update their standards for better water quality outcomes.

Each participating community has unique stormwater challenges, water quality concerns, flood mitigation priorities, outreach strategies, and funding needs. The CCT Collaborative provides tailored support in each of these areas. A full list of these services can be found at http://www.cleancoast.texas.gov/coastal/clean-coast-texas



Map of existing Clean Coast Texas Collaborative Memorandums of Understanding. The Collaborative helps communities improve local water quality and coastal resilience in ways tailored to their unique needs.



South Padre Island shoreline, which is included in the Coastal Texas Project's measure "South Padre Island Beach Nourishment and Sediment Management".

Eyes on the Horizon

Forward Motion for Coastal Texas: Funding and Design Milestones

By: Sarah Purdon, Texas General Land Office

The Coastal Texas Project continues to build momentum as new federal funding developments and ongoing state-supported design work advance this landmark coastal resilience effort. Recent actions at the federal level, including a $1.75 million inclusion in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Work Plan Budget and a $5 million appropriation in the FY 2026 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, provide important support for the project's planning and design. In addition, Congressman Randy Weber has submitted a $10.6 million request through the FY 2027 Energy and Water Development appropriations process to further advance design activities.

These federal actions help ensure technical and coordination work can continue while larger construction funding is considered. These appropriations enable the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to maintain planning, environmental reviews, and pre-construction engineering and design across multiple project features.

At the state level, the GLO remains a central partner in advancing project implementation. To date, the State of Texas, through the CEPRA program, has contributed $138 million toward the Coastal Texas Project, supporting ecosystem restoration, beaches and dunes work, and early design. Within that total, the GLO directed approximately $50 million towards GLO-sponsored Coastal Texas ecosystem restoration footprints, allowing progress to continue ahead of federal appropriations. Specifically, the Coastal Texas "G28-1" breakwater segment is nearing final design, and work on measure "M8-1" is progressing toward completion through a coordinated effort among the GLO, USACE, Texas Department of Transportation, the Matagorda Bay Foundation, and the Bay City Port Authority. The GLO is also moving forward with feasibility and design for the CA5 project, ensuring restoration opportunities within the system remain aligned with long-term Coastal Texas objectives. The agency is also preparing a legislative funding request to continue support for future ecosystem restoration efforts.

The Gulf Coast Protection District (GCPD) is likewise making accelerated progress on major features, including the Bolivar Roads and Gate System, and the Bolivar and West Galveston Beach and Dune System. These efforts are supported by new scientific and stakeholder engagement structures, including the Coastal Texas Research Council, established through the Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas at Texas A&M University, and two Stakeholder Advisory Committees focused on environmental and maritime considerations. In addition, GCPD recently executed engineering design contracts with Jacobs and HDR, marking a major step in moving the project's largest components from concept into detailed design.

Together, these state and federal efforts highlight continued, meaningful progress toward long-term coastal protection, ecosystem restoration, and risk reduction for communities and infrastructure across the Texas coast.

To learn more about Coastal Texas, visit https://coastaltexasproject.com/

Keller Bay, the location of the "CA5 project". The GLO is moving forward with feasibility and design for this project.

Texas Beach Watch Box

A Remarkable Start to the Season

By: Lucy Flores, Texas General Land Office

Texas Beach Watch sign at the beach. Look for advisory signs along the beach or at beach access points or sign up for notification emails for the latest bacteria levels at your favorite beach.

Beach season is officially underway, and as we look back on 2025, Texas beaches are cleaner and healthier than ever. In 2025, Texas Beach Watch (TBW) collected 7,871 water quality samples along the Texas coast, providing beachgoers with timely information about water quality. Last year, 401 beach advisories were issued, a 25.4% decrease from 2024, reflecting continued improvements in coastal water quality and the strength of long term monitoring efforts.

TBW's success is built on collaboration with local governments, academic partners, and coastal organizations. Together, these partnerships ensure consistent sampling, reliable data, and clear communication with the public.

The 2026 beach season opened with an unforgettable moment: a Kemp's ridley sea turtle, the world's most endangered sea turtle, nested on South Padre Island during a TBW field review. TBW staff immediately contacted the Sea Turtle Hotline, and Dr. Amy Bonka from Sea Turtle Inc. arrived to document the nest and collect valuable biological data. Encounters like this highlight the deep connection between healthy beaches, wildlife conservation, and the work TBW does every day.

This early-season encounter was more than a memorable moment; it was a reminder that every water sample collected and every advisory issued contributes to the health of the coastline. The connection between daily monitoring and long term conservation is a powerful reminder of why coastal stewardship matters. With continued monitoring and community support, Texas beaches will remain safe, healthy, and vibrant for everyone who enjoys them, including the wildlife that calls them home.

As the 2026 season continues, TBW encourages beachgoers to visit www.TexasBeachWatch.com for the latest bacteria levels at their favorite beach. Look for advisory signs along the beach or at beach access points or sign up for notification emails for the latest results. Protecting our coast starts with simple actions like picking up after your pets and disposing of trash properly. A clean shoreline keeps our waters healthy, our wildlife safe, and our beaches enjoyable for everyone. Let's all do our part and respect Texas beaches.

Texas Beach Watch (TBW) staff observed a nesting Kemp's ridley sea turtle on South Padre Island during a field review. Encounters like this highlight the deep connection between healthy beaches, wildlife conservation, and the work TBW does every day.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Restore America's Estuaries- 2026 Coastal & Estuarine Summit**
  September 22-25, 2026
  San Francisco, CA
  https://estuaries.org/2026summit/

- **American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) - National Coastal Conference 2026**
  October 5-8, 2026
  Atlantic City, NJ
  https://asbpa.org/asbpa-national-coastal-conference-2026/

- **Water for Texas**
  January 25-27, 2027
  Austin, TX
  https://waterfortexas.twdb.texas.gov/2027/

- **CMP – CEPRA Funding Opportunity Workshops**
  Early spring 2027
  Coastwide