

Texas Environmental Grantmakers Group
Fall Meeting - September 30, 2016
The Texas Landscape Project
Wray Ranch
Columbus, TX

Present: Judith Boyce, Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation; Jan Cato, SK Foundation; Adrienne Clay, Philanthropy Southwest; Colleen Claybourn, The Trull Foundation; Cullen Hanks, Malcolm C. Damuth Foundation; Lisa Harrison, The Trull Foundation; Richard Heilbrun, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department; Cara Herlin, The Trull Foundation; Julie Herman, The Edward and Helen Oppenheimer Foundation; Michael McCoy, The Meadows Foundation; Mary Milby, George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation; Deborah Mueller, Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation; Jonathan Ogren, Siglo Group; Cindy Raab, Shield-Ayres Foundation; Ellen Ray, Still Water Foundation; Caroline Sabin, The Powell Foundation; Kathryn Smyth, The Dixon Water Foundation; David Tod, Conservation History Association of Texas; Cathy Wakefield, The Trull Foundation; Lucja White, The Trull Foundation

Speaker Presentations:

Jan Cato welcomed the group and thanked host Lucie Wray Todd. She introduced presenters David Todd, who has an A.B. in architecture and urban planning from Princeton University, a M.S. in environmental science from Rice University, and a J.D. in law from Emory. David was responsible for the data collection, text, drawings and draft maps used in *The Texas Landscape Project*. Jonathan Ogren, is a lecturer in the Community and Regional Planning Department at the University of Texas where he earned a B.A. in biology and a M.A. in environmental science and conservation planning. Jonathan reviewed and analyzed the geographic and time-series data, and developed the finished maps and charts for the atlas.

David stated that since *The Texas Landscape Project* was a project about place that he would begin by talking about the place we were meeting. The building was formerly Columbus's railroad depot. Columbus was formed in 1823 in Colorado County, known as the city of Live Oaks and live folks. The Wray Ranch property encompasses 900 acres. It was purchased in 1949 as a beef cattle operation, two years prior to the great drought which began in 1951 and lasted 6 or 7 years. The environmental problem of the day was overgrazing, and the drain on the land due to cotton and watermelon crops. As a result, there was not much grass, and no organic content left in the soil. To correct, people started planting grass and ground cover. They worked with Charlie Kearney to bring back coastal bermudagrass, which was an exotic and invasive species requiring irrigation and fertilization.

The cattle are Brangus, 1/8 Brahman and 7/8 Angus. There are 90 cows, 80 calves and 6 or 7 bulls. In the 90's, they began using the first cross fencing with intensive rotation of the herd. There were originally 4 pastures, now 15. The herd is moved weekly to mimic the former grazing by bison to allow the grass to replenish.

An effort has been made to replant native grasses. They've tried bluestem, grasses from Attwater Chicken Refuge. The Todd family worked with Irene Spurier using round bales of native prairie grasses which are then rolled out on the land. The first step has been to kill the invasive species. They did a mapping of the property about six or seven year ago with Jonathan Ogren which gave them a bird's-eye view of the ranch to help keep the big picture in mind, quoting John Muir "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything in the Universe."

The depot was built in 1880 and was located 2 miles from its current location. It was in service until 1960 when Southern Pacific ended service. Charlie Stewart who worked for David's grandparents put a bid on the property in 1963 or '64 when it went up for auction for the amount which equaled his weekly pay check. He was the only bidder. He gave the building to the Todds who had it cut in two to be moved to the property.

The atlas was preceded by David's work with the Texas Environmental Grantmakers Group which he enjoyed for the opportunity to capture the knowledge of other funders. From 1997 to 2010, he conducted oral history interviews of Texans efforts to safeguard the places they hold dear which resulted in *The Texas Legacy Project*, a book published in 2010 with 60 excerpts from 230 interviews. With the question of "What Next" David pitched the idea of visual images instead of audio – relying on government data with assembled maps. With that, David asked Jonathan to speak about the maps.

Jonathan began by saying that the atlas was a move from oral stories to an exercise in visual storytelling. The idea being to give a clear, graphic look at the environmental history of the state. The maps show a spatial relationship so that we might understand our own dimensions of space better. The maps display statewide issues, focused on 40 different issues in 6 categories -- those being land, water, wildlife, built environment, energy and air. Jonathan and David found good data to explain environmental story through visuals, both positive and negative.

The atlas focuses on environmental issues that affect the entire state of Texas. Interwoven throughout, the Project touches on many questions of public health, environmental justice, politics and economics. David and Jonathan shared a snapshot of some of the issues with maps presented, and the story they tell

Maps on How we use the land

Maps include a slate of natural resources, ecoregions, climate patterns, and how we have historically inhabited the land as compared to now. The oldest being a depiction of lost springs and old trails. Based on research done over 35 years between the 1950s to the 1980s, the lost springs and old trails map documents early settlers recollections back to the 19th century of locations of springs throughout Texas. There used to be between 2,000 to 4,000 springs of which 420 have been lost due to overgrazing and loss of grasses. The springs allowed for people to settle, particularly in the west. Without the springs, particularly in West Texas, some areas would not have been settled. This section includes

a tongue-in-cheek map of service stations in West Texas and the Panhandle where travelers now stop for refreshment on their journeys.

The Changing Texas Night Sky 1992 – 2010

Two sets of satellite data with images taken at night show which places were brighter or darker. The map shows light pollution as the result of development over time, thus the loss of the night sky. The legislature has made attempts to limit light pollution around two observatories and Air Force training in San Antonio and has put limits on light pollution. The Hill Country Alliance is working on light pollution issues. Small map shows where volunteers metering light levels.

Sprawl in Texas

In the June 2016 issue of *Texas Monthly*, David and Jonathan had a brief article about the April floods in Houston in which they use one of the maps which drew from 2010 census data and demonstrated how the expansion of suburbs to the Northwest of the city had contributed to the rain event.

Texas Wind Power

Shows how in one recent day 40 to 50% of the state's energy needs were met by wind. This information could be used to encourage public policy allowing transfer of energy from west to east. Unfortunately, eminent domain often results in "planning with crayons" along straight lines instead of using the natural corridors which various maps in the book depict.

In wrapping up, David stated that now that the book exists, the questions which it prompts can direct where we go next. He asked the group how the information in the book might be of use to funders. He suggested that when the group receives applications that the data might help focus how to maximize impact based on knowledge from the data. He stated that the people who care are in the minority, so he encouraged the group to hone their "elevator speeches", to think about how we tell our stories, using data in the story and how grantees might create a more compelling story using the data.

Jan concluded the presentations with a thank you to Lucie -- recently honored by Houston Audubon -- with the presentation of a beautiful, brightly colored scarf with images of birds.

Over lunch, wildlife biologist Richard Heilbrun from San Antonio Texas Parks & Wildlife Department outlined House Bill H.R. 5650 "Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2016." If passed, the bill is a potential game changer for wildlife preservation and for the thousands of businesses and organizations that care about natural resources.

HR 5650 would allocate \$1.3 billion annually from existing revenue sources to effectively implement all 50 states Wildlife Action Plans. Collectively, these plans identify and provide a roadmap to recover more than 12,000 nationally imperiled species, called Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Of these funds, Texas would be eligible to

receive between \$50 to \$64 million annually as a three-to-one match.

H.R. 5650 was introduced as a “marker bill” to begin a national conversation. The bill will be re-introduced in Spring of 2017, possibly with a new bill number and title. At that time the legislature will have 20 - 22 months to consider and vote on the bill. It currently has bi-partisan support. TPWD is seeking opportunities to educate the public regarding this important legislation.

TEGG Business Meeting

TEGG Member Updates:

Ellen Ray shared that the **Still Water Foundation** had made a grant to launch a nature pre-k program at Cibolo Farm Project, and a million dollar grant to the Hill Country Conservancy (HCC) and \$250,000 grant to wrap up funding for the HCC’s Violet Crown Trail.

Judy Boyce and **Deborah Muller** with the **Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation** discussed their involvement with advocacy grant making. They were recently involved in a legal dispute regarding Hershey Ranch in Stonewall, Texas -- a 1,500-acre ranch protected by a conservation easement held by the Hill Country Land Trust. The Lower Colorado River Authority proposed to construct a large electrical transmission line across the property. After two years and the use of various interveners a route was finally chosen to move the project to the property line. With their advocacy efforts, the Foundation hopes to change the law at the state level so that easements could no longer be threatened by eminent domain.

Jan Cato with the **S.K. Foundation** had no grants to report but received a round of applause as thanks for helping organize the meeting and for providing lunch.

Julie Herman stated that the **Oppenheimer Foundation** has made recent grants to Legacy Land Trust, Katy Prairie, Galveston Bay Foundation and Artist Boat.

Cullen Hanks shared that the **Damuth Foundation** primarily grants for land endowments. Recent funding has included the acquisition of Powderhorn Ranch, the Balcones National Wildlife Refuge, Trust for Public Lands, Cibolo Nature Center, Sawtooth Mountain in the Davis Mountains and Gordy Marsh.

Cindy Raab offered the following highlights of the **Shield-Ayres Foundation’s** June 2016 grants cycle. The Foundation makes environmental grants in the areas of education, conservation and advocacy:

- **A Rocha USA**, to develop environmental education materials and activities for use by church communities
- **American Youthworks**, to support the Gulf Coast expansion of the Texas Conservation Corps (TxCC) which provides young adults with workforce training in disaster response, conservation, and coastal habitat restoration

- **Austin Youth River Watch**, to support youth programming that pairs environmental stewardship activities with drop-out prevention and mentoring
- **Barton Springs Conservancy**, to support rehabilitation of the Barton Springs Bathhouse and creation of an education/visitors center for Zilker Park
- **Cibolo Nature Center & Farm**, to support environmental education programming
- **Families in Nature**, to provide outdoor experiences and environmental education activities to underserved communities
- **Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance**, to provide technical assistance aimed at conservation and sustainable management of the Edwards and Trinity aquifer ecosystems
- **National Wildlife Federatin (NWF)**, to support the Texas Living Waters Project, a joint project of the NWF, the Sierra Club and the Galveston Bay Foundation, which provides legal, technical, and policy expertise to conserve and protect spring and river flows
- **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**, to support water-quality monitoring on TNC's West Texas preserves
- **Save Barton Creek Association**, to support production of additional segments of 'Living Springs,' a documentary series about Barton Springs

Kathy Smyth explained that the **Dixon Water Foundation** supports conservation and whole management ranches. It has demo ranches around Marfa where the cattle are raised using holistic methods and are grass-finished. The Foundation makes environmental grants in the areas of water, ranching and education. Recent grants have been made to

- **Sul Ros University Sustainable Ranching Program**
- **Katy Prairie Conservancy**
- **Nature Conservancy of Texas**
- **Texas A&M Agrilife**
- **North Central Texas College**
- **Keystone Conservation in Montana**
- **Connemar Conservancy**

Mary Milby reported that the **Hamman Foundation** grants in the areas of conservation and ecology. Recent grants have been made to

- **Audubon Texas**
- **Bayou Land Conservancy – Deer Park Prairie**
- **Galveston Bay Foundation**
- **Gulf Coast Bird Observatory**
- **Herman Park Conservancy**
- **Houston Audubon Society**
- **Houston Parks Board**
- **Memorial Park Conservancy, Inc.**
- **The Nature Conservancy of Texas**
- **The Nature Discovery Center, Inc.**

- **Peckerwood Garden Conservation Foundation**
- **Texas Rice Industry Coalition for the Environment**
- **Trees for Houston**

Colleen Claybourn announced that in 2016 **The Trull Foundation's** made 20 environmental grants to the following organizations and projects:

- **Coastal Bend Bays Foundation**, Annual Earth Day-Bay Day
- **Devils River Conservancy**, Interactive Surface and Groundwater Model
- **Ducks Unlimited, Inc.**, Protecting and restoring Texas coastal wetlands
- **Environment Texas Research and Policy Center**, Clean Water Communities: Protecting Our Rivers, Bays and Coastlines
- **Environmental Stewardship**, Public Policy, Education & Outreach Colorado River and Carrizo Wilcox
- **Friends of the Colorado River Foundation**, Texas Colorado River Rolling Exhibit
- **Galveston Bay Foundation**, Galveston Bay Dolphin Research and Conservation
- **Gulf Coast Bird Observatory**, Beach Nesting Birds
- **Gulf of Mexico Foundation**, Essential Coastal Habitat Restoration Training for the Gulf Coast
- **Nature Conservancy of Texas**, Conservation, Science, and Community Outreach programs at Mad Island Marsh Preserve
- **Nueces River Authority**, South Texas Land and Water Initiative
- **National Audubon Society**, Texas Coastal Conservation Program – Matagorda Bay
- **National Wildlife Federation**, Texas Living Waters
- **Pines and Prairies Land Trust**, Yegua Knobbs Preserve “Loo”
- **Restore America's Estuaries**, 8th National Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration
- **Rio Grande International Study Center**, Watershed Awareness
- **San Antonio Bay Partnership, Inc.**, Austwell-Tivoli Kids Birding Program
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation**, Powderhorn Ranch Acquisition
- **Texas Rice Industry Coalition for the Environment**, Operational Support
- **Turtle Island Restoration Network**, Texas Sea Turtle Recovery Campaign

Mike McCoy reported that the **The Meadows Foundation** made grants to the following:

- **Clean Water Fund**- toward reducing water consumption in North Texas
- **EcoRise Youth Innovations** – toward continued expansion of an environmental education program targeting economically disadvantaged Texas schools
- **Texas Land Conservancy** – to preserve 5,000 acres of land within 6 critical Texas watersheds
- **Friends of Cibolo Wilderness** - to purchase last six acres to protect critical watershed and habitat along the Cibolo Creek and aquifer recharge zones

- **The Peregrine Fund** – toward increasing the number of Aplomado falcons and delisting the Aplomado from the Endangered Species List
- **Ducks Unlimited** – to preserve Texas’ wetlands and coastal areas

2016 Philanthropy Southwest Annual Conference Session

Mike McCoy shared with the group as per the agreement with Philanthropy Southwest (PSW), TEGG will again be presenting a session at PSW’s upcoming annual conference. The session, “Conservation and Economic Opportunity through Environmental Tragedy,” organized by Mike will be moderated by Texas Parks & Wildlife’s Ann Brown. It is scheduled to take place Thursday, October 27 from 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. The session is designed to familiarize philanthropists with a source of hundreds of millions of dollars in funding opportunities for conservation and economic development. Parties responsible for the nation’s worst oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico have been forced to pay civil and criminal penalties for their actions. The availability of these funds can have, and is having, a significant impact on the Gulf Coast region of the country. Presenters are Toby Baker, commissioner, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; Justin R. Ehrenwerth, executive director, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council and Tanner Alston Johnson, director, Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

2017 Philanthropy Southwest Annual Conference Session

Planning for PSW’s 2107 Annual Conference begins immediately following the 2016 Conference. The 2017 Annual Conference is scheduled to take place October 12 to 14 in Incline Village, Lake Tahoe, Nevada. The first planning meeting is scheduled in Dallas November 30 to December 2. TEGG session designers are not required to attend the planning meetings. However, there are planning deadlines for submitting materials which need to be met. Mike asked for volunteers and ideas for topics. Two proposed topics were conservation easements and environmental advocacy. Jan Cato, Deborah Mueller and Cindy Raab agreed to volunteer with Mike’s guidance.

Discussion regarding seeking underwriting for 2017 TEGG Reception

Mike informed the group that the question had been raised if TEGG wished to seek underwriting for its reception held at PSW’s annual conference. At past conferences, TEGG has not wanted to incur the expense of having a formal reception with provided appetizers and beverages, instead opting for a Dutch-treat gathering at the hotel bar. As a consequence, TEGG’s reception has not been as well attended as some of the other special interest receptions at the Conference. Cindy Raab suggested that the topic of the gathering should be expanded to include all environmental funders, not just Texas. TEGG’s executive committee agreed to meet to discuss possible options for seeking underwriting.

Program-Related Investments Forum

Mike announced that TEGG was invited to co-host an upcoming forum with Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation: “Program-Related Investments Forum: Innovative Philanthropy for Transformational Texas Coastal Conservation.” The purpose of the forum is to inform foundations, philanthropists and NGO partners about the value of program-related investments (PRIs) in leveraging Deepwater Horizon funds for Gulf Coast land and freshwater conservation projects. It’s scheduled for Thursday, November 10 in Austin. Adriene Clay encouraged the group to watch their e-mail for an announcement and registration details.

Spring and Fall Meeting Topics and Locations

After some discussion, the group decided to pursue the following two options for spring and fall meetings. The group supported the idea of having the spring meeting in Galveston at the Bryan Museum focusing on the topic of climate change. Jan Cato and Mary Milby volunteered to organize with guidance from Mike McCoy.

For the fall meeting, Caroline Sabin proposed a follow up to TEGG’s PSW 2015 Annual Conference session on art and the environment. The two artists who presented at that session, Margie Crisp and William Montgomery will be participating in the exhibit “Texas Rivers” at The Witte Museum in San Antonio which is based on their collaborative book *The Nueces River: Rio Escondido*. The proposed topic would be environmental issues connected to Texas rivers and include a tour of the exhibit. Colleen Claybourn volunteered to organize the fall meeting with assistance from Andy Sansom.

Financial Report

Adrienne provided the financial report. As of the last meeting, there was a balance of \$8,134.67. One contribution was received from Houston Endowment in the amount of \$2,500. Expenses included PSW staff travel to the meeting (\$354.53) PSW’s fee of \$1,650 and speaker honoraria of \$1,000 leaving a new balance of \$7,630.14.

2016 – 17 Budget and Annual Appeal

The anticipated cost of the Fall meeting is \$3,650 which would leave a balance of \$3,980.14. With that in mind, Mike proposed to the group that it was time for an annual appeal for contributions from the group. Adrienne agreed to send a draft of the contributions form to the TEGG’s executive committee. Once approved, she would try to have the appeal to the group before the end of the year.

The meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.