

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Conservation Innovation Grant Awarded to Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation for Coastal Initiative

Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) has been recognized for its innovative approach to conservation by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. TPWF has been awarded a highly competitive Conservation Innovation Grant, one of 33 projects funded nationwide. The grant will bolster the new Gulf Coast Conservation Loan Fund, established by TPWF in early 2017. The revolving loan fund will support efforts over the next three years to maximize Deepwater Horizon oil spill mitigation funding by providing interim financing for time-sensitive land conservation projects along the Texas Gulf Coast.

"These Conservation Innovation Grants help implement projects that take conservation efforts to a higher level," said Texas Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Salvador Salinas. "Working with TPWF through their Gulf Coast Conservation Loan Fund and NRCS Farm Bill programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, these focused innovative conservation efforts will help protect and enhance natural resources on private lands that benefit all Texans."

With the support of state natural resource agencies and trustees responsible for implementing the mitigation funding in Texas, the Gulf Coast Conservation Loan Fund was created to help nonprofit conservation organizations secure cost-effective interim financing for projects that have been approved for a Deepwater Horizon-related grant. Once the Deepwater Horizon grant funding is received, loans are repaid at 0% or below market interest so that new, eligible projects can be considered.

The revolving loan fund is part of a broader effort by TPWF to raise awareness of the importance of private investment and nonprofit partnerships in maximizing funding available from the settlements with British Petroleum and Transocean following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. With nearly \$800 million available to Texas through 2031 for environmental, economic and tourism-oriented projects, private investors have an opportunity to partner in a historic conservation effort along the Texas Gulf Coast.

“We’re thrilled at the news that we’ve been awarded a Conservation Innovation Grant,” said TPWF Executive Director Anne Brown. “Along with the early funders of this effort, this grant will enable us to scale our efforts up to support transformational coastal conservation and enhance the efforts of all of our nonprofit partners to restore the Gulf of Mexico, a critical biological and economic engine for our state.”

In March, TPWF received a charter commitment from Dallas-based philanthropist, Lyda Hill, which enabled TPWF to make the first loan to The Trust for Public Land to prevent a critically important tract of land from being subdivided into a residential development. Since March, TPWF has raised more than \$4 million in loans from Texas-based foundations and individuals to support the fund.

A second loan was made in June to acquire a swath of pristine coastal habitat near Palacios in Matagorda Bay. This enabled the timely acquisition of high-priority coastal land as Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and its funding partners work through the Deepwater Horizon grant award process. TPWF is continuing to work with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and other conservation partners to develop a pipeline of eligible land projects that will receive Deepwater Horizon funding in the 2017-2018 grant cycles.

The \$290,000 Conservation Innovation Grant, awarded to TPWF by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, is part of over \$22.6 million in grants nationwide aimed at driving public and private sector innovation in resource conservation. The competitive Conservation Innovation Grant program helps develop the tools, technologies, and strategies to support next-generation conservation efforts on working lands and develop market-based solutions to resource challenges.

All TPWF news releases available online: tpwf.org/media/press-releases

USDA press release: [USDA Announces More than \\$22 Million in Conservation Innovation](#)

Texas NRCS website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation raises private funds to advance Texas’ proud outdoor traditions and conserve our state’s wildlife, habitat, recreational areas, and natural resources. Since 1991, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation has raised more than \$170 million in private philanthropy to ensure that all Texans, today and in the future, can enjoy the wild things and wild places of Texas.

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