TEXAS

COASTAL AND ESTUARINE

LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM PLAN

July 2010

The Texas Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United States Congress, through the adoption of the Appropriations Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-77), directed the Secretary of Commerce to establish a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) "for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses," giving priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value.

In establishing the CELCP, Congress: 1) directed the Secretary of Commerce to develop guidelines delineating necessary criteria for grant awards; 2) required that the Governor of each coastal state designate a lead agency to administer the state CELCP program if a state's lead agency for its coastal management program does not assume the role; and 3) required a 1:1 match from non-federal funding sources for financial assistance awarded under the program.

In June 2003, the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued guidelines for states to follow in developing state CELCP plans. Basically, the guidelines require the states to submit a state CELCP plan that discusses conservation priorities and project areas and establishes a process for identifying and ranking qualified projects within the state for nomination to the annual national competition.

Purpose of the CELCP Plan

In order to accomplish the goals of CELCP and conserve and protect natural coastal and estuarine areas in Texas, a state CELCP plan must first be developed and approved by NOAA. The NOAA CELCP guidelines (June 2003) (http://www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/media/celcpfinal02guidelines.pdf) list the contents for a state CELCP plan. The plan includes:

- A map or description of the geographic extent of coastal and estuarine areas within the state, as defined for the purposes of the CELCP;
- A description of the types of lands or values to be protected through the program and the need for conservation through acquisition;
- Identification of "project areas" that represent the state's priority areas for conservation, including areas threatened by conversion, based on state and national criteria for the program;
- A description of existing plans, or elements thereof, that are incorporated into the plan;
- A list of state or local agencies, or types of agencies, that are eligible to hold title to property acquired through the CELCP;
- A description of the state's process for reviewing and prioritizing qualified proposals for nomination to the national selection process. The vetting process should, at a minimum, involve representatives from the state's coastal zone management program, NERR(s), and any other agencies or entities that the state considers appropriate; and
- A description of public involvement and interagency coordination that occurred during the development of the plan.

The Texas CELCP plan includes these required elements and establishes conservation priorities for land acquisitions on the coast. The plan also describes the process Texas will use to solicit, select, and nominate projects for CELCP funding.

Texas CELCP Planning Process

NOAA guidance stipulated that state plans be developed in conjunction with the state's coastal management program. In 1995, the Texas Coastal Management Program (TCMP) was established, and the Texas General Land Office (GLO) was designated by the Texas Governor as the lead agency for the TCMP. As such, the Coastal Resources Division of the GLO manages the daily operations of the TCMP. Incorporating the Texas CELCP (TCELCP) into this administrative structure will assure maximum coordination and leveraging of the state's coastal program objectives and the state's land conservation efforts.

In developing the state plan, a core planning or steering committee was formed, composed of representatives from the GLO, including the TCMP, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve (MA-NERR). An advisory committee, composed of representatives from state and federal environmental agencies, state estuary programs, land trusts, river authorities and non-profits, was also formed. The steering committee met almost monthly from June to October 2005. Conservation priorities were determined for the TCELCP. These include:

(a) seven of the 16 Coastal Natural Resource Areas (CNRAs) in the TCMP (coastal wetlands, coastal shore areas, critical dune areas, coastal barriers, tidal sand and mud flats, special hazard areas, coastal historic areas);
(b) habitats for rare, threatened, or endangered species;
(c) coastal prairies;
(d) live oak-red bay forests;
(e) Texas ebony-anacua forests;
(f) rivers, streams, and riparian zones;
(g) public access and recreation areas; and
(h) other conservation lands, i.e., lands that provide connectivity, buffers, and/or lands that contribute to the goals, objectives, or implementation of local, state, or regional conservation plans or programs (e.g., the CMP, NERR, estuary programs, Texas Gulf Ecological Management Site Program, or other state/regional/local plans).

II. PRIORITIES FOR COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LAND PROTECTION

Lands being targeted for protection through TCELCP include coastal and estuarine areas with significant ecologic, conservation, recreation, historic, and aesthetic values. Many of these lands are threatened by conversion from their natural state to other uses. This section describes the geographic extent of the TCELCP boundary, outlines the types of lands and values to be protected, and gives an assessment of their status and trends (when known), functions and values, and potential threats.

Geographic Extent

The TCELCP boundary includes all the geographic area of 18 coastal counties: Cameron, Willacy, Kenedy, Kleberg, Nueces, Aransas, San Patricio, Refugio, Calhoun, Victoria, Jackson, Matagorda, Brazoria, Galveston, Harris, Chambers, Jefferson, and Orange counties (fig. 1). The boundary also contains the MA-NERR, which includes the Mission Aransas estuary. The full extent of "coastal" watersheds (as defined at http://water.usgs.gov/GIS/huc.html/) is also shown on figure 1. The TCELCP boundary expands the TCMP boundary that covers only whole or parts of counties (fig. 1). Using county boundaries are adequate as the TCELCP boundary, because all the lands and values to be conserved can be found in these counties.

Lands and Values to be Protected

Lands and values to be protected include coastal natural resource areas (CNRAs) requiring special management under the TCMP and other lands important for their conservation, ecological, recreational, historical, or aesthetic values. The lands and values discussed below include all the conservation priorities of the TCELCP. Some of the lands and values to be protected, such as seagrasses and tidal waters on rivers and streams, may already be on state-owned submerged lands, but future CELCP funds may be used to protect or buffer these areas. The following is a brief description of the lands and values to be protected. Complete descriptions of CNRAs and other habitats and lands and values to be protected are in the "Assessment of Conservation Needs" section.

Coastal Natural Resource Areas

- **Coastal wetlands (swamps/bottomland hardwoods, mangroves and other scrub shrubs, and salt, fresh, intermediate, and brackish marshes):** Areas having a predominance of hydric soils that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation.
- **Coastal shore areas:** Areas within 100 feet landward of the high water mark on submerged land.
- **Critical dune areas:** Sand dune complexes on the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) shoreline within 1,000 feet of mean high tide.
- **Coastal barriers:** An undeveloped area on a barrier island, peninsula, or other protected area.

- **Tidal sand and mud flats:** Silt, clay, or sand substrates, unvegetated or vegetated by algal mats, that occur in intertidal areas and that are regularly or intermittently exposed and flooded by tides, including tides induced by weather.
- **Special hazard areas:** An area designated by the administrator of the Federal Insurance Administration under the National Flood Insurance Act as having special flood, mudslide or mudflow, or flood-related erosion hazards and shown on a Flood Hazard Boundary Map or Flood Insurance Rate Map, as Zone A, AO, A1-30, AE, A99, AH, VO, V1-30, VE, V, M, or E.
- **Coastal historic areas:** A site in the National Register of Historic Places on Public Land or a state archaeological landmark that is identified by the Texas Historical Commission as being coastal in character.

Other Habitats

- **Habitats for rare, threatened, or endangered species:** Property that supports, or is capable of supporting, habitats for state or federally listed rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species in the TCELCP boundary.
- **Coastal prairies:** Prairies in the TCELCP boundary.
- **Live Oak-Redbay forests:** A community of closed to open canopy *Quercus fusiformis* forests on deep, hummocky sands, mostly on the Ingleside barrier-strandplain along the Texas Coastal Bend.
- **Texas Ebony-Anacua forests:** Forests along the deep, well-drained soils of the Rio Grande River delta, often associated with low lying resaca banks that had been formed by old river channels.
- **Rivers and streams and riparian zones:** Waters in the TCELCP boundary and identified and described in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality publication GI-316, Atlas of Texas Surface Waters, Maps of the Classified Segments of Texas River and Coastal Basins, August 2004, as well as the vegetated corridors that lie adjacent to these coastal streams and rivers.

Other Lands or Values

- **Public access and recreation areas:** Areas which provide or enhance public access to coastal shore areas and other coastal areas for low impact and passive recreation, such as hunting, fishing, bird and wildlife watching, swimming, canoeing, and kayaking.
- **Other conservation lands:** Lands that provide connectivity and buffers to existing protected lands and/or lands that contribute to the goals, objectives, or implementation of the CMP (e.g., lands that buffer areas with submerged aquatic vegetation), NERR, Estuary Programs, Texas Gulf Ecological Management Site Program, or other state/regional/local plans.

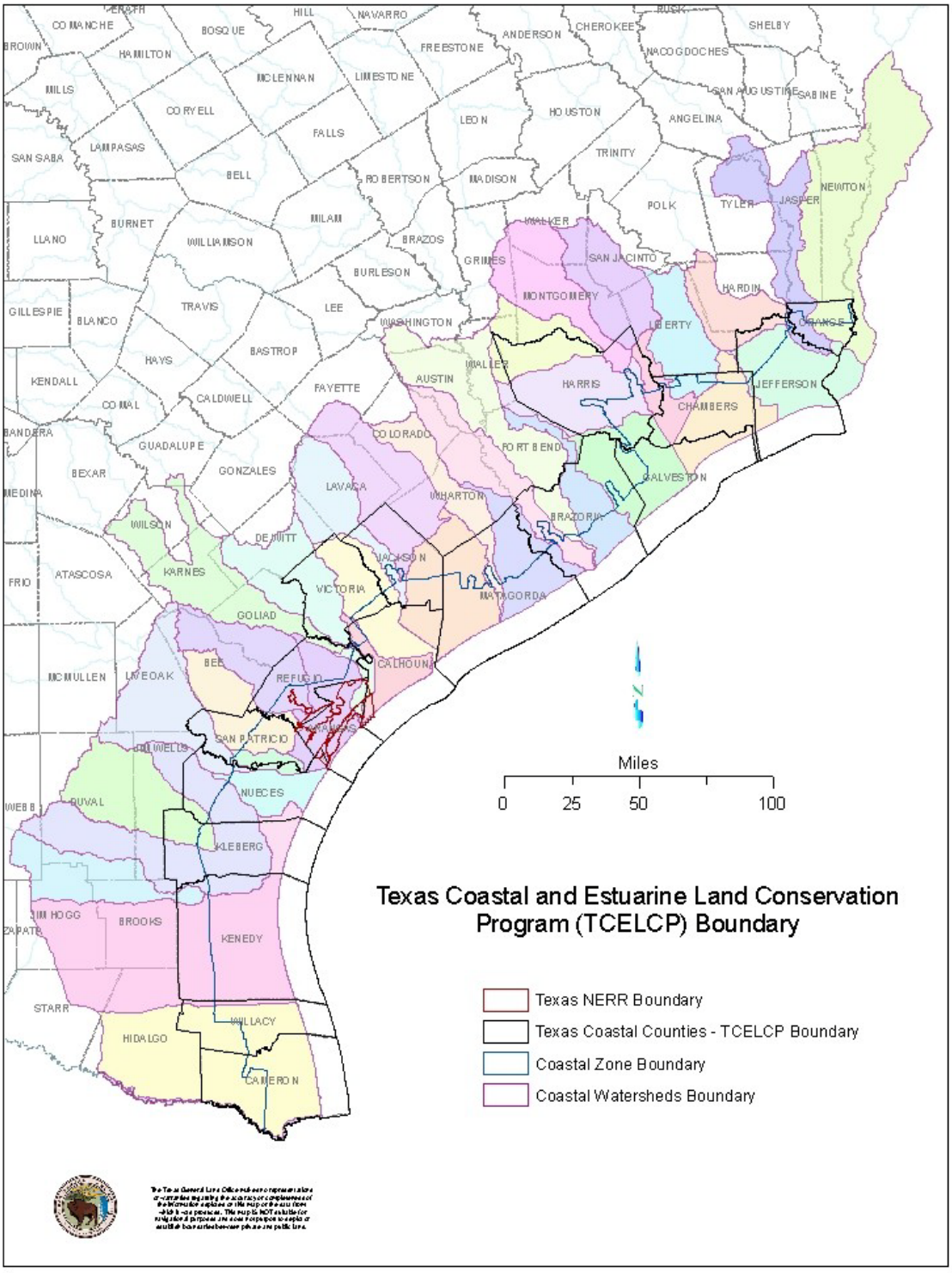

Figure 1. TCELCP Boundary Map

Assessment of Conservation Needs

This assessment includes detailed descriptions of the lands and values to be protected, conversion threats, functions and values, and, if known, their status and trends. Because of ongoing status and trends work in the coastal zone, more is known about the status and trends of coastal wetlands and relevant threats than probably any other land and value to be protected. Fortunately, historical data on coastal wetlands also includes status and trends information on tidal sand and mudflats, palustrine forested wetlands in riparian zones, and some seagrass information. In many cases, the threats are significant, and, in some cases unregulated (for example, some coastal wetlands). Acquisition/conservation easements are important tools for protecting these lands and values.

Coastal Natural Resource Areas

- **Coastal Wetlands:** Texas has approximately 4 million acres of coastal wetlands, including salt marshes and mangroves, brackish and intermediate marshes, fresh marsh, and bottomland hardwoods.

  Salt Marsh -- Coastal marshes in Texas can be divided into two major ecosystems, the Chenier Plain Ecosystem from the Texas-Louisiana border to East Bay, Texas, and the Texas Barrier Island Ecosystem from East Bay to the Texas-Mexico border (Webb, 1982). Typical species in the salt marsh (estuarine emergent marsh) community include smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), saltwort (*Batis maritima*), glasswort (*Salicornia virginica* and *S. bigelovii*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), saltflat grass (*Monanthochloe littoralis*), sea-lavender (*Limonium nashii*), Carolina wolfberry (*Lycium carolinianum*), seashore dropseed (*Sporobolus virginicus*), sea ox-eye (*Borrichia frutescens*), and salt-marsh bulrush (*Bolboschoenus robustus*). The dominant plant in the intertidal zone is *S. alterniflora*. On the upper coast, especially in the Galveston-Houston area, black needlerush (*Juncus roemerianus*), is a common salt to brackish marsh species, occurring at slightly higher elevations than *S. alterniflora*. South of the Corpus Christi/Nueces bay system, *S. alterniflora* is present in only small areas in South Bay and Laguna Madre. Black mangroves (*Avicennia germinans*) are significant components of salt marsh systems in some areas along the central and south Texas coast. Black mangroves occur on the upper coast on Galveston Island but are limited in distribution by extended periods of subfreezing temperatures (McMillan and Sherrod, 1986; Everitt et al., 1996).

  The broadest distribution of salt marshes is south of the Galveston Bay area, where they are common on the bayward side of barrier islands and peninsulas and along the mainland shores of narrow bays, such as West Galveston Bay. Although salt marshes occur on bay-head deltas, the communities change rather rapidly to brackish, intermediate, and fresh marshes up the river valleys.

  On the central coast, in the Matagorda and San Antonio Bay areas, the most extensive salt and brackish marshes occur on the Colorado River delta, Matagorda Island, and along east Matagorda Peninsula (White et. al., 2002).

  Brackish Marsh -- The brackish-marsh or estuarine emergent marsh community is transitional between salt and fresh marshes. Among the dominant species in topographically higher areas

are marshhay cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), Gulf cordgrass (*Spartina spartinae*), saltgrass, salt-marsh bulrush, and sea ox-eye. Brackish marshes are the most extensive wetland communities in the Galveston Bay system (White and Paine, 1992). They are widely distributed along the lower reaches of the Trinity River delta, inland from West Galveston Bay, in the inland system west of the Brazos River, and along much of the lower reaches of the Lavaca and Guadalupe River valleys.

Intermediate Marsh -- An intermediate marsh assemblage occurs on the upper coast above Galveston Bay where average salinities are generally between those found in the fresh and brackish-marsh assemblages. Species typical of this environment include seashore paspalum (*Paspalum vaginatum*), marshhay cordgrass, Olney bulrush (*Schoenoplectus pungens*), cattail (*Typha* sp.), and California bulrush (*S. californicus*), camphor daisy (*Haplopappus phyllocephalus*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*), and marsh elder (*Iva frustescens*).

Fresh Marsh -- Environments in which fresh (palustrine) marshes occur are generally beyond the limits of saltwater flooding, except perhaps locally during hurricanes. The freshwater influence from rivers, precipitation, runoff, and groundwater is sufficient to maintain a fresher-water vegetation assemblage consisting of such species as cattail, California bulrush, Olney bulrush, spiney aster (*Aster spinosus*), rattlebush (*Sesbania drummondii*), and pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*), and the non-natives, water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and alligatorweed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*). Fresh marshes occur inland along river or fluvial systems and in upland basins, both on the mainland and on barrier islands. Inland from the chenier plain and upstream along the river valleys of the Neches, Trinity, San Jacinto, Colorado, Lavaca, Guadalupe, and San Antonio rivers, salinities decrease and fresh marshes intergrade with and replace brackish marshes.

Swamps and Bottomland Hardwoods -- Swamps are most commonly defined as woodlands or forested areas that contain saturated soils or are inundated by water during much of the year. In Texas, these are areas in which bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and water tupelo (*Nyssa aquatica*) occur in association with other species of trees such as sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) and willows (*Salix* spp.). Swamps occur principally in the entrenched valleys of the Sabine, Neches, and Trinity rivers. The swamps grade at slightly higher elevations into river bottomland hardwood forest or streamside woodland. Entrenched and nonentrenched river valleys to the south are dominated by drier woodlands or forested areas.

Coastal wetlands, an integral part of estuarine ecosystems, have tremendous biologic and economic values. Texas wetlands serve as nursery grounds for over 95 percent of the recreational and commercial fish species found in the Gulf of Mexico; they provide breeding, nesting, and feeding grounds for more than a third of all threatened and endangered animal species and support many endangered plant species; and they provide permanent and seasonal habitat for a great variety of wildlife, including 75 percent of North America's bird species. The average annual yield of shrimp caught in the Gulf of Mexico is highly correlated with the area of wetlands, including submerged aquatic vegetation, within an estuary (Turner, 1977). Some of the commercial fish species associated with coastal wetlands include brown, white, and pink shrimp, blue crab, stone crab, red drum, spotted sea trout, southern flounder, Atlantic croaker, and Gulf menhaden. Species that are

important as elements in food chains and occur in salt and brackish marshes, include grass shrimps, xanthid crabs, cyprinodontid fishes, gobiid fishes, annelid worms, amphipods, and mysids.

Coastal wetlands also perform many chemical and physical functions. Wetlands temporarily retain pollutants such as suspended material, excess nutrients, toxic chemicals, and disease-causing microorganisms. Marshes can filter nitrates and phosphates from rivers and streams that receive wastewater effluents. Pollutants associated with the trapped material in wetlands may be converted by biochemical processes to less harmful forms, or they may remain buried and be absorbed by the wetland plants themselves and either recycled or transported from the area. Studies indicate that restoring just one percent of a watershed's area to appropriately located wetlands has the potential to reduce polluted runoff of nitrates and herbicides by up to 50 percent (Robinson, 1995). Wetlands help reduce erosion by absorbing and dissipating wave energy, binding and stabilizing sediments, and increasing sediment deposition. Wetlands also reduce the hazards of hurricanes and other coastal storms by protecting coastal and inland properties from wind damage and flooding (Whittington et al., 1994). Primarily because of their topography or position in the landscape, wetlands can reduce, capture, and retain surface-water runoff, thus providing storage capacity and overall protection during periods of flooding. Wetlands located in the mid or lower reaches of a watershed contribute more to flood control since they are in the path of more water than their upstream counterparts. These values can provide economic benefits to downstream property owners. Wetlands also promote groundwater recharge by diverting, slowing, and storing surface water, thus allowing infiltration and percolation of water into the saturated zone.

Coastal wetland loss continues to be significant with an overall loss of almost 6,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands per year. In addition, as a result of the 2001 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC), approximately 100,000 acres of coastal wetlands are currently non-jurisdictional or “isolated” in the coastal zone and no longer protected under the Clean Water Act. These, primarily freshwater wetlands, are being lost to development at an alarming rate. For example, Harris County lost approximately 13 percent of its freshwater wetlands between 1992 and 2002, with half of that loss occurring between 2000 and 2002. Threats to the resource include development/fill, land fragmentation, erosion, alterations in hydrology, pollution, channelization, nuisance or exotic species, loss in freshwater inflows, and sea level rise and subsidence (relative sea level rise).

- **Coastal Shore Areas**

Bay and estuarine shorelines may consist of coastal natural resources or hardened, man-made areas. Natural areas may include coastal wetlands, riparian vegetation, erodable bluffs, sand and mudflats, sand beaches, and others; whereas, hardened shorelines may include rock, concrete, various forms of riprap, and other structures. The major bay systems have different proportions of shoreline types that contribute to differences in land loss rates between bays. Morton and Paine (1990) calculated that 27% of the shorelines of major Texas bays were bluffs and 13% sand and shell. Sixty percent of the shorelines were marsh. The Galveston, Matagorda, San Antonio, Copano, and Corpus Christi bay systems lost fringing land at gross rates of about 287 acres/year between 1930 and 1982, or a total of 14,924 acres (Morton and Paine, 1990). Altered sediment supply and current patterns result in changes to these natural shorelines. Shore areas function as buffers, protecting upland habitats from erosion and storm damage and adjacent marshes and waterways from water quality degradation (Castelle et al., 1992). A variety of birds

occurs on bay shores, and few are restricted to one particular habitat (Britton and Morton, 1989). Cranes, rails, coots, gallinules, and other groups can be found on bay shorelines and in fringing marshes. Fiddler crabs (*Uca* spp.) are conspicuous crustaceans along bay-estuary-lagoon shorelines. These small crabs produce burrows that occur along almost every bayshore from the tide line to as much as 3 feet above sea level. The hermit crab (*Clibanarius vittatus*) also inhabits shore areas.

Maintaining natural shore areas is important for public recreation and access. Coastal shore areas may be adversely impacted by erosion, development/fill, and sea level rise and subsidence.

- **Critical Dune Areas**

As a natural barrier to the destructive forces of wind and waves, sand dunes are an efficient defense against storm-surge flooding and beach erosion. Dunes absorb storm surge and high wave impacts, preventing or delaying the intrusion of waters into inland areas. Dunes hold sand that replaces eroded beaches after storms and buffer windblown sand and salt spray.
The most conspicuous dune crest plant is the sea oat (*Uniola paniculata*). Sea oats occur along the entire coast, ranging from the backshore to the central vegetated flat of the barrier islands (Britton and Morton, 1989). Other plants occurring on the exposed dune slopes and crests include bitter panicum (*Panicum amarum*), beach tea (*Croton punctatus*), and the railroad vine (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*). Floral diversity is generally higher on the leeward dune slopes than on the windward side. Dunes also serve as important habitats for a variety of animal species. Many insects occur in the dune vegetation, including beach tiger beetles (*Cincidela* spp.), horseflies (*Tabanus* spp), and deer flies (*Chrysops* spp.). Larger ghost crabs (*Ocypode quadrata*) and the red land crab (*Gecarcinus lateralis*) burrow into the dunes.

Dunes may be adversely impacted by development/fill, erosion, and recreation. Dune damage resulting from human activities accelerates the damage caused by wind and wave erosion. Protecting dunes helps prevent the loss of life and property during storms and preserves the sand supply that slows shoreline erosion.

- **Coastal Barriers**

Coastal barriers are undeveloped areas on barrier islands and peninsulas or otherwise protected areas, as mapped by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (i.e., Coastal Barrier Resource System Units). Coastal barriers are subject to wave, tidal, and wind energy from the Gulf of Mexico. Barrier islands are Galveston, Matagorda, San Jose, Mustang, and North and South Padre islands. Peninsulas are Matagorda and Bolivar peninsulas. Coastal barriers act as important buffers against coastal storms and protect CNRAs and the mainland from erosion, flooding, and destruction. Coastal barriers also provide wildlife habitat and are an important recreational resource. Floral and faunal components of coastal barriers have generally been described under other CNRAs, including coastal wetlands, tidal sand and mud flats, and critical dune areas. Threats to coastal barriers include development/fill, channelization, erosion, relative sea level rise, alterations in hydrology, and nuisance or exotic species.

- **Tidal Sand and Mud Flats**

Tidal sand and mud flats are silt, clay, or sand substrates, unvegetated or vegetated by algal mats, that occur in the intertidal zone and that are regularly or intermittently exposed and flooded by

tides. Mud and sand flats are the feeding grounds for coastal shorebirds, fish, and invertebrates. Detritus and plankton collect on the flats and are eaten by primary consumers, which in turn are prey for higher levels of the food chain. Tidal flats in the Laguna Madre area are unique, because wind and storm tides, rather than astronomical tides, are primarily responsible for flooding and exposure. Overall, sand flats are more abundant than mud flats. Extensive sand flats occur in the Laguna Madre area of South Texas, whereas mud flats are common on the upper coast in the Houston/Galveston and Beaumont/Port Arthur areas. Texas contains more tidal flats than any other state, and the Laguna Madre estuary contains 14% of the nation's tidal flats (Field et al., 1991). Tidal flats can be adversely impacted by development/fill, tracking from vehicles, pollution, and dredging, relative sea level rise, and dredged material disposal. Between 1955 and 1992, estuarine intertidal unconsolidated shorelines (tidal sand and mud flats) declined by over 30,000 acres or almost 13% (Moulton et al., 1997).

- **Special Hazard Areas**

Special hazard areas are low-lying coastal areas prone to storm-surge tidal flooding or freshwater flooding. Specifically, they include the floodplains that are susceptible to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year (inundated by a 100-year flood), and bay and Gulf shores that are exposed to high-velocity wave action from storms or prone to severe flood-related erosion. Special hazard areas are important to the coastal ecosystem, because they generally receive the brunt of storms, act as natural surface-water detention systems, and are natural filters for runoff from uplands.

Floodplains contain many different habitats and zones defined by a moisture gradient, including the constantly inundated channels and lakes, overflow riverine wetlands, and uplands that are infrequently inundated. Floodplains support extensive fish populations of both sport and commercial fisheries. Floodplains and associated bottomland hardwoods also provide food, cover, and nesting sites for birds and other wildlife.

Activities that can adversely impact special hazard areas include erosion, pollution, alterations in hydrology, dredging and dredged material disposal, channelization, and nuisance or exotic species. Acquisition of special hazard areas that are adversely impacted by these activities, along with restoration, can protect/restore the important functions and values that are provided by these areas, ultimately reducing the impact of flooding, erosion, and pollution on both the coastal ecosystem and on homes and businesses in coastal watersheds.

- **Coastal Historic Areas**

A wide range of both prehistoric and historic sites exists on the Texas coastal plain. State Archaeological Landmarks are administered by the Texas Historical Commission. Historic sites include forts, shipwrecks, plantations, lighthouses, depots, battlefields, cemeteries, towns, ranches, and homesteads. The Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin has listed over 3,200 recorded archaeological sites in coastal counties. Threats to these areas include development and dredging and dredged material disposal.

Other Habitats

Besides more detailed descriptions of the habitats, information is provided on pertinent websites that include maps or descriptions of the geographic scope of these areas. See also III. TCELCP Project Areas, p. 17.

- **Habitats for Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species**

The TPWD Wildlife Diversity Program (WDP) maintains a Natural Diversity Database that contains information on rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals and their general habitats. The Database is constantly updated and provides current and additional information; however, the data can't provide a definitive statement on the presence, absence, or condition of special species, natural communities, or other significant features. Lists of species in each ecological region or coastal county can be obtained from the WDP. Species that appear on county lists do not all share the same probability of occurrence within a county. Also, the lists are not all inclusive for all rare species distributions. Habitats for rare, threatened, or endangered species may include types of habitats that are already listed as lands or values to be protected in the TCELCP boundary. Habitat destruction or disturbance are threats to habitats of rare, threatened, or endangered species. The focus of the TCELCP is not just on habitats for coastal-dependent species but on habitats of all rare, threatened, or endangered species that may occur within the TCELCP boundary; however, the primary focus will be on coastal-dependent species, especially those species that can be found in the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes ecosystem of the TPWD Land and Water Conservation Plan (2005).

To see which counties may contain particular species that are rare, threatened, or endangered, please visit: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/maps/gis/ris/endangered_species/

- **Coastal Prairie**

Coastal prairie vegetation consists of mostly grasses and a diverse variety of wildflowers and other plants. Nearly 1000 plant species have been identified in the coastal prairie and almost all are perennials. Prairie wildflowers are diverse, with many species belonging to the sunflower, legume, and mint families. Coastal prairie and adjacent marshes provide habitat for waterfowl and other forms of wildlife. Even in its altered state, coastal prairie routinely hosts more red-tailed hawks, northern harriers, white and white-faced ibises than any other region of the U.S. A unique insect diversity also occurs in the coastal prairie--butterflies, skippers, dragonflies, and numerous species of bees, wasps, ants, grasshoppers, beetles, and the preying mantis.

The coastal prairie ecosystem is listed as critically imperiled by major conservation organizations. It is estimated that, in pre-settlement times, there were 6.5 million acres of coastal prairie in Texas. Currently less than one percent of the coastal prairie remains. Much of the former prairie has been converted to pasture for cattle grazing or altered for growing rice, sugarcane, forage and grain crops. Many plant species have been lost through overgrazing. Other factors are increases in urban development and the elimination of natural fires or a change in their timing and frequency. The focus of conservation efforts is on both intact and altered coastal prairies in the TCELCP boundary.

- **Live Oak-Red Bay Forests**

The live oak-red bay forest (*Quercus virginiana-Persea borbonia* forest) occurs on former beach ridges on sand ridges of the Ingleside, Live Oak, and Blackjack peninsulas in Aransas, San

Patricio, and adjacent counties (Bezanson, 2000). These areas support mottes, woodlands, and thickets of live oak, with openings dominated by little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and other grass species. This habitat supports a high diversity of resident wildlife, as well as high numbers of migratory, neotropical birds. The live oak-red bay vegetation series is listed by Diamond (1993) as very rare and local throughout its range and rare or uncommon in Texas. Threats to this habitat include development, nuisance or exotic species, and erosion.

- **Texas Ebony-Anacua Forests**

The Texas ebony-anacua forest (*Pithecellobium flexicaule-Ehretia anacua* forest) occurs on deep, well-drained soils of the Rio Grande delta and are most often associated with resaca banks. Other species found in the forest community include the brasil (*Condalia hookeri*), snake-eyes (*Phaulothamnus spinescens*), coma (*Bumelia celastrina*), the spiny hackberry (*Celtis pallida*), and others. This evergreen subtropical plant community is known from a few sites in the lower Rio Grande valley, in Cameron County. Much of the original acreage of the forest community has been cleared for agriculture. In Texas, the Texas ebony-anacua vegetation series is listed by Diamond (1993) as critically imperiled, extremely rare, and very vulnerable to extirpation. Other threats may include development, nuisance or exotic species, and erosion.

Descriptions of the range of the Live Oak-Red Bay and the Texas Ebony-Anacua Forests can be found at http://www.csdl.tamu.edu/FLORA/toes/communitb.htm.

- **Rivers and Streams and Riparian Buffers**

There are 13 major rivers in Texas, 11 of which drain into bays and estuaries along the coast. The Sabine and Neches flow into Sabine Lake and were formerly joined as one river basin. Similarly, the Trinity and San Jacinto rivers drain into the connected Galveston and Trinity bays. The Colorado River flows into Matagorda Bay. The Lavaca River empties into Lavaca Bay, the Guadalupe and San Antonio together build a delta into San Antonio Bay, and the Nueces River discharges into the Corpus Christi/Nueces Bay system. The Brazos River and the largest river system, the Rio Grande, empty into the Gulf of Mexico. Tidal and non-tidal stream and river segments in the TCELCP boundary are shown on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Classified Segment and Texas River and Coastal Basin maps (2004) (http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-316/index.html).

Coastal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, shrimp, fish, bottom fauna, such as oysters, require the nourishment provided by the nutrients contained in the freshwater inflows and sediments from these rivers. Climate, especially rainfall and evaporation, strongly controls the flows of rivers and streams. In the Sabine River basin, mean annual rainfall is nearly 60 inches and annual evaporation is less than 70 inches, whereas, in the Rio Grande basin, mean annual rainfall ranges from 8 to 20 inches and annual evaporation is as much as 105 inches. No Texas river basin is in a natural state along its entire length. All are somewhat impacted and have dams, levees or engineered channels, and wastewater treatment plants. Threats to waters on rivers and streams include pollution, development/fill, shoreline structures, nuisance or exotic species, erosion, and dredging and dredged material disposal. Future CELCP funds may be used to protect or provide buffer for these waters.

Riparian zones consist of vegetated corridors adjacent to streams and rivers in the TCELCP boundary. Riparian zones vary in width, generally depending on the width of the riparian vegetation along streams and rivers. Riparian areas have unique plant and soil characteristics, often much different from the land and water environments they connect. Riparian zones maintain water quality, as well as the ecological health of other streamside communities. Riparian zones filter sediments and nutrients, stabilize stream banks, provide habitat and food for stream organisms, reduce downstream flooding, and, by shading streams, moderate temperature. Riparian zones also provide habitat for moist-zone animals and plants and travel routes for other animals. Riparian habitats are important in flood control within a watershed. Naturally vegetated riparian areas reduce the force, height, and volume of floodwaters through desynchronization and temporary storage (Smith et al., 2002). Groundwater recharge can occur through floodwater percolation in depressions, oxbow lakes, and sandy soils. Riparian zones are often degraded or altered, resulting in reduced water quality and adverse impacts on stream organisms. Moulton et al. (1997) reported that palustrine forested wetlands (forested wetlands, primarily in the riparian zone) decreased by over 96,000 acres between 1955 and 1992 or nearly an 11% decrease. Adverse impacts to riparian zones may include pollution, development/fill, shoreline structures, including channelizing and covering stream banks with impervious surfaces to maintain high flow conditions, damming, water diversions, erosion, nuisance or exotic species, and dredging and dredged material disposal. Conservation priority may be given to riparian zones containing palustrine forested wetlands along tidal rivers and streams and to riparian areas containing other lands and values to be protected, such as habitats for endangered/threatened species. Additional information on riparian forests and wetlands on the upper and lower coast is at http://www.texaswetlands.org/riverine.htm.

Other Lands or Values

- **Public Access and Recreation Areas**

Public access to the coast varies considerably, depending on whether the access is to the Gulf beaches or bay, estuary, river, and stream shore areas in the TCELCP boundary. The Texas Beach and Bay Access Guide, 2nd Edition (2003), a GLO publication, (http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/access/index.html) includes nearly 360 public access points to Texas bays and the Gulf of Mexico within 16 of the 18 coastal counties. The guide indicates whether the sites can be used for such non-consumptive recreational uses as fishing, swimming, wildlife viewing, picnicking, camping, and wind surfing.

Texas has one of the strongest sets of laws in the U.S. protecting public access to the Gulf beaches. The Texas Open Beaches Act (OBA) guarantees the public access to and use of the beaches fronting the Gulf of Mexico that are accessible by public road or common carrier ferry. The OBA applies to the Gulf beaches in Jefferson, Chambers, Galveston, Brazoria, Matagorda, Nueces, Kleberg, Willacy, and Cameron counties. Access to these beaches varies and the amenities provided change seasonally. Some Gulf beaches are pedestrian only, and parking is provided. Public access to shore areas along bay, estuary, river, and stream shorelines is much more limited than to the Gulf shoreline, and with increasing trends in population growth on the coast and increasing shoreline development, the need for additional public access sites increases considerably.

- **Other Conservation Lands**

Lands that provide connectivity and buffers for existing protected lands that contain priority TCELCP land types and values, such as the Texas Gulf Ecological Management Sites, contribute greatly to protection of important ecological, conservation, recreation, historic, and aesthetic features found on those lands.

In addition, lands that contribute to multiple conservation plans or programs, even though they may not contain the specific priority features or values discussed above, also have great potential to contribute significantly to ecological, recreational or other values. These would include lands that are demonstrated to contribute to the goals, objectives, or implementation of the CMP, NERR, Estuary Programs, and/or other state/regional/local plans. For example, an important CNRA identified for protection by the CMP is submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). Most SAV is already on public submerged lands. CELCP funds may be used to provide buffers to enhance protection of this resource.

Goals for the CMP can be found at 31 TAC Chapter 501.12 (http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/cmp.html). Seven of the 16 CNRAs to be protected by the CMP are also priority lands and values to be protected under the TCELCP.

The number one priority for the Galveston Bay Program is protecting and restoring coastal wetlands (http://www.gbep.state.tx.us/priority-problems/seventeen-priority-problems.asp). Loss of wildlife habitat, especially coastal wetlands, is a priority habitat protection issue for the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program. (http://www.cbbep.org/whatiscbbep/priorityissues.html).

The final management plan for the MA-NERR is at http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov/Doc/PDF/Reserve/MAR_MgmtPlan.pdf. Future acquisition priorities for the MA-NERR include key wetland habitats, coastal shore areas, watersheds, which may include riparian zones, and adjacent uplands. Proposed projects may be selected if they characterize the types of lands the TCELCP seeks to protect and if applicants demonstrate how the proposed project meets plan criteria and priorities.

III. TCELCP PROJECT AREAS

State CELCP plans must identify CELCP "project areas." Project areas are defined in the CELCP guidelines as:

> discrete areas to be identified within a CELCP plan that describe the state's priority areas for conservation based on national and state criteria, representing the values to be protected through the program and areas threatened by conversion. Project areas may consist, for example, of: geographic areas or habitat types identified by a state coastal management plan as areas of concern; significant areas within other coastal, estuarine, or watershed management plan(s) that may be priority areas for conservation; or areas that provide linkages or corridors among conservation areas within a geographical area.

The national criteria for projects and project areas are:

- Protects important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses;
- Gives priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value;
- Directly advances the goals, objectives, or implementation of the state's coastal management plan or program, NERR management plans approved under the CZMA, national objectives of the CZMA, or a regional or state watershed protection plan involving coastal states with approved coastal management plans; and
- Is consistent with the state's approved coastal management program.

TCELCP project areas comprise the priority lands and values listed in the previous section: CNRAs; habitats for rare, threatened or endangered species; coastal prairies; live oak-red bay and Texas ebony-anacua forests; riparian areas; public access and recreation areas; and conservation lands that provide connectivity and buffers for existing protected lands and/or that otherwise contribute to coastal conservation plans and programs (e.g., CMP, NERR, NEPs, GEMS, etc.).

The GLO provides more than 100 GIS data layers to employees and the public at http://www.glo.state.tx.us/gisdata/gisdata.html. Many of these layers describe the geographic scope of the TCELCP lands and values described in the previous section and can be used to determine whether or not a potential project falls within a TCELCP project area. Additional links provided below contain more detailed descriptions of the priority lands and values, as well as maps or descriptions of the geographic scope of these areas.

Some priority values discussed in the previous section are more difficult to map in advance and not specifically identified as project areas below—in particular, lands providing recreational opportunities and lands that may contribute to broader coastal conservation plans and programs. These values will be evaluated in ranking system (i.e., proposed projects that demonstrate these values will receive additional points in project evaluation and scoring). Planning documents that would help to determine where on the landscape these types of resources might be located are discussed in the next section.

Coastal Natural Resource Areas (CNRAs)
GIS maps on the location/distribution of many CNRAs, including coastal shore areas (NOAA coastal shorelines), coastal historic areas (National Register Historic Areas), critical dune areas (dune protection lines), coastal barriers, submerged aquatic vegetation (seagrasses), coastal wetlands (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory), tidal sand and mudflats, waters under tidal influence, and other pertinent areas/habitats, are at www.glo.state.tx.us/gisdata/gisdata.html. Additional information on the distribution of coastal wetlands and other habitats can also be found at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/pwd_bn_w7000_0120/.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website has Flood Insurance Rate Maps for coastal Texas that include the 100-year flood plain. Maps are at http://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/FemaWelcomeView?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1.

Other Habitats

- **Habitats for rare, threatened, or endangered species**

For county-level information on rare, threatened, or endangered species, please visit: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/maps/gis/ris/endangered_species/. Another source of data is the TPWD Texas Wildlife Action Plan (http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/pwd_pl_w7000_1187a/media/3.pdf).

- **Coastal prairies**

Information on the distribution of coastal prairies/grasslands is at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/pwd_bn_w7000_0120/grassland/ and http://conserveonline.org/docs/2003/06/GCPM_Ecoregional_Conservation_Plan.pdf.

- **Coastal forests (Live Oak-Red Bay Forest and Texas Ebony-Anacua Forest)**

General descriptions of the ranges of the Live Oak-Red Bay and the Texas Ebony-Anacua Forests can be found at http://www.csdl.tamu.edu/FLORA/toes/communitb.htm.

- **Riparian areas**

Tidal and non-tidal stream and river segments in the TCELCP boundary are shown on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Classified Segment and Texas River and Coastal Basin maps (2004) (http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-316/index.html). Conservation priority may be given to riparian areas containing palustrine forested wetlands along tidal rivers and streams and to riparian areas containing other lands and values to be protected, such as habitats for endangered/threatened species.

Other Lands or Values

- **Buffers, corridors, linkages for existing protected lands**

GIS information on the distribution of existing protected lands, such as coastal preserves, state parks and wildlife management areas, and federal wildlife refuges, is at www.glo.state.tx.us/gisdata/gisdata.html.

Descriptions of Plans Incorporated into the TCELCP Plan

Existing local, state, or federal plans may include the priority lands and values for TCELCP or focus on preserving/acquiring specific habitats or sites within a region. Many of the planning documents describe the geographic locations/scope of project areas. Many of these plans and associated maps are also located on websites that are included in the detailed descriptions.

The following describes conservation plans that are being incorporated into the TCELCP plan, along with descriptions of how the plans relate to lands and values to be protected. The first group of planning documents contains geographic information that describes or shows project areas and may include maps, often in the referenced websites, of the lands and values to be protected by the TCELCP. The second group are conservation plans that discuss the TCELCP priority lands and values but do not contain information on the geographic scope or location of project areas.

Planning Documents With the Geographic Locations/Scope of Project Areas

Armand Bayou Watershed Partnership. 2006. Armand Bayou Watershed Greenprint: Final Report. A report of the Coastal Coordination Council, pursuant to NOAA award no. NA04NOS 4190058. 52 pp.

This report is the implementation phase of a three-phase program. Phase one was a watershed assessment of the Armand Bayou watershed. Phase two was a stewardship exchange, whereby a local committee worked closely with an exchange team to use data collected in phase one to develop potential management alternatives for protecting the watershed. Phase three implements highest priority conservation strategies in the watershed. The Greenprint identified almost 12,000 acres of high priority, undeveloped lands to protect within the Armand Bayou watershed. Large tracts of coastal flatwoods (riparian zones and coastal wetlands) and pristine coastal, tall grass prairies represent critical habitats within the watershed. Other TCELCP priorities addressed include providing public access and recreation and reducing flood damage (special hazard areas). A copy of the Greenprint can be found at http://armandbayou.org/.

Beck. M. W., M. Odaya, J. J. Bachant, J. Bergan, B. Keller, R. Martin, R. Mathews, C. Porter, G. Ramseur. 2000. Identification of Priority Sites for Conservation in the Northern Gulf of Mexico: An Ecoregional Plan. The Nature Conservancy, Arlington, VA. 48 pp.

This TNC plan states that "the best way to identify and conserve the diversity of the Gulf is to focus on habitats and the ecological processes that affect their viability. Some of the primary habitat targets in the northern Gulf were seagrasses, oyster reefs, sponge and soft coral, salt marshes, tidal freshwater marsh, tidal flats and submerged freshwater grasses. As a preliminary goal, it was decided that the network of priority sites should contain at least 20% of the current distribution of each habitat and imperiled species target in each subregion." In general, the TNC proposes to acquire strategic tracts in upstream delta areas and on barrier islands and shorelines. Priority sites and habitats/resources include:

- Lower Laguna Madre—seagrasses, tidalflats, Kemp's ridley turtle, dwarf seashorses

- Upper Laguna Madre—seagrasses, tidalflats, Kemp's ridley turtle
- Corpus Christi Bay—seagrasses, oyster reef, Kemp's ridley turtle
- San Antonio Bay—salt marsh, oyster reef, seagrasses
- Northeast Matagorda Bay—seagrasses, salt marsh, tidal fresh marsh, freshwater grasses

Principal stressors in the above systems are listed as nitrification, pollution, dredging and incompatible development, light attenuation, and altered freshwater hydrologic regimes.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, conservation lands that support protection of submerged aquatic vegetation, and tidal sand and mud flats.

Buffalo Bayou Partnership. 2002. Buffalo Bayou and Beyond: Visions, Strategies, Actions for the 21st Century. Prepared by Thompson Design Group, Inc./Ecoplan.

The Landscape Plan for Buffalo Bayou includes these conservation, recreation, and public access initiatives: 1) add 850 acres of new park land to create a linked park system connecting Memorial Park to the Turning Basin; 2) create continuous publicly-accessible Bayou bank edges; 3) integrate landscape amenities and urban design elements with flood management infrastructure; and 4) connect to metropolitan and regional greenway networks. TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the plan include: riparian zones, public access and recreation areas, and coastal wetlands. Parts of the Buffalo Bayou Master Plan are at http://www.buffalobayou.org/masterplan.html.

Cecil Consulting. 2000. Identification of Natural Resource Restoration Projects for the Texas Coast. Presented to the Coastal Coordination Council. GLO Contract No. 99-124R. 60 pp.

This report lists 60 candidate restoration projects, including some proposed for acquisition. Each site falls within one of five defined geographical areas, and there are maps identifying each region. With the exception of three projects, each restoration/acquisition project has been presented at a public forum. TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the plan include: coastal wetlands.

Sites for acquisition/conservation easement in South Texas include:

- Lamar Peninsula/St. Charles Bay, adjacent to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge
- Resaca de los Cuates, adjacent to Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge
- Wetlands within the upper reaches of Bahia Grande
- San Martin Lake

Clear Creek Park and Conference Center: Conceptual Plan. 2002. Prepared for the Webster Economic Development Corporation by Wilson H. McClain, Landscape Architect. 44 pp.

The Clear Creek Park and Conference Center is only one element of the Webster Parks System Master Plan. This linear park will provide a hike and bike trail with a potential length of over seven miles. Because of its proximity to Clear Creek, it will allow users to have creek access for canoeing and kayaking. Multiple public access points along the length of the Park will provide convenient access for both regional and local visitors. The work will include the restoration of coastal wetlands, riparian zones, and coastal prairie environments along the length of the project.

Parts of the restoration work will include demonstration and education projects managed by the Park Orientation Center. A description of the Plan can be found at http://gbic.tamug.edu/gbeppubs/sob2003/sessions.html#ccpark.

TCELCP priority land and values referenced in the plan include: coastal wetlands, riparian zones, coastal prairies, conservation lands that support protection of submerged aquatic vegetation, and public access and recreation areas.

Conservation Fund and The Houston Parks Board. 2005. Houston Parks Rapid Assessment for New Parkland Acquisition. 8 pp.

This rapid assessment facilitates the identification and prioritization of parkland acquisition opportunities that implement the current City of Houston Parks and Recreation Master Plan. With input from an advisory committee, the Conservation Fund used a GIS to graphically represent suitable locations for potential parkland acquisitions. Key new parkland goals from the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Master Plan are to: (1) provide parks and open spaces adequate in size, distribution, and condition to serve all citizens; (2) use the park system to preserve and protect environmentally significant areas for public enjoyment and education; and (3) maximize public and private partnerships to assist in all aspects of park planning. Key suitability criteria for new non-linear and linear park sites and existing park expansions, include the physical characteristics, which include floodplains and wetlands, proximity to existing non-linear and linear parks, demographics, and whether the targeted areas are within acquisition target areas in the City Master Plan. The Parks Board will use a variety of strategies, including land transfers, in-kind donations, corporate partnerships, and acquisitions to implement the new parkland needs. The rapid assessment can be found at http://www.conservationfund.org/project/houston_parks_rapid_assessment.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the plan include: public access and recreation areas, coastal wetlands, riparian zones, and special hazard areas.

Diamond, D. D. 1993. Classification of the Plant Communities of Texas (Series Level). Unpublished Document. Texas Natural Heritage Program. Austin, TX. 25 pp.

Diamond gives general locations in Texas for plant communities at the series level and ranks them according to their conservation status, from imperiled (critically endangered), endangered, threatened, or secure. The live oak-red bay plant community series is listed as rare or uncommon in Texas. This evergreen woodland occurs in deep, often hummocky sands, mostly on the Ingleside Barrier of the Coastal Bend in the Corpus Christi area. The Texas ebony-anacua plant community series is listed as critically imperiled in Texas and occurs in the subtropical zone of the south Texas brush country.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: Texas ebony-anacua forests and live oak-red bay forests.

North American Waterfowl Management Plans:

- **Esslinger, C. G., and B. C. Wilson. 2003. North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Gulf Coast Joint Venture: Chenier Plain Initiative. North American**

Waterfowl Management Plan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM. 28 pp.

- **____ 2002. North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Gulf Coast Joint Venture: Laguna Madre Initiative. North American Waterfowl Management Plan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM. 28 pp.**
- **Wilson, B. C., and C. G. Esslinger. 2002. North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Gulf Coast Joint Venture: Texas Mid-Coast Initiative. North American Waterfowl Management Plan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, N. M. 28 pp.**

The primary goal of the Gulf Coast Joint Venture (GCJV) is to provide habitat for waterfowl in winter and ensure that they survive and return to the breeding grounds in good condition but not exceeding levels commensurate with breeding habitat capacity. Actions to achieve healthy wetland ecosystems and will provide benefits to fish and wildlife, in addition to waterfowl, will be supported.

- The goal of the Chenier Plain Initiative is to provide wintering and migration habitat for significant numbers of dabbling ducks, diving ducks, and geese, as well as year-round habitat for mottled ducks. The Chenier Plain Initiative area includes Orange, Jefferson, Chambers, and Harris counties within the TCELCP boundary.
- The goal of the Laguna Madre Initiative is to provide wintering and migration habitat for significant numbers of redhead ducks, greater and lesser scaup, Northern pintails, and other dabbling ducks, as well as year-round habitat for mottled ducks. The Laguna Madre Initiative area includes Nueces, Kleberg, Kenedy, Willacy, and Cameron counties within the TCELCP boundary.
- The goal of the Mid-Coast Initiative is to provide wintering and migration habitat for significant numbers of dabbling ducks, redheads, lesser snow geese, and greater white-fronted geese, as well as year-round habitat for mottled ducks. The Mid-coast Initiative area includes Galveston, Brazoria, Matagorda, Jackson, Victoria, Calhoun, Refugio, Aransas, and San Patricio counties within the TCELCP boundary.

Four broad strategies of wetland conservation are important for achieving the goals of the GCJV. These strategies include maintenance or loss prevention, restoration, enhancement, and creation of wetland habitat. Strategies under maintenance and restoration of habitat are to secure vulnerable tracts through fee title acquisition, conservation easement, or management agreement for the purpose of implementing management measures and to secure degraded tracts to protect waterfowl habitat, including coastal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, and coastal prairies, through fee title acquisition, conservation easement, or management agreement for the purpose of implementing restorative measures. Joint Venture Plans can be found at http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/JointVentures/index.shtm.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the GCJV plans include: coastal wetlands, conservation of lands that support protection of submerged aquatic vegetation, coastal prairies, coastal barriers, tidal sands and mudflats, and riparian areas.

Galveston Bay Foundation. 1998. Habitat Conservation Blueprint, A Plan to Restore the Habitats and Heritage of Galveston Bay: Sites, Strategies, and Resources. Galveston Bay Foundation. Webster, TX. 181 pp.

A list of 167 sites (with accompanying maps) for habitat restoration and/or conservation strategies was developed through interviews and facilitated public meetings. Site locations were added to a GIS database. In addition, a matrix of funding sources was also developed. The Blueprint can be found at http://galvbay.org/conservation_blueprint.html. An update to the original publication is currently being completed by the Environmental Institute of Houston.

Sites containing TCELCP priority lands and values—in particular, coastal wetlands and coastal prairies—include :

- Stingaree Road Marsh
- Wallis Lake/Lake Surprise Marshes
- Sun Bird Beach Marsh
- Cotton Lake/Cotton Bayou
- Elmgrove Point Marshes and Flats
- Horseshoe Lake Marshes and Flats
- Long Point Marsh
- Lower Marsh
- Robinson Lake Marshes and Prairies
- Double Bayou Riparian Woodlands
- Gordy Marsh and Lone Oak Bayou
- Old and Lost Rivers Marshes
- Smith Point Sand Ridge
- Trinity River Delta Fan
- Turtle Bayou Fringing Marsh and Riparian Woodlands
- Bird Lake Marshes and Flats
- Eisenhower Park Area Swamp and Marsh
- Highland Shores Riparian Woodlands and Marsh
- Highlands Forest and Wetlands
- Underwood Road Prairie
- Armand Bayou Coastal Prairie Potholes
- Bay Ridge Marsh
- Clear Creek Riparian Woodlands
- Cedar Bayou Upper Reaches
- South Pasadena Coastal Prairie

Harris County Public Infrastructure Department Engineering Division. 2003. Harris County Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space, Phase 2. Prepared by Bricker + Cannady Architects in conjunction with Clark Condon Associates, Gelb Consulting Group, and Klotz Associates, Inc.

Some of the goals of the Harris County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan are to: 1) develop and enhance a balanced network of parks and facilities to serve the passive and active needs of the citizens of Harris County; 2) develop passive recreation within existing facilities, through acquisition of new land or through interlocal agreements with municipalities or

organizations, such as the Harris County Flood Control District; and 3) continually identify, protect, and preserve quality natural open spaces for unstructured recreational activities, inherent aesthetic value and protection of valuable ecosystems. The County proposes to acquire 2,000 acres of land by 2008 and an additional 2,400 by 2020. TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the plan are: coastal wetlands, riparian zones, and public access and recreation areas. The Master Plan Phase 2 can be found at http://www.eng.hctx.net/pdf/park_plan_2.pdf.

Houston Parks Board. 2010. Bayou Greenway Initiative.
Using the latest GIS tools, the Houston Parks Board has mapped land parcels adjacent to each bayou, determined what is under public control and the location of trails, established land acquisition and improvement costs, and has already obtained several properties. TCELCP priority lands include: coastal wetlands, riparian zones, and public access and recreation areas. The Initiative is at http://www.houstonparksboard.org/projects/bayou_greenways_initiative.php.

Laible, Michael. 2003. Seabrook Wetland Conservation Plan. 44 pp.
The plan was developed using the GLO's Texas Coastal Wetlands: A Handbook for Local Governments as a model. The purpose of the Plan is to present a balanced approach to conserving Seabrook's unique coastal wetland resources, while promoting economic growth and improving the quality of life for its residents. This plan will also serve as a model for other coastal communities and help insure the health and diversity of the Galveston Bay estuary. The goals of the Plan are to: 1) protect top priority sites; 2) minimize coastal wetland loss and promote replacement and enhancement of degraded coastal wetlands; 3) raise awareness of residents, land owners, and the development community; and 4) encourage ecotourism.
Sites to be acquired when funding becomes available, include:

- North Red Bluff
- Meyer Street East Lagoon
- Hester-Central City Greenbelt
- North Red Bluff
- Meyer Street-East Lagoon Natural Area
- Hester-Central City Greenbelt
- Clear Lake Marshland Natural Area
- Galveston Bay Open Space
- Red Bluff-Taylor Lake Open Space
- Friendship Open Space
- Repsdorph Natural Area
- South NASA Road One Open Space
- West Central Open Space/Greenbelt

The sites are selected to protect open space that contains coastal wetlands and adjacent uplands from being overdeveloped. A description of the Plan can be found at http://labs.tdl.org/tamug/handle/123456789/26353. Other TCELCP priority lands and values to be protected are: riparian zones and public access and recreation areas.

Smith, E. H. and John Wood. 2003. Identification of Potential Conservation, Restoration, and Enhancement Sites. Publication CBBEP-49, Project Number 0319. 45 pp.
The Coastal Bend Bays Plan calls for identifying habitat types that are most at risk and to assist with efforts to conserve the habitats. Twenty potential wetland conservation project sites were

identified. A project advisory committee selected seven potential wetland conservation project areas, and project descriptions were generated for each site. Data generated will be stored on the CBBEP GIS for use in making informed decisions regarding individual projects and the development of overall conservation and public access goals. A copy of the report can be found at http://www.cbbep.org/publications/publications.html#special.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, coastal shore areas, tidal sand and mud flats, and coastal barriers.

Texas Coastal Watershed Program. 2002. Clear Creek Watershed Wetland Habitat Atlas. A Cooperative Effort of the Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Texas Sea Grant, Texas Cooperative Extension Service, and TPWD. 15 pp.

This wetland atlas was developed as an aid for public officials and others within the Clear Creek Watershed of the Houston area to make informed choices about habitat preservation. CELCP priority land types and values referenced in the document include: prairie potholes-pimple mound complexes and other wet prairies (coastal prairie), riparian forests and coastal flatwoods (coastal wetlands), and estuarine wetlands influenced by tides, including submerged aquatic vegetation. Wetland types are not prioritized; however, the fact that they are shown on the maps suggests these areas are important ecologically. The maps (http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/urban-nature/geospatial/atlas.htm) are the result of aerial photo interpretation, with limited ground truthing.

Texas General Land Office. 2003. Texas Beach & Bay Access Guide, Second Edition. Prepared by the Texas General Land Office, funded in part through the Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program of the Surface Transportation Program managed by the Texas Department of Transportation for the Federal Highways Administration. 149 pp.

This guide is designed to help users locate coastal public access sites, National Wildlife Refuges, and Wildlife Management Areas. The public access sites may provide either direct or indirect access to the Gulf coast or bay. The guide highlights five areas: Southeast Texas; Houston-Galveston; the Golden Crescent; the Coastal Bend; and the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The guide can be found at http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/access/index.html. GIS information on beach access points and boat ramps is also available at www.glo.state.tx.us/gisdata/gisdata.html. Lands that augment public access are a TCELCP priority.

____ 1990s. Habitat Priority Protection Area Layer. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Protection Division, Austin, TX.

The purpose of the Habitat Priority Protection Area Layer is to aid oil spill responders in establishing priorities for shoreline protection and facility contingency plans. Several hundred areas on or near the coast were evaluated for their ecological significance and the presence of sensitive resources. The GLO and TPWD conducted about a dozen workshops with representatives from state and federal agencies, academic institutions, non-government organizations, commercial fishermen and guides, and environmental consultants to define the polygonal areas to be protected from oil and to document their significance. Using a consensus approach, each polygonal area was ranked by a team of local stakeholders as LOW, MEDIUM,

HIGH, VERY HIGH, or no value in each of three resource categories: 1) bird/wildlife habitat; 2) fish/shellfish habitat; and 3) wetland quality. A VERY HIGH ranking was given only to polygonal areas with some unique significance, e.g., critical habitat for an endangered species. Some polygons ranked high in one or more categories but low or no value in others. These rankings are subjective but were based on the testimony of many knowledgeable individuals. Maps of priority protection areas can be found at http://www.glo.state.tx.us/gisdata/jpgs/ppa1.jpg.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, and tidal sand and mud flats.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. unknown date. Texas Gulf Ecological Management Sites. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin, TX. http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/conservation/txgems/

A Gulf Ecological Management Site (GEMS) is a geographic area that has special ecological significance to the continued production of fish, wildlife and other natural resources or that represents unique habitats. There are 24 GEMS sites in Texas.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: conservation lands that expand existing protected areas.

The Trust for Public Land, 2007, West Galveston Island Greenprint for Growth. The Trust for Public Land, Houston Galveston Office, Houston, TX. 31 pp. http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=21160&folder_id=264

The Trust for Public Land worked with the City of Galveston to conduct the conservation visioning process, known as "greenprinting," for the West End. The Trust developed a map of areas within which land conservation could best achieve community-identified goals. TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, conservation lands that support protection of submerged aquatic vegetation, coastal shore areas and barriers, and public access and recreation.

The University of Texas at Austin, Marine Science Institute. 2006. Final Texas NERR Management Plan. In: Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, Federal Approval of the Texas National Estuarine Research Reserve and Management Plan: The Mission-Aransas Estuary. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, National Ocean Service, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, Estuarine Research Division. 129 pp.

This management plan describes how the MA-NERR will be managed by the University of Texas at Austin, Marine Science Institute (MSI). This management plan is a compilation of subject specific plans that describe the management of the Reserve. A boundaries/acquisition plan (Objective 3-2) describes the criteria, description, and rationale of the boundary, as well as core and buffer areas, and future acquisitions/boundary expansion opportunities. The boundaries/acquisition plan identifies the following coastal wetland and watershed habitats, including adjacent uplands, which are likely to be identified as key acquisition areas:

- Shorelines along St. Charles Bay
- Shorelines along Port Bay

- Aransas River delta
- Mission River corridor

Future acquisition priorities for the MA-NERR also include key coastal shore areas, watersheds, which may include riparian zones, and adjacent uplands. The final management plan for the MA-NERR is at http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov/Doc/PDF/Reserve/MAR_MgmtPlan.pdf.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1981. Wetlands Preservation Program Texas Gulf Coast, Category 8. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM. 36 pp.

The Director of the USFWS on January 20, 1976, set forth new policy guidance and procedures for implementing the Migratory Bird Land Acquisition Program for the next 10-15 years. This 1981 document is an update of the original 1977-concept plan. The acquisition program, outlined for the USFWS, represents only a small part of total habitat preservation needs for waterfowl. A national priority system is a part of the program, which will guide the acquisition efforts. The program does not include habitat preservation specifically for migratory bird species, other than waterfowl, although numerous other species will benefit. This plan has been prepared as a partial fulfillment of the Migratory Bird Land Acquisition Program for the Texas Gulf Coast. Some of these areas have already been acquired and are currently a part of a state park or wildlife management area or a federal refuge. Many of the coastal wetland, tidal sand and mudflats, or coastal prairie habitats are valuable to threatened/endangered species. Some are threatened by near-term or imminent destruction.

Texas Gulf Coast areas of ecological concern include:

- Redhead Ridge Marsh in Cameron County
- West Laguna Marsh in Cameron County
- King Ranch complex in Kenedy County
- Nueces River Marsh in Nueces County
- McCampbell Slough in San Patricio County
- San Jose Island Marsh in Aransas County
- Port Bay Marsh in Aransas County
- Welder Flats Marsh in Calhoun County
- Guadalupe River Bottom Marsh in Calhoun County
- Swan Lake Marsh in Calhoun County
- Buttermilk-Sartwelle marsh in Matagorda County
- Mad Island Marsh in Matagorda County
- Big Boggy Marsh in Matagorda County
- Smith Marsh in Matagorda County
- Perry Marsh in Brazoria County
- Slop Bowl Marsh in Brazoria County
- Halls Bayou Marsh in Galveston County
- Lake Surprise in Chambers County
- Robinson Bayou Marsh in Chambers County
- Oyster Bayou Marsh in Chambers County
- Sea Rim Marsh in Jefferson County
- McFaddin Marsh in Jefferson County

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, coastal prairies, riparian zones, public access and recreation areas, special hazard areas and conservation lands that expand existing protected areas.

____ 1985a. Texas Bottomland Hardwood Preservation Program, Category 3. U.S. Department of the Interior Final Concept Plan. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, NM. 378 pp.

The study area is bounded by the Sabine River and the Texas-Louisiana border to the east, the Red River to the north, the Gulf of Mexico and the coastal plain to the south, and a staggered line to the west along the Brazos, Trinity, Sabine, Sulphur, and Red River systems. Recent efforts have been made to establish an updated habitat preservation strategy for waterfowl. As a result of efforts of an interdisciplinary team of waterfowl biologists, a draft report made 44 recommendations concerning habitat strategy for nine waterfowl species identified as national species of special emphasis. This report recommends that 300,000 acres of easements be obtained to protect these habitats and their waterfowl resources. A total of 62 bottomland areas are proposed for consideration within the area of ecological concern. The purpose of this program is to identify and seek methods for preserving as much of the remaining bottomland habitats of east Texas as possible.

Coastal wetland areas identified within the TCELCP boundary are Blue Elbow Swamp and North Orange County Bottom in Orange County and Giant Palmetto on the Hardin/Jefferson county line. Additional TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal prairies, riparian zones, public access and recreation areas, and special hazard areas.

____ 1991. Emergency Wetlands Resources Act: Region 2 Wetlands Regional Concept Plan. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2, Albuquerque, NM. 186 pp.

The purpose of this regional concept plan is to review the coastal wetland resources in the region and produce a list of wetlands that should be given priority consideration for federal and state acquisition. This Plan provides the framework, criteria, and guidance for identifying wetlands warranting priority attention for federal and state acquisition using Land and Water Conservation Funds. The Regional Plans are to assure that national priorities for wetlands acquisition are addressed within each State. Wetlands in Texas can broadly be grouped into: (1) Gulf coast salt and freshwater marshes; (2) bottomland hardwood forests in the river valleys of East Texas; (3) Playa lakes of the panhandle; (4) freshwater springs and their headwater streams of central and southwest Texas; (5) West Texas riparian areas; and (6) coastal pothole wetlands.

Priority wetlands in the TCELCP boundary include:

- Middleton Marsh in Chambers County
- Horseshoe Marsh in Chambers County
- Lower Marsh in Chambers County
- Robinson Bayou Marsh in Chambers County
- Pierce Marsh in Galveston County
- Delhomme Marsh in Chambers County
- Smith Marsh in Chambers County
- Baer Ranch in Matagorda County

- Freshwater Lake in Brazoria County
- Blue Elbow Swamp in Orange County
- Rancho la Bahia in Calhoun County
- Lamar Peninsula in Aransas County
- McCampbell's Slough in Aransas County
- Playa del Rio in Cameron County
- Welder Flats Marsh in Calhoun County
- Guadalupe River Bottom in Calhoun County
- Hoskins Mound in Brazoria County
- King Ranch et al complex in several counties
- San Jose Island marshes in Aransas County
- Baffin Bay complex in Kleberg County
- Nueces River in several counties
- Womack Ranch in Victoria County

Wetlands assessment threshold criteria in this plan focus on wetland types, functions and values, and threats. To qualify for acquisition consideration, a wetland site must: (1) include predominantly (50 percent or greater) wetland types which are rare or declining in the ecoregion; (2) be threatened with loss and/or degradation; and (3) offer important values to society in two identifiable functional categories.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include not only coastal wetlands, but also tidal sand and mud flats, coastal prairies, and riparian zones.

____ 1998. Final Habitat Stewardship Program Texas Chenier Plain. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Division of Refuges and Wildlife. Albuquerque, NM. 171 pp.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners, including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, are promoting active stewardship of important coastal wetland and coastal prairie habitats on approximately 185,555 acres in 15 designated focus areas in the Texas Chenier Plain. These include habitats in the:

- Trinity Delta
- East of High Island area
- Middleton Prairie
- North Spindletop Marsh
- South Spindletop Marsh
- Willow Slough Marsh
- Oyster Bayou Marsh
- Robinson Bayou
- Taylor's Bayou
- Elm Bayou
- Bolivar Peninsula
- Lower Marsh
- Gordy Marsh
- Rhodair Gully
- North of Texas Point

- South Spindletop Marsh

Between the mid-1960s and the late-1980s, it is estimated that wetlands in the project area declined by 16 percent or approximately 103,000 acres. Losses are attributed to subsidence, saltwater intrusion, erosion, construction of canals and reservoirs, deposition of dredged material, and agricultural conversion. The USFWS is proposing that conservation of the biological resources in the 15 focus areas be accomplished through a variety of public and private programs, including technical assistance, cooperative agreements, leases, conservation easements, and fee-title purchase available through federal and state agencies and other groups.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, riparian zones, and coastal shore areas.

____ 1999. Lower Trinity River Floodplain Habitat Stewardship Program. Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 41 pp.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing the lower Trinity River Floodplain Habitat Stewardship Program on approximately 105,000 acres of selected, important coastal wetland and riparian zone habitats along the lower Trinity River floodplain, south of the Lake Livingston Reservoir. This action is a comprehensive and coordinated effort to ensure long-term stewardship of biological resources in the project area.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, riparian zones, and coastal shore areas.

<u>Planning Documents</u>

Armand Bayou Watershed Partnership. 2005. Armand Bayou Watershed Plan: Phase I. A report of the Coastal Coordination Council, pursuant to NOAA award no. NA170Z1140. 119 pp.

This Phase I of the Armand Bayou Watershed Plan discusses the current state of the watershed, current management programs and practices, and current tools and strategies available for achieving the mission of the Armand Bayou Watershed Partnership, that is "to protect, preserve and enhance the ecological integrity of the Armand Bayou watershed while improving the quality of life in our communities." Phase II will address implementation of the Partnership's goals. Among the tools mentioned for protecting the ecological integrity of the watershed is the acquisition or preservation of habitats or open space. Specific sites are not described in the plan. TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, coastal prairies, riparian zones, and habitats for endangered species. A copy of the Plan can be found at http://www.armandbayou.org/.

City of Corpus Christi. 1992. The Preservation Plan. Development Services Department, City of Corpus Christi.

The City of Corpus Christi Preservation Plan was approved by City Council in March 1992. It is an element of the Comprehensive Plan, which provides overall guidance for land development decisions regarding zoning, platting, land use, annexation, transportation, economic development, public services, capital improvement programming, and the environment throughout the city. The purpose of the Preservation Plan is to formulate strategies that will

ensure the City of Corpus Christi protects its significant areas, sites, structures and buildings of historical character and that its citizens experience a high quality of life. The Plan offers goals and objectives the City should work toward in preserving its resources.
Preservation efforts take the form of historical restorations and protective "HC" Historical Cultural zoning of buildings, sites and objects; maintenance of commercial and residential character through enforcement of the building code, zoning ordinance, platting ordinance; and protecting the environment by adhering to Federal regulations. The plan is described at http://www.cctexas.com/?fuseaction=main.view&page=480.

TCELP priority lands and values referenced in the plan include: coastal historic areas.

____. 1997. Oso Parkway Plan: A Specific Area Plan—an Element of the Comprehensive Plan. City of Corpus Christi Department of Planning. 17 pp.

The goals and objectives of the Oso Parkway Plan are to conserve the natural environment, create recreational opportunities consistent with the environment, preserve archaeological resources, lessen the impact of storm water runoff on adjacent urban development, and provide public access to the Cayo Del Oso and Oso Creek. The City of Corpus Christi Policy Statements recommends preservation of public access and protection of habitats, including coastal wetlands and riparian zones. In 1980, at the request of the City of Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG), the Oso was included in the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan. In 1983, the CBCOG adopted a resolution supporting the acquisition of land for open space preservation. The Plan can be found at http://www.cctexas.com/?fuseaction=main.view&page=480.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the plan include: coastal wetlands, public access and recreation, and riparian areas.

Galveston Bay National Estuary Program. 1995. The Galveston Bay Plan: The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the Galveston Bay Ecosystem. A Publication of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. GBNEP-49. Austin, TX. 457 pp.

Galveston Bay habitats have been lost or reduced in quality by many processes, including erosion, subsidence, conversion to agriculture, urban development, and dredging and filling activities. Action HP-1 is to restore, create, and protect coastal wetlands. An objective of the program is to place 50,000 acres of wetland habitats in public ownership over the next 20 years. A copy of the Plan can be found at http://gbic.tamug.edu/theplan.html.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands.

Galveston County Department of Parks and Senior Services. 2003. Galveston County, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

Among the Master Plan goals of the County are to “acquire, protect, and preserve open space, natural resource areas, and wildlife habitat within Galveston County for the benefit of current and future residents.” In addition, quality parks and recreation opportunities are to be provided geographically, so that they “fairly serve residents of all ages and socioeconomic status.” TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: public access and recreation areas, coastal barriers, and habitats for threatened and

endangered species. A summary of the Master Plan is at http://www.galvestonparks-seniors.org/aboutus/au_masterplan.asp.

Natural Area Preservation Association and Environmental Defense. No date. Conservation Priorities for Texas: A Guide to Ten Threatened Natural Areas in the Lone Star State. 17 pp.

"This document focuses on ten special places, spread throughout Texas, that should demand our attention and action. These ten areas include significant scenic features, biological communities, areas of geologic uniqueness, and landscapes that helped to shape our identity." The ten areas are longleaf pine forests and savannas, East Texas hardwood forests, East Texas bogs, tallgrass prairies, lower Rio Grande Valley brush habitats, Hill Country canyon forests, Hill country rivers and springs, Llano Uplift granite country, Panhandle playa lakes, and other unique plant habitats. Conservation priorities include these areas within the TCELCP boundary:

- Tall grass prairie, including coastal prairies
- Rio Grande Valley brush habitats, including riparian zones and coastal wetlands.

Nature Conservancy of Texas. 2001a. Conservation Plan for the Texas Portion of the Laguna Madre. 52 pp.

One purpose of this plan is to identify remaining needs that the TNC can effectively address, either singly or in partnership. During the planning process, the TNC worked with resource managers, researchers, policy experts, and citizens to develop a shared vision for the conservation area and a suite of goals and strategies that will help reach that vision. This document outlines that planning process and its outcome.
Conservation elements include:

- Tamaulipan thornscrub system
- Coastal sandplain system
- Ocelot
- Barrier islands
- Hypersaline laguna and seagrasses
- Colonial waterbird guild
- Shorebird guild

The viability and biodiversity health of each of the conservation elements varies from fair to very good. Threats to the elements include incompatible development, grazing, and land management, non-native species, fire suppression, dredging, off-road vehicles, incompatible beach maintenance and recreational use, brown and red tides, sediment deprivation, non-point source pollution, oil and gas exploration/production, and conversion to agriculture. Threats rank from low to very high. The Nature Conservancy of Texas fact sheets and publications, including a fact sheet on the Laguna Madre, can be found at http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/texas/about/art25251.html. TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the plan include: coastal wetlands, coastal barriers, coastal prairies, conservation lands that support protection of submerged aquatic vegetation, and tidal sand and mud flats.

____ 2001b. Site Conservation Plan for the Mustang Island Site. 81 pp.

"The Mustang Island Site will support a healthy coastal ecosystem and local economy. Successful conservation on the site will be defined by a reasonable mix of residential amenities

and ecologically sensitive tourism enterprises, along with undisturbed open space that supports the area's many native plant and animal communities. The Nature Conservancy will build strong partnerships with local conservation and citizen action groups, academic facilities, and government agencies to facilitate conservation of the element habitats within the site, namely the gulf beach, rookery island, intertidal marshes and windtidal flats, island prairies, and freshwater wetlands."
TCELCP conservation priorities referenced in the plan include:

- Gulf beaches (part of the coastal barrier complex)
- Island prairies (coastal prairies)
- Intertidal marshes and windtidal flats (coastal wetlands and tidal sand and mud flats)
- Freshwater and brackish wetlands (coastal wetlands)
- Washover passes (part of the coastal barrier complex)
- Rookery islands

Threats include off-road vehicles, dredging, boating, and residential and resort development.

____ 2002. The Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregional Conservation Plan, Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregional Planning Team. The Nature Conservancy, San Antonio, TX. 27 pp.

The Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregion includes two states and part of Mexico. A total of 341 conservation elements were selected and over 1,800 element occurrence records were used in the selection of conservation areas. Eighty-six conservation areas were also delineated, including 36 in Texas. Conservation areas included 36% of the region. Within the ecoregions, conservation areas are designed to conserve conservation elements, defined as all viable native community types and vulnerable native species.
(http://conserveonline.org/docs/2003/06/GCPM_Ecoregional_Conservation_Plan.pdf)
Portfolios include:
Marine Conservation Areas
High priority marine areas

- Lower Laguna Madre
- Redfish Bay

Terrestrial Conservation Areas
Freshwater Conservation Areas

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the plan include coastal wetlands and coastal prairies.

____ unknown date. Columbia Bottomlands Conservation Plan: Executive Summary. 2 pp.

The Columbia Bottomlands, also known as Austin's Woods, span over a million acres and is part of the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Ecoregion. The Bottomlands form a network of wetlands, prairies, and bottomland hardwood forests along three major river systems: the Brazos, San Bernard, and Colorado. The Bottomlands serve as important feeding and resting areas for neotropical songbirds during migration.
Conservation priorities include:

- Protecting bottomland hardwood forest habitats;
- Ensuring that the area continues to support neotropical migratory songbirds; and
- Providing landowners with tools for conserving native habitats.

Threats to the Bottomlands include development and water quality and quantity problems.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the plan include coastal wetlands, coastal prairies, and riparian zones.

Smith, E. H., and S. J. Dilworth. 1999. Mission/Aransas Watershed Wetland Conservation Plan. Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through a competitive grant awarded to the Texas General Land Office. 99 pp.

The handbook, Texas Coastal Wetlands: A Handbook for Local Governments (Texas General Land Office, 2002), served as the framework for local governments to develop a regional wetland conservation plan, including the local wetlands plan for the Mission/Aransas Watershed. The goal of this local plan was to develop a plan at a regional level with both local government and public input to provide a planning tool for future development. Development of this local wetland conservation plan demonstrates the value of asserting local control in managing coastal wetlands. The Mission/Aransas wetland conservation plan contains objectives for wetland monitoring, stewardship, restoration, and protection, along with local case studies illustrating the objectives. A copy of the Plan can be found at http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/pubs.html. TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands and riparian zones in the Mission/Aransas River watersheds in Refugio, Aransas, and San Patricio counties.

Smith, E. H., S. J. Dilworth, John Wood, A. E. Koltermann, Rick Hay, Dan Moulton, and Warren Pulich. 2002. Riparian Habitat Corridor Characterization in the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program Area. Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Center for Coastal Studies. 200 pp.

The conservation objective of this report is to "conserve riparian habitats in the Texas Coastal Bend through acquisition, conservation easements, and riparian management plans." The report recommends developing landowner riparian management groups within each rural watershed that would develop guidelines to conserve contiguous corridors of riparian habitats, including coastal wetlands, coastal prairies, and adjacent uplands, that are consistent with sustainable use of the upland areas. In urban areas, where habitat clearing has fragmented riparian corridors, sites can be either purchased for conservation or placed under conservation easements. For nearly all sites within the different basins or watersheds (Copano, Nueces Bay, Oso Bay, upper, middle, and lower Baffin Bay, and others), conservation easements are one of the conservation options. Riparian management plans for each watershed are needed to provide justification of and methodology for conserving riparian habitats. This publication is available through the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (http://www.cbbep.org/publications/publications.html).

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: riparian zones, coastal wetlands, and coastal prairies.

Texas General Land Office. 1996. Texas Coastal Management Program: Final Environmental Impact Statement. Prepared by: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management and State of Texas, Coastal Coordination Council. variable pagination.

This document is a comprehensive management plan for coastal land and water use activities. It consists of numerous policies on diverse management issues, which are administered under Texas laws. The TCMP either promotes the beneficial use of CNRAs, prevents their impairment, or manages major activities that substantially affect the resources. The Coastal Coordination Council designated 16 CNRAs requiring special management, under the TCMP. Goals for the CMP can also be found at 31 TAC Chapter 501.12 (http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/cmp.html). Seven of the 16 CNRAs to be protected by the CMP are also priority lands and values to be protected under the TCELCP. TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, tidal sand and mud flats, coastal shore areas, critical dune areas, special hazard areas, coastal historic areas, and coastal barriers.

____ 1995. A Coastal Wetlands Acquisition Plan for Texas. Texas General Land Office, Coastal Management Program. Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, Wetlands Protection State Development, Contract CD996083-01-0. 29 pp.

The Coastal Wetlands Acquisition Plan satisfies the State-owned Wetland Conservation Plan and the Coastal Wetland Acquisition Act by: complementing existing wetland preservation programs; creating the criteria and guidance for identifying and prioritizing coastal wetlands for state acquisition; identifying and ranking general coastal wetland categories by region for acquisition; identifying current and potential new funding sources for acquisition; and helping satisfy the overall goal of no net loss of state-owned, coastal wetlands.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. 1988. The Texas Wetlands Plan, Addendum to the 1985 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. 35 pp.

The Texas Wetlands Plan is an addendum to the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan, the State's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. It is required for Texas to remain eligible to receive federal Land and Water Conservation Fund monies in response to the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The plan contains sections on Texas wetlands, federal, state and local programs affecting wetlands, wetland management needs in Texas, and recommendations for action.

____ 1995. The Texas Wetlands Plan: Addendum to the 1995 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Resource Protection Division, Austin, TX. 55 pp.

"The Texas Wetlands Plan (1995) is a revision of the 1988 addendum to the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TORP), the State's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. A wetlands plan is required for Texas to qualify for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies in response to the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. LWCF monies are provided to state and federal agencies to assist in acquiring and developing federal, state, and local government public outdoor recreation areas." The Plan calls for identifying significant coastal wetlands that can be protected by public and private conservation efforts. A copy of the Plan can be found at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/habitats/wetland/publications/conservation_plan.phtml.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands.

____ 2000. Seagrass Conservation Plan for Texas. Sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas General Land Office, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Galveston Bay Estuary Program, and the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program. Published by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Resource Protection Division, Austin, TX. 79 pp.

The focus of this planning document for seagrasses (submerged aquatic vegetation) is research, management, environmental awareness through education and public outreach, and implementation of seagrass plan objectives. A copy of the Plan can be found at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/habitats/seagrass/conservation.phtml.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: conservation lands that support protection of submerged aquatic vegetation (a CNRA in the TCMP).

____ 2005. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin, TX. 133 pp.

This Plan identifies significant conservation and recreation needs and lists strategies and goals. The Plan was written to guide the Department for the next 10 years in conserving the state's natural and historic heritage and in providing public access to the outdoors.
Conservation priorities include:

- Native prairie and grasslands, including coastal prairies
- Riparian habitats, including riparian zones and coastal wetlands
- Wetlands
- Springs and aquifers
- Public access sites

A priority ecoregional analysis showed that native prairies and grasslands and riparian habitats that cross ecoregion boundaries are the most important wildlife habitats, contain the highest numbers of rare species, and are often the most threatened. These habitats will be a future priority for the TPWD. Important aquatic habitats for conservation are springs and aquifers and wetlands. Several state parks and wildlife management areas (GEMS) are mentioned as priorities for expansion, and the TPWD "will add additional land for public use to priority state parks and wildlife management areas, as opportunities arise." The plan also mentions that the TPWD will work with local communities and other agencies to acquire and manage access points along rivers and lakes. Two of the major conservation and recreation goals of the Plan are to: 1) improve access to the outdoors by opening a minimum of four, 5,000 acre or larger state parks near major urban centers; and 2) identify opportunities for adding land to existing state parks and wildlife management areas consistent with the plan. A copy of the Plan can be found at http://lighthouse.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/pwd_pl_e0100_0867/tpwd_roles/parks_wmas/.

TCELCP priority lands and values referenced in the document include: coastal wetlands, coastal prairies, public access and recreation, riparian areas, coastal historic areas, and conservation lands that expand GEMS.

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. 1998. Coastal Bend Bays Plan to Conserve and Manage the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program. CBBEP-1. Austin, TX. 87 pp.

A key goal of the Coastal Bend Bays Plan is to "increase and preserve the quantity, quality, and diversity of habitats and living resources" within and adjacent to Coastal Bend bays and estuaries. Action HLR-1 is to preserve functional, natural habitats of all major types, including TCELCP priority lands and values such as coastal wetlands, tidal sand and mud flats, submerged aquatic vegetation (seagrasses), barrier islands, riparian zones, oyster and serpulid worm reefs, and others. A copy of the Plan can be found at http://www.cbbep.org/publications/publications.html#special.

IV. STATE PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE TCELCP

Lead State Agency

The lead state agency for implementing the TCELCP is the GLO. The GLO is also the lead agency for the state's CMP. As the lead state agency, the GLO will be responsible for soliciting projects that are consistent with the goals of the TCELCP, working in conjunction with a review team to prioritize the projects for funding based of state criteria, and nominating projects to the national selection process. The GLO will also be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of and in a manner consistent with the TCELCP. The GLO will not hold title or conservation easements to project properties. As the designated grant recipient, the GLO will allocate sub-awards to other state agencies or to local governments that lie within the TCELCP boundary.

Agencies Eligible to Receive Funds and Hold Title to TCELCP Property

State agencies that are eligible to receive funds under the program, hold title and manage land for conservation purposes, include the Department of Agriculture, TCEQ, TPWD (Parks and Wildlife Commission), Texas Forest Service, Railroad Commission, Natural Resource Conservation Commission, the Soil and Water Conservation Board, and the GLO. Regional groups that can hold title to land for conservation purposes are the Brazos, Lower Colorado, Sabine, Guadalupe-Blanco, and Trinity River Authorities. River authorities are quasi-state agencies that were created by the Texas Legislature as conservation and reclamation districts with the responsibility of controlling, storing, preserving, and distributing waters within river basins. Title or other interests in the acquired property will be held in perpetuity for the purpose of conservation. Agencies that hold title to lands acquired with CELCP funds must manage lands in a manner consistent with the CELCP Guidelines regarding long-term uses, particularly for any agency whose mission includes managing working lands or facilities.

Any property acquired with CELCP funds must have a long-term stewardship or management plan that addresses costs of long-term operations, maintenance, and safety needs related to the property, as well as existing and proposed activities/uses envisioned. Non-governmental

organizations whose primary mission is to acquire and manage land for conservation purposes may hold title to in-kind match properties.

Project Nomination Process

Upon notification from NOAA of the competitive CELCP funding opportunity for a particular fiscal year, the GLO will prepare and distribute a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit project applications from qualified entities. The RFP will be sent to all state environmental agencies with a potential interest in using CELCP funds, coastal regional planning agencies, land trusts, local governments in the 18 coastal counties, and other interested parties. The RFP will also be posted on the GLO, TPWD, and Texas NERR web pages.

The RFP will include federal project eligibility criteria as well as specific state evaluation criteria that will be used by a review committee to rank and prioritize prospective projects. General state eligibility criteria will include the following:

- Only public entities are eligible to apply for CELCP grants.
- The property to be acquired is located in one or more of the coastal counties shown in figure 1. The property may encompass two or more communities, as long as all the communities support the project and the property is held by a grant recipient with authority to hold title in all jurisdictions involved in the project (although, interests in the property may be held by more than one public entity).
- The property to be acquired will support or buffer one or more of the lands or values or project areas to be protected.
- The project application includes a comprehensive management plan for effective stewardship and protection of the property to be acquired.
- The property acquisition can be completed in a reasonable time frame, with no known major obstacles. The standard award period for CELCP grants is up to 18 months. A grant period of greater than 18 months, up to a maximum of three years, would only be granted, if circumstances warrant, such as difficulties unforeseen at the time of application.
- A willing buyer and a willing seller relationship exists.
- The non-federal 1:1 cost-share ratio for the project can be confirmed.
- The acquisition of real property, or interests therein, will be by fee title or easement.
- Title or other interests in the acquired property will provide conservation in perpetuity.
- The project will provide for access by the general public, or other public benefit as appropriate, and be consistent with resource protection.

A project proposal will only be considered for funding for the fiscal year listed in the RFP. A project proposal that includes several separate and distinct phases may be submitted in phases, but each phase will compete with all other proposals in a given fiscal year.

V. STATE REVIEW AND PRIORITIZATION

Following the application submittal deadline, a TCELCP proposal review committee will be established to review and rank proposals that have met the general project eligibility criteria. Committee members will be representatives from the GLO, TPWD, TCMP, and the TNERR, and may also include representatives from the Texas Sea Grant, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Galveston Bay or Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Programs, and others, as needed.

Project proposals that have met the general project eligibility criteria will be ranked according to the following two-step process.

Step 1:

The project must meet all the following threshold criteria:

- The project can be completed in three years. The standard award period for CELCP grants is up to 18 months. A grant period of greater than 18 months, up to a maximum of three years, would only be granted through extension, if circumstances warrant, such as difficulties unforeseen at the time of application.
- Justification for the project demonstrates the need for funding.
- The project has been coordinated with appropriate local, state, and federal resource agencies and programs to ensure consistency, to the greatest extent practicable.
- The applicant is a public entity and proposes to manage the property, over the long-term, in a manner consistent with the TCELCP.
- The applicant has demonstrated public involvement and support for the purchase of the project property.
- The property to be acquired will support or buffer one or more of the lands or values or project areas to be protected.
- The project directly advances and is consistent with the goals, objectives, or implementation of the TCMP, NERR management plans, Estuary Program plans, national objectives of the CZMA, or a regional or state watershed protection plan.

Step 2:

Project applications that have met all the threshold criteria under Step 1 will be scored according to the following point system. Not all characteristics in each scoring category are required. Projects with the highest scores will be selected.

Ecological/Conservation Values (up to 35 points)

The property to be acquired contains the TCELCP priorities and is located in a project area, for example:

- Has a high conservation/ecological value (diversity and condition).
- Supports rare, exceptional or uncommon habitats (biological uniqueness).
- Contains habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species.
- Has a demonstrable link to water quality and quantity maintenance or improvement.
- Contributes to ecological corridor connections.

- Is currently in a desired state consistent with the intended purpose, and surrounding land uses are compatible with long-term conservation of the site's values.
- Offers demonstrable opportunity for restoration/enhancement.

Threat of Conversion (up to 20 points)

- The proposed tract is threatened with conversion from its natural state to other uses.
- The proposed tract has development potential.
- Development plans have been approved by local governmental and/or regulatory agencies.
- The property is on the market.

Recreational/Historical/Aesthetic Values (up to 15 points)

The location of the property to be acquired:

- Enhances existing recreational infrastructure.
- Provides/enhances opportunity for public access to coastal resources, particularly in areas of determined need.
- Contains national historical, cultural or archaeological features or is listed as a historical landmark with the Texas Historical Commission.
- Has high aesthetic value; i.e. scenic vistas abundant on site throughout the year.

Stewardship and Management (up to 15 points)

The applicant can:

- Provide effective management of the property.
- Provide effective enforcement to manage trespass, overuse, vandalism, and safety hazards on the property, and will take the necessary actions to rectify such problems.
- Provide regular monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the management plan.
- Perform administrative duties in a timely and responsible manner.
- Demonstrate the capacity and experience to effectively execute the land transaction consistent with CELCP guidelines.
- Provide financial resources to ensure long-term stewardship of the property.

Planning Consistency (up to 10 points)

The project **contributes to multiple conservation plans or programs, for example**:

- Implements and is consistent with a local, regional, or state plan, including the CMP and/or the NERR management plan.
- Has potential for future expansion.
- Has an upland buffer to protect ecological/conservation value.
- Is within or contiguous to lands already identified as priority acquisition or already permanently protected by a state or local entity.

Multi-community and/or Partnership Application (up to 5 points)

- The project location encompasses two or more communities or states. In the case of multi-community or state projects, a lead community or state will be determined to help

administer and manage the projects. All communities or states involved must be in support of the project.

- A diverse number of organizations support the project acquisition.

VI. INFORMATION REQUIRED IN APPLICATIONS TO NOAA

Information on funding opportunities for the CELCP can be found at the GLO (http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/funding/federalfunding.html#CELCP) and NOAA (http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/celcp_fundingop.html) websites. Applications submitted to NOAA for the national competitive process must contain the first four bulleted items in the list below. The remaining bulleted items will be required at the time a final grant application is submitted, if not provided earlier. Note that NOAA's application requirements are subject to change; interested applicants should consult the Federal Funding Opportunity notice for a given fiscal year for complete requirements.

- A completed and signed NOAA Project Application Checklist, which will be available as an appendix of the federal funding opportunity.

- A project description that describes:
  - The nature of the project, including acreage and types of habitats or land values to be protected, the legal rights to be acquired, how the funds will be used, and conversion threats to the property, as well as a description of same characteristics for any property that will be used as match;
  - How the proposed project meets the state and national criteria and its expected benefits, in terms of coastal and estuarine land conservation;
  - Any pre-existing uses of the property, the nature of those uses, and whether those uses will continue after acquisition;
  - Discrete benchmarks for completing the project within a specified time period. The benchmarks should indicate whether the project is "ready to go," has any deadlines associated with it, and whether the project is likely to be completed within the award period;
  - The types of activities that would be allowed on the land and a strategy for long-term stewardship, including support for long-term operations, such as maintenance or enforcement against illegal uses; and
  - Whether the project has been submitted in application for other sources of federal funding, and if so, which federal program and year.

- Project location maps that include:
  - A map of the state or county, showing the general location of the project; and
  - A map of the project site, showing the location an extent of the proposed acquisition, and its relationship to significant natural features, as well as adjacent land uses.

- Project budget and justification of proposed costs/appraisal
  - The budget must include a breakdown of the following costs, as applicable, by category—salary, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, other. Administrative costs are limited to 5% of the federal share. (Note: Use of Standard Form 424A is suggested, as it provides a model template

for this information, and will be required in the grant application package for all projects selected for funding). The total budget must reflect the 1:1 match required by statute.

- The negotiated price of the property, or interest in property, should be based on the fair market value, as determined by an independent appraisal conducted by a state-approved appraiser. Before funds can be disbursed, the applicant must obtain and submit the appraisal to NOAA. An appraisal is required at the time the applicant submits a formal grant application to NOAA. Independent appraisals must reflect nationally recognized appraisal standards, including using the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (the yellow book standard) (http://www.usdoj.gov/enrd/land-ack/).

- Certification of compliance with federal laws, regulations, and policies. If an Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement has been prepared for the project, attach a copy with the application. States will be responsible for ensuring that any project applications are consistent with the CMP and any applicable NERR management plans.

- Documentation of willingness or intent to sell. The applicant must submit documentation that the current owner is a willing participant in a process of negotiation for possible sale of property, or interests in property, for conservation purposes, and that the landowner has been advised of the applicability of Public Law 91-646, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970. This documentation may be in the form of a letter of willingness or intent, option letter, contract, or other similar form. If not submitted with the project application, it will be required with the grant application to NOAA.

- Miscellaneous items that may be required by NOAA (see Section 4.4 of the CELCP guidelines and/or the Federal Funding Opportunity notice for the given fiscal year, both available on NOAA's website at: http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/land/celcp_fundingop.html).

VII. NATIONAL RANKING AND SELECTION PROCESS

NOAA will conduct a peer review process to prioritize and select among all projects nominated by states through their competitive process, as follows:

- Peer review and ranking. A national peer review panel, consisting of at least six members will review each project nominated by a state. Membership of the panel will be made up of at least one representative from each of the following: NOAA, another federal land conservation program, the state coastal resource management community, estuarine reserve community, and two from the non-governmental sector. Each member will rank projects according to the degree that they meet national criteria and submit individual rankings to NOAA.

- Ranking criteria. Projects will be reviewed and prioritized according to the degree that they meet the national CELCP criteria.

- Selection of approved projects. The Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management or his/her designee will serve as the selecting official for projects, based on the national ranking, as well as availability of funds. In selecting projects, NOAA may consider geographic distribution of projects, as well as other factors deemed necessary to select among similarly ranked projects.

- Funding for CELCP is subject to the federal budget/appropriations process.

VIII. COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Interagency Coordination

In the spring of 2005, a steering committee consisting of representatives of the upper and lower coast TPWD field offices, representatives of the proposed TNERR, and staff of Coastal Resources and the TCMP in the GLO, was formed to assist in developing a draft CELCP plan. The steering committee met almost monthly from June to October 2005. Also, in the spring, an advisory committee, consisting of state and federal agencies, non-profits, and others, was formed to provide comment on a draft plan.

During 2005 and early 2006, representatives from the steering committee met with the Nature Conservancy, Conservation Fund, Trust for Public Land, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program, the Galveston Bay Estuary Program, and the Coastal Bend Land Trust, to discuss and provide input to the draft plan. Discussions centered on the types of lands to be protected, project areas, existing plans that may be incorporated into the CELCP plan, and the process for implementing CELCP. The steering committee met with the advisory committee on February 17, 2006. Comments from the advisory committee were incorporated into the draft plan.

Public Involvement

The draft TCELCP plan was presented to the Executive Committee (EC) of the Coastal Coordination Council (Council) in Austin on May 4, 2006 and to the Council meeting in Port Aransas on June 8, 2006, and the public was given opportunities to comment. The draft TCELCP was posted in the *Texas Register* and on the GLO web site for a 30-day, public comment period. No comments were received on the draft plan.

Coastal Management Program Consistency

This TCELCP plan was developed through the Texas Coastal Management Program and is consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the goals and policies of the TCMP.

X

Helen Young, Deputy Commissioner
Coastal Resources Program

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