



# NFWF

# Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

### RECIPIENTS

The Conservation Fund

### AWARD AMOUNT

\$2,000,000

### PARTNERS

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Peregrine Fund

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

National Wildlife Refuge Association

Deepwater Horizon – Texas Trustee Implementation Group

### LOCATION

Cameron County, TX

### AWARD DATE

November 2017

### STATUS

Active

### PROGRESS UPDATE

Acquisition of the Holly Beach tract is complete. A voluntary mitigation agreement has been reached to make funds available so the property can be conveyed to USFWS by the first quarter of 2020. (January 2019)

The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org).

## TEXAS

# Bahia Grande Coastal Corridor Acquisitions – Phase II (Holly Beach Tract)

The project will fund the acquisition and permanent protection of 1,540 acres of estuarine and freshwater wetlands and associated coastal habitats, including four miles of tidal frontage on the globally-unique Laguna Madre in South Texas. The subject tract, referred to as Holly Beach, will be conveyed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to become part of the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. Matching funds for the land acquisition have been approved by the Deepwater Horizon Texas Trustee Implementation Group for the subject parcel.

The diverse habitats contained within the Holly Beach parcel include estuarine marsh, freshwater wetlands, bayfront tidal lands, oyster reefs, nearshore seagrass beds and coastal prairie. Holly Beach provides essential habitat and feeding grounds for spill-impacted bird species like gull-billed terns, black skimmers, reddish egrets, piping plover, brown and white pelicans, red knots and American oystercatchers.

Holly Beach has been designated as a top USFWS regional priority based on the high quality of habitat for imperiled species and its connectivity to other Refuge lands (Bahia Grande Conservation Corridor). The unique shallow and hypersaline conditions of Laguna Madre, one of the few such systems in the world, contributes to its regional importance for a number of bird species. In fact, Laguna Atascosa NWR has some of the highest numbers of recorded bird species within the National Wildlife Refuge System.



Credit | USFWS



The conservation of the Holly Beach tract will help complete a contiguous conservation corridor in the globally significant habitats of the lower Laguna Madre. Pictured above, the Laguna Atascosa NWR.