



Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, Inc.

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January 22, 2010

To: CBBEP Board of Directors

From: Ray Allen, Executive Director

Re: Wetland Enhancement Project on CBBEP's Nueces River Property (Byerly & Coleman Brothers Tracts)

CBBEP's marsh restoration project along the Nueces Bay Causeway is going to require a considerable amount of fill-dirt to increase the bottom elevation in order to support Marsh vegetation. While there are commercial sources of fill-dirt available for the project, CBBEP staff investigated the possibility of creating/enhancing wildlife habitat at the place where the dirt was to be obtained.

It turns out that CBBEP's property along the Nueces River, that was purchased from the Byerly family and Coleman Brothers, may be a good site for both a habitat enhancement project and as a source of fill-dirt. Our friends at US Fish and Wildlife Service arranged for Kim Grafe with USDA to visit the property and design a wetland enhance enhancement project that would yield 195,000 cu. yd of dirt for the causeway marsh project.

The design would take a very flat piece of property that doesn't hold very much water and create a series of broad, shallow depressions with a few imbedded deeper areas to hold water and provide greater habitat diversity. The area receives both local rainfall run-off and occasional river flooding. Future improvements to the design could include control gates to actually manage water levels on the property.

Because the priority is completing the marsh restoration project along the causeway, CBBEP staff proposes to issue a RFP for the causeway marsh project that would have contractors include the wetland project on CBBEP property as the preferred alternative as a source of dirt for the project. Responders will also be asked to identify an alternative source of fill-dirt and related costs. It is possible that alternative sources of fill-dirt could be less expensive.

Staff is seeking approval by the Board of Directors to use the property for a wetland enhancement project and as a possible source of fill-dirt for the causeway marsh project.