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Project Removes 50 Metric Tons of Hurricane Harvey Debris on Lamar Peninsula!

by Kathryn Tunnell

The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP) is excited to report that our Hurricane Harvey Debris Removal project is complete! The project removed over 50 metric tons (275 cubic yards) of hurricane debris from critical wetland habitats in the Holiday Beach community and the Newcomb Point Unit of Goose Island State Park on the Lamar Peninsula, Aransas County.



View of Holiday Beach community and surrounding wetlands that benefited from debris removal.

“Debris left behind in the aftermath of storms is very problematic in these critically important habitats,” said Jake Herring, Director of the Land Conservation Program at CBBEP. “It covers plants and feeding areas that wildlife depends on, and if left in place it could decrease abundance and diversity of species found in these areas.”

Debris was removed from 4 tracts of land totaling almost 500 acres and consisted of construction materials, and household items deposited by the strong hurricane winds and tidal storm surge of Hurricane Harvey. Due to the sensitive nature and remoteness of the habitats impacted, the majority of the debris had to be handpicked or removed by airboat. Taking all of this into consideration, it’s pretty amazing to note that once everything was in place, removal was accomplished in only 2 months!





Debris removal by hand and by airboat totaled 50.13 metric tons!

The low-lying coastal marshes and sand flats of the Lamar Peninsula that were cleaned and restored by this project are favored by the last naturally occurring Whooping crane population. This population migrates over 2,500 miles from their breeding grounds in western Canada to winter on the coastal wetlands of the mid-Texas coast. The cranes are well known for their presence at nearby Aransas National Wildlife Refuge; however, they also utilize the wetlands in surrounding areas like the Holiday Beach community and Goose Island State Park where they can dine on blue crabs, wolfberries, crayfish, frogs, and large insects. CBBEP along with other conservation and agency partners, as well as private landowners, have all participated to help conserve hundreds of acres of habitat on Lamar Peninsula for the benefit of these magnificent birds and other wildlife, as well as people.

You can check out all of this information and more on the new Whooping crane interpretive sign (right) that was developed and installed near the boat ramp in the Holiday Beach community to increase the understanding of the importance of these conserved lands.



The debris removal project was funded by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NA19NOS0220009) through the General Land Office's Coastal Management Program (CMP). Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve at University of Texas Marine Science Institute received the funding (GLO Contract No. 19-237-000-B682) and contracted with the CBBEP to perform the work in the Holiday Beach community and the Newcomb Point Unit of Goose Island State Park. The interpretive sign was funded separately in part by a Texas Coastal Management Program grant approved by the Texas Land Commissioner pursuant to National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA18NOS4190153.

The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring bays and estuaries in the 12-county region of the Texas Coastal Bend. For more information about the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, contact Kathryn Tunnell at (361) 336-0311 or ktunnell@cbbep.org. This report published in February 2021.

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