

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Third-Party Supplemental Environmental Project Agreement

SEP Title: Coastal Prairie, Tidal Marsh, and Forested Wetland Restoration
SEP Number: 2024-04
Third-Party Administrator: Armand Bayou Nature Center, Inc.
Effective Date: September 24, 2024
Total Project Budget: \$1,387,300
Expiration Date: 5 Years from the Effective Date (September 24, 2029)

Agreement Introduction

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (“TCEQ”), an agency of the State of Texas, and Armand Bayou Nature Center, Inc. (“Third-Party Administrator”), a non-profit organization under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)(3), (collectively, “the parties”) enter this Third-Party Supplemental Environmental Project Agreement (from now on “Agreement”). The Agreement is effective on the date signed by an authorized representative of TCEQ.

The Third-Party Administrator has developed an environmental enhancement project (“Project”), which is described in this Agreement. The parties agree that the Project qualifies as a supplemental environmental project (“SEP”) under Texas Water Code § 7.067 and TCEQ guidance on SEPs. This Agreement designates this Project as a pre-approved SEP. Respondents to TCEQ enforcement actions may choose to contribute to an eligible pre-approved SEP that benefits the community in which their alleged violations occurred. All contributions to pre-approved SEPs are voluntary, and all funds will come directly from eligible respondents. **TCEQ will not provide any direct funding, and no amount of funding is guaranteed.**

Contact Information

Each party designates the following individual as its initial representative for implementing this Agreement and for receipt of notice or other information required by the Agreement.

Contact Information for Third-Party Administrator:

Contact Information for TCEQ:

Name: Barrett Hollingsworth
Title: SEP Attorney
Telephone: (512)239-0657
Email: SEPReports@tceq.texas.gov

Mailing Address:
Litigation Division
Attn: SEP Attorney
Mail Code 175
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Overnight or Courier:
Litigation Division
Attn: SEP Attorney
Mail Code 175
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
12100 Park 35 Circle, Bldg A
Austin, Texas 78711-3087

Signature page

**Texas Commission on
Environmental Quality**



Authorized Signature

For Charmaine Backens

Printed Name

Interim Director, OLS

Title

September 24, 2024

Date

Third-Party Administrator



Authorized Signature

Tim Pylate

Printed Name

Executive Director

Title

9/16/2024

Date

Agreement Documents List

This Agreement between TCEQ and Third-Party Administrator consists of the Agreement Documents listed on this page. Documents on this list include all amendments. In the event of a conflict of terms, the Agreement Documents as amended control in the order that items are listed below, with the Agreement Documents higher on the list controlling over the items lower on the list, unless the Special Terms and Conditions specify otherwise. All Agreement provisions, however, are subject to control by the latest amendment, the most specific provision, and by the applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

- Agreement Introduction
- Signature Page
- Agreement Documents List (this page)
- Special Terms and Conditions
- Estimated Project Budget for Coastal Prairie, Tidal Marsh, and Forested Wetland Restoration
- Project Description
- General Terms and Conditions
- Exhibit 1—Maps of the Preserve
- Exhibit 2—Project Tasks by Area

Special Terms and Conditions

The following provision is added to **General Condition 3.1., Estimated Project Budget:**

- 3.1.1. The full amount of any SEP Funds received under the previous SEP, SEP Agreement No. 2011-37, that remain in Third-Party Administrator's SEP Account at the time of the execution of this Agreement will be considered when and if any SEP contributions are allocated under this Agreement. If these funds are distributed from the previous SEP to this new Agreement, SEP Agreement No. 2024-04, the funds will be subject to all terms and conditions in this new Agreement, including the potential to be subject to Audit. These funds will also count towards the Estimated Project Budget of this new agreement. Third-Party Administrator shall report the SEP Funds distributed from the previous SEP Agreement in its first Quarter Report submitted under this Agreement.

The following provisions are added to **General Condition 3.3., Use of SEP Funds:**

- 3.3.1. Third-Party Administrator shall own and operate any vehicle purchased with SEP Funds through this agreement for at least five years following the date of purchase. In the event that Third-Party Administrator sells a vehicle purchased with SEP Funds during this five-year period, all funds received from the sale shall be deposited into the SEP account, become part of the SEP Funds, and be reported in the SEP Quarterly Report as a deposit. Third-Party Administrator shall use a form provided by TCEQ to document a sale occurring during this five-year period, available upon request.
- 3.3.2. Any optional equipment or accessories not included in the base price of a vehicle must directly support performance of the Project. SEP Funds may not be used for any other optional equipment or accessories for vehicles. TCEQ has sole discretion to determine whether any optional vehicle equipment or accessories support performance of the Project.
- 3.3.3. Third-Party Administrator shall not sell plants raised in the greenhouse or nursery; they shall be used only for on-site restoration at the Preserve.
- 3.3.4. Work performed under this agreement may be performed by either contractors or by Third-Party Administrator's employees that are described in the Estimated Project Budget.
- 3.3.5. Given the nature of the Project, conditions such as weather may impact Third-Party Administrator's ability to expend SEP Funds in a timely manner. Third-Party Administrator has discretion on when to perform project work, but in the event of delays, Third-Party Administrator shall resume performance of the Project and expend SEP Funds as soon as feasible.
- 3.3.6. Third-Party Administrator shall work cooperatively with any and all germane governmental entities and authorities when performing prescribed burns. Third-Party Administrator shall obtain any required permits or other authorizations for prescribed burns. Third-Party Administrator shall obtain and maintain prescribed burn insurance before performing any controlled burns.
- 3.3.7. Third-Party Administrator shall purchase and install at least two weatherproof signs on the Preserve that describe the Project and include the following language: "Performed with penalty monies from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Enforcement Actions."

The following provisions are added to **General Condition 4.2., Quarterly Reports:**

- 4.2.3. SEP Funds used to pay Third-Party Administrator's employees shall be accompanied by detailed documentation of the cost of, amount of time spent, and type of work done by Third-Party Administrator's employees. This documentation shall include time sheets, pay stubs, business accounting software reports, time logs, general ledgers, and a statement showing the amount of SEP Funds paid yearly to each employee.
- 4.2.4. Third-Party Administrator shall submit documentation of work performed by contractors in Quarterly Reports, including invoices, checks, photos, and receipts.
- 4.2.5. Quarterly Reports shall, as applicable, include Project-specific information such as the approximate number of invasive plants or acres treated by herbicide or chipping, the approximate number of acres treated by prescribed burns, the approximate number of acres planted with native species, and the approximate number of native plants raised in greenhouses or nurseries.

**Estimated Project Budget for Coastal Prairie, Tidal Marsh, and Forested
Wetland Restoration Project ("Estimated Project Budget")**

#	Expense Category	Allowable SEP Expense Item	Unit Cost	Unit	Qty	Total (5yrs)
	Personnel Work					
1		Project Manager	\$7,200	18%	1	\$36,000
2		Biologist	\$7,200	18%	1	\$36,000
3		Stewardship Technicians	\$120,000	100%	5	\$600,000
	Contracted Work					
4		Nursery-Fencing	\$7,500	1	1	\$7,500
5		Greenhouse/Nursery Irrigation & Ventilation Systems Upgrades & Repairs	\$14,800	1	1	\$14,800
6		Greenhouse Lighting	\$12,000	1	1	\$12,000
7		Chipping, Prairie	\$3,000	Acre	30	\$90,000
8		Chipping, Forest	\$3,000	Acre	30	\$90,000
9		Herbicide, Land	\$125	Acre	500	\$62,500
10		Herbicide, Water	\$275	Acre	90	\$24,750
	Materials					
11		Fuel	\$4.00	Gallon	1,500	\$6,000
12		Herbicide	\$350	Drum	125	\$43,750
13		Treatment Supplies	\$1,000		5	\$5,000
14		Soil	\$400	Load	35	\$14,000
15		Potting Supplies	\$1,000		5	\$5,000
16		Planting Supplies	\$1,000		5	\$5,000
17		Burn Supplies	\$10,000		1	\$50,000
18		Purchase and installation of weatherproof signs	\$1,000/sign	2	1	\$2,000
	Equipment					
19		Fire Service Truck	\$45,000	1	1	\$45,000
20		Boats/propulsion (electric motor/batteries)	\$6,000	1	1	\$6,000
21		Skid Pumper	\$15,000	1	1	\$15,000
22		ATV	\$12,000	1	1	\$12,000

23		Equipment Repairs	\$5,000		5	\$25,000
24		Tractor/mowing equipment	\$120,000	1	1	\$120,000
25		Chipping Supplies (chainsaws and supplies)	\$1,000	1	5	\$5,000
	<i>Other</i>					
26		Prescribed Burn Insurance	\$11,000	1	5	\$55,000
Total Cost						\$1,387,300

Project Description

I. Facts/Purpose

Third-Party Administrator manages the Armand Bayou Nature Center (the “Preserve”), located in southeast Harris County. The Preserve contains three unique and vanishing ecosystems: coastal tallgrass prairie, forested wetland, and the tidal marsh stream of Armand Bayou. Since the 1950’s, these ecosystems experienced significant ecological degradation from both natural and human disturbances. The tallgrass prairie, once a common ecosystem in Texas and the United States, today contains less than 1% of its original 750 million acres. The tidal marsh, which serves as wildlife habitat and a nursery habitat to over 90% of the commercial and recreation fish and shellfish harvested from Galveston Bay, suffered a 93% reduction. Invasion of non-native and exotic species greatly reduced the forested wetland.

Third-Party Administrator developed a comprehensive, long-term ecological restoration and management plan to restore and manage these ecosystems. Through the management work performed with SEP Funds, the tidal marsh, coastal prairie, and forested wetland ecosystems provide valuable ecological services at no direct cost to the community. These include improved water quality, soil erosion reduction, storm water detention, water purification, and wildlife habitat for important terrestrial and aquatic species.

The Preserve, containing 2,500 acres of the last wild lands remaining in Harris County, shares the Armand Bayou Watershed with portions of five cities - Houston, Pasadena, Deer Park, La Port, and Taylor Lake Village (see maps in Exhibit 1). The Preserve remains one of the largest protected urban nature centers in the region.

Through this Project, Third-Party Administrator will expand its initial restoration investment to address the continuing significant water challenges in this watershed. Armand Bayou is on TCEQ’s list of impaired water bodies due to low dissolved oxygen levels, along with high algal populations, high bacteria counts, and high turbidity. Galveston Bay suffers from excessive enrichment of nutrients and resulting hypoxia. The impact of invasive species on the prairie and forest landscape displaces the historically diverse plant and animal communities. This leads to compromised ecological function, which results in poor water quality.

This project will include, but is not limited to, the following restoration and management work:

- Invasive species removal using tree chipping, rotational mowing, and herbicide broadcast application and spot treatment
- Prescribed prairie burning
- Native plant propagation and introduction
- Installation of infrastructure for living shoreline projects
- Removal of debris

See Exhibit 2—Project Tasks by Area, for more details.

SEP Funds will be used to hire specialized contractors and to pay employees to perform this work, which will be performed with the consultation of a biologist and other ecological restoration experts. The project will also include purchase of supplies and materials, including herbicides, planting equipment, and supplies for controlled burns. SEP Funds will additionally be used to purchase vehicles necessary for land-management activities, such as an ATV, boats, and a tractor and mowing equipment.

II. Environmental Benefit

The ecological services provided by the restoration and management of these three unique ecosystems will help prevent pollution, reduce the amount of pollutants reaching the environment, and enhance both water quality and wildlife habitat.

Coastal prairie grasslands are considered fire-dependent plant communities and require frequent exposure to fire effects for full ecological function. One of the benefits of controlled prescribed burns is the reduction of fuels and the prevention of wildfires. This is particularly critical in the urban environment to protect human life and property and to minimize the release of large amounts of particulate matter resulting from a large uncontrolled wildfire. Prescribed fire in prairies helps control invasive species, minimize accumulated grass thatch, promote enrichment of soil nutrients and improve prairie plant vigor. This treatment ensures that these coastal prairie grasslands will perform at their highest ecological function and provide the maximum potential ecological service to benefit water quality.

The use of invasive plant control methods on aquatic and terrestrial vegetation is also critically important for good water quality. Invasive aquatic plants can negatively affect natural tidal marsh and forested wetlands ecosystems by out-competing native aquatic plants and animals for resources. These floating invasive species may completely blanket the water surface and deplete oxygen levels which may damage restoration sites and prohibit recreational activity. If invasive species are not removed, they may take over prairies and forested wetlands, which then cannot capture, store, and transform nutrients in rainwater, and filter out pollutants in the water. Proper management and restoration of these ecosystems, through propagation and planting of biologically diverse native species, helps them work together to provide maximum ecological services.

III. Eligible Areas and Counties

San Jacinto River Basin and the Gulf Coast Aquifer including Angelina, Aransas, Atascosa, Austin, Bee, Brazoria, Brazos, Brooks, Calhoun, Cameron, Chambers, Colorado, Dewitt, Duval, Fayette, Fort Bend, Galveston, Goliad, Gonzales, Grimes, Hardin, Harris, Hidalgo, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Karnes, Kenedy, Kleberg, Lavaca, Liberty, Live Oak, Matagorda, McMullen, Montgomery, Newton, Nueces, Orange, Polk, Refugio, Sabine, San Jacinto, San Patricio, Starr, Trinity, Tyler, Victoria, Walker, Waller, Washington, Webb, Wharton, Willacy and Zapata Counties.

IV. Minimum Contribution Amount

The minimum contribution amount is \$1,000. Third-Party Administrator has the discretion to accept contributions under the minimum contribution amount.

General Terms and Conditions

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. **“Allowable SEP Expenses”** are the reasonable and necessary actual costs listed in the Estimated Project Budget for this Agreement.
- 1.2. **“Book Account”** refers to a ledger account or other accounting mechanism used to maintain a detailed record of debits and credits of SEP Funds separate from any other funds.
- 1.3. **“Contract”** refers to this Agreement. The terms “Contract” and “Agreement” may be used interchangeably.
- 1.4. **“Effective Date”** refers to the date this Agreement begins and is the date the Agreement is signed by an authorized representative of TCEQ.
- 1.5. **“Includes”** and **“Including”** are terms of enlargement and not of limitation or exclusive enumeration. The use of these terms does not create a presumption that any components that are not explicitly mentioned are excluded.
- 1.6. **“Indemnification”** means security against legal liability.
- 1.7. **“Overhead Costs”** means costs that are necessary for operation that are not directly related to goods or services required for this Project.
- 1.8. **“Party”** or **“Parties”** refers to one or all of the signatories to this Agreement, respectively.
- 1.9. **“PAL”** refers to the Pre-Approved List, or the public list of SEPs that respondents to TCEQ administrative enforcement actions may select from to make eligible contributions of SEP Funds.
- 1.10. **“Project”** refers to the project that is approved by TCEQ as a SEP and described by this Agreement.
- 1.11. **“Remit”** means transferring funds in a manner approved by TCEQ.
- 1.12. **“SEP”** refers to Supplemental Environmental Project.
- 1.13. **“SEP Funds”** means funds that, with TCEQ approval, are contributed to Third-Party Administrator by respondents to TCEQ enforcement actions. These contributions offset the administrative penalty that would otherwise be due to the State of Texas General Revenue Fund. The term includes interest earned on funds.

2. CONTRACT PERIOD

- 2.1. **Contract Period.** The Agreement begins on the Effective Date and is effective for a term of **five years** unless terminated by either party in accordance with this Agreement. At TCEQ’s sole discretion, the term of this Agreement may be extended by three additional one-year increments upon written request from Third-Party Administrator or upon TCEQ’s own initiative. Any request for extension must be received 30 days prior to the end of the term.
- 2.2. **Fully Funded.** When the Total Cost of the Estimated Project Budget is met or exceeded by a contribution from a respondent, TCEQ will consider the project fully funded. When the project is fully funded, TCEQ will remove it from the PAL. Third-Party Administrator is still responsible for the expenditure of funds and completion of the project in accordance with this Agreement after the SEP is fully funded. Third-Party Administrator may request an amendment through the process described in Section 2.3.

to increase the budget if the project is not and will not foreseeably be complete after being fully funded. This amendment will again allow the project to be added to the pre-approved list of SEPs available to respondents for contributions.

2.3. Amendments. This Agreement may be amended by mutual agreement. Except as specifically allowed by the Agreement, all material changes to the Agreement require a written amendment that both parties sign.

2.3.1. Material Changes. “Material changes” include the following:

- 2.3.1.1. Changes in the total amount of funds in the estimated project budget and/or changes to the amount allowed for specific line items;
- 2.3.1.2. Changes to the Agreement’s Expiration Date;
- 2.3.1.3. Changes to the Project Description that affect the nature or scope of the project; and
- 2.3.1.4. Changes that affect the material obligations of the Third-Party Administrator in this Agreement.

2.3.2. Unilateral Amendments. As specifically allowed by the Agreement, TCEQ may issue unilateral amendments. Unilateral amendments take effect when issued by TCEQ.

- 2.3.2.1. The only portion of the agreement that the Third-Party Administrator may unilaterally amend is the Contact Information located in the Agreement Introduction through written notice to the other party. TCEQ may also unilaterally amend the Contact Information.

2.3.3. Minor Changes. TCEQ has the authority, without a written amendment, to correct typographical errors; make written Agreement interpretations, and make minor, non-material changes to the requirements in the Project Description, reporting requirements, or as agreed to elsewhere in the Contract. Third-Party Administrator may request in writing that TCEQ make Minor Changes to the Agreement. If Third-Party Administrator objects to a Minor Change, it must provide TCEQ with a written objection to any Minor Change no later than 5 business days from the effective date of the Minor Change. A copy of the agreed change shall be retained by both Third-Party Administrator and TCEQ. Minor, non-material changes may include, but are not limited to:

- 2.3.3.1. Changes to the schedule in the Project Description, including an extension to any proposed date included in the project, not to exceed the expiration date of the Agreement;
- 2.3.3.2. Changes to the individual tasks/activities in the Project Description, if applicable, that do not substantially change the obligations of the Parties relative to those tasks/activities; and
- 2.3.3.3. Changes to the descriptions of the Estimated Project Budget line items that do not substantively affect the nature of the line item, including changes to update model or equipment types. Changes to the amount of funds allowed for each item is not a Minor Change.

2.4. Termination. Either party may terminate this Agreement with or without cause after providing written notice 30 days prior.

- 2.4.1. **Final Accounting.** Within 30 days after the effective date of the termination, Third-Party Administrator shall make a written accounting to TCEQ of all SEP Funds received, expended, and remaining under this Agreement. This accounting must associate SEP Funds to specific docket numbers and must utilize the TCEQ SEP Third-Party Administrator Final Report form as specified in Section 4.3. of this Agreement. This final accounting must include the remittal or transfer of all SEP Funds under Section 3.8. of this Agreement.
 - 2.4.1.1. If TCEQ finds that any SEP Funds are not accounted for in the Final Accounting and remittal to TCEQ of any remaining SEP Funds, Third-Party Administrator shall be required to remit these funds to TCEQ from sources unrelated to its SEP Funds or accounts. Failure to remit funds that were not properly accounted for to TCEQ will result in Third-Party Administrator owing a debt to TCEQ.
- 2.4.2. **Termination for Cause.** TCEQ may terminate for cause without a 30 day notice period if Third-Party Administrator materially fails to comply with the Agreement, including any one or more of the following acts or omissions: violations of accounting practices, including comingling; failure to expend funds in a timely manner; failure to submit quarter reports on a timely basis; or expenditure of SEP Funds in a manner not authorized by this Agreement.
- 2.4.3. **Opportunity to Cure.** Third-Party Administrator will have a reasonable opportunity to correct its nonconforming performance if possible under the circumstances.

3. SEP FUNDS

- 3.1. **Estimated Project Budget.** TCEQ has approved the Estimated Project Budget on page 5 of this Agreement. SEP expenditures for each line item must be Allowable SEP Expenses. Expenditures must not exceed ten percent (10%) over the budgeted amount for each line item unless Third-Party Administrator receives prior written approval from TCEQ. If Third-Party Administrator does not receive TCEQ approval for the amount of an expenditure that exceeds a line item by ten percent, SEP Funds must not be used for that increased cost expenditure. Third-Party Administrator shall, on request from TCEQ, remit to TCEQ any line item expenditures in excess of the ten percent limit, in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 3.8. of this Agreement. The Parties acknowledge that there may be other Project costs that are not included in the Estimated Project Budget that may be paid for with non-SEP Funds.
- 3.2. **Maintenance of SEP Funds.** Upon receipt of its first Project contribution from a respondent in a TCEQ enforcement action, Third-Party Administrator shall open and maintain a separate SEP Funds account or book account. The SEP Funds account must be a fee-free account without a minimum balance requirement that is used exclusively for SEP Funds. The SEP Funds account must be at a financial institution that is insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and that provides regular accounting statements that are acceptable to TCEQ.
 - 3.2.1. **Interest.** The SEP Funds account may either be interest-bearing or non interest-bearing. All earned interest on SEP Funds, if any, must be accounted for. Any earned interest on SEP Funds becomes part of the SEP Funds.
 - 3.2.2. **Commingling.** Unless Third-Party Administrator accounts for SEP Funds separately in a manner that receives prior written approval from TCEQ, such as an acceptable book account, SEP Funds must not be commingled with any non-SEP Funds. SEP Funds may only be used to reimburse other accounts with the

express permission of TCEQ. Reimbursing other accounts without prior written approval from TCEQ is considered comingling under this Agreement.

- 3.3. **Use of SEP Funds.** Third-Party Administrator shall expend SEP Funds only for Allowable SEP Expenses that are authorized by the Estimated Project Budget on page 5 of this Agreement. Third-Party Administrator shall ensure that the expenditure of SEP Funds results in the performance of adequate and timely Project work and that purchases are made in accordance with this Agreement. Third-Party Administrator may expend SEP Funds for work being performed by or for Third-Party Administrator.
- 3.4. **Administrative Expenses.** In accordance with Texas Water Code § 7.067(c), TCEQ may allow Third-Party Administrator administrative expenses related to implementing the Project. Administrative expenses include overhead costs, personnel salary and fringe benefits, and travel and per diem expenses associated with implementing the Project. Third-Party Administrator must ensure that administrative expenses do not exceed 10% of the direct cost of the project. For SEP Funds to be used towards administrative expenses, the cost must either be identified and included in the Estimated Project Budget or have the prior written approval of TCEQ.
- 3.5. **Accounting.** Third-Party Administrator shall account for the receipt and expenditure of SEP Funds, including all interest earned on such funds. Third-Party Administrator will submit records of this accounting at least quarterly as described in Section 4.2., Quarterly Reports.
- 3.6. **Timely Expenditure.** Third-Party Administrator shall expend SEP Funds in a timely manner after receipt of SEP Funds. If TCEQ determines that SEP Funds were not expended in a reasonable period of time, it may request a written explanation for the delay and a plan to expend the funds. Failure to expend SEP Funds in a timely manner may result in termination of the Agreement.
- 3.7. **No Guarantee of Funding.** Respondents to TCEQ enforcement actions voluntarily contribute to eligible SEPs of their choice. Therefore, it is possible that no respondents will choose to contribute SEP Funds to this Project. *Third-Party Administrator understands that there is no guarantee that it will receive any SEP Funds under this Agreement.*
- 3.8. **Remittal of SEP Funds.**
 - 3.8.1. **Refund requirements.** Any remittal of SEP Funds made according to the terms of this Agreement, made either to the SEP Account or to TCEQ, must be accompanied by a detailed written accounting in a manner acceptable to TCEQ.
 - 3.8.1.1. If funds are remitted to TCEQ, the remitted SEP Funds must be in the form of a check or money order made out to “Texas Commission on Environmental Quality” and sent to the following TCEQ Address:

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Litigation Division
Attention: SEP Coordinator, MC 175
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, Texas 78711-3087
 - 3.8.2. **Transfer of SEP Funds to another project.** In lieu of remitting unexpended SEP Funds after the conclusion or termination of the Project, and with the written direction of TCEQ, Third-Party Administrator may transfer SEP Funds to another SEP as directed by TCEQ. Any transfer of SEP Funds must be accompanied by a detailed written accounting in a manner acceptable to TCEQ.

- 3.8.3. **Remaining Funds.** If any SEP Funds remain after the conclusion or termination of the Project, Third-Party Administrator must either remit the SEP Funds to TCEQ or transfer the SEP Funds to another SEP as directed by TCEQ. Third-Party Administrator must remit or transfer SEP Funds within 30 days after the due date of the Final Quarterly Report required by Section 4.3.
- 3.8.4. **Unallowable costs.** If at any time TCEQ determines that SEP Funds were expended in a manner that is not allowed by this Agreement, Third-Party Administrator shall, on request from TCEQ, remit all improperly spent SEP Funds to the SEP Account. Such a remittal shall be accompanied by a detailed written accounting in a manner acceptable to TCEQ.
- 3.9. **Other contributions to the Project.** Nothing in this Agreement is to be construed to prevent Third-Party Administrator from accepting funds from charitable contributors or other sources to the extent permitted by law. Third-Party Administrator may expend funds from sources other than SEP Funds (“non-SEP Funds”) in furtherance of the Project, so long as the expenditures do not violate the accounting practices described in Section 3.2. of this Agreement. If Third-Party Administrator expends non-SEP Funds for any of the line items listed in the Estimated Project Budget of this Agreement, Third-Party Administrator shall report the source and amount of the non-SEP Funds and provide a list of items and expenses for which the non-SEP Funds were used in the Quarterly Reports required under Section 4.2.

4. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1. **Records.** Third-Party Administrator shall maintain all records relating to the Agreement, including organized and legible financial records, books, documents, and other evidence reasonably pertinent to its performance under this Agreement for the duration of the entire Agreement, and for a minimum of 5 years from the date that a Final Quarterly Report is submitted. Third-Party Administrator shall maintain all financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- 4.2. **Quarterly Reports.** Third-Party Administrator is required to send Quarterly Reports (“QRs”) to account for SEP Funds and update TCEQ on the status of the Project. The QRs must be submitted on the approved TCEQ SEP Third-Party Administrator QR Form (“QR Form”). The deadlines for sending QRs are included on the QR Form.
- 4.2.1. **Quarterly Report Contents.** The QRs must include anything required within this Agreement, as well as the following information:
- 4.2.1.1. A list of the amount of SEP Funds received during the previous quarter with each corresponding respondent name, contribution docket number, dollar amount received, and date received, as well as copies of contribution checks;
 - 4.2.1.2. A list of actual expenditures on the Project paid for with SEP Funds and any necessary accompanying explanation and documentation, including invoices and general ledgers;
 - 4.2.1.3. SEP Funds account financial institution statements for each month of the previous quarter;
 - 4.2.1.4. The total balance of the SEP Funds, with interest, if any, separately noted;
 - 4.2.1.5. A description of the Project to which SEP Funds were allocated and progress made to date;

- 4.2.1.6. Copies of all receipts for all SEP Fund expenditures, copies of all checks for SEP Fund expenditures, and documentation and explanations to support all electronic funds transfers from the SEP Funds account; and
- 4.2.1.7. Any additional information required by the Special Conditions of this Agreement, requested by TCEQ or in the QR Form, or that Third-Party Administrator believes would demonstrate compliance with this Agreement.
- 4.2.2. **Failure to submit QRs.** QRs must be timely submitted even if they do not contain any new SEP Funds activities. Third-Party Administrator may request an extension from TCEQ in writing. QR Extensions requests must include a reason for seeking the extension and be received by TCEQ within 30 days of the deadline. Failure to provide QRs in a timely manner will constitute grounds for termination of this Agreement.
- 4.3. **Final Report.** At the conclusion or termination of the Project, Third-Party Administrator is required to submit a final QR to TCEQ on the approved QR Form for the quarter in which the Project concluded. The deadlines for doing so are included on the QR Form. In addition to the information required in Section 4.2.1. of this Agreement, this final QR must include the following information:
 - 4.3.1. An accounting of SEP Funds that were not used for the Project;
 - 4.3.2. Any additional information Third-Party Administrator believes would demonstrate compliance with this Agreement; and
 - 4.3.3. Any additional information requested by TCEQ.
- 4.4. **Additional Reporting.** Third-Party Administrator agrees to provide additional information and/or documentation requested by TCEQ under this Agreement within 30 days after receipt of the request, unless TCEQ specifies another deadline in writing.
- 4.5. **Surviving obligations.** The obligations required by Section 4.1., Records; Section 4.3., Final Report; and Section 4.4., Additional Reporting, survive the termination of this Agreement.

5. THIRD-PARTY ADMINISTRATOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. **Access.** The following obligations survive termination of this Agreement.
 - 5.1.1. **Inspection and Audit.** Third-Party Administrator shall permit TCEQ as well as authorized state and federal agencies to have unrestricted access to all records, data, and facilities as necessary to review, inspect, and audit all activities and services associated with SEP Funds under this Agreement. Third-Party Administrator shall provide appropriate accommodations for such access and inspection.
 - 5.1.2. **Access to Project.** Third-Party Administrator agrees to provide access by TCEQ and its representatives to the site of any work performed in whole or in part utilizing SEP Funds, and it shall require its contractors to provide the same access.
- 5.2. **Quality and Acceptance.** All work performed under this Agreement must be complete and satisfactory in the reasonable judgment of TCEQ. All materials and equipment shall be handled in accordance with the instructions of the applicable supplier, except as otherwise provided in the Agreement.

- 5.3. **Insurance.** Unless prohibited by law, Third-Party Administrator shall require its contractors and suppliers to obtain and maintain adequate insurance coverage sufficient to protect the Third-Party Administrator from all claims and liability for injury to persons and for damage to property arising from work performed under the Agreement. If Third-Party Administrator is performing work under this Agreement using its own employees and resources, then, unless Third-Party Administrator is a governmental entity or this requirement is waived by TCEQ, Third-Party Administrator shall obtain and maintain insurance coverage sufficient to protect the Third-Party Administrator from all claims and liability for injury to persons and for damage to property arising out of Third-Party Administrator's performance of the work under this Agreement.
- 5.4. **Assumption of Risk.** Third-Party Administrator undertakes performance of the Project as its own work and does not act in any capacity on behalf of TCEQ nor as a TCEQ agent or employee. Third-Party Administrator agrees that the Project is performed at Third-Party Administrator's sole risk as to the means, methods, design, processes, procedures, and conduct of the Project.
- 5.5. **No Third-Party Beneficiary.** Third-Party Administrator is an independent entity and performs the Project as part of its own authorized functions. Nothing in this Agreement shall create a contractual relationship between TCEQ and any of the Third-Party Administrator's subcontractors, suppliers, or other persons or organizations with a contractual relationship with Third-Party Administrator.
- 5.6. **Indemnification.** To the fullest extent permitted by law, Third-Party Administrator shall indemnify and hold harmless TCEQ and its representatives from and against all losses, liabilities, damages, and other claims of any type arising from the performance of the Project by Third-Party Administrator or its contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and agents, including those arising from workmanship, materials, or from a breach of applicable laws, regulations, safety standards, or directives regardless of whether such acts or omissions are negligently or recklessly performed. This indemnification survives the termination of the Agreement.
- 5.7. **Excluded Parties.** Third-Party Administrator represents and warrants that it is not listed in the prohibited vendors lists authorized by Executive Order No. 13224 "Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism," published by the United States Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control. Third-Party Administrator will notify TCEQ if it can no longer make this representation.
- 5.8. **COVID-19 Vaccine Passport Prohibition.** Under § 161.0085 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Third-Party Administrator certifies that it is not ineligible to receive the Contract and will maintain this certification throughout the term of the Contract.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 6.1. Third-Party Administrator shall promptly disclose in writing to TCEQ any actual, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest, including but not limited to disclosure of:
- 6.1.1. Any consulting fees or other compensation not explicitly authorized by the Agreement paid to employees, officers, agents of Third-Party Administrator, or members of their immediate families, or paid by subcontractor or subrecipients;
 - 6.1.2. Any organizational conflicts of interest between Third-Party Administrator and its subcontractors or subrecipients under a subaward; or
 - 6.1.3. Any conflicts of interest between Third-Party Administrator and respondents to TCEQ enforcement actions that contribute SEP Funds to this project.

- 6.2. No entity or individual with any actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest will take part in performance of the Project without TCEQ's written consent. Third-Party Administrator agrees that TCEQ has sole discretion to determine whether a conflict exists and agrees that a conflict of interest is grounds for termination of this Agreement.

7. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

- 7.1. **Acknowledgement of Financial Support.** Third-Party Administrator shall acknowledge the financial support of the TCEQ SEP program in any publication involving the use of SEP Funds or whenever work funded in whole or in part by this Agreement is publicized or reported online or in news media. All publications, news releases, and project signs must contain the following notation (or its equivalent if approved by TCEQ):

Performed with penalty funds from
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality enforcement actions.

- 7.2. **Publicity.** Third-Party Administrator shall not publicize the name of contributors of SEP Funds without consent of the contributor and notice to TCEQ.
- 7.3. **Public Information.** The Texas Public Information Act (Texas Government Code, Chapter 552) applies to all information delivered to TCEQ in the course of performance under this Agreement. This means that any document provided to TCEQ may be subject to public disclosure upon request. TCEQ assumes no obligation to make legal arguments in support of any claims pertaining to confidentiality, patents, trade secrets, or copyright.
- 7.4. **Audit of Funds.** The Third-Party Administrator understands that acceptance of SEP Funds under this Contract acts as acceptance of the authority of the State Auditor's Office, or any successor agency, to conduct an audit or investigation in connection with those funds. Third-Party Administrator further agrees to fully cooperate with the State Auditor's Office or its successor during any audit or investigation, including providing all records requested.
- 7.5. **Publication.** Third-Party Administrator agrees to notify TCEQ 5 days prior to the publication or advertisement of information related to this Agreement. Third-Party Administrator agrees not to use the TCEQ logo or the TCEQ graphic as an advertisement or endorsement without written permission signed by the appropriate TCEQ authority.

8. NOTICES AND OTHER INFORMATION

- 8.1. **Delivery of Notice.** Notices are deemed to be delivered 3 working days after postmarked if sent by U.S. Postal Service certified or registered mail, return receipt requested. Notices delivered by other means are deemed delivered upon receipt by the addressee. Routine communications may be made by first class mail, email, or other commercially accepted means.
- 8.2. **Bankruptcy and/or Business Closing.** In the event that Third-Party Administrator closes its business and/or files a petition for bankruptcy protection, Third-Party Administrator shall provide written notice to TCEQ within 24 hours of such closure and/or filing. Notice must be sent to the designated TCEQ contact under this Agreement as well as the TCEQ Bankruptcy Program. Notice to the TCEQ Bankruptcy Program must include contact information and be sent to: TCEQ Bankruptcy Program, P.O. Box 13087, Mail Code 205, Austin, Texas 78711.

- 8.3. **Notice of Change.** Third-Party Administrator agrees that all information it provided to TCEQ was correct at the time of submission, and that in entering into this Agreement, TCEQ has materially relied on all information provided by Third-Party Administrator, regardless of whether such information is incorporated into this Agreement. Third-Party Administrator agrees to give 5 days' written notice to TCEQ if there is any material change in the information.

9. SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY

The parties agree that this Agreement does not waive any sovereign immunity to which either party is entitled by law.

10. AGREEMENT INTERPRETATION

- 10.1. **Headings.** The headings of the sections contained in this Agreement are for convenience only and do not control or affect the meaning or construction of any provision of this Agreement.
- 10.2. **Interpretation of Time.** All days are calendar days unless stated otherwise. Days are counted to exclude the first and include the last day of a period. If the last day of the period is a Saturday or Sunday or a state or federal holiday, it is omitted from the computation. A "year" is a period of 365 days. A "month" is the period ending on the same numerical day in the subsequent calendar month as the day on which the period began.
- 10.3. **State and Federal Law.** This Agreement is governed by and interpreted under the laws of the State of Texas, as well as applicable federal law.
- 10.4. **Venue.** Third-Party Administrator agrees that the Agreement is being performed in Travis County, Texas, because this Agreement is being administered in Travis County, Texas. Third-Party Administrator agrees that any permissible cause of action involving this Agreement arises solely in Travis County. This provision does not waive TCEQ's sovereign immunity.
- 10.5. **Severability.** If any provision of this Agreement is found by any court, tribunal, or administrative body of competent jurisdiction to be wholly or partly illegal, invalid, void or unenforceable, it shall be deemed severable (to the extent of such illegality, invalidity, or unenforceability) and the remaining part of the provision and the rest of the provisions of this Agreement shall continue in full force and effect. If possible, the severed provision shall be deemed to have been replaced by a valid provision having as near an effect to that intended by the severed provision as will be legal and enforceable.
- 10.6. **Assignment.** No delegation of the obligations, rights, or interests in the Agreement, and no assignment of payments by Third-Party Administrator will be binding on TCEQ without its written consent, except as restricted by law. No assignment will release or discharge the Third-Party Administrator from any duty or responsibility under the Agreement.
- 10.7. **Compliance with Laws.** TCEQ relies on Third-Party Administrator to perform all Agreement Activities in conformity with all applicable laws, regulations, and rules and obtain all necessary permits and licenses.
- 10.8. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be signed in any number of copies. Each copy when signed is deemed an original and each copy constitutes one and the same Agreement.
- 10.9. **Accessibility.** All electronic content and documents created as deliverables under this Agreement must meet the accessibility standards prescribed in 1 Texas Administrative Code § 206.50 and ch. 213 for state agency web pages, web content, software, and hardware, unless TCEQ agrees that exceptions or exemptions apply.

10.10. Full Integration. This Agreement, including any and all exhibits and amendments, merges any prior negotiations and understandings of the Parties and embodies the entire agreement of the Parties. No other agreements, assurances, conditions, covenants (express or implied), or other terms of any kind exist between the Parties regarding the Project.

10.11. Authorized Signatories. The Parties agree that the signatories to this Agreement are authorized to enter into this Agreement on behalf of the entities indicated below each respective signature. Furthermore, the Parties agree that each is bound by the terms and conditions of this Agreement after it is signed by each Party.

11. FORCE MAJEURE

Force majeure is defined as acts of God, war, fires, explosions, hurricanes, floods, or other causes that are beyond the reasonable control of either party, could not reasonably be foreseen, and by the exercise of all reasonable due diligence, is unable to be overcome by either party. Neither party shall be liable to the other for any failure or delay of performance of any requirement included in the contract caused by force majeure. Upon timely notice by the Third-Party Administrator, the time for performance shall be extended for a reasonable period after the causes of delay or failure have been removed provided the Third-Party Administrator exercises all reasonable due diligence to perform. The Third-Party Administrator must provide evidence of any failure resulting in impossibility to perform.

12. UNIFORM ASSURANCES

12.1. Executive Head of a State Agency. In accordance with Texas Government Code § 669.003, relating to contracting with the executive head of a state agency, Third-Party Administrator certifies that it is not (1) the executive head of TCEQ, (2) a person who at any time during the four years before the date of the Contract was the executive head of TCEQ, or (3) a person who employs a current or former executive head of TCEQ affected by this section.

12.2. Open Meetings Act. Third-Party Administrator represents and warrants its compliance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code which requires all regular, special, or called meetings of a governmental body to be open to the public, except as otherwise provided by law.

Exhibit 1—Maps of the Preserve

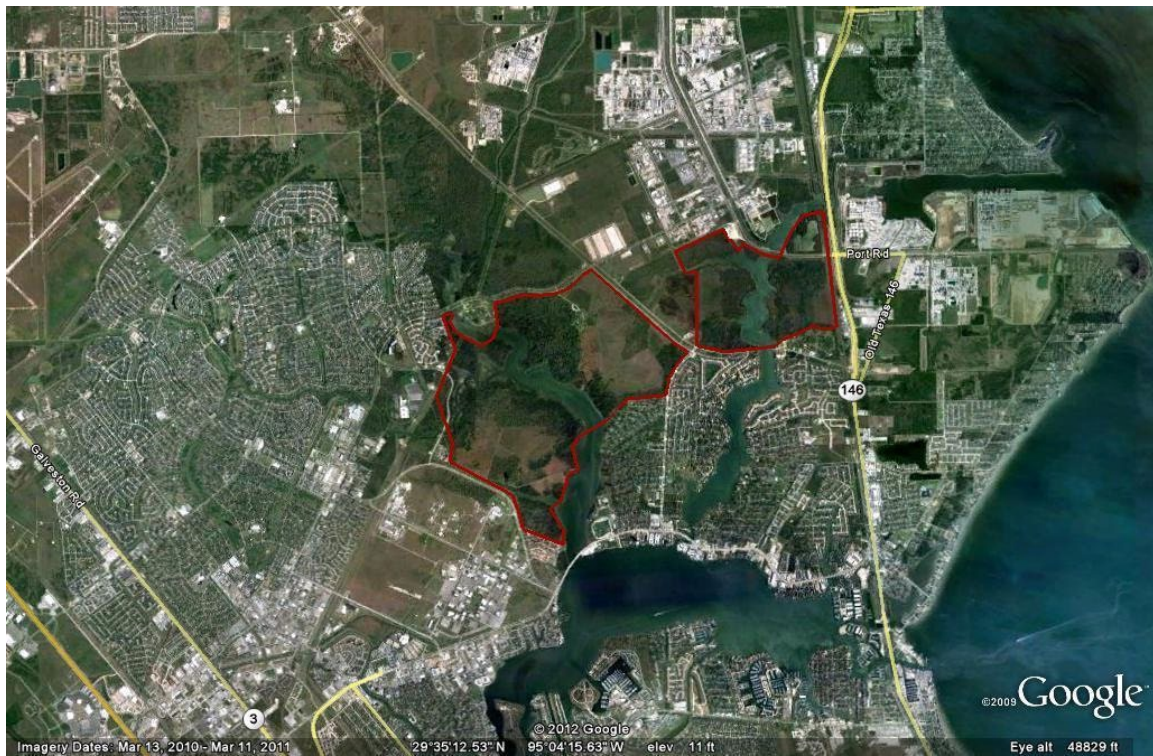
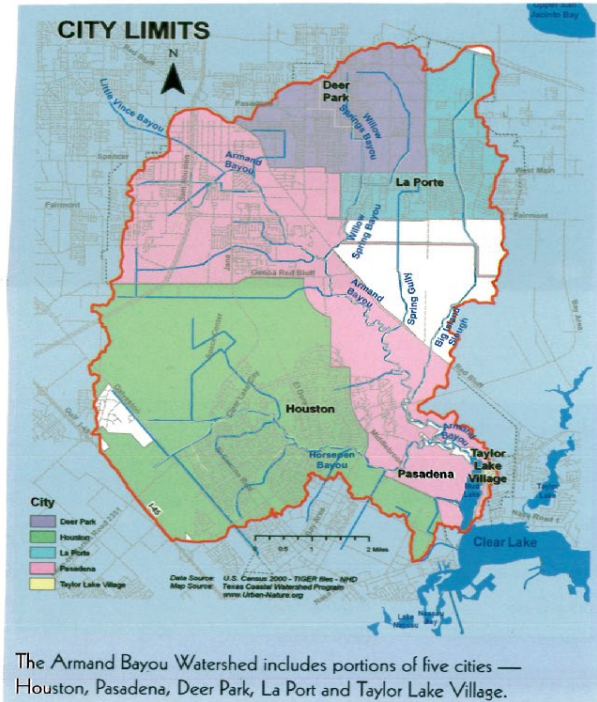
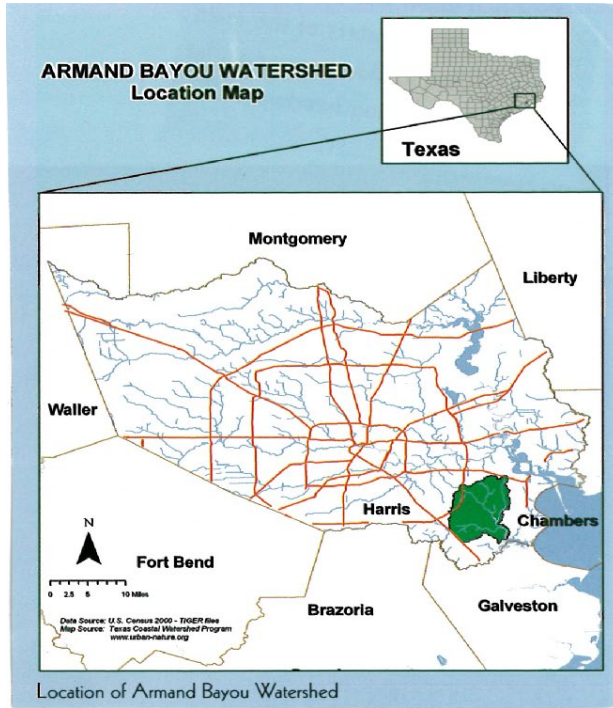


Exhibit 2—Project Tasks by Area

Project activities include, but are not limited to:

- Invasive species chipping
 - Trees and other invasive plants will be cut to an appropriate level and chipped vegetation will be broadcast and left to decompose on-site. Herbicide will be applied to stumps to prevent regrowth.
- Herbicide broadcast application
 - Broadcast applications of herbicide will be conducted on large areas that are heavily dominated by invasive species. These sites will be selected based on high stem densities per acre which exceed spot treatment capability.
- Herbicide spot treatment
 - Third-Party Administrator will conduct ongoing control of invasive species in targeted areas using spot treatments of herbicide in grasslands using hand-held sprayers. All-terrain vehicles will be used to facilitate this work.
- Prescribed burn treatments
 - Third-Party Administrator will utilize a range of fire-fighting equipment on designated coastal prairie grasslands or forested areas annually.
- Prescribed mowing treatments
 - Third-Party Administrator will conduct mowing operations on the coastal prairie grasslands as needed, using a range of mowing equipment.
- Plant propagation and introduction
 - Third-Party Administrator will propagate terrestrial and aquatic native plant material and plant it to restore the coastal prairie, tidal marsh, or forested wetlands.
- Living shoreline structural installation
 - Third-Party Administrator will oversee or perform installation of non-living infrastructure portions of living shoreline projects.
- Aquatic debris removal
 - Third-Party Administrator will remove large debris from the tidal marsh habitat.
- Greenhouse/nursery irrigation system and maintenance
 - Third-Party Administrator maintains a greenhouse and plant nursery to cultivate native plants for habitat restoration. These plants are largely unavailable commercially, so they are produced on-site for ongoing restoration efforts. The greenhouse and nursery equipment and systems require maintenance and occasional replacement to successfully cultivate the necessary plants. This work is applicable to all categories of environments.

	Invasive Species Chipping	Herbicide Broadcast Treatment	Herbicide Spot Treatment	Prescribed Burn Treatment	Prescribed Mowing Treatment	Plant Propagation and introduction	Living Shoreline Structural Installation	Aquatic Debris Removal
Coastal Prairie	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Tidal Marsh		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Forested Wetland	✓		✓	✓		✓		