



VOLUNTEER AND CONTRACTOR
HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

About the Coastal Prairie Conservancy	3
Mission and Vision	3
Programs	4
Land Conservation	4
Preserve Management and Restoration	5
Community Benefits	5
Flood Mitigation	6
Green Health	6
Community Conservation and Outreach	6
Public Policy and Research	7
Our Preserves	7
Volunteering with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy	7
About Volunteering	7
Volunteer Opportunities	8
Tracking Your Hours	8
Policies and Procedures	8
Equal Volunteering Opportunity	8
Background Checks	9
Privacy Protection	9
Harassment/Sexual Harassment	9
Conflict Resolution	9
Verbal Conduct and Public Relations	9
Confidentiality	10
Resignation and Termination	10
Safety and Compliance	10
Dress Code	10
Personal Property	10
Coastal Prairie Conservancy Property	11
Conflict of Interest	11
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	12
Staff, Board of Directors, and Advisory Board	17
Staff	18
Part-time Staff and Interns	18
Outreach Specialists	17
Board of Directors	19
Advisory Board	19
Volunteer Acknowledgment Form	20
Individual Waiver or Liability, Release, & Indemnity Agreement	21

About the Coastal Prairie Conservancy

Mission and Vision

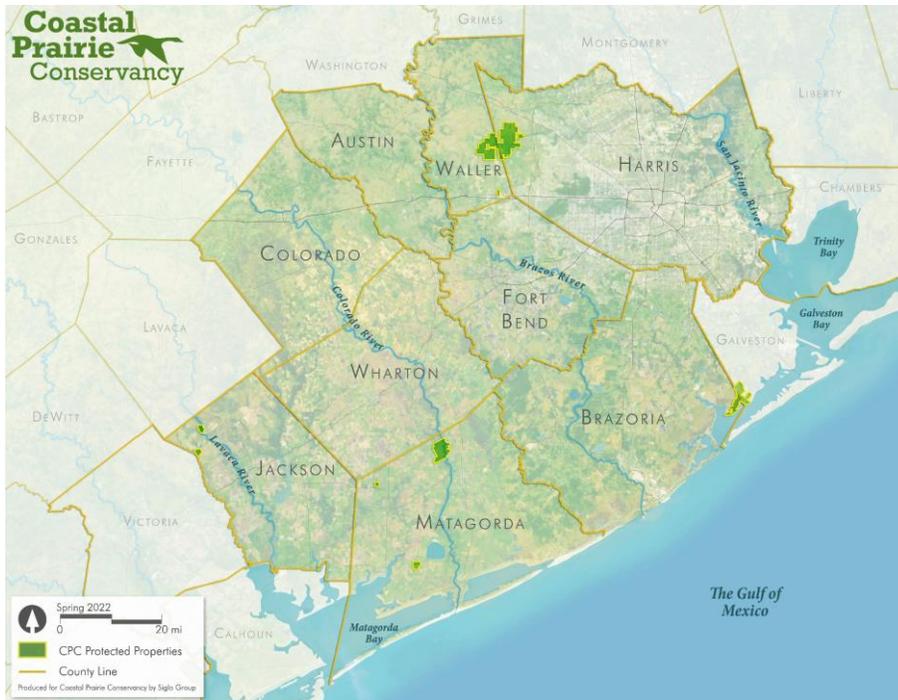
The mission of the Coastal Prairie Conservancy is to help sustain a resilient Texas by preserving coastal prairies, wetlands, farms, and ranches, to benefit people and wildlife forever.

Our vision for the future is simple: Save a piece of the prairie. Connect people with nature. Ensure healthy communities. Safeguard wildlife.

More than 20,000 acres of land are permanently protected on the Katy Prairie in Waller and Harris Counties. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy owns or has a conservation easement (see below) on more than 18,000 of these acres, and this land makes up the Katy Prairie Preserve. This vast preserve includes restored prairies and wetlands, pristine wildlife habitat, a trail system, a working ranch, and a lake. Together, we are working toward the protection of 30,000 to 50,000 connected acres of conserved prairie on the coastal prairie. A preserve of this size will ensure the biodiversity and health of a vibrant ecosystem for generations to come.

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy also has begun to protect the coastal prairies of Texas in surrounding counties: in 2017, the organization entered a conservation agreement with a landowner in Matagorda County to permanently protect a beautiful 5,332-acre ranch along the Colorado River and now also holds additional easements in Jackson and Matagorda Counties. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy continues to identify and protect properties in Harris, Waller, Matagorda, Brazoria, Colorado, Jackson, Ft. Bend, Austin, and Wharton counties.

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy is one of the largest private land trusts, by acreage, in southeast Texas, currently protecting over 30,000 acres.



Programs

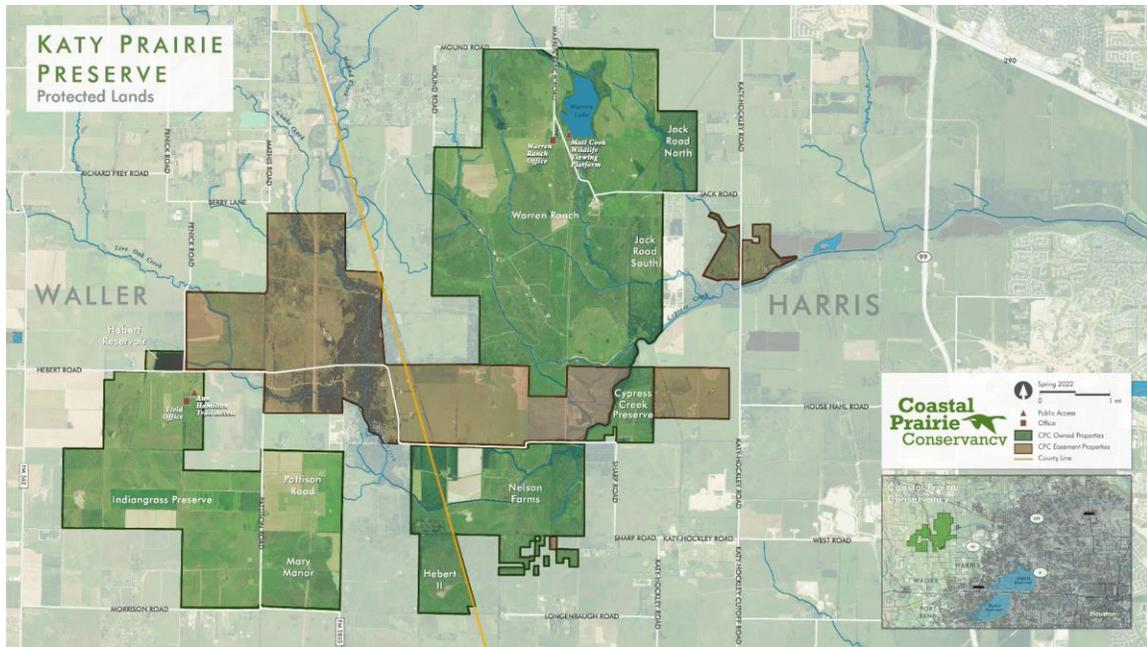
Land Conservation

Open space on the coastal prairie has dwindled to less than half its original size. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy works to protect what is left before it's too late. The Katy Prairie Preserve is land that has been conserved either through ownership by CPC or through conservation agreements with landowners. This land will never be developed.

An important priority is the continued protection of areas adjacent to or surrounded by Katy Prairie Preserve lands that are under threat of development. Protecting this area is of great urgency – there are few large, contiguous areas left in this region that are currently free of roads and lights. These lands are heavily utilized by migratory birds such as the sandhill crane and the long-billed curlew. If these lands are developed for housing or businesses, many birds may no longer find suitable habitat and will disappear from the Houston region forever.

As a regional leader in land conservation, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy's goal is to protect at least an additional 10,000 acres within the Katy Prairie, and to extend protection to the other threatened coastal prairies of Texas.

The following map shows lands protected on the Katy Prairie Preserve as of December 2020. Please check www.coastalprairieconservancy.org for updates as we protect additional lands.



Preserve Management and Restoration

Once protected, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy works hard to restore and enhance these lands. To date, more than 5,000 acres of wetlands have been created, restored or enhanced on its preserve system. Wetlands not only provide suitable habitat for migratory waterfowl, but also help retain floodwaters. Since 1992, the Houston metropolitan area has lost up to 70% of its wetlands – the Coastal Prairie Conservancy is working hard on restoring these important wetlands.

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy is also working to restore tallgrass prairie across the Katy Prairie Preserve. This type of restoration involves planting native grasses, which develop deep root systems that help absorb water. This can play an important role in flood control. A number of areas have been identified that will be restored with fields of native grasses and wildflowers.

Community Benefits

The coastal prairie serves our greater community in so many ways. It keeps land in agriculture for local farmers and ranchers. These lands link current generations to their natural heritage and provide opportunities for young people to participate in the same outdoor recreational adventures enjoyed by their parents and ancestors generations ago. These lands offer opportunities for families from all over to enjoy nature-based adventures. The prairie is one of the last strongholds for wildlife in the region. Finally, studies have shown that if the values of ecological services are considered, natural lands show a net gain in cost-benefit analyses in relation to more traditional options such as hardscapes or gray infrastructure. While residential areas, for example, require public services, natural areas need little. By protecting water resources such as streams, wetlands, and riparian corridors, the conservation of open

spaces reduces the need for expensive stormwater management, flood control, and even some wastewater treatment facilities. In addition, these open spaces also help filter and improve water flowing to Lake Houston and the San Jacinto River.

Flood Mitigation

Hurricane Harvey brought to light a need for a regional approach to flood control. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy knows that when restored coastal prairie holds water, it delays the flow of water traveling downstream. In catastrophic flooding events, this time is essential, as it is the time Houstonians need for water to drain, for the sun to come out, and for flood-prone residential and commercial areas to recover. Even if the water is only held back for a day or two, this can make an enormous difference to properties in downstream Houston.

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy is building upon a science-based conservation plan and other completed studies to identify and evaluate nature-based strategies and conceptual designs to reduce flooding vulnerabilities. This approach aims to show that land conservation and restoration can significantly reduce the harmful effects of flooding at a lower initial capital cost and reduced operating cost than gray infrastructure, while also providing critical benefits to the community.

Green Health

The list of health benefits from nature is vast and includes improved mental health, decreased stress, increased ability to concentrate, more rapid healing, and many others. Only two hours a week in green spaces have shown a measurable health improvement. Green spaces typically have lower air pollution levels than other urban areas and may help remove harmful particles from the air. Urban green space can also reduce the heat island effect making cities cooler and increasing airspeed. Green spaces can reduce noise levels by 5-10 decibels and supply psychologically beneficial natural sounds.

Community Conservation and Outreach

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy's educational programs, which take place on the prairie and in town, provide an opportunity for young and old alike to learn about the value of the prairie. The public can visit the prairie first-hand at the Shrike Prairie and Matt Cook Wildlife Viewing Platform at Warren Lake and by walking the Ann Hamilton Trail near the Field Office on the Indiangrass Preserve as well as the Williams Prairie north of Fulshear. When we provide a place for people to connect with nature, they are able to understand the value of the prairie and why it is worth protecting. Our team is excited about its programming and the ways that we engage the residents, students, teachers, and families in our region.

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy's community conservation programming ranges from Youth Waterfowl Hunts and Virtually Wild Field Trips to Unplugged Adventures and Holiday Hikes. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy recently partnered with the

University of Houston and Rice University to create pocket prairies on-campus that will also facilitate student research.

Public Policy and Research

The goal of the Coastal Prairie Conservancy's public policy efforts is to encourage conservation of the prairie and ensure that its current and anticipated protected lands are not compromised – either for the wildlife using the prairie or the people who enjoy the prairie. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy is currently developing plans to show how public infrastructure projects can avoid conservation lands while still providing support for a growing population.

Research programs on conserved lands identify the ways grasslands and wetlands provide natural benefits to a growing region, reintroduce species that were endemic to the prairie, and provide important habitat for the many species that use the prairie. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy works with area universities to provide land to accommodate faculty and student research and has completed work with Texas A&M on the western chicken turtle and continues to work with the University of Texas Vertebrate Paleontology Lab on a fossil project.

Our Preserves

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy owns and manages 14 preserves. Together these preserves cover over 30,000 acres of habitat south and west of Houston. Each preserve has a unique history, geology, and wildlife community.

Areas open to the public include the Ann Hamilton Trail at the Indiangrass Preserve, the Williams Prairie north of Fulshear, and the Shrike Prairie and Matt Cook Memorial Wildlife Viewing Platform at Warren Lake. Other areas in the preserve are not open to the public except by special arrangement; access is limited to protect the wildlife and working farm and ranch operations on the lands.

You can find information about the preserves, as well as detailed maps and driving directions on our website at www.coastalprairieconservancy.org/plan-your-visit.

Volunteering with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy

Becoming a Volunteer

Volunteers help the Coastal Prairie Conservancy in many ways. From restoration and maintenance on our preserves or working in our native plant nursery, to planting and maintaining pocket prairies or lending a hand at an event, we could not do what we do without YOU.

To become a volunteer, complete the registration form on our website (coastalprairieconservancy.org/volunteer-form). Let us know how you would like to help. Completing and submitting the form will sign you up to receive our newsletter and other volunteer information. A staff member or lead volunteer will contact you

to let you know that you have been added to our list of volunteers for selected activities. Once you are assigned to an activity, you will work under the direction of a staff member. We also host a Volunteer Orientation twice annually. All new volunteers should attend an orientation during their first year of service. We also encourage existing volunteers to attend an orientation annually in order to stay up to date on CPC news and opportunities.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Grow prairie plants at your home or school through the Great Grow Out program
- Help with a pocket prairie
- Work in the Native Seed Nursery
- Collect seeds
- Participate in volunteer conservation and restoration activities on a preserve
- Give a presentation or represent the organization at an event
- Lead a tour
- Help with an educational program
- Monitor property conditions
- Conduct Wildlife and Plant Surveys
- Administration/office help

Tracking Your Hours

Please help the Coastal Prairie Conservancy keep track of all the amazing hours our volunteers spend helping us protect and restore the prairie! If you volunteer with us at the Indiangrass Preserve, you will record your hours by signing in and out on the volunteer log-in sheet at the Field Office. If you volunteer at another location, you can submit your hours by emailing Bethany Foshee or by using our Monday.com team space. We also ask outreach volunteers to submit their outreach participant numbers. We are able to use tracked hours to help show how volunteers provide thousands of hours of support when we apply for grants.

Policies and Procedures

Equal Volunteering Opportunity

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy recruits and enrolls volunteers without regard to gender, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance or regulation. Special accommodations may be made upon request. Certain activities are physically demanding and require physical abilities such as lifting and carrying in outdoor conditions. Volunteers under the age of 18 must gain permission from a legal guardian in order to volunteer. Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times when volunteering for the Coastal Prairie Conservancy.

Background Checks

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy requires a background check for all volunteers working with minors or acting in a public-facing, leadership role. Sterling Volunteers is used to perform background checks, and prospective volunteers will be contacted to obtain consent. Results are provided to volunteers and staff. Other volunteers do not need to undergo a background check.

Privacy Protection

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy is committed to maintaining your privacy and will not give out your personal information, including but not limited to email address, phone number, and home address, except as required by law.

Harassment/Sexual Harassment

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy is committed to providing a volunteer environment free of unlawful discrimination and harassment. It is illegal to harass others based on gender, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age or any other basis made unlawful by federal, state or local law or ordination or regulation. This policy applies to all persons involved in the operations of the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, including employees, board members, and volunteers, as well as by any person doing business with or for the organization. Unlawful discrimination and harassment in any form, including verbal, physical, sexual, and visual conduct, threats, demands and retaliation are prohibited. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Conflict Resolution

In the event of a conflict with another volunteer or staff member that you feel is unresolved, please contact the President and CEO immediately to discuss the issue. There will be no discrimination against those who wish to voice a complaint to the organization's leadership, and your complaint will be confidential. If your conflict relates to the President and CEO, please contact the Chairman of the Board about the issue at chairman@coastalprairieconservancy.org.

Verbal Conduct and Public Relations

Please refrain from commenting in a negative way about the Coastal Prairie Conservancy and our member organizations while volunteering. Profanity or hateful speech will not be tolerated while you are volunteering with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy.

Please remember volunteers are not official spokespeople for the Coastal Prairie Conservancy. When addressing public meetings or in public advocacy situations, identify yourself as a volunteer and clarify that your opinions are your own, not those of the Coastal Prairie Conservancy. Any media inquiries regarding the organization should be referred to the President and CEO.

Confidentiality

While volunteering, you may come across confidential information about the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, including but not limited to, information relating to its operations or activities, employees, business partners, and volunteers. Please keep all proprietary and private information in confidence. This obligation does not prevent you from disclosing information required by law.

Resignation and Termination

If you no longer wish to volunteer with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, please notify a staff member leading the activity in writing. Please let us know why you are no longer volunteering and let us know if there is something we could have done better.

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy holds the right to evaluate your volunteer status at any time and dismiss any volunteer it feels violates the organization's policies and procedures. Grounds for dismissal include but are not limited to the following:

- Inappropriate behavior or misconduct;
- Violation of policies or procedures;
- Being under the influence of alcohol/drugs while volunteering;
- Theft of property or illegal, unsafe, or violent acts, and/or
- Unwillingness or inability to support and further the mission of the organization.

Safety and Compliance

Volunteer safety is important to the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, and we are committed to providing you a safe volunteer environment. Despite our efforts, volunteer opportunities sometimes come with inherent risks about which the volunteer should be aware and work to avoid at all times. To confirm volunteers are aware and comfortable with these risks, all volunteers must sign a waiver of liability. Volunteers must comply with all safety and health requirements by the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, federal, state, and local law. In addition, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy will provide safety orientation training when appropriate.

Dress Code

Please dress appropriately for your work, the season, and in accordance with program requirements. Inappropriately dressed volunteers may not be able to participate in an activity. We ask people to wear closed toed shoes, long pants, and gloves when working in the field to avoid injury.

We ask outreach volunteers and guided tour leaders to wear a CPC shirt and nametag so that participants can easily recognize you as their CPC program leader. CPC will provide a nametag and shirt to each lead outreach volunteer.

Personal Property

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy does not assume responsibility for the loss, damage, or theft of personal belongings, and volunteers are strongly advised not to carry unnecessary amounts of cash or other valuables with them when they volunteer.

Coastal Prairie Conservancy Property

Desks, storage areas, work areas, lockers, file cabinets, credenzas, computer systems, office telephones, modems, facsimile machines, copiers, and vehicles are the Coastal Prairie Conservancy's property and must be regarded and maintained according to this policy. Handle all equipment with care, ensuring its safe and proper operation and storage.

Computer Use: Computers owned by the Coastal Prairie Conservancy are provided for the use of volunteers, as appropriate, in order to further the organization's mission and complete assigned tasks. Volunteers are prohibited from viewing sexually explicit web sites, web sites depicting violence, or any other web sites that could be offensive to others. In some cases, an official email account will be made for volunteers. You are asked to remember that any communication delivered via this email account represents the organization. All equipment owned by the Coastal Prairie Conservancy may be monitored at any time and without warning, and volunteers should not expect any privacy in their use of the same. Please handle equipment with care, ensuring its safe and proper operation and storage.

Data: The use of the Coastal Prairie Conservancy's electronic communication systems, including computers, email, voice mail, telephone systems, fax machines, and all forms of Internet/Intranet access is for organizational business and for authorized purposes only. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information systems used by the organization.

Conflict of Interest

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy has adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy to protect the organization's interests when the organization contemplates entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interests of individuals with close relationships to the organization. It is the policy of the Coastal Prairie Conservancy to disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest and to address such conflicts in a manner that will fully protect the integrity and reputation of this organization as well as related parties.

A conflict exists when a Covered Person (as defined below) proposes to act on any issue, matter, or transaction in which the Coastal Prairie Conservancy has an interest, and the Covered Person may have an interest separate from the organization. A conflict of interest also exists in situations in which there is an appearance that a Covered Person is utilizing, for their own benefit, inside information that is proprietary to the organization, is acting in his or her own interest rather than the best interest of the organization, has the ability to exercise undue influence over the

organization's decisions, or is receiving favorable treatment by the Coastal Prairie Conservancy because of their status as a Covered Person.

A volunteer and their close relatives are considered Covered Persons subject to the conflict of interest policy if the volunteer, by virtue of continued involvement with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, either has access to inside information that could place him or her within a conflict situation or could give the appearance of such person having the ability to unduly influence the Coastal Prairie Conservancy.

If there is a conflict of interest involving a volunteer, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy Conflict of Interest Policy will apply, and full disclosure must be made to the Chairman of the Board at chairman@coastalprairieconservancy.org prior to any action.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

As a volunteer, you may find yourself helping out at an event booth, fielding questions at our preserve properties, or simply speaking to friends and family about the Coastal Prairie Conservancy. Here are some frequently asked questions and responses that might be helpful. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to a staff member.

What does the Coastal Prairie Conservancy do?

The Coastal Prairie Conservancy works to protect the coastal prairie for the benefit of wildlife and people. The prairie provides important benefits to the people of the region, including a place for families and individuals to enjoy nature, extensive wildlife habitat, restored tallgrass prairie and wetlands, a place for scientific research, enhanced flood control, and public programming and activities to introduce the general and school-aged public to the sights and sounds of the prairie.

What is a land trust?

A land trust is a nonprofit organization that works to conserve land by accepting donated land, by purchasing land or by working with private landowners to secure conservation agreements.

How does the Coastal Prairie Conservancy obtain lands?

Donation: Landowners may donate their land. Donating land for conservation is one of the finest legacies a person can leave to future generations. Our staff will work with a landowner that would like to donate land to identify the best arrangement. While we accept gifts of land or other real property, any such gift is carefully evaluated as to the needs for formal land protection, or for consideration as a re-saleable asset (or trade land) to be used to further our mission. We strive to honor the wishes of our donors and can facilitate careful planning to achieve their goals.

Purchase. As land becomes available, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy may purchase land directly from willing sellers. This is subject to the organization securing funds, and often involves a landowner willing to sell at a reduced price in order to ensure the land is preserved forever. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy owns nearly 14,000 acres outright – an area larger than Hermann Park, Memorial Park and Cullen Park combined.

Bargain Sale. If a landowner chooses to sell land for below fair market value, this is called a “bargain sale.” This allows the landowner to realize income from the property, affords some tax relief for the capital gains that may be realized from the sale, and provides the Coastal Prairie Conservancy an opportunity to purchase the land, more affordably, at below market value.

Conservation Agreements. Not all landowners want to sell their land, but many want to ensure that they preserve their land in perpetuity – whether for their families or for future buyers. We accomplish this type of land protection by working with interested landowners to agree on the terms of a conservation agreement to protect their property forever.

What is a conservation agreement?

A conservation agreement (also known as a conservation easement) is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land to protect the land’s conservation values. Landowners retain many of their rights, including the right to own and use the land, sell it, and pass it on to their heirs.

Conservation easements can be donated or sold and do not require public access. To date, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy has protected nearly 17,000 acres through either donated or purchased conservation easements. A donated conservation easement may afford income tax and estate tax benefits if it permanently protects the conservation values of the property and meets other federal tax code requirements. The charitable deduction would be worth the difference between the development value of the property less the restricted value of the property. (Please note that the Coastal Prairie Conservancy is not able to offer legal or accounting advice so a landowner should contact their own financial planner or lawyer to determine if any tax advantages may be available.)

How do I get more information about conservation agreements or protecting land?

For additional information on land conservation with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, please visit www.coastalprairieconservancy.org/for-landowners. We encourage any landowner to contact us at 713-523-6135 or via email at info@coastalprairieconservancy.org if they are interested in discussing the protection of their land.

For general information about land trusts and conservation agreements in Texas, another resource is the Texas Land Trust Council (www.texaslandtrustcouncil.org),

of which the Coastal Prairie Conservancy is a member organization. Or go to the website of the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization (www.landtrustalliance.org/).

Why should I care about preserving the coastal prairie?

Fish and Wildlife – The coastal prairie is home to thousands of species of wildlife, native grasses, and wildflowers. The land protected by the Coastal Prairie Conservancy was named a Global Important Bird Area in 2012. These protected lands are a critical stopover for many migrant birds that use the diverse prairie habitats and wetlands as a place to rest and forage before flying farther north and south, as well as a home to many resident species. These, plus plants, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, and many more – many of them species of concern - all rely on the prairie for part of or their entire life cycle.

Nature's Benefits – The benefits that nature provides to us are free. The prairie offers many benefits to the region, including reducing downstream flooding as these areas have huge water holding capacity, removing sediment and pollutants from nearby wetlands and water bodies, and sequestering carbon in grasses and other plants. The prairie also offers great recreational opportunities (e.g. ecotourism, hunting, fishing, birding, photography, hiking, etc.).

Preserving Our Cultural Heritage – Prairies are the quintessential Texas landscape and forged our cowboys, built our economy, fed us, and clothed us. In Houston, prairies played an important role in our development, both culturally and economically.

Personal Values – Perhaps you find peace and solitude among swaying tall grasses and wildflowers. Did you have an unforgettable experience watching cranes silhouetted against a brilliant sunset? Do you love being able to hear a chorus of frogs on a brisk spring night away from city lights? Maybe you wait all year to go hunting, hunkered down in wetlands on a chilly winter morning? Oftentimes, when we speak to what the prairie means to us, our passion really shines through.

Tell us your story - Why do you love the prairie?

How can I help the Coastal Prairie Conservancy?

- Volunteer. We rely on volunteers for many of our conservation activities and programs.
- [Donate](#). We depend on donations from our supporters all year long.
- Advocate. Your support is critical in making sure our lands remain free of intrusion and that we maintain the conservation values of our preserves by making their voices heard to city and regional planners.
- Raise awareness of our mission by wearing a [Coastal Prairie Conservancy t-shirt](#), or encouraging a friend to visit or attend one of our many [events](#) at the prairie.
- Visit our [website](#) to learn more about the challenges and opportunities facing the Coastal Prairie Conservancy.

Can I visit Coastal Prairie Conservancy properties?

Yes. The Field Office at the Indiangrass Preserve is home to the Native Seed Nursery and acts as our base of operations out on the prairie. Visit the Field Office for a volunteer work day, an educational event, or to explore 55 acres of newly restored prairie, complete with the 1.5-mile long Ann Hamilton Trail. The preserve is open to the public or by appointment. Plan your visit [here](#).

Another property open to the public year-round is Shrike Prairie and the Matt Cook Memorial Viewing Platform at Warren Lake. This property showcases a beautiful restored prairie site and excellent bird viewing. You can find directions, visiting information, and hours on our [website](#).

Is it possible to go onto other properties that are not open to the public?

There are occasional public events to visit preserves that are usually closed to the public. Be on the lookout for these opportunities by joining our [mailing list](#).

What types of wildlife live on the coastal prairie?

- Birds - Over 300 species of bird have been documented on the prairie. Two out of three are migratory. Summer visitors include swallows, hummingbirds, warblers and roseate spoonbills. Winter visitors include several species of ducks, geese, shorebirds, sandhill cranes, northern harriers and several kinds of sparrows. There are numerous others that call the prairie home year-round - including eastern meadowlarks, loggerhead shrikes, and great blue herons.
- Mammals – Beavers, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, river otters, armadillos, pocket gophers, native mice, and rabbits (including black-tailed jackrabbits) can be found on the prairie. Wildlife biologists have also confirmed the presence of species of concern, like the eastern spotted skunk. Using remote cameras, we hope to document many other mammals that live on, or travel through the prairie.
- Amphibians – The coastal prairie is home to several common and rare amphibians such as frogs and toads. The crawfish frog is a secretive species that relies on crawfish mounds, grasslands, and prairie potholes for breeding. This secretive frog is declining across North America, although it has recently been documented at our Indiangrass Preserve’s reconstructed wetlands and nearby properties.
- Reptiles – Several species of snake, most non-venomous, can be found on the prairie. Snakes, like the eastern hognose, which feigns death when afraid. Lizards, like green anoles, bask on vegetation, and American alligators gracefully swim in bayous. Several species of turtle occur on the coastal prairie, to include the rare western chicken turtle. Biologists are currently conducting surveys for horned lizards, classified as threatened by the State of

Texas. Even if they are not found, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy might have potential as a future reintroduction site.

- Fish – Many species of native and non-native fish live in the bayous, creeks, and rivers of the coastal prairie. These include catfish, largemouth bass, white mullet, alligator gar, bluegill, buffalo fish, and carp.
- Invertebrates – A diversity of grasses and wildflowers, means a diversity of insects. Many species of beetle, grasshopper, cricket, katydid, bee, and wasp. Flies, spiders, pollinators and dragonflies rely on the prairie for different stages of their life cycle – and vice versa. Many common and rare butterflies and moths rely on prairies for species-specific larval host plants and flowering plants for nectar in their adult stage. One recognizable species is the Monarch butterfly which requires milkweed as an egg laying site and caterpillar food source. The Coastal Prairie Conservancy provides this habitat as they make their arduous journey to and from wintering grounds in central Mexico, as well as being an active participant in local conservation partnerships to conserve this species. In addition, there is another world of aquatic invertebrates in prairie potholes, lakes, ponds, bayous, and creeks – freshwater crustaceans, mollusks, larval dragonflies, water beetles, and caddisflies, just to name a few.
- Wildflowers and Grasses – over 600 species of wildflowers and grasses have been identified on the Katy Prairie Preserve. The “Big-Four” prairie grasses include big bluestem, little bluestem, Indiangrass and switchgrass. Prairie wildflowers are abundant in color and diversity, and include meadow pink, rattlesnake master, yellow coneflower, Indian paintbrush, bluebonnet, prairie blazing star and Indian blanket (also known as firewheel), and the endangered prairie dawn. Wetland plants are found in the prairie potholes and wetland areas, and include lesser duckweed, pickerelweed and maidencane. These plants provide necessary food and shelter for prairie animals.

What are prairie potholes?

Small, seasonal wetlands found on the prairie - important to many species of wildlife that breed or forage in such areas. This habitat is critical to waterfowl, such as snow geese, northern pintails, and mottled ducks, as well as amphibians and reptiles such as the southern crawfish frog and western chicken turtle. These depressions on the prairie also help retain and absorb water.

Why burn the prairie?

Fire is a natural force on grasslands and was a land management tool used by indigenous peoples in North America for thousands of years. Fire is beneficial to promote new plant growth, help control invasive species and woody growth, stimulate seed banks, and put nutrients back into the soil. Controlled burns, also

known as “prescribed fire” are conducted on protected lands by highly trained individuals.

Is hunting allowed at the preserve?

We allow hunting on some of our properties in accordance with state and federal regulations. Hunters help with management and maintenance of protected properties and hunting on our preserves provides significant revenue to support our conservation mission. Having hunters on our properties during hunting season helps to minimize trespassing and poaching (illegal hunting) issues because there is a legitimate presence on our properties during those seasons. Hunters are extra eyes and ears to help identify potential issues that need to be addressed.

What happens to the plants that are grown at the Native Seed Nursery?

Plants grown at the Native Seed Nursery will be planted in restoration sites, such as Indiangrass Preserve and Shrike Prairie, and in pocket prairies in Prairie Builder Schools + Parks. Seeds that start to sprout in the spring are cared for by volunteers to make sure they are ready to plant in the fall at volunteer events like *Putting Down Roots*.

Where can I get more information and resources for growing native plants?

There are many resources available in Texas for homeowners and landowners wishing to grow and promote native plants on their properties. See www.coastalprairieconservancy.org/9-natives for a list of resources on native plants. You may also wish to participate in the *Great Grow Out*, our program where volunteer growers are given packets of locally collected prairie seeds to grow and return until they are ready to be planted. Seed packing parties, seed collecting field trips, and nursery volunteer days are also an important part of this program. See www.coastalprairieconservancy.org/great-grow-out.

What other volunteer opportunities are there besides working at the nursery?

Volunteers provide support in many ways. You can help ongoing restoration, maintenance projects and planting days. There are also opportunities to become involved in education, outreach, and citizen science. You can help give tours at preserve properties or at local events to spread awareness. We may need help with administrative tasks if you are interested in office duty. If you have a specific skill or trade - perhaps you are a photographer, wildlife or plant specialist, an educator, a storyteller – please contact volunteer@coastalprairieconservancy.org; we can use all of these skills, and more.

Staff, Board of Directors, and Advisory Board

Phone Number: 713-523-6135

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Maryann Young

Volunteer Acknowledgment Form

I, _____,
acknowledge that I have read and understand the volunteer handbook and
am familiar with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy's policies and procedures.
By signing this document, I acknowledge, understand, accept, and agree to
comply with the policies and procedures laid out in the volunteer handbook
provided to me. I understand that this handbook is not meant to cover every
situation that may arise during my time as a volunteer but is meant as
outlining general policies to which I will adhere. I understand that the Coastal
Prairie Conservancy may revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or
portion of the Handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, and I
agree to comply with such policies as they are changed.

Signature _____

Date _____

Individual Waiver or Liability, Release, & Indemnity Agreement

THIS PROPERTY MAY HAVE VISIBLE AND/OR HIDDEN OBSTRUCTIONS, THORNS, POISONOUS BERRIES OR PLANTS, VENOMOUS SNAKES, WILDLIFE, FARM EQUIPMENT, AND/OR OTHER NATURAL OR MANMADE CONDITIONS WHICH MAY BE DANGEROUS TO VISITORS AND/OR THEIR VEHICLES. VISITORS MUST LOOK OUT FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY FROM PHYSICAL CONDITIONS WHICH MAY EXIST ON THESE PREMISES. VISITOR HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGES HE OR SHE IS VOLUNTARILY PRESENT ON THE PROPERTY WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE DANGER INVOLVED AND AGREES TO ACCEPT ALL RISKS OF INJURY OR DEATH, PROPERTY LOSS OR DAMAGE.

I UNDERSTAND AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT AN AGRITOURISM ENTITY IS NOT LIABLE FOR ANY INJURY TO OR DEATH OF AN AGRITOURISM PARTICIPANT RESULTING FROM AGRITOURISM ACTIVITIES. I UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE ACCEPTED ALL RISK OF INJURY, DEATH, PROPERTY DAMAGE, AND OTHER LOSS THAT MAY RESULT FROM AGRITOURISM ACTIVITIES.

In consideration of the right to enter lands owned or leased by CPC or Landowner, I, individually and on behalf of my children, agree to the following: I release, acquit, and forever discharge CPC and Landowner from any and all losses, claims, costs or causes of action (including all attorney's fees and hospital and medical expenses) of any kind whatsoever, at common law, statutory or otherwise, that may arise from my or my children's use and entry upon such lands. I further agree that I, my children, my heirs, successors and assigns, will not make any claim or institute any suit or action at law or equity against CPC or Landowner arising from any such accident, incident or occurrence. I, individually and on behalf of my children, further agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless CPC and Landowner for any such loss, claim cost or cause of action by them arising from any acts by me or my children, whether negligent or not, while we are upon or using any lands owned or leased by CPC and Landowner.

The term "my children" shall include my own children and wards. The term "Landowner" includes any owner and/or lessee of the land upon which I am entering, and such owner/lessee's agents, employees, officers, directors, and assigns, as well as all agents, employees, board of directors, advisory board members, and assigns of the Coastal Prairie Conservancy.

I UNDERSTAND THAT, BY SIGNING THIS RELEASE AND INDEMNITY, I HAVE AGREED, INDIVIDUALLY AND ON BEHALF OF MY CHILDREN, NOT TO BRING SUIT OR ASSERT ANY CLAIM AGAINST CPC OR LANDOWNER EVEN THOUGH WE OR OUR PROPERTY ARE INJURED OR DAMAGED AS A RESULT OF THE NEGLIGENCE OF CPC OR LANDOWNER, THEIR GUESTS OR ANY OF THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED PARTIES WHILE WE ARE UPON OR USING THE OWNED OR RENTED LANDS OF CPC OR LANDOWNER. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT WE HAVE AGREED TO INDEMNIFY, PROTECT AND HOLD HARMLESS CPC AND LANDOWNER FOR ANY ACTS BY ME OR MY CHILDREN WHICH CAUSE DAMAGE OR INJURY WHILE ANY OF US ARE ON LANDS OF CPC OR LANDOWNER.

AGREED TO AND ACCEPTED on _____, 202___.
Date

Signature

Printed Name

Address

Address

Phone
on the prairie.
.....

Email - If you would like to receive regular updates on activities and events

Emergency Contact (name)

Emergency Phone

If any visitors are under 18 years of age, name(s) of Children: _____.
By signing below, I represent that I have the authority to sign this waiver on behalf of said children.

Signature of Parent of Guardian

Printed Name

I give my permission for my children and myself to be photographed or videotaped for use in the Coastal Prairie Conservancy's publications, website, and other media and grant to the Coastal Prairie Conservancy all right, title, and interest in any and all photographic images and video or audio recordings made during activities with the Coastal Prairie Conservancy.

Signature