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Texas Mid-Coast Initiative



Natural Resource Conservation Service Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership

Conserving, restoring and
enhancing vital coastal wetland
habitat on our Texas Mid-Coast



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Application Deadline: December 17, 2021

Texas Mid-Coast Initiative targets critical habitat for threatened and endangered species in the project range. These priority watersheds are among the most diverse in Texas and include a mosaic of freshwater wetlands, coastal prairies, river deltas, and estuaries.

Project Objectives:

- 1) Conserve priority wetland habitats for migratory birds and other State and federally listed species.
- 2) Through restoration and enhancement, improve habitat conditions for fish and wildlife and improve overall health of freshwater flows of streams and riparian areas into the coastal bays and estuaries.



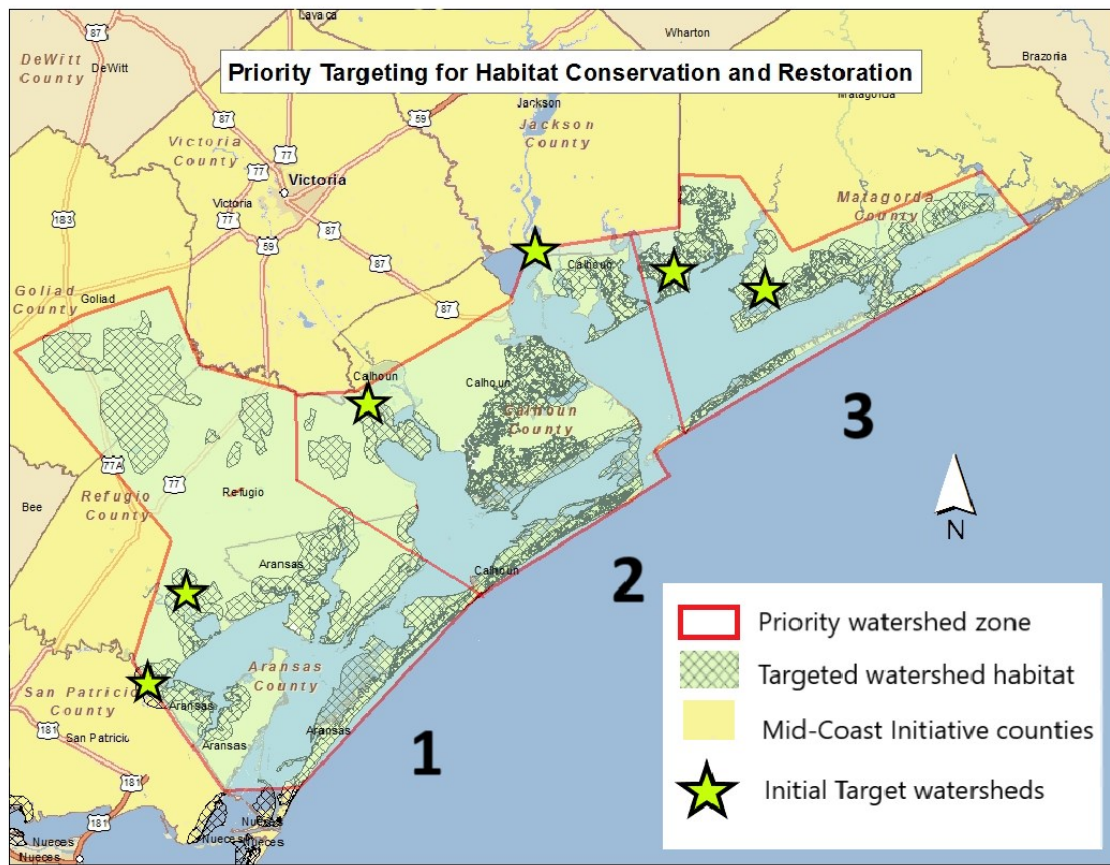
The program works collaboratively with national, regional and local partners, and private landowners to implement an 8-County regional voluntary conservation program.

Project activities will follow these steps:

- Landowner outreach
- Parcel prioritization ranking
- Contract development
- Conservation easement acquisition
- Wetland habitat restoration & enhancement



Contact your local USDA Service Center to apply!

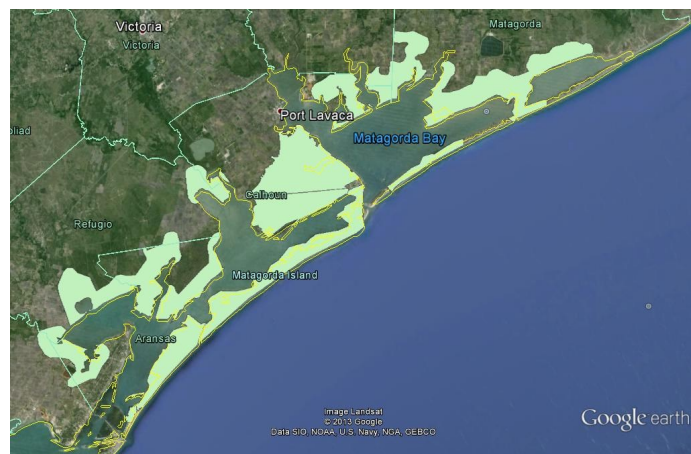
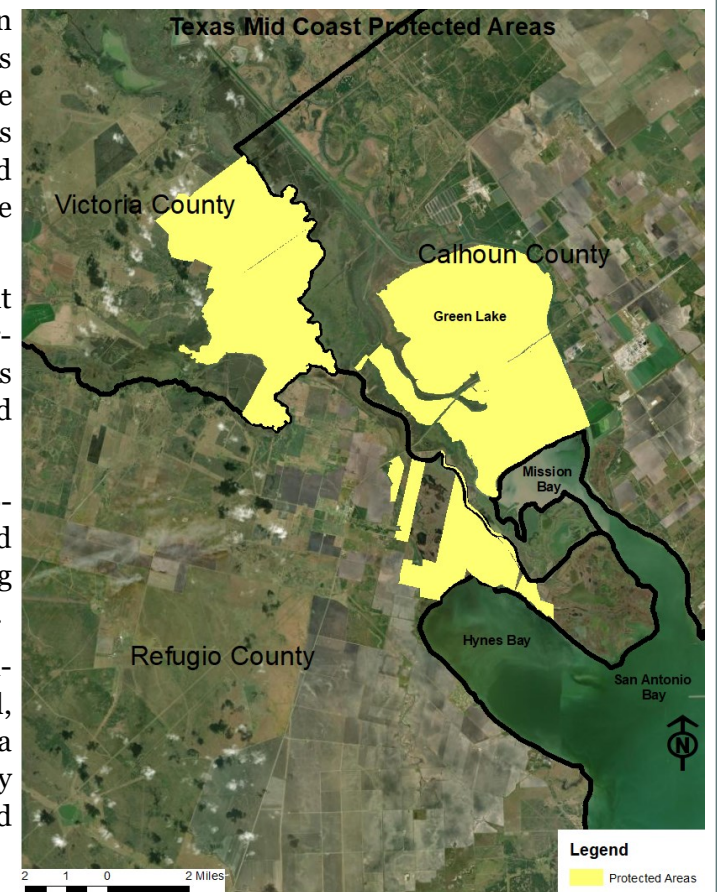


Land protection through wetland conservation easements and subsequent restoration activities in 8 counties of the Mid-Coast (*Left*) will ensure habitat needs are met for critical wildlife species and that these systems will function as intended to improve water quality and quantity over the landscape.

Prioritization will be placed on habitat adjacent to, or in the immediate vicinity of existing conservation easements, or otherwise protected lands (*e.g. right*), creating larger habitat blocks and migration corridors.

Restoration will focus on re-establishing hydrology or hydrologic connections, if necessary, and habitat needs such as brush control, controlling invasive/exotic species, and vegetation plantings.

Restoration activities are expected to benefit migratory species such as shorebirds and waterfowl, wading birds, terrestrial wildlife, aquatic flora and fauna, and provide water quality/quantity benefits such as enhanced freshwater flows and healthier bays and estuaries.

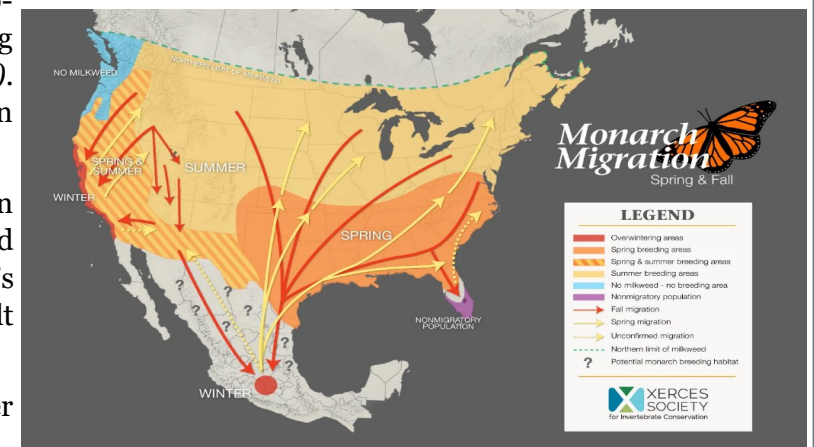


Whooping Crane Priority Habitat (USFWS, 2013).

Historically, these former wetland riparian and floodplain locations provided migrating, wintering, and nesting habitat for many species including the monarch butterfly (*bottom right*) and whooping crane (*bottom left*). Studies have shown that 237 species of birds, totaling at least 29 million individuals, migrate through this region every year.

Bird species of benefit include whooping crane, piping plover, northern aplomado falcon, peregrine falcon, wood stork, brown pelican, white-tailed hawk, sooty tern, white-faced ibis, Attwater prairie chicken, LeConte's sparrow, mottled ducks, buff-breasted sandpipers, long-billed curlews, stilt sandpipers, and western sandpipers.

Other species of benefit include blue crabs, shrimp, oysters, freshwater mussels, bass, red drum, southern flying squirrel, white-tailed deer and many amphibian species, including the black-spotted newt.



Known Monarch migration routes, (Xerces Society, 2016).