

FINAL REPORT

As Required by

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM

TEXAS

Grant No. TX E-99-RL-1

Endangered and Threatened Species Conservation

Recovery Land Acquisition For Whooping Crane Habitat at Falcon Point, Calhoun
County, Texas

Prepared by:

Jeff Francel



Carter Smith
Executive Director

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Division Director, Wildlife

22 August 2012

INTERIM REPORT

STATE: Texas GRANT NUMBER: E-99-RL-1

GRANT TITLE: Recovery Land Acquisition For Whooping Crane Habitat at Falcon Point, Calhoun County, Texas

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 July 2008 to 31 May 2012

OBJECTIVE(S):

To aid in the eventual recovery and delisting of three federally endangered species, three state threatened species, and one species of concern through habitat protection from a perpetual conservation easement on a 110 acre parcel of the Falcon Point Ranch in Calhoun County.

Segment Objectives:

1. Determine acreage to locate conservation easement
2. Conduct all due diligence on purchase of conservation easement including appraisal
3. Acquire Conservation Easement from Landowner
4. Final report submitted to TPWD

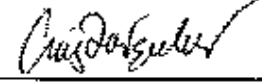
Significant Deviation: None.

Summary Of Progress: Please see Attachment A.

Location: Calhoun County, TX

Cost: Costs were not available at time of this report.

Prepared by: Craig Farquhar Date: 22 August 2012

Approved by:  Date: 22 August 2012
C. Craig Farquhar

Attachment A

**Recovery Land Acquisition For Whooping Crane Habitat at Falcon
Point, Calhoun County, Texas
Grant TX E-99-RL-1 / TPWD Contract 194220
August 15, 2012**

From The Nature Conservancy to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

On May 30, 2012, the long saga of TX E-99-RL-1 finally ended. On that date, The Nature Conservancy closed on a 111.24 acre conservation easement on the Falcon Point Ranch in Calhoun County, Texas. This was one day before the one year extension on E-99 expired. E-99 officially began on June 1, 2008 and was intended to purchase a conservation easement on a portion of the adjacent Cliburn Ranch to benefit federally endangered Whooping Cranes and other shorebirds.

The owners of the Cliburn Ranch rejected the Conservancy's fair market value proposal for a conservation easement in 2009. The reason for their rejection was likely because the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) agreed to purchase a conservation easement on the same property for several times the Conservancy's appraised fair market value. The NRCS purchased a several thousand acre conservation easement on the Cliburn Ranch in 2011.

The owners of the adjacent Falcon Point Ranch were willing to sell a conservation easement on a developable portion of their property they withheld from the NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program. This property fronts on San Antonio Bay and is within designated Critical Whooping Crane Habitat and fit the criteria of the original E-99 grant. In April 20, 2011 the grant was extended until May 31, 2012 and on April 13, 2012 the grant was amended to change the federal/state cost share to 50/50.

The Conservancy and the landowner reached agreement on the acreage and price for the conservation easement after several years of negotiations and several USFLA appraisals. The conservation easement allows for no construction or development other than an all-weather road and no subdivision. The final purchase price for the conservation easement was \$605,000 plus closing costs. The source of funding for the purchase was \$337,052.13 from the E-99 grant and the remainder coming from private sources. The Conservancy submitted an invoice to TPWD for reimbursement in July 2012.

The Conservancy will add the 111.24 acres to its more than 80 conservation easement agreements in Texas and will monitor the property annually to ensure compliance with the conservation easement.