



## Annual Report

# 2020

September 2019 - August 2020



# About Artist Boat

## Our Mission

Artist Boat is a 501(c)(3) whose mission is to promote awareness and preservation of coastal margins and the marine environment through the disciplines of the sciences and the arts.



Connect people to Gulf Coast environments through mind-opening experiences.

Educate and inspire people to action to preserve and protect coastal and marine habitats.

Our 5 Goals

Expand engagement in existing programming to inform and inspire people of all ages.

Preserve and restore 1,400 contiguous acres from beach to bay on West Galveston Island.

Establish the first nationally significant environmental education center on the Gulf Coast.



## Board of Directors

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## Staff

Karla Klay, [Executive Director](#)  
Kaye Gite, [Accounting Manager](#)  
Karissa Laffey, [Education Program Coordinator](#)  
Greg Hall, [Habitat + Stewardship Program Coordinator](#)  
Kelsey Malan, [Eco-Art Educator](#)  
Cassidy McDonald, [Eco-Art Educator](#)  
Janna Pate, [Eco-Art Educator](#)

# Our 2020 impact by the numbers



**\$270,000** INVESTED

in local schools and teachers

**15,000** SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

**404** VOLUNTEERS

donated 4,944 hours of their time working at our Coastal Heritage Preserve

**356** YOUTH WORKSHOPS & ADVENTURES

connected 2,516 kids to the native environment over multiple days, and 1 formal external evaluation determined the programs' impact on students

**142** BUCKET BRIGADE TOURS

informed 491 beachgoers about the important qualities of Galveston beaches

**103** PUBLIC KAYAK TRIPS

brought 277 people into critical wetland areas

# 84 SPECIES

added to the Coastal Heritage Preserve master species list, now totalling 633

# 121 TRASH BARRELS

underway for beautification of our beaches

# 690 ACRES

of coastal and wetlands preserved forever; 120 acres of coastal prairies and wetlands in progress for permanent conservation; and 9.58 acres resored

# 1 ECO-ART RESIDENCY

and 4 Eco-Art Camps educated 122 students about coastal and marine environments, and resulted in 1 public work of art

# 5 WATERSMART LANDSCAPES

designed by students on 4 school campuses; 1 monarch garden installed by Texas Master Gardeners

# 3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

delivered to 23 teachers and 8 paddling instructors in the Houston-Galveston area

# 1 Curriculum Written & Companion Professional Development

for Crenshaw Environmental Magnet School, entitled "Bolivar Habitat Preserve Field and Curriculum Guide For Educators"



73% youth programs  
 7% outreach  
 7% volunteers  
 13% public programs

Connect people to Gulf Coast environments through mind-opening experiences.

### Eco-Art Workshops + Adventures

This year we continued to offer our flagship Eco-Art Workshops and Adventures to students from second grade through high school.

Our hands-on, in-class lessons teach students about native prairie and wetland environments through science and art activities. Students then bring this knowledge outdoors, to explore the environments they learned about in the classroom on either foot or kayak.



These programs were supported by grants from Moody Permanent Endowment Fund, NOAA Bay and Watershed Education Training, and EPA Gulf of Mexico Program.

### STEAM-Powered: Blue Carbon Art IQ

For the fourth year, we offered an expanded Eco-Art Workshop and Adventure program to 569 Galveston 7<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The STEAM-Powered: Blue Carbon Art IQ program offers two workshops and two adventures in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) over the course of the school year. Students explore complex concepts like blue carbon, climate change, sea level rise, ocean acidification, and thermal expansion.

Students engage in project-based learning through the creation of an interpretive art piece, translating knowledge through conceptual art.

*As part of our Covid response, this adventure was offered to small family pod groups in person at the Preserve, and the workshops were provided virtually.*



**Following program participation, students:**

- showed a **75% increase in knowledge of the Galveston Bay ecosystem**
- are more likely to engage in **stewardship of the Bay**
- have improved attitudes that **Galveston Bay is beautiful and clean**





*"My students gained an educational and physical experience that they'll remember forever."*

L. Chambers, Collegiate Academy Teacher



*"The best time I've ever had learning!"*

Jenna, age 12 - Austin Middle School Student

Connect people to Gulf Coast environments through mind-opening experiences.

## We Back the Bay & Gulf

We Back the Bay & Gulf! Project reduces non-point source pollution and improves water quality to the Bay and the Gulf. This year, Artist Boat partnered with four middle school campuses in Pasadena Independent School District (PISD) in Harris County. During this project, students and teachers engaged in the EPA's environmental education continuum through:

- 1) raising awareness and knowledge through a field based workshops and adventures by kayak that engage critical thinking skills about water quality and sources of pollution,
- 2) providing opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving through decision making as the students and teachers design a WaterSmart landscape feature for their campus, and
- 3) engaging students in actions and stewardship as they build the WaterSmart landscape feature and launch a We Back the Bay & Gulf ! outreach messages for the regional community.

A total of ten campuses will receive these services over two years, 2019-2022.

## Turn the T.I.D.E.

*Turn the T.I.D.E.* leads to a more sustainable future by increasing awareness and altering attitudes and behaviors associated with climate change and extreme weather. *Turn the T.I.D.E.* is: advocating for **TOMORROW, INFORMing the community about current social and ecological issues, DISCUSSing and DEBATING our next steps, and learning from our shared EXPERIENCES (T.I.D.E).** This two year grant (2019 - 2022) from NOAA B-WET provides:

- 1) Professional Development for 50+ teachers,
- 2) 50 Eco-Art Workshops and Adventures to 50 classes in PISD,
- 3) 50 Habitat Restoration Adventures to restore dune ecosystems, and
- 4) Production of podcasts addressing resiliency by students.



"I had the most **AMAZING** experience these four days! I have gained so much knowledge, and I cannot wait to share what I have learned with my family, friends, teachers, administration, and students!"





**“Very well done. After teaching 36 years, presenting and attending workshops, high school and college levels, this workshop ranks in the top 5%!!”**

– Turn the T.I.D.E, Teacher in PISD





### Public + Private Eco-Art Adventures

Groups can join us in fun, educational kayak adventures offered at five locations around the Greater-Houston area. Adult engagement connects more people to the Gulf Coast and creates and grows the regional stewardship ethic. This year, we brought [277](#) members of the public on a kayak adventure.

Connect people to Gulf Coast environments through mind-opening experiences.

## Eco-Art Residencies

We continued to offer Eco-Art Residencies in schools this year. Residencies span 12-24 hours within one class. This extended time allows the creation of multiple art-science integrated projects that vary from large-scale public art to small take home projects.



In 2019-2020 at Briscoe Elementary, 2nd – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students participated in Shark Mania Eco-Art Residency. Students learned about the common sharks of the Gulf of Mexico and painted a portrait of their favorite shark. They learned a lot about sharks' feeding habits and diets. They created a "diet-rama" made of plaster that they could feed over and over. Their favorite activity was the shark dissection in which they discovered the shark was pregnant with four babies.



Educate and inspire people to action to preserve and protect coastal and marine habitats.

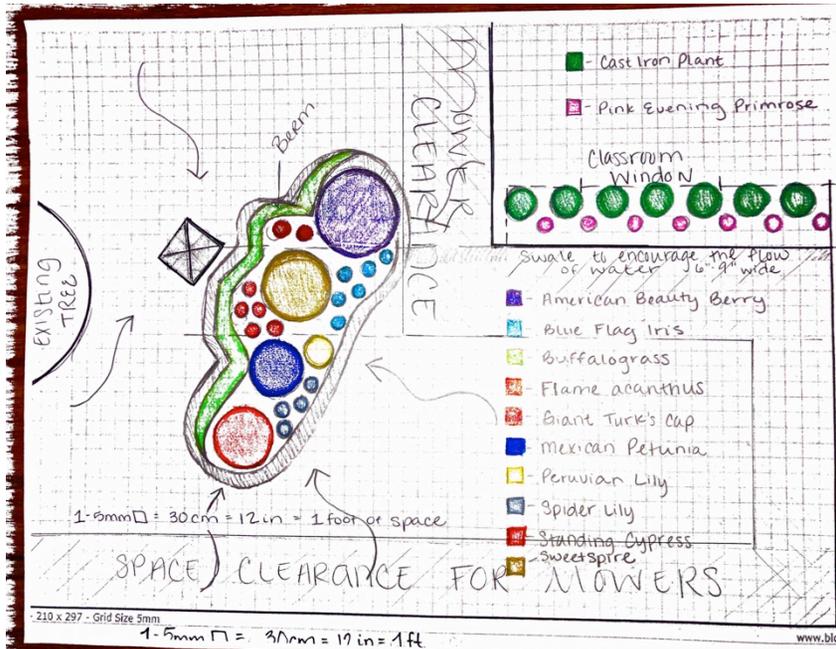


### “We Back the Bay and Gulf” & “Turn the T.I.D.E.”

For the second year, Artist Boat has expanded the creation of habitats on school campuses and our island’s beaches. The “We Back the Bay and Gulf” program has been provided to nine schools with six more planned, serving a total of over, 1,400 students in the Greater-Houston Area who have designed nine WaterSmart features for their campuses.

Students design and build a WaterSmart landscape on their campus to achieve two goals: (1) conserve water and (2) reduce stormwater runoff from their school campus.

- Parkview Intermediate, *rain garden*
- South Houston Intermediate, *pocket prairie*
- Jackson Intermediate, *pocket prairie*
- De Zavala Middle School, *rain garden*



### Westside High School, 2018-2019 Shows Lasting Impact

The students and faculty at Westside High School worked together to build a wetland pond on their school campus during the “We Back the Bay” program. Today, whistling ducks, ibis, dragonflies, toads, and a myriad of other wetland creatures call this new pond “home.” Students at this school get to witness the impact that restoring native habitat can have for local wildlife populations.





Turn the T.I.D.E. provided dune restoration for Galveston Island. This year, students restored 1.5 acres of dunes in partnership with the Galveston Park Board of Trustees.

*“After this experience, I learned that trying to help the planet, even in a small way, is a lot more productive than not doing anything at all...*

*“Through this project within our community, **young people have been encouraged & energized about helping the environment**, and that is something **they can share with their friends, families, and one day, their kids**, spreading the message about maintaining and loving this planet.”*  
-Alex Masewicz - Westside High School Student



*"Hands on experiences and opportunities for students to showcase creativity provide [them] lasting memorable moments and learning."*

– L. Elzner, Oppe Elementary Teacher



### Habitat Restoration Program

During the 2019-2020 school year, 569 Galveston 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders participated in our Habitat Restoration Program. The Habitat Restoration Program offers two workshops and one adventure over the course of the school year. In the fall, students are introduced to coastal prairie habitats and wildlife, threats facing the coastal prairie, and techniques for using oil pastels. In the winter, students take care of seedlings at their school, and in the spring, students come out and plant their seedlings at the Coastal Heritage Preserve.

From beginning to end, the students involved in this program:

- showed a 91.7% increase in knowledge of the coastal prairie ecosystem
- claimed to spend more of their time outside and less time playing video games and watching T.V.
- claimed to do more to learn about nature, such as visiting a park and gardening
- agreed that they enjoy being in nature and understand there are many habitats in need of restoration in Galveston



**Restoration adventures give students a chance to take ownership of the native coastal prairie. This year, students restored more than 9 acres of coastal prairie.**





Educate and inspire people to action to preserve and protect coastal and marine habitats.

### Beautify the Bucket

Beautify the Bucket is a competition effort to encourage beachgoers to throw their trash in the can, not the sand. Volunteers paint a trash barrel based on a marine theme:

- ocean organisms
- marine debris
- coastal and marine ecosystems
- Galveston recreational activities

Volunteers adopted over 121 barrels this year. Due to COVID, they will be returned in fall of 2020 for the final competition and voting.

After the competition, the painted barrels are placed on the beach, where they raise awareness about the marine environment and encourage proper trash disposal.





Educate and inspire people to action to preserve and protect coastal and marine habitats.

### **Bolivar Habitat Preserve Field and Curriculum Guide for Educators**

This curriculum is a part of a comprehensive partnership with Crenshaw Environmental Science Magnet School to provide training for teachers and access to the campus's very own conserved 22+acre ecosystem. Artist Boat designed a curriculum for three levels of learners to engage seasonally in the five ecosystems found on the Bolivar campus.

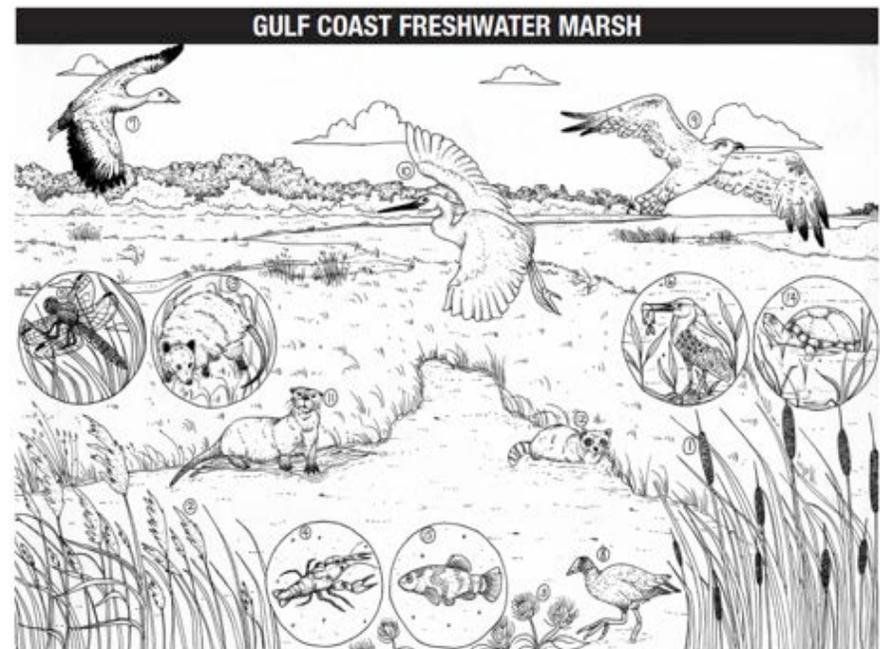
This curriculum was paired with three days of professional development, a designed storage area with all supplies needed for every lesson, and wildlife charts by ecosystem. The curriculum and PD provided direction for:

- Learning in the outdoors
- Interpreting ecosystems
- Integrating art and science for observation
- Identifying organisms and ecosystems by season

### **Professional Development**

Three professional development workshops were held for local teachers this year. These workshops gave 23 teachers new strategies and tools to teach conservation topics in the classroom. Each professional development course had a topic. This year's Professional Development courses and their topics were:

- EPA We Back the Bay & Gulf (blue carbon, water quality, storm water)
- NOAA BWET Turn The T.I.D.E. (climate change, extreme weather, resiliency)
- Bolivar Habitat Preserve (coastal ecosystems, art & science, species)



Expand engagement in existing programming to inform people of all ages



### Mardi Gras Float

Artist Boat recruited over 70 volunteers to paint an Arctic Float themed for the Mardi Gras Parade, funded by the Knights of Momus. The float featured native animals of the arctic, such as polar bears, reindeer, arctic foxes, marine mammals, and a myriad of arctic birds.



### Eco-Art Camps

This year, we took our Eco-Art Camps outside and on the Preserve. Accordingly, educators wrote new curriculum to fit themes of exploration and observation. Campers spent the week paddling, swimming, walking, running, and adventuring throughout the Preserve. They also created a mural for the Eco-Art Barn where students created art. The Camp met all CDC standards for camps and outdoor learning.



### Bucket Brigade

The Bucket Brigade program dispels misconceptions about Galveston Beaches through free interpretive tours and animal encounters. This year, we served 412 people. For COVID safety, all groups were limited to 10 participants and required pre-registration for the 45-minute tours.

**Tour topics include:**

- water quality
- the importance of dunes
- marine debris
- Sargassum + the creatures that inhabit it

Bucket Brigade serves a range of K-Gray learners.

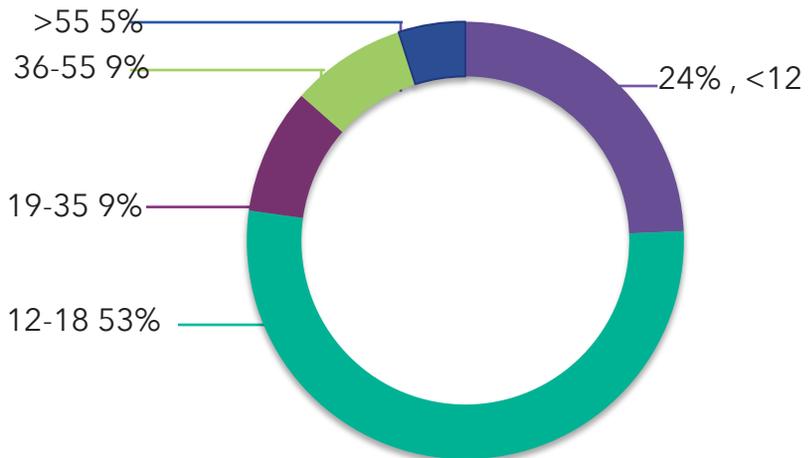




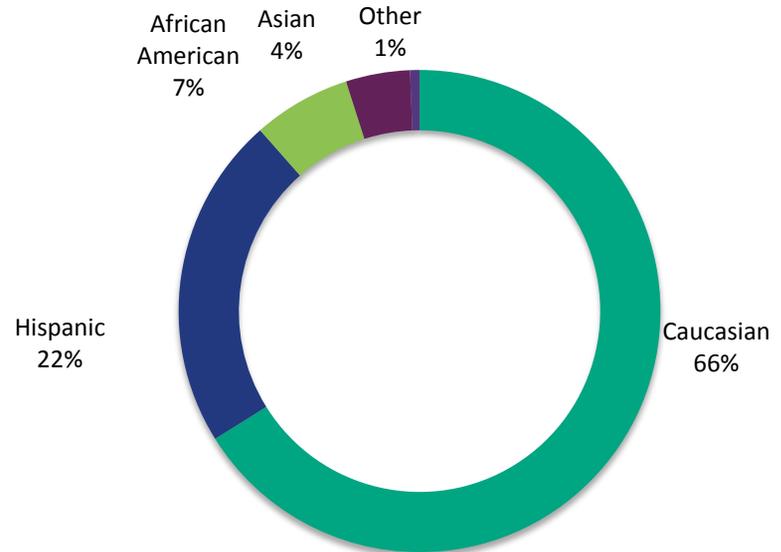
**Each year, we aim to serve a diverse audience.**

These graphs show the range of 6,164 people we connected with in the 2020 fiscal year. Of the people we served this year, 65% were under 18 and 67% were people of color.

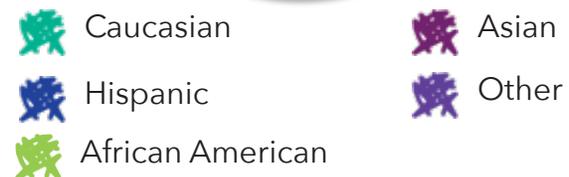
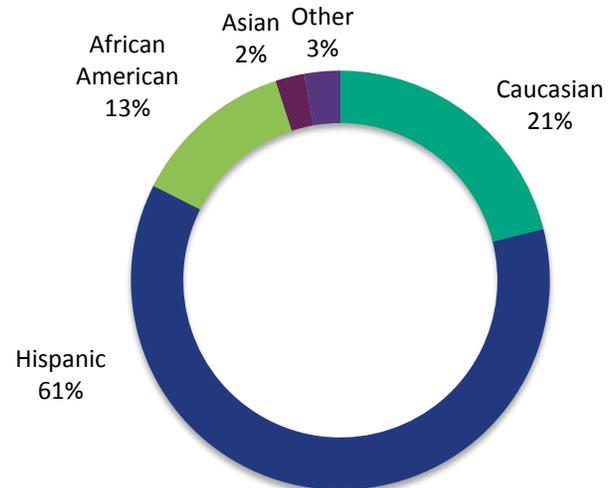
# Age



# Race for public programs



# Race for youth programs





Preserve and restore 1,400 acres from beach to bay on West Galveston Island.

### Volunteers

Volunteers of all ages participated in habitat restoration, spending over 4,944 hours at the Preserve. Many groups volunteered at the Coastal Heritage Preserve this year, including:

- Sea Citizens
- Port of Galveston
- Phillips 66
- REI
- Texas Master Gardeners
- Southland Lutheran Church
- Sea Citizen Dennis

### Gulf Corps

Eight members of the Gulf Corps spent twenty-five days on the Coastal Heritage Preserve providing much needed labor in constructing over 3,000 linear feet of ranch fence to help secure our property lines. In addition, the Corps treated over 400 invasive trees and removed 2.5 acres of other invasive vegetation, along with hauling thousands of pounds of ranching debris left on acquired properties.

### USFWS Coastal Program

This year, the Coastal Program funded management of the coastal prairies with funds to mow annually over 160 acres to mimic fire, maintain 6 foot paths along nine miles of fence lines, and provide management for birds seasonally, such as mowing for cranes. A new tractor was essential to meet these goals.



***CITGO provides an annual grant to support stewardship at the Preserve.***



Preserve and restore 1,400 acres from beach to bay on West Galveston Island.

### Eagle Scouts

Three Eagle Scout candidates completed projects on the Coastal Heritage Preserve this year!

***Kyle Sedita built and installed 8 heavy duty nursery tables in the Coastal Heritage Preserve Native Plant Nursery. This effectively doubled our space to grow out seedlings!***



### Eagle Scouts Protecting Prairie, Creating Homes for Wildlife, and Creating Storage

***Joshua Demel raised the funding for and built several items related to bird conservation for the Coastal Heritage Preserve. His Purple Martin House, 3 owl nesting boxes, and two swallow houses will be installed on the property later this fall!***



### Eagle Scouts

**Leaders for the future and leaders for conservation created with Artist Boat!**

***Nikko Atessis and his family improved our smaller shed, giving it a badly needed upgrade, a new roof and walls, and making a nice place for Artist Boat to store our new tractor!***

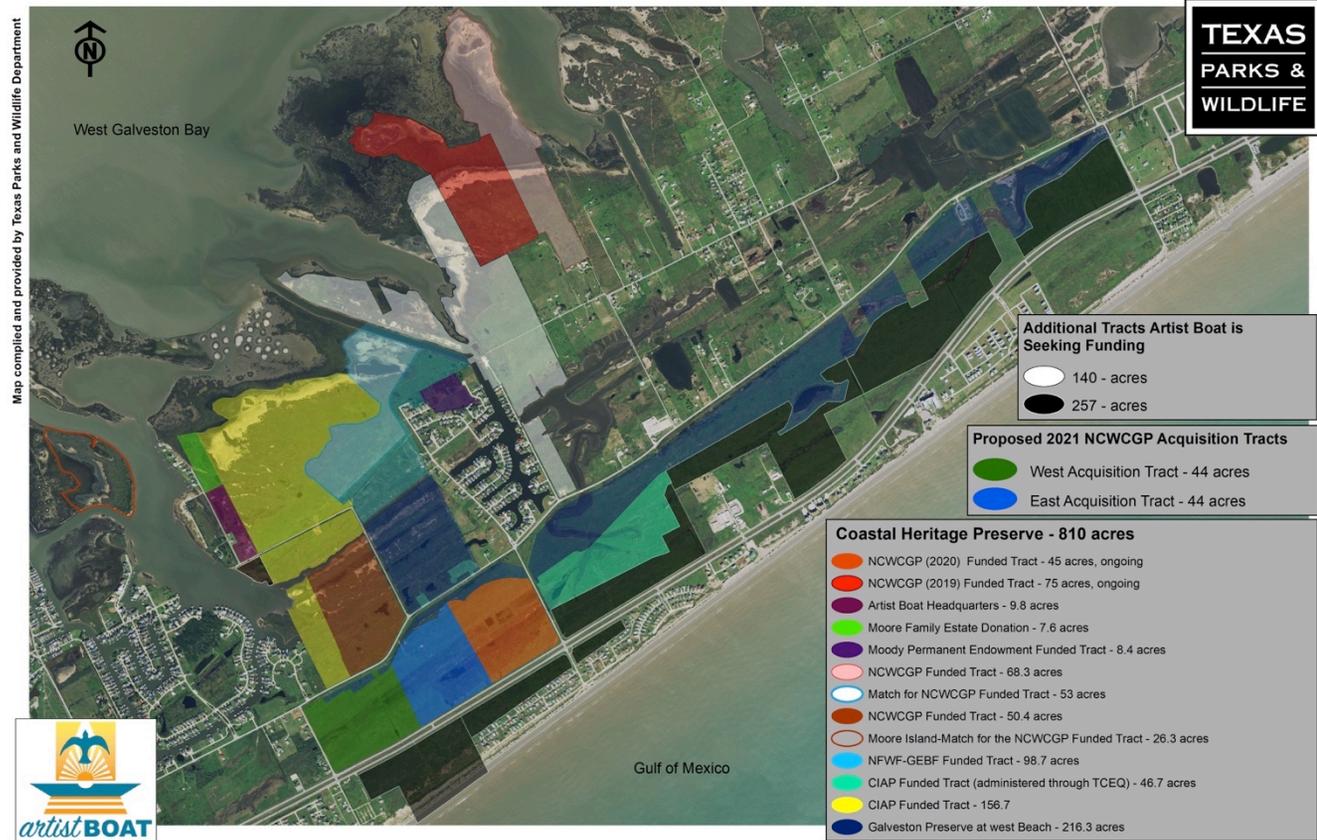


## Land Acquisition

During 2019-2020, we made great strides in procuring grants to save coastal habitats and add them to the Preserve. Two grants for \$1,000,000 were awarded to Artist Boat in partnership with TPWD to protect 120 acres. Efforts are underway now to raise \$700,000 in matching funds. We are halfway there! Two more applications to protect 90 acres are under review. Currently, we have **over 690-acres** of land to protect and restore. Recent and upcoming efforts will bring the Preserve to **over 900-acres** acres by 2022. Everyone can help and donate to our restricted funds for land acquisition.



Cherie O'Brien, Darren Sloniger, and Linda Shead are key partners.

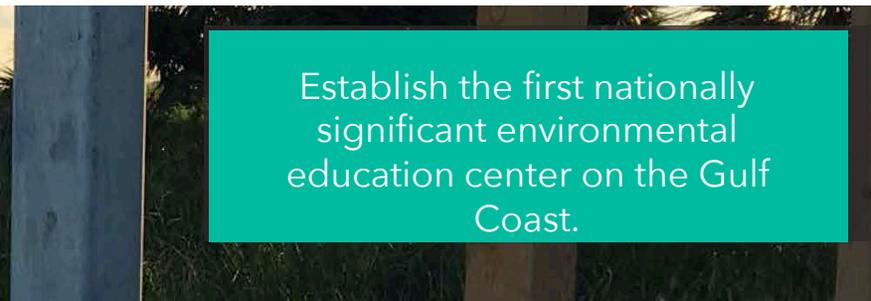


“When we save nature, we save ourselves.” –Karla Klay

Establish the first nationally significant environmental education center on the Gulf Coast.

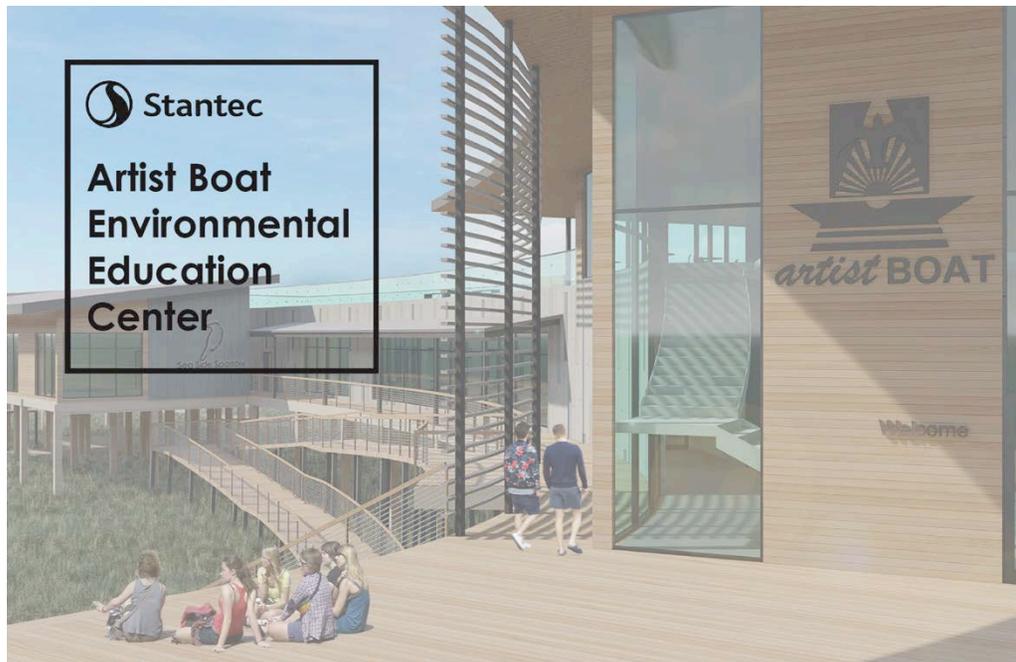
**The Edward and Helen Oppenheimer Bird Observatory** is the first of its kind on Galveston Island, a bird observatory open to the public along the Great Texas Birding Trail. During COVID, the Observatory became vital to birders and nature lovers as we provided access that was safe and socially distanced in 2019-2020.





*In April 2020, Artist Boat made its final move to 13330 Settegast Road next to the Preserve. You helped to make this new house our **home**.*

*Since then, we have started dreaming about the Gulf Coast Environmental Education Center, thanks to Stantec and their summer interns. Five designs were created to meet the Living Building Challenge.*



SITE PLAN



- BEAUTY
- 19
- BEAUTY + BIOPHILIA
- PLACE
- 02
- URBAN AGRICULTURE
- PLACE
- 03
- HABITAT EXCHANGE





Establish the first nationally significant environmental education center on the Gulf Coast.

## Stantec Buildings Internship Program 2020

Stantec's 2020 Buildings Internship Program aims to do three things: experience, engage, and enrich. Artist Boat is partnering with Stantec to provide the best experience possible for 23 interns across 13 cities and 7 Stantec Business Centers. These interns work together in teams according to discipline: architecture, interior design, and mechanical and structural engineering. This year, the intern teams developed designs for a future Gulf Coast Environmental Education Center that will allow Artist Boat to continue promoting awareness and preservation of coastal margins and the marine environment through the disciplines of the sciences and the arts. In return for their service, interns receive opportunities to work on real projects with interdisciplinary teams and to gain valuable design experience and applicable knowledge for their future careers. Stantec interns gain mentorship, community involvement, and networking opportunities across the US and Canada.





Establish the first nationally significant environmental education center on the Gulf Coast



**Stantec**  
The Spectacular Seaside Sparrows



Energy

| GOAL           | PLAN                      | MEASURE                   | STATUS              |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 01             | 04                        | 07                        | 08                  |
| SCALE OF PLACE | ALTERNATIVE DESIGN SCHEME | ENERGY + CARBON REDUCTION | NET POSITIVE CARBON |



**Stantec**  
The Pittsburgh Purple Martins



# Highlights of our accomplishments to date

## Total Participants, 2004-2020



**\$13,200,000** INVESTED

in preserving endangered environments and bringing kids outdoors

**95,327** YOUTH REACHED

through our state-of-the-art workshop and adventure programs

**16,364** PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS

**23,015** BUCKET BRIGADE PARTICIPANTS

**690** ACRES

of coastal prairie saved from development

**273** TRASH BARRELS

painted and installed on Galveston beaches

**162** PUBLIC ARTWORKS

including 70 benches on the Seawall Interpretive Trail

**3** EDUCATION ACCESS  
STRUCTURES

built on our Coastal Heritage Preserve: a kayak storage facility,  
outdoor classroom, and Oppenheimer Bird Observatory

**1** PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS



# From the Director *staying the course with you!*

## Thank you!

Dear Friends, Donors, Partners, Volunteers, Funders, Crew Members, and Fans,

First and foremost, Artist Boat's success is a direct reflection of the committed investments YOU make to assure our mission flourishes and thrives! YOU all have made that possible for over 17 years! You and we know disasters occur in many forms. This year was a surprising one with a global pandemic causing loss of life and decimating many for-profit and non-profit organizations.

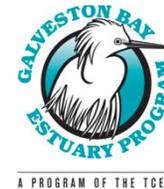
In the past six months, 1,000 nature centers have closed. This is a cultural and natural loss to these communities. Many communities in America rely on their "one" nature center to do the mighty work of educating children about our natural world during school days, advocating and procuring funds for land acquisition, and making a place for their community to learn about their specific place – their ecosystem. Every place is unique. Our Coastal Heritage Preserve's wetlands and prairies belong to us and are unique. It is sad to imagine the reality of all of these 1,000 places and their unique systems of grasslands, forests, wetlands, and more being now at risk for permanent loss. Our planet and our nation cannot afford to lose one more unique place. Each place that hosts an ecosystem adds to the whole of our planet's health.

And these 1,000 lost nature centers collectively served over 3 million students annually. It all adds up!

Why am I sharing this "bad" news? Because we can also "add up" in a positive way. We are committed to being here when this is over and resuming our service to 17,000 participants annually. We intend not merely to survive – but, to thrive. We intend to save the wilds of West Galveston Island and finish creating a 1,400-acre preserve. We are visioning the future, and we need you more than ever to help us. Each of you, each acre we save, and each kid we teach is "one in a million."

Thanks for staying with us and continuing your support! Thanks to all our funders, supporters, friends, fans, volunteers, partners, and crew members!

Sincerely,  
Karla Klay,  
Executive Director



# We continued to grow by between 80% to 33% every three years for over 16 years.

|                               | 2004         | 2005         | 2006         | 2007         | 2008         | 2009         | 2010         | 2011          | 2012         | 2013         | 2014          | 2015          | 2016          | 2017          | 2018          | 2019          | 2020         | TOTAL SERVED TO DATE | % compared to 2019 |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Eco-art Workshops             | 1,103        | 828          | 678          | 2,463        | 924          | 2,044        | 3,055        | 3,382         | 1,669        | 1,618        | 3,225         | 3,599         | 1,752         | 2,395         | 2,340         | 3,720         | 2,516        | <b>37,311</b>        | 0.676344086        |
| Eco-art Adventures            | 1,303        | 902          | 1,055        | 1,782        | 1,942        | 1,598        | 2,068        | 3,034         | 2,195        | 2,275        | 4,069         | 3,841         | 2,174         | 1,896         | 2,591         | 2,750         | 1,721        | <b>37,196</b>        | 0.625818182        |
| Residencies                   | 101          | 608          | 1,265        | 992          | 1,471        | 1,228        | 1,238        | 867           | 427          | 1,175        | 682           | 630           | 270           | 283           | 95            | 373           | 122          | <b>11,827</b>        | 0.327077748        |
| Professional Development      | 73           | 111          | 236          | 275          | 245          | 119          | 103          | 52            | 116          | 85           | 84            | -             | 62            | 14            | 61            | 28            | 23           | <b>1,687</b>         | 0.821428571        |
| Public/Private Adventures     | 358          | 511          | 548          | 591          | 816          | 527          | 1,264        | 2,382         | 1,775        | 1,840        | 1,457         | 1,372         | 932           | 639           | 572           | 503           | 277          | <b>16,364</b>        | 0.550695825        |
| Bucket Brigade                | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -             | -            | -            | -             | -             | 4,820         | 6,639         | 6,843         | 4,222         | 491          | <b>23,015</b>        | 0.116295595        |
| Habitat Restoration Adventure | -            | 420          | 168          | 63           | -            | 1,360        | 1,024        | 609           | 2,298        | 934          | -             | 204           | -             | 717           | -             | 507           | 198          | <b>8,304</b>         | 0.390532544        |
| Outreach/Engagement           | -            | 611          | -            | 576          | 159          | 299          | 300          | 628           | 1,431        | 1,500        | 3,614         | 558           | 2,382         | 627           | 2,979         | 3,422         | 412          | <b>19,498</b>        | 0.120397428        |
| Volunteers/Workdays           | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -            | -             | -            | -            | -             | -             | 417           | 411           | 925           | 1,359         | 404          | <b>3,516</b>         | 0.29727741         |
|                               |              |              |              |              | → 80% inc    |              |              |               | → 50% inc    |              |               |               | → 25% inc     |               |               | → 33% inc     | ← 67%        |                      |                    |
|                               |              |              |              |              | Avg = 3,626  |              |              |               | Avg = 6,491  |              |               |               | Avg = 9,836   |               |               | Avg = 12,441  |              | Avg = 16,645         |                    |
| <b>TOTAL SERVED</b>           | <b>2,938</b> | <b>3,991</b> | <b>3,950</b> | <b>6,742</b> | <b>5,557</b> | <b>7,175</b> | <b>9,052</b> | <b>10,954</b> | <b>9,911</b> | <b>9,427</b> | <b>13,131</b> | <b>10,204</b> | <b>12,809</b> | <b>13,621</b> | <b>16,406</b> | <b>16,884</b> | <b>6,164</b> | <b>158,916</b>       |                    |

In spite of a global pandemic and falling back to 2007 (post-Ike) levels of service, Artist Boat remains committed to:

- conserving 1,400 acres of wilds for wildlife and people on West Galveston Island,
- educating people of all ages in the coastal and marine environment through unique coastal experiences,
- restoring coastal prairies and dune ecosystems,
- protecting our beautiful Gulf Coast, and
- affirming that the coast is unique, beautiful, and alive to all who will hear and take action!



Headquarters:  
13330 Settegast Road,  
Galveston, TX 77554  
409-632-0388  
[www.artistboat.org](http://www.artistboat.org)

