

FlatsWorthy, TPWF provide patrol skiff for game wardens

By LYDIA SALDAÑA
TPWF Communications Director

Texas Game Wardens working in coastal waters near Rockport now have access to a custom-made shallow water skiff that will allow them to better patrol hard-to-reach marshes and bays. The new boat was exhibited to the public and put into the water for the first time Thursday, March 12.

The vessel was funded through a partnership between FlatsWorthy and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation's (TPWF) Gear Up for

Game Wardens program.

FlatsWorthy is a nonprofit that promotes boating courtesy among all who enjoy Texas' shallow bays. The core founders and followers are guides, paddlers, air boaters, fly-fishermen, wade anglers and those who drift-fish or enjoy poling the flats. This diverse coalition of anglers is engaging in conversations to encourage mutual respect. The shallow water areas are rich in fish and wildlife resources and are also environmentally sensitive. Care must be taken

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This new \$60,000 custom-made shallow water skiff, top photo, will allow game wardens to better patrol hard-to-reach areas. Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation chairman Chuck Nash, bottom photo, middle, thanks FlatsWorthy President Chuck Naiser, left, and NewWater Boat Works Owner Tim Clancy, right, for donating the shallow-water skiff to Wardens.

Photos by STEVEN SMITH (top photo) and DAVID SIKES



Little Bay grant agreement now back in county's hands

Aransas County Navigation District (ACND) commissioners, at their regular meeting Monday, March 16, approved an interlocal agreement by and between Aransas County and the ACND with regard to the Little Bay mitigation grant study, with changes made by ACND Attorney Jerry Benadum.

This \$1.5 million funding could pave the way for future construction projects.

ACND Attorney Jerry Benadum noted the county is the fiscal agent, but because the project is on ACND property, the ACND will be supervising the project.

"It's very similar to arrangements we've done in the past," said Benadum.

County Commissioner Charles Smith said the agreement, as rewritten by the ACND, "Isn't going to fly with our legal counsel (Kristen Barnebey)."

ACND Chairman Malcolm Dieckow said, "Hold on. We are going to take a vote. This will then go to the county and we'll see what changes are made by the county."

Smith noted, "This is your property, but it has to be done by someone else's (FEMA) rules."

Later in the meeting, during the reports section of the agenda, ACND Harbor Master Keith Barrett said the district's Corps of Engineers permit, which the ACND holds, has a long tail of requirements. He said if the

See HANDS, page 3A

break due to Coronavirus

waives STAAR, ACISD offering children free meals

Monday, March 23.

All ACISD directors and principals returned to work Monday, March 16. All other ACISD employees were to return to work Tuesday, March 17.

Abbott waives STAAR testing

Texas Governor Greg Abbott waived the State of Texas Assessments of Academic

to ensure schools continue to deliver instruction while students are absent or while schools are closed due to COVID-19. This includes tailoring instruc-

tion for students with special needs so they have access to the same education as other students in the district. Abbott will continue to work with the TEA

on developing additional methods to ensure that students are learning and ready to succeed

See MEALS, page 2A

UIL postpones extra-curricular activity

SKIFF

continued from 1A

not to disturb sea grasses and other ecological resources necessary for a healthy ecosystem that supports fish and wildlife populations. Veteran fly-fishing guide Chuck Naiser led the effort to create FlatsWorthy.

"We are thrilled at the success of the fundraising partnership that will provide this tool for our game wardens," said Naiser. "It's a sign that the public is ready to move forward in a positive way to change the culture

on the water, and it's a sign that users and regulators can come together in agreement and accomplish something that will benefit us all. It is validation for FlatsWorthy and validation for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). We can accomplish good things by working together."

The shallow water skiff, called a Curlew, maneuvers in areas that conventional boats cannot reach. The boat is designed to

have minimal environmental impact on the shallow waters it will traverse. Having a better patrol presence in areas where there have been user conflicts will benefit all who use and enjoy the coastal flats.

"It's a fantastic partnership," said Major Ellis Powell, who leads TPWD's Law Enforcement Region 8, covering the lower Texas coast from Port O'Connor to the Rio Grande Valley. "The problems we are having out here are everybody's problem, and no user group is being singled out. We need to find common ground, and that's exactly what game wardens do. We are extremely grateful to FlatsWorthy and TPWF's Gear Up for Game Wardens program for providing this critical piece of equipment that will allow us to effectively patrol the shallow waters without disturbing the resources and with very little impact on these environments."

More than \$60,000 was raised to fund the new Curlew.

"I was proud to support this effort, and it is heartening to see so many others support it, too," said former Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Chairman Chuck Nash, who serves on FlatsWorthy's Advisory Board. "We all need to treat each other with respect. A Texas Game Warden presence in these shallow water areas will make a big difference."

The custom-made boat was manufactured by Pro-Line NewWater Inc., a Texas company that provided a substantial discount on the boat's construction.

"I was a fisherman long before I was a boat builder," said company president Tim Clancey. "I developed these boats to get to remote and special places where you can find more wildlife and more fish. That's what has inspired me. I am very honored to be able to outfit this boat for Texas Game Wardens to patrol these areas and keep them pristine for future generations."

TPWF's Gear Up for Game

Wardens program has raised more than \$1.2 million to secure specialty equipment and gear for Texas Game Wardens all over the state. While the state provides the necessities for game wardens to do their jobs, there is still a critical need for additional equipment. The program has received support from all corners of the state.

"It's gratifying to see how Texans come together to support their game wardens," said TPWF Executive Director Susan Houston. "Through the Gear Up for Game Wardens program, Texans are helping to conserve the lands, waters and wildlife of our state for generations to come."

Records

The following are open records information compiled by The Pilot staff. These records will be published each Wednesday, except when schedules prevent such publication. This week's report covers the period between March 9, 2020 and March 15, 2020.

DWI/BWI/DUI Arrests

EDITOR'S NOTE: The names of ALL people arrested for the offense of driving while intoxicated, driving under the influence, or boating while intoxicated and taken to the Aransas County Detention Center will be published. Formal charges may be made or dropped following the arrest.

Those arrested for the offense

of DWI, DUI or BWI are:

- (3-12) Megan Suzanne Knostman, 40

- (3-13) Vernon Neal Hahn, 59

Marriages

Marriage licenses applied for in the county clerk's office included:

- William Mack Combs and Barbara Jean Tutor

- Michael Edwin Gibson and Angela Lynn Gibson

- Noah Jeffrey Marton and Rebecca Christine Thompson

Divorces

Divorces and annulments granted in district court or the county court at law included:

- Darcy Huggins and Jarod Huggins

Obituaries

CREAMER



Kathryn B. Creamer, 58, passed away Wednesday, March 11, 2020. She was born Jan. 25, 1962 in San Bernardino, CA.

She was preceded in death by her sister-in-laws, Phyllis Murray, Betty Sheets, and Margie Swift.

She is survived by three children, Lisa (David) Dougherty, Timothy (Linda) Denison, and Joseph (Tracy) Denison; 11 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

A celebration of life will be planned at a later date.

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