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**Restoration of Bahia Grande  
Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge  
Brownsville – Port Isabel, Texas**

**Objective**

To establish private industry partnerships in the restoration of Bahia Grande as a vibrant estuary supporting fish, wildlife and migratory waterfowl, and a public-private coalition to support the largest restoration project in the United States at Bahia Grande, Texas.

**Project Description**

Bahia Grande is an 11,000 acre, barren basin within the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge that once served as an important nursery for a wide variety of fish, shellfish, wildlife and waterfowl in the South Texas coastal region. Since the construction of the Brownsville Ship Channel in the 1930s which cut off tidal exchange into Bahia Grande, it has been a dustbowl filled only by occasional rainfall. Ocean Trust, a national nonprofit foundation dedicated to building science, conservation and industry partnerships to sustain the oceans as a food source for humanity is leading the restoration of Bahia Grande in cooperation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

**Progress & Plans**

Ocean Trust has raised approximately \$450,000 of federal funding for permitting, planning and construction of new channels that will bring tidal water into Bahia Grande. This spring, Ocean Trust constructed a mangrove nursery on site in Bahia Grande and obtained a commitment from University of Texas Brownsville/Texas Southmost College (UTB/TSC) to donate a building for a larger native plant nursery needed for the project. The US Fish & Wildlife Service has \$200,000 of funding for initial monitoring and research. The final archeological survey will begin in April. Groundbreaking and channel construction will begin this summer. A groundbreaking ceremony is being planned with Congressman Solomon Ortiz and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson which is expected to attract national media coverage as the largest restoration project in the US.

**Funding Needs**

Ocean Trust is seeking \$60,000 of private and inkind matching support for a new federal grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service to provide \$120,000 of additional funding for Bahia Grande. These funds will be used for bottom contouring, water control structures, channel modifications, and/or development and stocking of the native plant nursery at UTB/TSC as needed to complete the project. Major industry sponsors and partners will receive permanent recognition at the restoration site, and during media and groundbreaking events. Site visits can be arranged for interested major donors.

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| Photos:               | Ocean Trust   | Carrie Robinson   |                   |                       |

Barren Bahia Grande



Rain filled Bahia Grande



Bahia Grande Channel Construction Locations



Historic Railroad Trestle



Bahia Grande Nursery Activities



Mangrove Plantings With Local Schools



UTB/TSC Greenhouse Donation



Community Organizing Committee

