

Contract 082: Acquisition and Restoration of ICF's Texas Flagship Property

Report 1: November 2025-December 2025

November 2025

In November we continued to complete due diligence and plan for closing on the property.

December 2025

On December 4th we closed on the Lane Road Tract. This is the first conservation land deal in our organization's 52-year history, and we are grateful for the Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust's support of this project.

After some consideration we have renamed the property, Wolfberry Whooping Crane Sanctuary. The property is named after the Carolina wolfberry, an important food item for wintering Whooping Cranes.

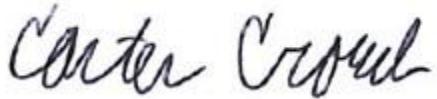
The protection of this property and a nearby property purchased by The Conservation Fund, with plans for the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program to acquire it, garnered international media coverage: <https://apnews.com/article/whooping-crane-endangered-species-texas-climate-environment-988377544ea9237966af392fb4f460e1> & <https://savingcranes.org/news/resources/land-conservation-partnership-preserves-wintering-habitat-endangered-whooping-cranes/> & <https://www.portlavacawave.com/articles/1706/view/conservation-groups-obtain-3-000-acres-for-crane-population.>

We began developing our vegetation monitoring protocols and visiting the site shortly after closing. No invoices for this work yet, but we will invoice for vegetation plot establishment for work in January.

Twelve days after closing on the property, Texas staff and a volunteer contributed to the Powderhorn Christmas Bird Count on the new Wolfberry Whooping Crane Sanctuary. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is the nation's longest-running community science bird project. Over 6 hours and 55 minutes, we counted 71 bird species on the property, including 12 species of shorebirds, 10 species of birds of prey, 7 species of wading birds (including both species of North American cranes), 6 species of waterfowl, and 5 species of sparrows. We treated this as a trial year for working with more volunteers next Christmas Bird Count, so we did not invoice for this work.

Checklist from that CBC here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S289136051>

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carter Crouch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Carter" on the top line and "Crouch" on the bottom line.

Carter Crouch, Ph.D.
Director of Gulf Coast Programs,
International Crane Foundation