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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Galveston Bay Foundation Acquires Over 4,700 Acres of Coastal Habitat in Brazoria and Galveston Counties

(Kemah, TX – Oct. 26, 2021) The Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) recently acquired 4,714 acres of coastal habitat along Halls Bayou and West Galveston Bay in Brazoria and Galveston Counties, to be named [The Chocolate Bay Preserve](#). The preserve will be forever protected as open space and natural habitat. This acquisition brings the total amount of land conserved by the Galveston Bay Foundation to over 13,000 acres. Natural habitats found onsite include tidal marshes, freshwater and brackish wetlands, and coastal tallgrass prairie. The acquisition was funded by a \$10.5 million grant from Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and a \$1 million grant from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Additional financial support was provided by the Galveston Bay Estuary Program's (GBEP) Conservation Assistance Program. GBF will preserve this property as part of its mission, but will also place a conservation easement on the property to be held by the Katy Prairie Conservancy. A conservation easement will provide additional legal protection to ensure the property remains conserved forever.

“This Preserve represents the largest conservation project ever completed by GBF and we are very proud to have preserved this special property. Natural habitats that occur on the Preserve will ensure availability of critical resources for waterfowl like ducks, geese, and cranes, numerous wading birds, and neotropical migrant songbirds. These habitats also provide essential habitat for recreationally and commercially significant coastal fisheries including fish, crabs, and shrimp. Due to the continued growth of our region, it is more important than ever to conserve large tracts of land like this now to ensure the future health of Galveston Bay.” said Bob Stokes, President of GBF.

This project was prioritized for its size, location, and high-quality wildlife and fisheries habitats. The nearly 5,000-acre Preserve is situated only 2 miles from the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge, preserving connectivity of similar habitat types. The Preserve also has 13 miles of frontage along coastal waterways, saltwater lakes, and bays, including the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in West Galveston Bay. These marshy shorelines provide nursery habitat for many species of fish, shrimp and crabs that are found in Galveston Bay and help maintain local water quality. Over 1,000 acres of brackish and freshwater wetland habitats found on the Preserve provide refuge for resident and migratory waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, and other wetland and water dependent species. The property also contains more than 2,000 acres of native coastal prairie. This prairie contains rare plant communities that have largely disappeared from the Texas Coastal Plain because of agricultural land uses and development. Mary Anne Piacentini, President and CEO of the Katy Prairie Conservancy, states “The protection of the Chocolate Bay Preserve makes a meaningful impact on the preservation of the imperiled coastal prairie ecosystem. We are excited to work with GBF to ensure this land

remains a sanctuary for the many birds and other wildlife that depend on the grasslands and marsh of the Texas coast.”

The property is the eastern half of a larger parcel owned by an investment fund of The Lyme Timber Company LP, a conservation-oriented real estate investment manager, and has been managed in cooperation with Eco-Capital Advisors, LLC, an advisory firm with expertise in ecosystem services. Lyme first contacted Galveston Bay Foundation about the property in 2017, and the parties have worked together to complete this transaction. Lyme also expects to convey a conservation easement to Galveston Bay Foundation on the adjacent western half of the parcel at some point in the future to facilitate the establishment of a wetland mitigation bank and the enhancement of the habitat on the adjoining property.

About the Galveston Bay Foundation

Established in 1987, the Galveston Bay Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Its mission is to preserve and enhance Galveston Bay as a healthy and productive place for generations to come. It implements diverse programs in land preservation, habitat restoration, water quality and quantity, youth education, and advocacy. For further information, contact GBF at (281)332-3381, visit www.galvbay.org, like us on Facebook, or follow us on twitter @GBayFoundation

Galveston Bay Foundation has conserved more than 13,000 acres of coastal habitat through property acquisitions and conservation easements. GBF continues to actively expand its land conservation efforts within the Galveston Bay Watershed, focusing on protecting a wide range of habitats and land uses including freshwater and estuarine wetlands, tallgrass prairies, coastal forests, and various agricultural lands. GBF is a member of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) and was accredited by the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Commission in 2013 and re-accredited in 2019. GBF is also a participating member of the Texas Land Trust Council (TLTC).

About the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 5,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$6.8 billion. Learn more at www.nfwf.org.

About Galveston Bay Estuary Program

The mission of the Galveston Bay Estuary Program is to preserve Galveston Bay for generations to come. As a non-regulatory program administered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, it is charged with implementing The Galveston Bay Plan - a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for Galveston Bay.

About The Lyme Timber Company LP

Founded in 1976, The Lyme Timber Company LP is a private timberland investment manager that focuses on the acquisition and sustainable management of lands with unique conservation values. With over 1.6 million acres under management, the company has followed a disciplined and value-oriented approach to investing in forestland and rural real estate in the US and Canada. Learn more at www.lymetimber.com.

About the Katy Prairie Conservancy

The Katy Prairie Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust dedicated to sustaining a resilient Texas by preserving coastal prairie, wetlands, farms, and ranches to benefit people and wildlife forever. Preserved lands play an important role in flood control, cleaner air and water, outdoor recreation, and wildlife habitat. To learn more about Katy Prairie Conservancy's conservation efforts, visit katyprairie.org or find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @katyprairie.

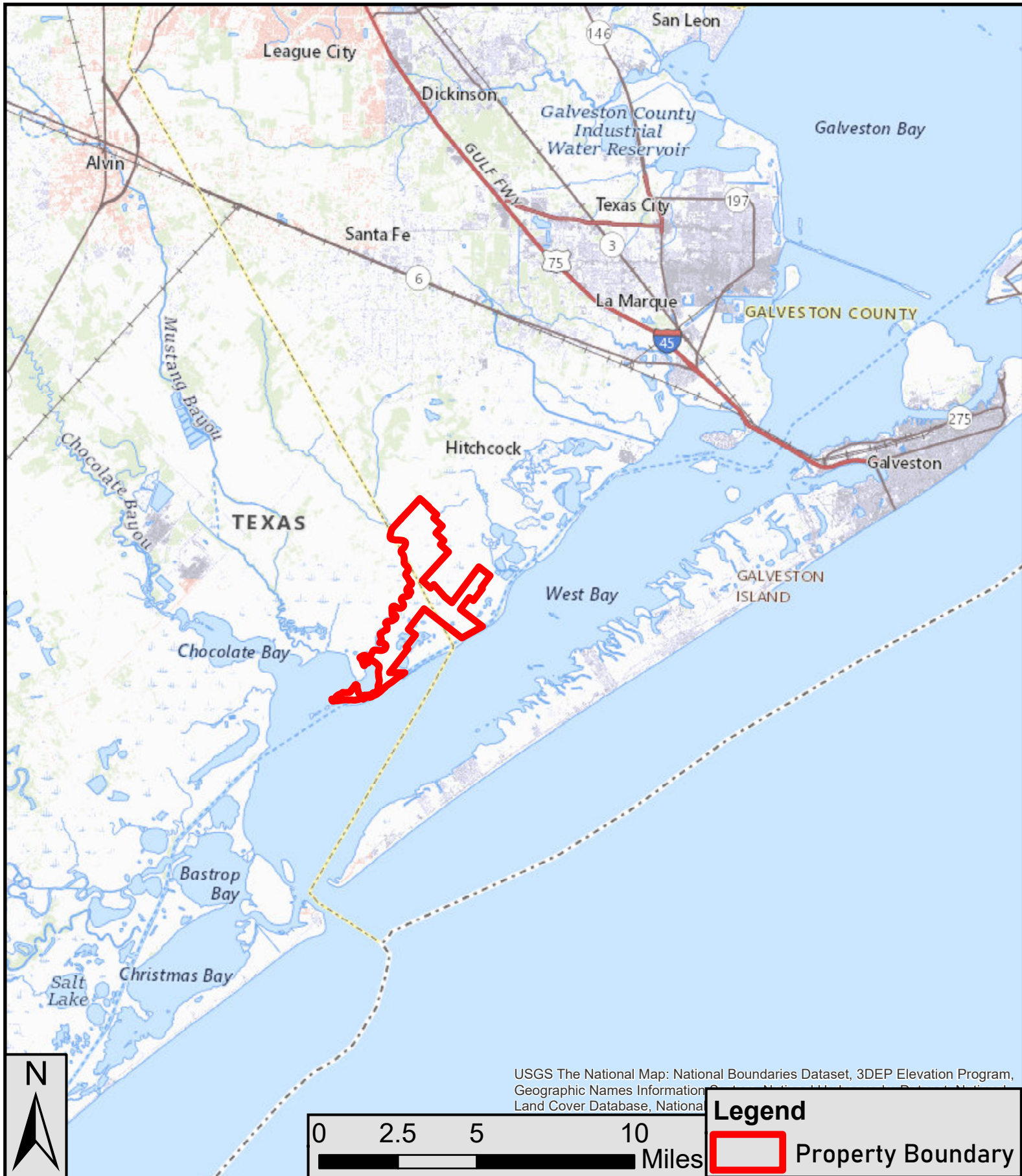
Photos and Map of Chocolate Bay Preserve:



Freshwater and Brackish Marsh Complex at Chocolate Bay Preserve



Chocolate Bay Preserve shoreline along coastal waterway



Chocolate Bay Preserve

Project Name: Chocolate Bay Preserve
 Project Location: Brazoria \ Galveston County
 Date Revised: October 22, 2021

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GALVESTON BAY
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