

ARANSAS COUNTY JUDGE BULLETIN

C.H. "Burt" Mills
Judge, Aransas County
361-790-0100



Judge Mills Issues Update on Cedar Bayou Project *Commissioners Court Optimistic and Supportive*

Aransas County, Texas – January 9, 2012. Aransas County Judge C.H. "Burt" Mills issued a progress report on the Cedar Bayou dredging project. The Aransas County Commissioner's Court as well as a number of private citizens have worked for years to gain the necessary federal permits required to facilitate the reopening of Cedar Bayou and Vinson Slough, which was plugged in 1979 to protect the area from the Ixtoc 1 oil spill.

Commenting on the progress to date, Judge Mills stated, "literally everyday, I am in contact with any number of the individuals, agencies and firms involved in the Cedar Bayou project. We are cautiously and responsibly proceeding through the various steps that are essential to achieving our goal to reopen Cedar Bayou. Receiving the permit to perform the dredging last August from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) was a huge accomplishment and very exciting, but it is just the first step in the process."

"Our next step was to sign the lease agreement with the Texas General Land Office, which we have done. Additionally, the engineering firm of Coast & Harbor has provided a "scope of work" proposal that outlines the parameters of the survey and engineering work that must be performed. To date, no survey or engineering work has been conducted. It is important to note that the findings in surveys are time sensitive and over time can become outdated. For that reason, it should be performed nearer to the time that the dredging work actually commences. We must be responsible in not committing County funds to proceed with the survey and final engineering work until we have secured the funding for the project and when we are nearer to starting the dredging activities."

"Our biggest hurdle at this point is to secure the necessary funding of approximately \$6 million. And, we are currently pursuing a number of opportunities, including discussions with several oil companies and private citizens as well as with professional grant writers that have experience in this type of project funding. I am optimistic that funds are available to assist us, and we are pursuing avenues and potential resources available to us."

"Accordingly, I remain committed and optimistic with the progress we are making. I want to thank our Commissioners, other local government entities, citizens and organizations as well as the various State Agency Officials for their support and partnership with the County in helping us achieve this mission. The benefits we will experience from opening Cedar Bayou are expected to significantly improve the health and sustainability of our bay

systems, including many acres of wetlands, seagrass beds, oyster reefs and tidal flats that would benefit from the renewed connection to the Gulf waters.”

To make tax-deductible donations to dredge Cedar Bayou, send checks to Aransas County Commissioners Court, 301 North Live Oak St., Rockport, TX 78382. Please write “Cedar Bayou Project” in the memo line.

*As an opportunity to keep the citizens of Aransas County better informed, Judge Mills will continue to issue regular progress bulletins (**Aransas County Judge Bulletin**) on significant activities occurring within the County. If you are interested in receiving these reports via email, please email the Judge at **sheuerman@aransascounty.org** and you will be added to the “**Aransas County Judge Bulletin**” email distribution. Additionally, these updates will be posted on the County’s website at www.aransascountytx.gov. If you receive the Bulletin by email and do not wish to receive it, advise the Judge at the same email address.*

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