



## For Immediate Release

### Texas Coastal Exchange Announces Carbon Capture and Storage Grants For Bottomland Forests and Urban Trees Enabled By Sprint Waste

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The Texas Coastal Exchange (TCX) announced today that Sprint Waste Services, LP (“Sprint Waste”) of Houston has donated \$100,000 to sequester 5000 tons of carbon dioxide in the bottomland hardwood forests of the Texas Coast and urban trees in the City of Houston. The sequestration program is the first of its kind on the Upper Texas Coast, if not the state.

TCX was formed to compensate landowners for the services that their natural ecosystems provide, such as removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing stormwater, buffering hurricane surge and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. In May, TCX announced its first payments to landowners for carbon dioxide removal and storage in Texas coastal marshes. Today’s program marks the expansion of the TCX carbon sequestration program into forests, both rural and urban.

In the face of climate change, many large corporations and smaller businesses are making the voluntary commitment to achieve a carbon neutral impact within certain defined time frames. This TCX initiative, and those like it, will provide win-win situations both preserving the open space of rural

environments and providing businesses with carbon dioxide removal and storage strategies that allow them to better achieve their carbon neutral goals along with other social and ecological goals.

The rural portion of the Sprint Waste project will occur on the Pierce Ranch in Wharton County on the Colorado River. This ranch is the legacy of historic figure Shanghai Pierce, who assembled lands extending from Matagorda Bay up the Colorado River to near Wharton. The area preserved is comprised of oak, pecan, hickory, elm, green ash and various understory vegetation. TCX has calculated a rate of sequestration using computer modeling. As part of this project, the Pierce Ranch will agree to leave these hardwoods in place for a minimum of ten years.

The urban portion of the Sprint Waste project is still being developed in conjunction with a local environmental group. The concept is to use tree planting for carbon sequestration purposes to achieve other reasonable social goals such as pathway shading and urban heat island reduction in areas lacking tree cover. In essence, the urban portion of the Sprint Waste donation will combine carbon dioxide removal and storage along with addressing social equity issues. It is expected that the details of this urban project will be completed and available in the next few months.

“We at Sprint Waste are very supportive of the work of TCX in establishing a process for donations to secure carbon capture and storage using nature-based solutions in the region surrounding Houston as well as in urban areas,” said Joe Swinbank, an owner of Sprint Waste. “Houston can and should be the center of thinking and action regarding carbon dioxide, and these solutions have the potential to be expanded and adapted across the United States. I have been supportive of this TCX work for several years and am glad to be able to contribute in this way.”

According to Jim Blackburn, President of TCX, “These two projects highlight carbon sequestration, ecology, historic preservation and equity considerations being integrated into projects with a whole greater than sum of their parts. Rural landowners, such as those of the Pierce Ranch, are challenged to keep large land areas intact; working with landowners to create new streams of revenue is a key focus of TCX. On the other hand, the urban project is an experiment for us – a chance to try our concepts and metrics in areas of Houston that have equity needs that can be addressed by carbon-capturing activities. This is a glimpse of how the future of urban conservation may unfold.”

“The ranch has been working on environmental stewardship issues for years, but it is difficult to generate cash flow from stewardship alone,” said Laurance Armour of the Pierce Ranch. “We have been monitoring TCX from its inception with the hope that we could put a project together that combined protection of our historic legacy, ecological stewardship and carbon sequestration. I am excited that we are getting started down this road that could represent a turning point for Texas landowners committed to stewardship and maintaining working ranches.”

According to Elizabeth Winston-Jones, a board member of TCX, “Our goal from the beginning was to create a landowner-friendly system that could help keep these larger properties intact, along with the outstanding ecological services they provide to the community, by paying landowners for these services that have traditionally gone uncompensated. We are appreciative of the donation by Sprint Waste that allowed us to expand into our region’s bottomland forests and undertake this very creative urban forestry project. The opportunities and synergies associated with our approach to carbon capture and storage are affirming that this new model has legs.”

TCX was formed as a non-profit corporation in 2018 from research at the Severe Storm Prediction, Education and Evacuation from Disaster (SSPEED) Center at Rice University and began accepting donations for carbon footprint capture and storage through its web site, <https://www.texascoastalexchange.org/> in 2019. TCX requests a donation of \$20 per ton of carbon dioxide captured and stored by participating landowners of which \$17 is provided as a grant to participating landowners and \$3 of which is retained for administrative uses. TCX will work with corporations, foundations, churches, and civic organizations regarding larger-scale carbon capture projects.