



Public Notice

**U.S. Army Corps
Of Engineers**

Galveston District

Permit Application No: SWG-2025-00405

Date Issued: August 25, 2025

Comments

Due: September 24, 2025

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, GALVESTON DISTRICT

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received a Prospectus from Space Exploration Technologies, Inc (Sponsor) to develop The Rockhands Mitigation Bank (Bank) to generate compensatory mitigation credits to offset impacts to waters of the United States. The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments from the public regarding the Bank described below. The Corps is not the entity proposing or performing the proposed work, nor has the Corps taken a position, in favor or against the proposed work.

SPONSOR: Space Exploration Technologies, Inc.
1 Rocket Road
Brownsville, TX 78521
POC: Brandon Conroy, Ph.D.
Telephone: (425) 830-0126
Email: Brandon.Conroy@spacex.com

AGENT: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
421 Fayetteville, Suite 600
Raleigh, NC 27601
POC: William Sullivan, PWS
Telephone: (919) 677-2113
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LOCATION: The proposed 1,050-acre project is part of a large wind-tidal flat and loma system at the southern end of the Laguna Madre in South Bay, Cameron County, Texas and located in the Western Gulf Coastal Plain ecoregion (EPA Level III). The project is located in the U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle map entitled: Port Isabel, Texas.

LATITUDE & LONGITUDE (NAD 83):
Latitude: 26.002666° North; Longitude: -97.192311° West

PROPOSED MITIGATION BANK: The Sponsor proposes the establishment and operation of the approximately 1,050-acre Rockhands Mitigation Bank (the "Bank") in Cameron County, Texas. The Sponsor proposes to establish a preservation-based

mitigation bank, generating compensatory mitigation credits through the perpetual preservation of a unique mosaic of coastal habitats, including wind-tidal flats, estuarine emergent wetlands, mangrove fringe, and vegetated shallows/SAVs. This would be accomplished through the establishment of a Conservation Easement held by the City of Starbase. Key activities of the proposed Bank would include documentation of Site baseline conditions, establishment of a Conservation Easement, long-term management and stewardship, and potential research opportunities. The Bank would preserve over 1,000 acres of undeveloped land, creating an important linkage between existing protected lands and South Bay.

The Rockhands Mitigation Bank proposes to generate wind-tidal flat credits, estuarine wetland credits, and vegetated shallows/SAV credits through the permanent protection of these valuable resources. Mitigation credits are proposed to be generated by community type at a ratio of 7 acres per credit. The Sponsor proposes to provide compensatory mitigation credits for unavoidable, permitted impacts to waters of the United States within the South Laguna Madre Tidal Service Area and the South Bay area located east of the South Laguna Madre Tidal Service Area east to Brazos Island and south to the Rio Grande. The establishment of the Rockhands Mitigation Bank would help offset anticipated losses from continued development in a watershed currently lacking available mitigation credits, contributing to the ecological sustainability of the region and the preservation of this internationally significant estuarine ecosystem.

A 50-foot buffer has been proposed between the Bank and privately-owned land to the southeast. This buffer area, which is part of the Site parcel, would not generate mitigation credits but is considered necessary to further reduce the risk of the encroachment of development and associated potential land degradation on the Bank site. Additionally, a 140-foot corridor along the southern boundary of the parcel has been excluded from the mitigation area for the purpose of enabling utilities to be extended to Starbase and associated facilities in the future. Any disturbance within this area would be outside the mitigation bank and would be temporary in nature. Areas that have been established as state submerged lands by the GLO are also excluded from the Bank's credit generation.

CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS: The proposed Bank is located in Cameron County, Texas, characterized by a subtropical climate influenced by its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico. The area experiences relatively low rainfall and prevailing south-southeasterly winds that significantly impact the hydrologic regime through wind tides. The Bank lies within the Laguna Madre estuarine system, one of only five hypersaline lagoon systems globally.

The current site conditions at the proposed Bank site can best be described as a mosaic of coastal habitats, primarily comprised of wind-tidal flats with smaller areas of estuarine emergent wetlands, mangrove fringe, vegetated shallows, and upland lomas. The majority of the site is relatively flat, with elevations of approximately 0-5 feet above mean sea level.

The dominant habitat is wind-tidal flats, often sparsely vegetated and irregularly inundated by wind-driven tides. These flats are often characterized by blue-green algal mats and surface soil cracks. Inundation occurs with shifts in wind direction, particularly during northerly winds

that push water from South Bay onto the flats. Mangrove fringe wetlands border deeper waters in the northern and eastern portions of the site. Two linear open water features in the southwest and northwest portions of the Site support rooted aquatic vegetation and constitute vegetated shallows. Two natural upland dunes (lomas) are present within the site.

This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the Sponsor. This project information has not been verified by the Corps. The Sponsor has developed the enclosed Prospectus for Rockhands Mitigation Bank, dated August 2025.

SOLICITATION OF COMMENTS: The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

This public notice is being distributed to all known interested persons in order to assist in developing facts upon which a decision by the Corps of Engineers may be based. For accuracy and completeness of the record, all data in support of or in opposition to the proposed work should be submitted in writing setting forth sufficient detail to furnish a clear understanding of the reasons for support or opposition.

PUBLIC HEARING: The purpose of a public hearing is to solicit additional information to assist in the evaluation of the proposed project. Prior to the close of the comment period, any person may make a written request for a public hearing, setting forth the particular reasons for the request. The District Engineer will determine if the reasons identified for holding a public hearing are sufficient to warrant that a public hearing be held. If a public hearing is warranted, all known interested persons will be notified of the time, date, and location.

CLOSE OF COMMENT PERIOD: All comments pertaining to this Public Notice must reach this office on or before September 24, 2025. Extensions of the comment period may be granted for valid reasons provided a written request is received by the limiting date. **If no comments are received by that date, it will be considered that there are no objections.** Comments and requests for additional information should reference our file number, **SWG-2025-00405**, and should be submitted to:

Regulatory Division, CESWG-RD-P
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DISTRICT ENGINEER
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CORPS OF ENGINEERS