

The Conservation Fund

In December 2022, Apex Clean Energy awarded a \$450,000 conservation grant on behalf of El Sauz Wind and Young Wind to the Conservation Fund (TCF) in support of the preservation and protection of the bottomland hardwood forest (BHF) in Wood County, Texas.

About the Bottomland Hardwood Forest

Protecting the Texas BHF and associated bat habitats is critical. Over 75% of the original BHF has been lost or degraded due to timber harvest, urbanization, reservoir construction, and conversion to agricultural uses. Additionally, restoration efforts alone may never be able to replicate previous forest character due to alterations in flooding regimes.

The conservation grant will help fast-track TCF's acquisition of BF Allen Estate, which currently owns the Wood County BHF tract. TCF's ownership of the tract will allow for the perpetual protection of roosting and foraging habitats used by ten bat species that are either entirely or partially dependent on bottomland hardwood forests for roosting and foraging habitat. These species include:

- the Rafinesque's big-eared bat, which is classified as a threatened, endangered, or special concern species in 16 out of 18 states it occurs in, including Texas
- five species of greatest conservation need in Texas (southeastern myotis, tricolored bat, big brown bat, eastern red bat, hoary bat)

These protected areas also benefit high-priority breeding birds, such as the swallow-tailed kite, migrating land birds, and 14 state-threatened species, including the Louisiana black bear, the Texas horned lizard, and five species of freshwater mussel.

The El Sauz Wind and Young Wind donation was matched 1:3 by TCF with additional funding provided by the Federal Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and TCF's own fundraising.

About the Apex Conservation Grant Program

As a company with a core value of sustainability, Apex Clean Energy endeavors to not only minimize our projects' impacts, but also promote an ecological balance. Through the Apex Conservation Grant Program, each renewable energy project commercialized by Apex will contribute a sum of money, proportional to the size of the project, to support local or regional wildlife conservation, reforestation and flora restoration, protection of sensitive habitats such as grassland or wetlands, and other environmental conservation initiatives in or near project communities.

