

## **2009 TEXAS PLANT CONSERVATION CONFERENCE**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2009

### **Oral Presentation**

#### **THE COASTAL PRAIRIE PARTNERSHIP (CCP): A VISION TO PROTECT AND RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS OF THE COASTAL PRAIRIE ECOREGION**

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Abstract-Most of the natural ecosystems of the Texas/Louisiana Coastal Prairie Ecoregion and their biodiversity, including grasslands, marshes, woodlands, etc., have been destroyed, greatly altered or exist in isolated patches within a matrix of agricultural, urban and other humanscapes. Natural/semi-natural upland prairies, for example, persist on less than 1 percent of their original extent. In spite of these changes much of the flora and fauna of these ecosystems remains. Protection of remaining patches and their plants and animals provides opportunities for the preservation and restoration of these ecosystems and even larger scale landscape mosaics that include an array of these ecosystems. A new organization, the *Coastal Prairie Partnership*, was recently created at the first State of the Prairie Conference held at Armand Bayou Nature Center (Pasadena) on April 17, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen collaboration and communication between members of the Coastal Prairie Ecoregion. Over 20 organizations were represented at the conference. A 13-member steering committee was created to initiate activities of the Partnership. The evolving Mission Statement is: To coordinate governmental and non-governmental efforts for the conservation and restoration of natural Coastal Prairie ecosystems and their biological diversity to enhance the aesthetic, ecological and agricultural benefits for this rapidly changing region. As an initial event the Steering Committee has committed to hosting a two-day prairie restoration and education conference on November 11-12, 2009. The focus of this presentation is to create an awareness of this organization and to invite interested individuals and organizations to join this initiative to protect and restore the diverse natural heritage of this unique Ecoregion.