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**HURRICANE RELIEF SENT TO TEXAS AND PUERTO RICO ESTUARINE RESERVES**

WELLS, Maine, September 27, 2017 — The nonprofit partner of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve is sending $1,500 donations to two estuarine reserves that were badly damaged by hurricanes Harvey and Maria. The Laudholm Trust board of trustees voted September 21 to send emergency relief funds to the Mission-Aransas Reserve in Texas and Jobos Bay Reserve in Puerto Rico to support their recovery and rebuilding efforts.

“These are one-time emergency relief donations sent in response to unprecedented and powerful storms that directly hit our sister reserves,” said Jessica Gribbon Joyce, chair of the Laudholm Trust board. “The 29 estuarine reserves across the country are a tight-knit family, so we were heartbroken to see the devastation in Texas and Puerto Rico. We wanted to help our friends and colleagues get back to full capacity as soon as possible.”

Laudholm Trust collected the funds from ticket proceeds from its recent Laudholm Nature Crafts Festival. More than 4,000 visitors attended the festival on the weekend after Labor Day, with perfect weather helping to spur record revenues for the 30th annual fundraising event.

The National Estuarine Research Reserve Association, the nonprofit that supports the national system of estuarine reserves, is collecting hurricane relief donations for the affected sites. The organization’s executive director, Rebecca Roth, said, “We are grateful to Laudholm Trust and Wells Reserve for offering a hand in this hour of need. The recent hurricanes caused damage at other estuarine reserves, but Texas and Puerto Rico were hit especially hard, losing roofs, equipment, and trails. These donations demonstrate the compassion of our small network.”

For more information on recovery progress at the Mission-Aransas and Jobos Bay reserves, and to contribute to relief efforts, visit [www.nerra.org/give](http://www.nerra.org/give).

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