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**MEDIA CONTACT**

Jenna Laird, Marketing & Business Development  
Kirksey Architecture  
713 426 7550 / jennal@kirksey.com

## **Kirksey Architecture is now carbon positive and makes first-ever carbon storage transaction on Texas Gulf Coast**

**HOUSTON, TEXAS** — With the purchase of carbon storage from 386 acres of marshlands along the Texas coast, Kirksey Architecture has met its goal of becoming a carbon-positive company. The purchase represents the first transaction of the Texas Coastal Exchange (TCX), a non-profit seeking to establish a marketplace to buy and sell ecological services and to allow firms to offset their carbon footprint by supporting the conservation of local ecosystems.

The marshlands that are a part of this inaugural purchase are estimated to sequester more than 770 metric tons of carbon dioxide. The land is currently owned and maintained by the Galveston Bay Foundation; what Kirksey purchased was the carbon dioxide uptake that occurred during 2018.

The TCX is the first carbon exchange of its kind and was conceptualized after a research project at Rice University that explored opportunities to incentivize preservation of Texas coastal lands. One of many ecosystem services performed by these lands is carbon sequestration. TCX has created a system that rewards Texas landowners for maintaining coastal land in an unspoiled condition that maximizes the ability of plants to absorb carbon dioxide out of the air and store it in their root systems and the soil. Because of the regular tidal inundation coastal wetlands have a very high capacity to store carbon, and are very important for healthy bays and estuaries, making them ideal candidates for inclusion in the TCX. The exchange takes place between these landowners looking to preserve the ecological integrity of their property and consumers who would like to offset the impact of their carbon emissions.

Kirksey has long been at the forefront of sustainability, from designing high-performance buildings to practicing sustainability in their offices, and in recent years the organization began working toward the goal of becoming carbon positive. Carbon neutrality means a business has calculated its environmental impacts and, through reduction efforts and offsets, is operating at a net-zero carbon impact. Carbon positivity means the offsets have exceeded the impacts of the business, and the company is actually operating at a carbon deficit, reducing more carbon than it creates.

A business' carbon footprint can be divided into three categories: transportation, facilities, and procurement. Kirksey calculates their carbon footprint in each category, and then quantifies the actions the firm takes to offset their footprint, such as an annual tree planting, to land on a final number. Kirksey has found procurement, electricity, and employee commutes to be the three major components of their footprint. To offset these, Kirksey purchases 100% renewable energy, implements policies to minimize single-occupant car travel, and purchases responsibly-sourced office supplies, among other strategies.

The firm's commitment to the environment and desire to reach carbon positivity made working with the TCX a natural choice. "After taking steps to reduce or eliminate the generation of carbon where we could, we calculated a remaining 770 metric tons that needed to be offset, so we purchased storage in the marshlands of Galveston Bay from TCX," said Julie Hendricks, Kirksey's director of sustainability, "If you want a local carbon offset, this is it, and it's something that is both visible and proven. You can actually go and see where it is happening with your own eyes."



Kirksey's founder, John Kirksey, commented on the historical nature of the TCX and the firm's desire to help push the market forward and promote carbon storage. "Kirksey has long been a leader in green design and LEED, and we want to help build a market for local carbon sequestration. It's important to who we are as a firm and we are proud to be part of this launch."

Reducing carbon dioxide emissions is a major step in fighting climate change and, in cases where it is impossible to avoid emissions, mitigating them by protecting the Texas landscape is an opportunity for landowners and companies alike. Kirksey is hoping that their purchase will help promote the TCX and the storage of carbon dioxide in Texas and ultimately across the United States. To learn more, visit [www.texascoastalexchange.org](http://www.texascoastalexchange.org).



*Galveston Bay - Photo by Trey Bartsch*

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#### **Kirksey Architecture**

Kirksey is a sustainable architecture and interior design firm with more than 36 million sf of LEED projects in their portfolio. With offices in Houston and Austin, Texas, Kirksey is team-based in structure and serves Commercial, Collegiate, Community, pK-12, Government, Healthcare, Hospitality, Science & Technology, and Multi-family Residential markets. To learn more about the firm, visit [www.kirksey.com](http://www.kirksey.com).

#### **Texas Coast Exchange**

The Texas Coastal Exchange (TCX) is a newly launched non-profit organization designed to enable consumers and businesses to reduce their contributions to climate change by investing in carbon sequestration rights with participating landowners along the upper Texas coast. Learn more at our website, [www.texascoastalexchange.org](http://www.texascoastalexchange.org).

#### **Galveston Bay Foundation**

The Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1987. The mission of the Galveston Bay Foundation is to preserve and enhance Galveston Bay as a healthy and productive place for generations to come. <https://galvbay.org/>