

# Friends of Trinity River Refuge (FOTRR) Board of Directors Information Packet \& Board Application 

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## The Mission of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge (FOTRR) is

To support, expand, promote, and enhance the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge (TRNWR) and its use for recreational, educational, and scientific research purposes.

To accomplish this mission the FOTRR will:

- Serve in a cooperative partnership with refuge management to provide funds, volunteer labor, and inkind resources as required to meet the needs and goals of the refuge.
- Promote public awareness of and participation in conservation goals and activities on the refuge through educational, scientific, civic, and charitable activities.
- Provide assistance to refuge personnel on projects to develop and improve the refuge's visitor programs and public use facilities.
- Serve as an advocate for the acquisition of wetlands and associated habitats within the Lower Trinity River Floodplain.


## Responsibilities of the <br> FOTRR Board

As the highest leadership body of the organization and to satisfy its fiduciary duties, the board is responsible for"

- determining the mission and purposes of the FOTRR
- strategic and organizational planning
- ensuring strong fiduciary oversight and financial management
- fundraising and resource development
- approving and monitoring the organization's programs and services
- enhancing the FOTRR's public image
- assessing its own performance as the governing body of the FOTTR

Responsibilities of
Individual FOTRR Board Members Each individual board member is expected to make a significant commitment to advance the organizations mission and goal:

- know the FOTRR's mission, policies, programs, and needs
- faithfully read and understand the FOTRR's financial statements
- serve as active advocates and ambassadors for the TRNWR and FOTRR
- prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in FOTRR board meetings
- participate fully in one or more committees
- contribute time, expertise, community contacts, organizational skills, and leadership talents



## Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge

The Trinity River NWR is one of over 560 refuges administered by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service throughout the United States. This Refuge now totals nearly 30,000 acres scattered along 65 different tracts in Liberty County, Texas,

The Refuge is used during migration or nesting by nearly 50 percent of the neotropical migratory bird species listed by the Service. Bottomland hardwood forest also support abundant populations of waterfowl, white-tailed deer, squirrels, freshwater turtles, alligators, snakes, and numerous other animals. Over 275 species of birds occur in the bottomland forests and associated wetlands in eastern Texas, while over 100 bird species are known to breed there. The Refuge contains over 635 plant species, over 350 vertebrate species and 900 moth species. Continued acquisition, along with private property protection initiatives, will contribute to the goal of protecting bottomland hardwood forests.

## Objectives of the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge

[^0](1) land acquisition and /or conservation easements when appropriate
(2) management of habitat and wildlife resources on Refuge lands and
(3) strengthening existing or establishing new cooperative efforts with public and private conservation groups and other governmental agencies.

- To provide for wildlife dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service policy on the Trinity River NWR that results in furthering the public's understanding and appreciation of the bottomland hardwood forest ecosystem and the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- To protect, maintain, and plan for Service - managed cultural resources on the Trinity River NWR for the benefit of present and future generations and in compliance with historic and archeological resource protection laws and regulations.


## Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge Staff

Dean Bossert, Refuge Manager
Laurie Gonzales, Refuge Biologist
Bonnie Campisi, Refuge Secretary


## FOTRR Meetings

The FOTRR Board meets bi-monthly starting in January at the TRNWR office in Liberty, TX. (Some meetings may be WEBEX or hybrid).

The business meeting days are on the second Monday in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Any member of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge may attend. Members are notified of Board of Directors meeting dates in writing or through the newsletter.

Committee meetings are scheduled by the committee members.
The Annual General Membership Meeting is held on the 3rd Saturday of January.

## FOTRR Activities

The FOTRR offers our members many opportunities to work with the refuge on recreational, educational, scientific research and public-use projects. Some past activities include:

- Assisted the Refuge with numerous Earth Day Celebrations \& Free Fishing Days
- Helped setup and staff Information booths at Liberty Jubilee, Mont Belvieu Outdoor Celebration, and other nature festivals
- Participated in bird, butterfly, and wildlife surveys on the Refuge
- With Refuge staff, built and maintained Butterfly (Pollinator) Garden at Champion Lake
- Partnered with the Refuge and the Union Sportsman Alliance to build the Knobby Knees Boardwalk
- Key partner in the building of the Champion Lake Fishing Pier
- Installed memorial benches on the Refuge to honor our past members
- Received and administered invasive species control grant funds
- Partnership with neighborhoods, county trapper and TRNWR to control feral hog population
- Participated in Refuge Workdays- trash removal, trail maintenance, and habitat restoration
- Received a NFWF grant to develop the Friends Environmental Education Program
- Participated in educational and outreach programs on the Refuge
- Leader in Casa da los Patos Renovation with planning and 500+ volunteer hours
- Funded, built, and installed the Silver Lake Information kiosk
- Support of the TRWNR summer intern programs
- Sent FOTRR representatives to Regional and National Friends Board meeting and trainings
- Administration of grant and remediation funds that the Refuge cannot directly receive
- Partnership with Refuge and local school district for the Feathered Friends Art Contest
- Functioned as an advisor to the Refuge Manager and staff

| Lisa Holmes <br> President | Dayton, Texas- Aviculturist <br> Lisa is a nationally recognized aviculturist specializing in canaries, finches and <br> grasskeets. She has won three National Championships with her Dutch Frill Canaries. <br> Lisa is a Texas Master Naturalist, member of the Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club and <br> Board Chair of the Houston Canary and Finch Society |
| :---: | :--- |
| Chris Arceneaux <br> Vice-President | Kingwood, Texas- Oilfield Services <br> Chris, a product of South Louisiana, retired a few years ago from oilfield services to <br> pursue more family time, hours on the water kayaking, gardening and volunteering <br> for nature-based organizations. He attended the Texas Master Naturalist training in <br> 2019. Chris holds leadership positions in two Houston kayak clubs. He enjoys prairie <br> restoration and is an amateur birder, open to learning more. |
| Shelli Ellerbe |  |
| Treasurer | Liberty, Texas- Business Manager <br> Shelli is a part-time Business Manager for a private medical practice. She is an avid <br> birder who has long been interested in conservation. Shelli is a founding member of <br> Lower Trinity Basin Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists and a member of Lower <br> Trinity Valley Bird Club. |
| Gary Holmes <br> Board Member | Dayton, Texas- Educator <br> Gary has 40+ years of experience as an educator at the secondary and university |
| levels. He currently teaches chemistry, physics, and environmental science. Gary is a |  |
| Texas Master Naturalist and President of the Lower Trinity Valley Bird Club. |  |

## BY-LAWS OF FRIENDS OF TRINITY RIVER REFUGE

## ARTICLE I: INCORPORATION

The Friends of Trinity River Refuge was incorporated in the State of Texas on the second day of August 2000 to promote appreciation and conservation of wildlife and habitat at the Federal Wildlife refuges in the State of Texas and more specifically in Liberty County.

## Section 1: Operation

The Friends of Trinity River Refuge will:
A. Operate under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act and the Refuge Recreation Act.
B. Comply with the laws of the State of Texas.

## ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Friends of Trinity River Refuge, Inc. is an independent, non-profit Corporation dedicated to supporting the primary purposes for which the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge was established: to protect a remnant of the bottomland hardwood forest ecosystem along the lower Trinity River. And help fulfill international obligations contained in various migratory bird treaties and conventions; for incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, the protection of natural resources, and the conservation of endangered or threatened species; and for the conservation, maintenance, and management of wildlife resources thereof, and its habitat thereon.

The Corporation shall promote the preservation of the natural and historical resources of the Refuge, promote and support the dissemination of the knowledge of its natural and cultural history, foster its use and enjoyment by the public, consistent with the protection and preservation of its environment, and engage in such educational, scientific, charitable and civic activities as will assist the management of the Refuge in carrying out its mandates. To accomplish these purposes, the Corporation may solicit, receive, purchase, and borrow, with or without security, real and personal property, including funds by way of gifts, contributions, and subscriptions, and administer, own, hold, convey, transfer, disburse, lend, and sell the same for such charitable, scientific, literary, and educational purposes as are permitted by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States as it now exists and as hereafter amended, and no assets of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of any private individual. Upon dissolution and winding up of the Corporation, any remaining assets shall be transferred only to an organization having like charitable, scientific, literary, and educational purposes as are permitted by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. No assets shall be conveyed or distributed to any individual. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, nor shall the Corporation take part in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these By-Laws, the purposes for which the Corporation is formed are exclusively charitable and educational within the meaning of section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The Corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by: (a) a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

## ARTICLE III: FINANCIAL

The Corporation shall not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its members. No part of the income or earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of any member.

The Corporation shall distribute for each of its taxable years amounts at least sufficient to avoid liability for the tax imposed by Section 4942 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. For purposes of these Articles of Incorporation, the term "income" means, for each taxable year of the Corporation, the distributable amount with respect to the Corporation as defined in Section 4943(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The Corporation may not engage in an act of "self-dealing" (as defined in Section 4941(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that would give rise to liability for the tax imposed by 4943(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The Corporation shall not retain "excess business holdings" (as defined in Section 4943© of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that would give rise to liability for the tax imposed by Section 4943(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The Corporation may not make any investments that would jeopardize the carrying out of the exempt purposes of the Corporation, within the meaning of Section 4944 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, so as to give rise to liability for the tax imposed by Section 4944(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

The Corporation may not make a "taxable expenditure" (as defined in Section 4945(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) that would give rise to liability for the tax imposed by Section 4945(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

General supervision of the fiscal policy of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge is provided by the Board of Directors.

Immediate supervision of fiscal policy is provided by the Executive Officers of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge. The Treasurer shall authorize the expenditures of funds as approved by a majority of the Board of Directors at a business meeting. Each of the four Executive Officers can sign a check. Checks of any amount must be signed by two Executive Officers. Reimbursement of expenses incurred by a member shall be made only if prior approval of reimbursement of expenses was made by a majority of the Board at a business meeting.

The Fiscal Year of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge shall commence on the first day of January and it shall end on the last day of December, each year.

The Corporation shall not lend any of its assets to any Executive Officer or Director of the Corporation or guarantee to any other person the repayment of a loan made to an Executive Officer or Director of this Corporation.

## ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

## Section 1: Eligibility

All persons interested in the aims of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge and of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service shall be eligible for membership.

## Section 2: Regular Membership

Upon application to the Secretary, and upon payment of the annual membership dues to the Treasurer, a person eligible for membership shall become a Regular Member.

## Section 3: Family Membership

Upon application to the Secretary, and upon payment of one and one-half times the annual membership dues to the Treasurer, persons residing in the same household shall be eligible for a Family Membership.

## Section 4: Life Membership

Any member, who pays an amount in one sum equal to twenty times the current annual dues, becomes a Life Member of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge.

Life Members shall pay no annual dues; yet, they shall retain all rights and privileges of a Regular Member.

## Section 5: Honorary Membership

A Member or non-member may be designated an Honorary member by a vote of three-fourths of the Board of Directors at a business meeting. Honorary Members shall pay no dues. They shall have all rights and privileges of a Regular Member except they shall not have the right to vote.

## Section 6: Membership Categories

A variety of additional membership categories may be established by the Board of Directors.

Section 7: Employees of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Upon application to the Secretary, employees for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service shall become nonvoting members.

## Section 8: Voting Rights

All paid members shall have the right to vote a single vote at all meetings of the general membership. A Family Membership is entitled to two votes. All votes must be in person.

## Section 9: Dues

The Board of Directors shall have the power to prescribe membership annual dues. Dues are payable for the calendar year January 1 through December 31. Members joining after November shall begin membership immediately with their dues applied to the coming calendar year.

Failure to pay annual dues by January 31 following the first full year of membership will result in automatic membership termination.

## ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

## Section 1: Annual General Membership Meeting

The Annual General Membership Meeting shall be held on the 3rd Saturday of January following the closing of the fiscal year books in order to transact such business as can lawfully come before the membership.

## Section 2: Special Meetings

Special Meetings of the members may be called at any time by the President of the Corporation and shall be called upon written request of any 3 members of the Board of Directors or not less than 10 members of the Corporation. Members will be notified of Special Meeting dates in writing or through the newsletter.

## Section 3: Business Meetings

The Board of Directors shall meet regularly, but no less than once each quarter of the calendar year (March, June, Sept., Dec.), for the purposes of conducting routine business of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge. Any member of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge may attend. Members will be notified of Board of Directors meeting dates in writing or through the newsletter.

## Section 4: Place of Meetings

All meetings of the Friends of Trinity River Refuge shall be at a place designated by the Board of Directors.

## Section 5: Notice

Notice of Annual General Membership and Special Meetings shall be mailed by the Secretary to each member's address, as maintained by the Secretary, at least 14 days before the date of the Meeting. Notice of every Special Meeting shall briefly indicate its purpose.

Members present in person at the Annual General Membership or Special Meetings shall constitute a quorum.

## Section 6: Procedure

The procedures at all meetings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order * The Modern Edition by Patnode, except where superseded by these by-laws.

## ARTICLE VI: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Section 1: Board

The property, business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors.

## Section 2: Composition

Directors shall be members of the Corporation. The Board of Directors shall consist of no less than 5 and no more than 11 voting members plus up to 2 non-voting members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Elected Board members are: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, who are the Executive Officers, and up to 7 Directors-at-Large. All Board members must be available to attend General, Special, and Business Meetings.

## Section 3: Elections

Board members for the following year will be nominated by a nomination committee appointed in October by the President. This committee will not include any Executive Officers of the Corporation. The nomination committee will be composed of two Directors and two non- Board members of the Corporation. Nominations will be presented to the membership in writing at least 14 days prior to the General Membership Meeting. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the General Membership Meeting. New Directors will be elected by a majority vote. Each member shall cast one vote each for President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and one vote each, for up to 7 Directors-at-Large.

## Section 4: Terms

Board members shall serve for a term of two years or until their successors have been duly elected and qualified to take office. There shall be no limit on the number of terms that Directors may serve.

## Section 5: Officer Recall

a. Any officer shall be subject to recall for incompetence, negligence, malfeasance of duty, breach of trust, or any other grievous offense. A special closed meeting of the Board of Directors will hear the charges. A simple majority of the Board of Directors, with the notification to the membership, can remove the person from office.
b. Any member of Board of Directors missing three (3) consecutive board meetings may be replaced by the majority vote of the Board of directors with the notification to the membership at the following meeting.

## Section 6: Grievance Procedure

The grievance procedure for the filing an official complaint with the Corporation including officer recall and/or termination of membership is as follows:
a. A written complaint must be filed with the secretary of the Corporation within ten (10) calendar days after the alleged incident.
b. The President of the Board of Directors must call a board meeting to hear the complaint within thirty (30) calendar days after the secretary has received the written complaint.
c. The Board of Directors shall invite the person making the allegation and the person being accused to be present at the meeting to present their respective responses to the Board of Directors; and
d. The Board of Directors shall consider the information as presented and notify the parties involved in writing within ten (10) calendar days after the hearing is held.

## Section 7: Vacancy

Any vacancy on the Board shall be filled by an appointee recommended by the President and confirmed by a majority of the remaining members of the Board. The appointee shall hold office for the unexpired term of the vacancy.

## Section 8: Meeting

Board meetings shall be scheduled and conducted per Article V , except special Board meetings may be called upon written or verbal notification of the President.

Section 9: Quorum
At all meetings of the Board, a majority of voting Directors shall constitute a quorum of the Board of Directors.
In the transaction of business less than $\$ 5000$ at any meeting of the Board of Directors, $30 \%$ of the number of Directors, then in office, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. For business equal to or exceeding $\$ 5,000$, a majority of Directors, then in office, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business

The Directors present at a duly called or held meeting at which a quorum is present may continue to transact business even if enough directors leave the meeting so that less than quorum remains. However, no action may be approved without the vote of at least a majority of the number of Directors required to constitute a quorum.

If a quorum is present at no time during a meeting, a majority of the Directors present may adjourn and reconvene the meeting one time without further notice.

## Section 10: Compensation

No salary, stipend, or other remuneration shall be paid to any member of the Board. Reimbursement of expenses incurred by a Board member shall be made only if prior approval of reimbursement of expenses was made by a majority of the Board of Directors at a meeting.

## Action of Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall try to act by consensus. However, the vote of a majority of directors present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be sufficient to constitute the act of the Board of Directors;
unless, the act or a greater number is required by law or by the By-Laws. A director who is present at a meeting and abstains from a vote is considered to be present and voting for a purpose of determining the decision of the Board of Directors.

In absentia voting, an absent Director's electronic voting (e.g., email) is acceptable as long as the email has been sent to a) the President and b) the Secretary at least 3 hours prior to the meeting and clearly states the vote of that Director.

## ARTICLE VII: DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

## Section 1: President

The President shall preside at all Membership, Board and Special Meetings. The President shall bring all matters of business of the Corporation to the Board of Directors for approval by the Board of Directors. The President shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the nomination committee.

## Section 2: Vice-President

The Vice-President shall understand the responsibilities of the President and be able to perform these duties in the President's absence.

## Section 3: Secretary

The Secretary shall maintain minutes of all meetings of the Membership, The Board of Directors, and any committee in the Corporation's minute books, and shall cause notice of such meetings to be given when requested by any person authorized to call such meetings, and will maintain a membership list. The Secretary may, with the prior approval of the Board of Directors, sign with the President, in the name of the Corporation, all contracts of the Corporation. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the Corporation's records. In the absence of the President and Vice-President, the Secretary shall assume the duties of the President.

## Section 4: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall have custody of the Corporation's funds and securities, shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements, and shall deposit all moneys and valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the Corporation in such depository or depositories as may be designated by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall receive, audit, and consolidate all operating and financial statements of the Corporation, and shall have charge of matters relating to taxation. Additionally, the Treasurer shall have the power to endorse for deposit, collection, or otherwise all checks, drafts, notes, bills of exchange, and other commercial paper payable to the Corporation, and to give proper receipts and discharges for all payments to the Corporation. The Treasurer will give a receipt for all monies collected and will make a report at each Membership, Special and Board Meeting. In the absence of the President, VicePresident and Secretary, the Treasurer shall assume the duties of the President.

## Section 5: Board Members-at-Large

At-Large Board members shall have a vote equal to the Executive Officers in discharging the duties of the Corporation.

## ARTICLE VIII: COMMITTEES

## Section 1: Standing Committees

The Friends of Trinity River Refuge shall have such committees as the Board of Directors shall from time to time deem necessary and advisable to assist it with its work.

## Section 2: Appointment of Committees

The President shall appoint all committees with the concurrence of the Board of Directors. Such concurrence shall take place no later than the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting. Committees shall terminate upon completion of the project or at the direction of a majority of the Board members.

## Section 3: Committee Chairpersons

All committee chairpersons shall be approved by the Board of Directors no later than the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting.

## Section 4: Function

Committees are the primary method for the Friends of Trinity River Refuge to take action. They undertake projects, studies, and activities which benefit Friends of Trinity River Refuge.

## ARTICLE IX: ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Section 1: Number; Selection; Term; Qualification

The Advisory Committee members will be appointed by the Board of Directors. Members of the Advisory Committee will be Honorary Members. Advisory Committee members may become voting members by paying their annual membership dues.

## ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

## Section 1: Amendments

The power to repeal or to amend these By-Laws and to adopt additional By-Laws is vested in the Board of Directors.

## Section 2: Procedures

A motion to repeal, amend, or adopt By-Laws must be made at a General or Special Membership Meeting.

At the meeting where the By-Laws are to be repealed, amended, or adopted, a majority of the voting Board members present must vote for the change. Such meetings require a majority of the Board of Directors be present to be valid.

These By-Laws were adopted by the Board of Directors $8 / 1 / 2000$
Revised Section 8 and 9 1/19/2013
Revised and added Officer Recall and Grievance Procedure: Section 5 and 6 1/18/2020
Revised Article III 1/18/2020


## Friends of the Trinity River Refuge (FOTRR)

Board of Directors Candidate Application

Thank you for your interest in serving on the FOTRR Board of Directors. We would be honored to have you work with us to promote and assist the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge in its important conservation, recreational and educational missions.

Please contact me if you have any questions
Lisa Holmes, FOTRR President

## Date

$\qquad$

Name $\qquad$

## Residence

Address
Cell Phone $\qquad$ Home Phone $\qquad$

E-mail $\qquad$
Preferred method of contact: $\qquad$ Work $\qquad$ Residence $\qquad$ Cell
$\qquad$ email $\qquad$ phone $\qquad$ text

## Employer

Name
Your title $\qquad$
Address
Phone $\qquad$ E-mail $\qquad$
Type of business or organization
Primary service(s) and area/population served
Please list boards and committees that you serve on, or have served on (business, civic, community, fraternal, political, professional, recreational, religious, social).

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
\text { Organization } & \text { Role/Title } & \text { Dates of Service }
\end{array}
$$

$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

## Education/Training/Certificates

$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

Optional - Have you received any awards or honors that you would like to mention?
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$

How do you feel FOTRR would benefit from your involvement on the Board?
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
Skills, experience and interests (Please circle all that apply)

Finance, accounting Administration, management
Nonprofit experience
Community service
Policy development
Program evaluation
Public relations, communications
Nature, Naturalist
Outdoor Recreation, Activities

Hunting, Fishing Education, instruction
Special events
Grant writing
Fundraising
Outreach, advocacy
Other $\qquad$
Other $\qquad$

Please list any groups, organizations, or businesses that you could serve as a liaison to on behalf of FOTRR
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
Please tell us anything else you would like to share.

## Friends of Trinity River Refuge

## Box 12

Liberty, TX 77575
E-mail: friendsoftrinityriverrefuge@gmail.com


[^0]:    - To protect, enhance, and restore the natural diversity of the Lower Trinity River Floodplain, on and off the refuge lands through:

