

PROTECTING THREATENED PLANT SPECIES

Healthy and diverse **ecosystems** offer many important benefits to our environment, our company, our employees and the communities where we operate. As part of our planning, development, construction and decision-making process, we work hard to reduce impacts on **biodiversity**.

We take great care to minimize impacts on the **environment** where we work and operate. Our plans and procedures are designed to meet or exceed established standards that protect **environmentally sensitive areas**, such as water bodies, wetlands and endangered species habitats. This includes our efforts to help preserve and protect the **Tobusch Fishhook Cactus** by collecting these plants within the Gulf Coast Express Pipeline Project right-of-way and providing plants for biodiversity research.

TOBUSCH FISHHOOK CACTUS



- Federally listed **threatened** species
- State of Texas listed **endangered** species
- Known or believed to occur in **only ten counties** in Texas, including Bandera, Edwards, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Medina, Real, Uvalde, and Val Verde counties

PROJECT CONNECTION

The **Tobusch Fishhook Cactus** habitat and plants were identified within portions of the Gulf Coast Express Pipeline Project right-of-way in Texas during the project's pre-construction environmental survey. We consulted with local agency biologists to develop a **conservation program** for the species. We took additional steps to work with a state university to support its research on the plant.



SURVEY AND COLLECTION PROCESS



- Initial **Tobusch Fishhook Cactus** surveys were conducted during the plant's flowering season from January to April.
- Surveys conducted outside of the flowering period included counting the radial spines unique to the cactus. This allowed additional plants to be identified beyond the flowering period.
- Qualified biologists returned to the project right-of-way prior to construction and safely collected the previously identified plants.
- **Approximately 130 plants** were collected and transported to a state university that is conducting reintroduction research to increase knowledge about the species' biology.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Instead of simply relocating the plants adjacent to the project right-of-way, the Gulf Coast Express Pipeline Project went further to improve the long-term viability of the **Tobusch Fishhook Cactus** by **supporting research** being conducted by a state university. The university agreed to house and care for the collected plants as part of the **reintroduction research**, which will include assessing suitable sites for the plants and long-term monitoring to determine the health and reproductive success of each cactus. Research efforts are aimed at the **recovery and delisting** of the cactus from the State of Texas endangered and federally designated threatened species lists.