

Jim Blackburn Bio

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Jim Blackburn is an environmental lawyer and planner. He is a Professor in the Practice of Environmental Law in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department where he teaches environmental law and sustainable design at Rice University. He is co-director of the Severe Storm Prevention, Education and Evacuation from Disaster (SSPEED) Center at Rice, a faculty scholar at the Baker Institute and Director of the undergraduate minor in energy and water sustainability. Blackburn set aside environmental litigation to concentrate on research and teaching and expand his planning practice through his firm, Sustainable Planning and Design. He has authored two books published by Texas A&M Press – *The Book of Texas Bays* in 2004 and *A Texan Plan for the Texas Coast* in 2017. He has co-authored two books that are collections of poems and artwork with artist Isabelle Scurry Chapman, titled *Birds: A Book of Verse and Vision* (2009) and *Hill Country Birds and Waters: Art and Poems* (2019). Blackburn received the Distinguished Alumni Laureate Award from Rice University in 2018, the Good Egg Award from the International Crane Foundation for litigation to protect the endangered whooping crane in 2015, the Barbara C. Jordan Community Advocate Award from Texas Southern University in 2007 and the Robert Eckhardt Lifetime Coastal Achievement Award from the General Land Office of the State of Texas in 1998, among others. Also active in civic affairs, Blackburn founded the Bayou City Initiative (BCI), a Houston-based NGO focused on community recovery and long-term flood protection post Harvey. He continues to serve on the boards of the Matagorda Bay Foundation, the Texas Coastal Exchange and the Aransas Project, three NGOs committed to protecting the Texas coast.