

As I know you are aware, many members of our Texas Parks and Wildlife Department family have been personally affected by Hurricane Ike and its aftermath. Park residences at Sea Rim and Galveston Island state parks were complete losses, and families assigned to those locations have lost most all their belongings. Colleagues in other divisions suffered severe losses as well and are in dire need of our collective support and assistance. As we work to recover operationally from Ike, please know that getting our colleagues and their families back on their feet is priority number one for our agency.

To that end, our Human Resources (HR) Division is taking the lead in coordinating our agency-wide employee disaster relief efforts. Initial plans call for a multi-part approach utilizing a combination of agency resources, and financial and material donations from department employees and various friends groups, most notably the TPW Foundation.

Since our colleagues' most pressing short-term needs are likely to be financial in nature, Human Resources and other departments will utilize agency resources to the maximum extent allowed by law to maintain employees' pay and benefits at pre-hurricane levels. Displaced employees in travel status at alternate work locations may receive per diem payments to off-set added expenses. Executive management has authorized local managers to allow affected employees appropriate "Emergency Leave" to attend to their families or other personal needs.

In addition, Human Resources is also coordinating several financial fundraising initiatives. Financial donations will be used for need-based grants to assist affected employees with uncovered disaster-related expenses.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation has set up a special "TPWD Employee Hurricane Relief Fund" account to aid with this effort, and all financial donations can be mailed to:

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation  
Re: TPWD Employee Hurricane Relief Fund  
1901 N. Akard  
Dallas, TX 75201

As we get a better accounting of individual needs, additional fundraisers for clothing, furniture and other material items will be organized to help these families as they recover from their losses. Additional details will be forthcoming by email, and information will be available on the home page of WILDnet.

Now is the time to show our support for those at TPWD who need it most. All gifts, big and small, will make a difference in the lives of our colleagues and their families as they seek to recover from the impacts of this terrible storm. Thank you in advance for joining me in contributing to this effort.

All My Best,

Carter Smith  
Executive Director  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department