



Mission

The Mission of Texans for State Parks is to preserve and enhance the State Park System for the benefit of the people of Texas and their guests.

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Texans for State Parks

Citizens working to preserve and enhance our great state park system

The Voice

May, 2010

- Budget Predictions Worsen for State Parks
- New Parks Reservation and Business System Now Online
- Friends of San Angelo SP Host Fundraising Events
- Many Parks Hosting Special Events
- Park Construction and Upgrades Underway in a number of parks

From the President:

The month of May found me on the road to several of our State Parks. One of the first things you notice when you go into the Parks now is how cleaned up they all look. This is due in large part to the improved equipment and added personnel we have been able to acquire with the better funding we have been receiving over the last three or so years.

We find ourselves looking at a decrease in our funding, anywhere from 5%-15% over the next couple of years because of the economic slowdown. There is no doubt we will need to take a decrease in funds, but we need to make sure it's a fair and equitable cut and not drastic.

In Texas, we have "dodged the bullet" compared to a lot of States. There are several States who have had to close or curtail their State Parks in recent months. Should we have to go to the 15% higher cut, we will most likely end up having to mothball several of our Parks and lay off Staff.

I am asking each and every one of you to contact your Member of the House, your State Senator, the Lt.

Governors' office and the Governors' office to ask that we do not lose more than we absolutely have to.

Our Parks bring in a tremendous amount of visitors and money to local areas, not just the State. We cannot afford to hurt our economy anymore than it already is. **We need to think of all of our State Parks, not just your favorite.** If we start fighting over one or two Parks, we lose all the way around!

Please join us in helping get the message out about our State Parks.

Thank you,
John Cobb, President

Budget Predictions Worsen for Parks

The projected amount of the state's budget shortfall continues to climb. That means further funding cuts for Parks and Wildlife and other state agencies.

In addition to the 5% budget cut first taken, P&W is working on a contingency plan for a budget cut of as much as 15%. The recently implemented 5% cut was accomplished without any park closures or staff

reductions. However, if the Parks Division has to sustain a 15% cut, that will severely impact the State Parks and other P&W programs. A 15% cut represents a \$13.4 million shortfall for the Department. Assuming Parks take something in excess of \$9 M of this cut, some parks will have to close. Since closed parks still need security, utilities and other minimal services, it probably means that more than 9-15% of all parks will be affected.

The TfSP Legislative Committee and other parks supporters have begun efforts to hold reductions to parks budgets to a minimum. In addition to parks' other many benefits, they generate a substantial amount of revenue for the local communities where they are located, so any park closures will take dollars from local economies in the form of jobs lost and income brought in to local businesses by out-of-town visitors. Park Friends Groups and other local park supporters will have an important role in assuring that local officials are familiar with the parks and how they contribute to their community so they can communicate that information to legislators.

We will keep you informed of the budget situation and other legislative items impacting State Parks as the situation progresses.

TxParks, a New Parks Reservation and Business System Now Online

An improvement three years in the planning, the new TxParks business system is now live. It will provide customer-friendly features along with comprehensive and trackable real-time park and financial data

and is expected to improve numerous facets of the agency's customer service, business and park reservation functions.

Perhaps most notable among the many changes and improvements expected to accompany the new business and reservations software system launch for the Texas state park system, scheduled for May 12, will be those associated with the annual State Park Pass program.

The popular annual Parks Pass—which topped more than 85,000 in sales last fiscal year—will now be immediately available for purchase on site at individual state parks. There will be no more “temporary” park pass or wait time for the customer's “real” park pass to be sent via mail. Patrons can leave the park office with their Parks Pass card in hand, and will be able to use the associated discount coupons on their first visit.

Those who currently own a valid State Parks Pass will also be issued a new plastic Pass card compatible with the new business software being installed, *TxParks*. Current Parks Pass holders will simply need to exchange their old card for a new one when they visit, with no interruption of services.

Other customer benefits of *TxParks* include new state park gift cards, plus new color-coded Parklands Passport cards available to senior citizens, disabled veterans and people with disabilities. In addition, *TxParks* will eliminate the extra \$3 online reservation booking fee.

If you have difficulties trying to get through by phone to make reservations, please visit the new website

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/park_reservations/ to reserve campsites and shelters.

There is no extra fee for using the website.

Friends of San Angelo State Park Host Two Successful Fundraising Events

A Geocaching challenge and a Cowboy Celebration recently brought visitors and funds for San Angelo State Park.

Geocachers from all over Texas and several states participated in Texas Challenge 2010. On March 12-13 over 300 Geocachers, young and older, filled all the camping spaces – and several local hotel rooms - with treasure-seeking outdoor enthusiasts. In connection with West Texas Geocaching Association, Friends of San Angelo State Park provided breakfasts and a barbecue dinner, silent auction, sponsorships and t-shirt sales.

Geocaching is a competitive sport in which teams search for caches, hoping to log more finds than the other teams. Forty special caches were placed for the event. For regional teams competed. The enthusiastic team of South/Southeast Texans was declared the winner when the crowd gathered in the almost-completed outdoor theater. The group was the first to make use of the new facility being constructed through efforts of the Friends group.

San Angelo State Park has over 50 permanent caches inside the park. The caches are listed on the website

www.geocaching.org and attract visitors to the park. Friends of San Angelo SP supplies a “loner” GPS unit and instruction for visitors who want to try the

sport before deciding to invest in their own equipment.

On March 27-28, guests of a different sort filled the equestrian camping area with horses and cowboy-types for the Sixth Annual Cowboy Celebration at SASP. Friends of San Angelo SP provided trail preparation, outriders, Chuck Wagon Dinner and breakfast, auction, refreshment stand, cowboy concert and Cowboy church services. The event attracts riders from near and far, including a large 'club' from New Mexico.

Friends of San Angelo SP have raised funds for horse pens, troughs and trail markers for this event and for the equestrian visitors who frequent the area all year.

The two events required many volunteers who plan, coordinate and work on the trails and with the food service. Sponsors are solicited to increase the income. A total of \$10,000 was produced to benefit the parks projects. Finishing the outdoor theater, adding more amenities to the horse camp and trails and purchase of hydraulic dump trailer are planned.

An additional benefit, increased park usage fees created by the two events, had Park Manager, Kurt Kemp, beaming. San Angelo State Park staff supports the volunteers in many ways and are most appreciated. *[Ruth Jordan, President, Friends of San Angelo State Park]*

State Parks News

[click on titles for full article]

- **[Geocaching Coming to a Texas State Park Near You](#)**

Have you always considered technology and the great

outdoors to be worlds apart? The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is trying to bridge the gap with a program born from the success of a pilot program in the Austin area. Participating parks in Houston include: Sheldon Lake, Huntsville, San Jacinto Battleground SHS, Galveston Island, Brazos Bend, Lake Texana, Lake Livingston, Village Creek, Martin Dies Jr. and Stephen F Austin.

For information about these events and a separate Dallas/Fort Worth challenge, visit <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/geocaching/>.

- **[Inks Lake SP — Twilight Paddle: A Sensational Adventure](#)** — Discover how using each of your five senses will help you experience the mysteries which surround you at twilight. We will be your "senses-guide" through this evening adventure on the flat waters of Inks Lake. Canoes, kayaks, life jackets and paddles will be provided, or you can bring your own for a reduced fee. Open to ages 18 and older; canoeing or kayaking experience is required. Bring a strong flashlight and wear shoes that can get wet. Meet us on the back porch of the park store. Fee \$15 includes boat rental; call for fee if you bring your boat. Reservations required, deadline 10 AM day of event. 7:30-9:30 PM (512) 793-2223. For more about Inks Lake events, see **[\[More About Inks Lake SP\]](#)** **[\[Featured Events\]](#)**

- **[Eisenhower SP Hosts Go Fish! June 5](#)**. This learn to fish event is an educational fishing derby for families to celebrate National Free Fishing Day. Parents or guardian must be present. Prizes awarded in various categories. Bait and tackle provided or bring your

own. No fishing license required to fish in the park. Bring the family and fish on beautiful Lake Texoma with the experts. Fishing games and a free hotdog lunch will be provided after the derby. 8 a.m.-2 p.m. (903) 465-1956.

- **[Kickapoo Caverns State Park to Host Grand Opening Event June 12](#)**

After operating as a limited-access park for more than 20 years, Kickapoo Caverns State Park near Brackettville will host an all-day grand opening event free to the public on Saturday, June 12, commemorating the park's official opening of its doors on a daily basis. Main activities including guided tours will be 8 a.m.-5 p.m., but early morning birding and evening bat flight viewing also planned. Click on the title link above for more information about the numerous activities planned for the day. Entry and Camping are free for the event, but reservations are required for camping. To make reservations contact the park at (830) 563-2342.

For a calendar of park events, see www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/calendar/

Construction and Upgrades Underway at a Number of State Parks

- **[New Cabins Underway at Possum Kingdom State Park](#)** Caddo Lake, one of Texas' most scenic and popular water-sport parks will soon boast two new rustic-style cabins to meet the eager demand of year-round visitors. Thanks to bond funding authorized by the Texas Legislature and approved by statewide voters, Texas Parks and Wildlife is currently replacing

two dilapidated Possum Kingdom cabins built shortly after World War II. The new cabins, to be completed this fall, will have increased space and amenities, be more fire resistant and meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

- **Palo Duro Canyon State Park Honoring History While Opening Doors**

Spectacular, rugged and starkly beautiful, Palo Duro Canyon State Park near Canyon has always been a worthy Texas bragging point. To make sure everyone has an opportunity to enjoy the canyon's scenic splendor, early this summer Texas Parks and Wildlife begins making more of this 76-year-old park current with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Construction is expected to be completed in spring 2011.

- **Legendary Garner State Park Dancing to the Beat of Restoration**

Whether they go to float the cool Frio waters, hike the rugged terrain, watch the abundant wildlife or dance the night away at the iconic riverside pavilion, generations of Texans have endowed Garner State Park near Concan with an iconic status as the perfect getaway.

- **Lake Corpus Christi State Park Warming Up to Cool Cottages**

Summer days and nights get pretty warm at Lake Corpus Christi State Park near Mathis, but they will soon feel a lot cooler to guests who reserve ahead. Ten of the park's 25 screen shelters are now being converted to enclosed cottages — with air conditioners.

- **Bastrop State Park Moving Forward on a Year of Major Renovations**

Central Texas' famous Lost

Pines were found again and again last year — by 150,000 visitors at Bastrop State Park just outside Bastrop. The beautifully wooded setting, the historic structures, the large pool, and the rustic cabins all make the park, opened in 1937, a favorite traditional escape for families and outdoor enthusiasts.

- **Historic Daingerfield State Park Takes Hiatus with Eye to the Future**

The now famous Civilian Conservation Corps came to this beautiful northeast Texas forest land in the 1930s to construct Daingerfield State Park near Daingerfield. The hard-working New Deal crews built cabins, park buildings, roads and infrastructure. They also created 80-acre Lake Daingerfield at the heart of the park.

On July 5, 72 years after the opening of Daingerfield State Park close, but only for a few months. When it reopens in early spring 2011, visitors will find an improved park.

Thanks to bond funding authorized by the Texas Legislature and approved by statewide voters, Texas Parks and Wildlife is revitalizing three of the original CCC buildings.

There will also be new restrooms, with showers, in all three park camp loops. All these facilities will be accessible to more people than ever, being built or restructured in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The more than \$5 million in improvements at Daingerfield are part of a list of parks projects underway this year.

- **Visitor-Pleasing Upgrades Accelerating at Huntsville State Park**

Huntsville State Park just outside

Huntsville quickly attained major attraction status after becoming a state park. Originally constructed in the 1930s by African-American Company 1823 of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the park was still being developed in 1940 when a heavy flood collapsed a dam and flooded the park, causing extensive and costly damage. The park did not open until 1956.

Texas State Parks general obligation bonds have been sold to fund more than \$44 million in repairs and renovations to park cabins, bathrooms, electrical and water systems, and other state park infrastructure. Along with fixing up more than 40 state parks, the bonds provide an additional \$25 million to dry berth the Battleship Texas.

For information on the status of other park improvement projects, click on [long list of major Texas State Parks rejuvenation projects](#) to see a list on the Parks & Wildlife website.

See more TPWD news at: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/leases/.

Texans for State Parks invites you to join in protecting Texas treasures.

Texans for State Parks is a statewide, not-for-profit organization that works exclusively in support of the preservation and enhancement of the state parks, state historic sites, and state natural areas of Texas.

Find a Membership Application on the website www.texansstateparks.org and join today!

