

*Citizens working to preserve and enhance the state park system for the benefit of the people of Texas and their guests.*



The Voice, Online – TfSP E-News

August 2012

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From the President:

As we are approaching the end of the summer rush at our Texas State Parks, we need to look to the future and funding our Parks for the next two years. January will mark the start of the new Legislative session and now is the time to approach your Representatives and Senators about improving our future for Parks.

As you can see in the articles in this month's edition of the Voice, our Parks and Historic Sites are hurting. Texas State Parks are looking to new ways of bringing money in for Parks, including Corporate Sponsorships. This last year, Carter Smith, the Executive Director of Parks and Wildlife asked for donations to help keep our Park system running. This shows how we need help.

This is where you come in. Although TfSP works with the Legislature, including during the session, your input is needed right now to your Members of the Legislature. Tell them you would like to see improved budgets for Texas State Parks. One way to do this is the implementation of HB-12 from the 2007 session that called for 94% of the State Sporting Goods Tax to go to Texas State Parks.

If it means adding it to the State Constitution, then let's ask for it! With the elections on hand, now is the time to make contacts. This is when the business is being lined up. Waiting for the Legislative Session to start is too late.

In the meanwhile, continue to support your local State Parks in any way you can.

Hope to see you in our Parks.

John Cobb, President



Follow Texans for State Parks on our Facebook Page

See the featured park for this quarter, Lake Colorado City SP, on [www.texansforstateparks.org](http://www.texansforstateparks.org).

**Message from Executive Director Carter Smith: Texas State Parks need \$4.6 million.**

Record drought and devastating wildfires have created a critical situation for state parks. We need to raise \$4.6 million to keep state parks open, and we can't do it without you. To date, thanks to generous donations from private individuals, non-profit organizations and companies, more than \$1.7 million has been raised.

There are three simple ways you can help:

1. Visit state parks often with your family and friends—visitor fees pay for about half of all park operating costs.
2. Make a tax-deductible donation.
3. Make a donation when it's time to renew your vehicle, boat or trailer registration.

Please act now, to help keep Texas State Parks open for everyone to enjoy. Our state parks won't be the same without you.

Thank you,  
Carter Smith, TPWD Executive Director



Get the latest State Parks information: click the envelope or [Sign-up for email alerts](#) for a subscription form.

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### **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Seeks Official Corporate Partners:** Legislation Allows New Way for State Agency to Address Budget Gaps

For the first time, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is seeking Official Corporate Partners to raise additional revenue to help meet financial challenges, including those facing state parks due to drought and wildfires. This new funding strategy was made possible during the last legislative session by the passage of House Bill 1300, in which state lawmakers gave TPWD authority to develop partnerships with private businesses.

For years, TPWD has benefited from working closely with its official non-profit partner, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, to develop corporate sponsorships as well as philanthropic relationships with individuals and private foundations. Now TPWD will also be able to offer a new array of exclusive benefits to Official Corporate Partners, including official partner designation in specific business categories.

“The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is a trusted brand, synonymous with outdoor experiences, wildlife, state parks and conservation,” said Carter Smith, TPWD executive director. “We believe that this private-public partnership will be a smart business move for the right companies, offering access to a marketplace of millions of outdoor enthusiasts, and recognizing partner roles in helping to preserve state parks and the outdoor lifestyle that are such important parts of our Texas heritage.”

The department has targeted a number of business categories in its [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#), including automotive, banking, beverage, computer equipment, energy companies, gas station/convenience store, hotel/motel, insurance, mobile phone/wireless, and outdoor apparel. However, the opportunity is open to any interested company, and all business categories will be considered. The RFP also details partnership guidelines and links to agency regulations created to implement HB 1300.

Under TPWD rules to implement the legislation, businesses who are awarded Official Corporate Partnerships will be able to use the official designation in their marketing efforts and work with TPWD to develop joint promotional campaigns. Among other new benefits, partners will be able to license products featuring the department brand and reach millions of web visitors through banner ads on the agency web site.

“To our knowledge, this is the first time any state agency in the U.S. has done anything like this, and we anticipate this will be a learning experience where best practices will evolve over time,” said Lydia Saldaña, TPWD communications director. “However, we are approaching this very thoughtfully. Our marketing, legal and administrative teams have spent a great deal of time planning and preparing. We are all mindful that the goal is to help take care of our Texas treasures and carry out our mission.”

Companies interested in TPWD’s official corporate partner opportunity can see details in the Request for Proposals (RFP) on the agency website. The deadline to submit a proposal is Aug. 30  
{<http://tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/>}

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### **TPWD Historic Sites Receives Grant to Study Effects of Bastrop State Park Fire:** National Park Service Awards \$25,000 to Examine Damage to Historic CCC Structures

As one of only 11 recipients nationwide, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s Historic Sites and Structures Program was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the National Park Service to study the effects of the Bastrop fire on Bastrop State Park’s historic structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corp.

Despite that almost all of the park’s CCC-built structures, which date back to the 1930s, survived the worst fire in Texas history, the lethal flames and smoke came within feet of these invaluable buildings and may still have caused long-term or even unforeseen damage—hence the reason for the evaluative study.

“With the recent wildfires, I’ve learned to appreciate these historic structures even more,” said State Parks Regional Director Todd McClanahan, who was the Bastrop State Park Complex Superintendent at the time of

the fire last Labor Day. “Knowing just how close we came to losing these buildings forever forces me to admire their beauty with a different perspective. They are so much more than historic buildings, they are historic treasures.”

In addition to TPWD staff, Fran Gale, who teaches in the Historic Preservation Program at the University Of Texas School Of Architecture and is director of the UT Architectural Conservation Lab, and Casey Gallagher, who is a graduate of that program and now works as an independent conservator, will help administer the program study. Results from this landmark research are expected to serve as an application model nationwide for other historic structures and cultural resources facing potential wildfire damage. For more information, contact TPWD’s Angela Reed at (512) 389-8818.

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### **Abilene State Park Receives Funds to repair CCC-constructed picnic tables**

In January Historic Sites and Structures Program was awarded \$22,000 from the Dian Graves Owen Foundation to repair a group of CCC-constructed picnic tables at Abilene State Park, a project that is currently underway.

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### **Rent a Yurt at Abilene State Park**



At Abilene State Park, visitors can rent a yurt for the night. The Mongolian-style dome-shaped tents are equipped with a bunk bed, microwave, electric lights, a swamp cooler and electric coffee pot. They're surprisingly comfy, and unlike regular tents, you don't have to stoop to get inside. They've also got linoleum floors. Each yurt sleeps up to five and is equipped with a small refrigerator, microwave and coffee pot. Restrooms and showers are a short walk away

Bunk beds are part of the surprisingly comfortable interior of the yurts. A small picnic table sits outside and restrooms and showers are a short walk away.

Story and photos by Pam LeBlanc, American-Statesman. For the full story of Pam’s visit to Abilene SP, click on the photo above, or <http://www.statesman.com/life/travel/make-like-a-nomad-and-sleep-in-a-2423761.html>.

For more about Abilene SP, see the Texas Parks & Wildlife website, [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us) .

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### **McKinney Falls Home to Old Baldy**

Old Baldy soars more than 100 feet into the air, its root system splaying across the length of two school buses in McKinney Falls State Park. It would take at least three people holding hands to encircle the massive bald cypress. According to recent estimates, it's more than 500 years old.

Though it's known as one of the oldest bald cypress trees on public land in Texas, it's hard to know exactly how old Old Baldy is because the hulking tree crushes tools used to sample its core, said Amber Conrad, the park's interpretive specialist, who guided a group of park visitors on a tour to the tree. During a drought, the tree could not add a ring at all, but two to three new rings could appear during a lush, wet year, she said.

But Conrad was surprised when she learned that the tree was only thought to top 60 feet — and had been for about 20 years. The Texas Forest Service confirmed her suspicions earlier this month, when they measured the tree's height with infrared and sound vibrations. The best estimate: 103 feet. With an expansive root system that connects to most of the plants it towers over along Onion Creek, the tree is vital to the park, Conrad said.

Conrad's tour past the tree and along a packed dirt trail to the park's limestone rock shelter drew an appreciative crowd, gawking at the tree's height and at times applauding Conrad's enthusiastic explanation of the park habitat. See Austin American Statesman, [http://www.statesman.com/news/local/mckinney-falls-visitors-laud-majestic-old-baldy-2424027.html?cxtype=rss\\_ece\\_frontpage](http://www.statesman.com/news/local/mckinney-falls-visitors-laud-majestic-old-baldy-2424027.html?cxtype=rss_ece_frontpage) for the full article by [Ciara O'Rourke](#).

For more about McKinney Falls SP, see [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us).

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*Click on **Park Events** to see a list of State Parks and coming events on the TPWD website.*

## Enjoy Canoeing or Kayaking in State Parks

Anyone can enjoy canoeing or kayaking in state parks. Many parks offer rentals for all the equipment you'll need: canoes, kayaks, even paddle boats.

Click [Find paddling opportunities at a state park near you](#) » for more information.



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**Remember to send e-mail or other address changes to [leevans@texas.net](mailto:leevans@texas.net) to continue receiving news and information about Texans for State Parks activities and the State Park System.**

News items from various sources are edited and forwarded by Texans for State Parks. If you have news or an event you would like to include, send it to [leevans@texas.net](mailto:leevans@texas.net). Recipients are encouraged to forward the newsletter or reprint any part of it for others interested in the future of Texas parks.

**Texans for State Parks – P. O. Box 41480 - Austin, TX 78704-0025**

[www.Texansforstateparks.org](http://www.Texansforstateparks.org)

### Texans for State Parks Board Members

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*Citizens working to preserve and enhance the state park system for the benefit of the people of Texas and their guests.*

**PLEASE JOIN TODAY!**

**TEXANS FOR STATE PARKS** invites you to join with us in protecting our Texas treasures.

Whether you are an individual, organization, school group or represent a small business or a major corporation, there is a membership category for you. See ↓

[www.texansforstateparks.org](http://www.texansforstateparks.org) or e-mail [leevans@texas.net](mailto:leevans@texas.net) for more information.

*As a member, you will ---*

- ✓ Add your voice in support of the Texas State Park System.
- ✓ Receive “The Voice” – E-news keeping you informed of issues and events.
- ✓ Contribute toward activities, events and projects not possible in park budgets.
- ✓ Receive information about legislation and other issues impacting Texas parks.

***Individuals***

\_\_\_\$25 Regular  
 \_\_\_\$50 Family  
 \_\_\_\$100 Supporting  
 \_\_\_\$1,000 Benefactor  
 \_\_\_\$5,000 Life

***Organizations***

\_\_\_\$50 Bronze  
 \_\_\_\$100 Silver  
 \_\_\_\$250 Gold  
 \_\_\_\$1,000 Platinum  
 \_\_\_\$25 Youth Groups under age 18

***Business***

\_\_\_\$100 Bronze  
 \_\_\_\$500 Silver  
 \_\_\_\$1,000 Gold  
 \_\_\_\$5,000 Platinum

\$\_\_\_\_\_ **Additional Donation**                      \$\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Amount Enclosed**

**Please note: New member \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Renewal \_\_\_\_\_**

**Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_**

**City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (Bs) \_\_\_\_\_**

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**I don't have e-mail. Please put me on a list to receive e-news items by mail. \_\_\_\_\_**

**Texans for State Parks is a 501(c)(3) organization; membership dues are tax deductible.**

**Mail your check today to: Texans for State Parks, P. O. Box 41480, Austin, TX 78704-0025**

***Goals***

- *Provide a united, state-wide voice for users of state parks and related groups on park matters of shared concerns.*
- *Serve as an information resource for interested persons on state park matters.*
- *Educate park users, legislators and the general public about state park matters.*
- *Support stable and adequate financing for the state park system.*
- *Work in partnership with local state park support groups and other interested groups on state park matters.*
- *Advise the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Commission on State-wide matters of importance to state park users and related groups.*