

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

March, 2014

- **Texans for State Parks Annual Meeting**
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President's Remarks:

Through personal conversations and “brag night” presentations at our annual membership meeting at LBJ State Park last month, I was thrilled to see demonstrated once again how strong the grassroots connections are in the building of a network of Texas outdoor enthusiasts and their State Parks. At the meeting, representatives of local Friends Groups personified the differences and the energy that exist locally to promote State Parks all across Texas.

But we need to do more! At this meeting, TfSP stepped forward to launch a new financial support grant program to provide “seed money” for grants to initiate or strengthen the organizational capability of Friends Groups across the State.

With Texas’s rapidly expanding population and increasing urbanization, much work lies ahead in developing a State Park system for the future. And – at the same time -- we must continue to recruit and equip many more dedicated and inspired local volunteers as essential partners in this enterprise.

I am inspired and I hope you are, too!

John Gosdin, President

Texans for State Parks Annual Meeting Held February 28-March 1

After some difficulty due to the closure of HWY 290 Friday evening, approximately 25 persons were welcomed to the “Souper Supper” and Brag Night by Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site Superintendent *Iris Neffendorf*.

Volunteers with Park Friends Groups from LBJ State Park, Enchanted Rock SP, Colorado Bend SP, Blanco SP, San Angelo SP, and Bastrop/Buescher SPs had presentations with interesting information about their park and the activities they have underway.

For those who would like to know more about these and other volunteer activities, you can find more on the TPWD website at <http://tpwd.state.tx.us/involved/volunteer/spdest/>.

Saturday thirty-five people including representative of seven Friends Groups, TfSP Board of Directors and members and other as guests were welcomed to the park by Paul Hendrix, Assistant Superintendent, LBJ State Park. After coffee and breakfast treats, TfSP President John Gosdin and Paul Hendrix, Assistant Park Superintendent welcomed everyone introduced by Brent Leisure, TPWD, Director of Parks. Brent made the following points:

- One-fourth to one-third of the work done in Texas State Parks is accomplished by volunteers.
- Ninety-five State Parks receive 8.1 million visitors per year.
- Forty-four million dollars in revenue is produced by the State Park System.
- Current challenges for the Park System are to accommodate the growing population in Texas with adequate natural resource, recreation, and historic opportunities and to address the increasing diversity of the citizens of Texas.

Russell Fishbeck, TPWD, Assistant Director of Parks, followed with charts and photos to highlight the accomplishments of several of the fifty-two TPWD sanctioned Friends Groups. He reported that volunteers have logged an average of 575,000 hours per year and the value of this contributed service represents the equivalent of an additional 2.26 FTEs (full time employees) for every Texas State Park.

Jay Kleberg, Texas Parks Foundation Associate Director, explained the purpose and accomplishments of the foundation whose mission is to acquire and distribute donated funds for State Parks and other TPWD programs through the solicitation of donations and gifts from corporations and other benefactors.

Cynthia Brandimarte, TPWD historian, presented photos and facts about the unique buildings and infrastructure in twenty-nine State Parks that were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the period of 1920 -1930 and the importance of their renovation and preservation.

Parc Smith, American Youth Works, told of his organization's accomplishments in constructing and maintaining trails and structures in State Parks, including extensive work after the hurricane damage at Galveston Island SP and the wildfire at Lost Pines SP.

After lunch, the annual meeting adjourned to the TfSP Board meeting. Everyone was invited to stay and participate in discussions by the board. Board business included action on the applications for the new Park Friends Development Grants program.

Park Friends Development Grants Awarded

After a review of the information from the only three applicants received for the first round of grants, the Texans for State Parks board members awarded the first round of grants to the three applicants. Friends of Colorado Bend SP will purchase archery equipment to implement their addition of the National Archery in Schools program. Friends of Blanco SP received funds for completion of the Nature Activity Center and Friends of Purtil Canyon was awarded funds for fishing equipment for a Kidsfish and Play day.

Friends Development Grants can be awarded any to existing 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization sanctioned as a "Friends Group" through a Memorandum of Agreement with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, or to a group in process of organizing a "Friends Group" with TPWD.

Grants can be used to enhance the ability of existing organizations in their efforts to support an individual state park. However, priority will be given to help fund the development of a new Friends Groups, reactivate a group, or increase a group's membership.

Applications deadlines are May 15, August 15 and November 15, 2014. For an application, contact Ruth Jordan, Grant Coordinator at ruthjordan@suddenlink or 325-651-7346.

About Texans for State Parks

TfSP, formed in 1997, is the only statewide, not-for-profit organization that works *exclusively* in support of the preservation and enhancement of the state park system, TfSP strives to keep members informed about issues and provide an opportunity to get involved and make a difference.

Selected 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.

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, membership categories provide a way for you to become involved.

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.

For information and a membership application, see www.texansstateparks.org or e-mail leevans@texas.net.

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