



The Voice, Online – TfSP E-News

Fall 2009

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A Message from the President of Texans for State Parks

This has been a really busy and productive year for TfSP with the Legislature in Session and our Summer Hire Program. Your Board members have worked hard implement and oversee these projects. A special thanks need to go to Richard and Linda for their hard work with the payroll!

We have some funding now and we have an important meeting coming up on February 6th in Austin for the membership to decide how we can best use these funds. How can we best help Parks over a several year period, instead of year by year?

We will be having elections this year as well. Linda will be sending out more information on the meeting a little closer to the date.

I hope to see everyone at this year's meeting. We need your input and support.

John E Cobb, President
Texans for State Parks

Texans for State Parks Concludes Summer 2009 Hire Program

Texans for State Parks had a unique opportunity to partner with Parks & Wildlife and serve as the "employer" for the hourly workers hired to supplement the regular park staff during the 2009 summer season. Between May 30 and September 30, Texans for State Parks, in partnership with Parks and Wildlife was instrumental in successfully processing a twice monthly payroll for approximately 100 hourly employees across the state.

In order to have the needed summer help, parks made use of a provision allowing the department to contract with non-profits and contracted with TfSP to administer hiring and payroll procedures because of a lack of available positions. The Parks Division had

budgeted funds to hire interns and hourly workers for the summer season, but the agency was nearing its cap on the number of allowed employees established by legislature due to the lack of vacant positions normally used for summer positions

This process made it possible to hire the necessary summer staff and gave an added benefit to the employees of being paid twice a month rather than the normal monthly state payroll. It also allowed TfSP to earn an administrative fee to be used on behalf of parks and park support groups.

Texans for State Parks hopes to use the experience and 'lessons learned' during the 2009 program to administer payroll services for a portion of the hourly employees for the summer of 2010.

Texans for State Parks Schedules 2010 Annual Meeting

Texans for State Parks Directors have scheduled the 2010 Annual Members meeting for Saturday, February 6th. The meeting will be held in Austin at the New Airport Commerce Park facilities beginning at 10:00 AM.

Meeting topics will include

- An overview of the 2009 summer hire program administered by TfSP and a five year plan for the best use of the fee earned for the service. Some initial thoughts for discussion include assistance for startup and existing Friends groups and assistance with special projects for parks without friends groups. Input from Friends Groups and Parks Division Staff is requested in order to plan the best use of funds to benefit state parks.
- An update on Legislative Items for the next session. (See following article and more on the website.)

The meeting will conclude by mid-late afternoon. For those who wish to stay in Austin overnight, a discounted rate for meeting attendees has been arranged with a new Staybridge Suites across from the meeting location.

A full agenda and registration information, along with driving directions to the new Training Center, will be mailed approximately a month prior to the meeting date.

TfSP Officers Election

Texans for State Parks will hold elections for directors prior to the February meeting. Ballots will be mailed to TfSP members in early January. Two sitting directors, President John Cobb and Jan DeVault are up for re-election, and there is one open spot on the board.

If you are interested in serving on the Texans for State Parks board, or would like to nominate someone, please contact one of the Directors listed at the end of this newsletter by phone or e-mail, or Linda Evans, leevans@texas.net. Information about terms, board meetings and director responsibilities can be found on the Texans for State Parks website

Celebrate Holiday Season at a Texas State Park

Start, or continue, a new family tradition that celebrates the great outdoors and Texas history by visiting one of the more than a dozen Texas state parks and historic sites hosting special holiday

events for all ages. From a Christmas sing-along around a woodland campfire to a pancake breakfast with Santa, the holiday spirit shines through at a park near you through the month of December, ending with the 40th annual tree lighting celebration begun by President Lyndon B. Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson in 1970. This year's event will take place December 20, 2009.

See a list of parks hosting holiday events on the TPWD website by clicking on **Celebrate Holiday Season at a Texas State Park**

or

(<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/releases/?reg=20091120a&nrtype=all&nrspan=2009&nrsearch=>)

Speaker of the House Joe Strauss Issues House Interim Committee Charges

Speaker of the House Joe Strauss recently released the following House Interim Committee charges, reflecting topics committees will study in the interim period before the 2011 legislative session.

House Committee on Culture, Recreation, and Tourism:

1. Explore ways to promote and improve economic development through heritage, cultural, recreational, and historical programs. Consider the long-term economic impact of state parks in promoting tourism and recreation.
2. Examine Texas Parks and Wildlife's current licensing and permitting process, including available exemptions, occupational licensing, potential for reducing the number of permits for a single permit holder, and assessment of fees.
3. Review the Texas Wildlife Action Plan and make recommendations on ways to further support aquatic and nongame programs.
4. Monitor the long-term plans to improve state parks. Consider the feasibility of acquiring additional park land.

TfSP will post more details on the issues along with information on hearing dates and locations as they are available. Everyone is encouraged to take the opportunity to comment on the issues regarding parks and other topics of interest.

Most park issues will be before the House Committee on Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. The entire document with issues before other committees relating to parks and other agencies can be found on the TfSP web site. [Click Here for House Interim charges](#)

Senate committee interim charges have not yet been announced. All interim committees will make recommendations that could result in legislative action during the next session.

Don't forget to send e-mail or other address changes to leevans@texas.net so you will continue to receive news and information about the State Park System.

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. For

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

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

<http://texansstateparks.org/>

(Note: the new website address above. It no longer includes the word 'for')

Texans for State Parks Board Members

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