



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

August, 2010

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Farewell Happy Hour

for

Walt Dabney

Texans for State Parks is sponsoring a "Farewell Happy Hour for Walt Dabney" on September 1st (Wednesday) and we hope you, friends and coworkers can join us in thanking Walt for his leadership and contributions to our State Park System. Please share the invitation with anyone we might have missed.

**TEXANS FOR STATE PARKS
INVITES YOU TO JOIN US IN A
FAREWELL HAPPY HOUR
FOR**

**WALT DABNEY
And Friends**

**Wednesday, September 1st.
5:00 - 7:00 pm
at Scholz Garten in Austin.**

For more information, contact John Gosdin, jmgosdin@aol.com or Linda Evans, leevans@texas.net

New Texas State Parks Director Named

Brent Leisure, a 26-year veteran of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, has been named director of Texas State Parks. A regional parks director for almost seven years, Leisure will assume his new duties as leader of the agency's State Parks Division effective Sept. 1.

Leisure replaces Walt Dabney, who is retiring on Aug. 31, after 11 years of leading Texas state parks through some challenging times to become one of the nation's most innovative state park systems.

New State Parks Guide is Out

The latest version of the State Parks Guide, sponsored by Toyota, is hot off the press, in time for visitors to plan a camping trip when the cool fall weather arrives. The free 112-page color publication has information on

more than 90 Texas state parks and can be picked up at any state park, [TPWD law enforcement office](#), [TxDoT travel information centers](#), [Sea Center Texas](#) or at the [Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center](#). Many convention and visitors bureaus and chambers of commerce will also carry the guide. The guide also can be viewed on the TPWD web site in English or Spanish.

More Texas Families Becoming Camping Converts

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has scheduled a full slate of Texas Outdoor Family workshops this fall designed to introduce even more families to the ease and joy of camping in one of dozens of Texas state parks.

Weekend workshops will be held this autumn in state parks located near most of Texas' major metropolitan areas, as well as several parks in less populous areas.

For a complete list of upcoming workshops, visit the online Texas Outdoor Family Calendar pages. The workshops are made possible in part by sponsorships from Toyota and the Igloo Corporation.

Families can register by calling (512) 389-8903 between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. and speaking to a Texas Outdoor Family representative or by sending an e-mail to: tofsp@tpwd.state.tx.us. After registration, a confirmation packet with details will be sent.

Rehabilitated Birds from BP Oil Spill Released at Goose Island State Park

Twenty brown pelicans rehabilitated after exposure to the

BP oil spill were transported from Louisiana by plane and released at Goose Island State Park near Rockport recently. This was the first release of spill-rehabbed birds at a Texas state park.

Observation Tower Going Up at Houston's Sheldon Lake State Park

Imagine being a red-tailed hawk soaring through the air and looking down upon an expanse of wetlands, ponds and a coastal tallgrass prairie inhabited by fish, alligators, songbirds and small mammals just 15 miles from downtown Houston.

Starting early next year, visitors to Sheldon Lake State Park will be able to experience a bird's-eye view of the reservoir and surrounding countryside from the decks of a new observation tower to be erected in the park's 40-acre Environmental Learning Center unit. Construction of the \$1.3 million tower is slated to begin by the end of the summer and be completed sometime early next year.

In keeping with Sheldon Lake State Park's reputation as the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's leading example of an environmentally-friendly and conservation-minded facility, the 75-foot tower will use photovoltaic cells to provide solar power to run an elevator and light the stairways and two observation decks. The tower was designed by PDG Architects of Houston. For more information about Sheldon Lake State Park, visit the park web page or call (281) 456-2800.

TPWD Restricting Cave Access on Agency Owned Lands to Protect Bats

Access to Gorman Cave at Colorado Bend State Park has been closed to the public and additional precautions are being taken at other Texas Parks and Wildlife Department caves to protect bats from the spread of White Nose Syndrome (WNS), a contagious disease that can be fatal to bats.

Executive Director Carter Smith has issued an executive order giving authority to close caves on TPWD property to protect bats from the spread of White Nose Syndrome.

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) is named for a white fungus found on the muzzles and wings of infected bats. Bats with WNS awaken often during hibernation and use up the fat reserves they need to last through the winter, causing them to freeze or starve to death.

Though bats can spread the disease among themselves, there is evidence that humans coming from infected bat caves and roosts can transport the fungus as well.

WNS "has caused the most precipitous wildlife decline in the past century in North America," said John Hayes, chairman of the University of Florida Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation.

Since 2006, when WNS was first discovered in a cave in New York, more than a million hibernating bats of eight species have been killed in 14 states. Five of those eight species also inhabit Texas, where more than 50 species of bats live.

While WNS has not yet been detected in Texas, the disease was confirmed in Oklahoma last May.

Big Bend Ranch

The U.S. Border Patrol has worked out an agreement with TPWD to stable four horses at Big Bend Ranch State Park for use by Presidio-based agents in patrolling environmentally sensitive areas of the park, where motor vehicle use is discouraged or forbidden. The four American mustangs were furnished by the Bureau of Land Management. The horses, all about five years

old, come from stock captured on public lands in the western United States. Stabling the horses inside the park will allow federal agents to more efficiently patrol areas that are difficult to access.

See the complete story on the items above and other Parks & Wildlife News Items *online*:
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/news/media/releases/>.

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.

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, membership categories provide a way for you to become involved. Your tax deductible dues fund advocacy and education efforts, and contributions to special parks activities as funds are available.

Individuals

_____ \$25	Regular
_____ \$50	Family
_____ \$100	Supporting
_____ \$1,000	Benefactor
_____ \$5,000	Life
_____ \$25	Youth Groups under 18, scouts, etc.)

Organizations

_____ \$50	Bronze
_____ \$100	Silver
_____ \$250	Gold
_____ \$1,000	Platinum
_____ \$5,000	Platinum

Business

_____ \$100	Bronze
_____ \$500	Silver
_____ \$1,000	Gold

Please Note:

New Membership _____

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Please send a check to: Texans for State Parks, P.O. Box 41480, Austin, TX 78704. Texans for State Parks is a 501(c)(3) organization. Dues are tax deductible.
