

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
December 2011*

- Texas State Parks Announce \$4.6 million Appeal for Help
- P&W Historic Sites & Structures Program Launches *Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy Parks Initiative*
- Goliad State Park and Amigos of Goliad SP Host *First Day Hike*
- Washington on the Brazos SHS Presents *Hunting in the Republic of Texas*

President's Message

We hope you are having a great Christmas Holidays! After the first of the year, our yearly Membership Meeting of Texans for State Parks will take place in Lockhart State Park and we want to make sure you have a chance to come visit with us.

We will have updates from Texas State Parks about the budget crunches we are going through and what we can do to help. This will be very important for every one of our Parks. Remember, what goes for one, goes for all!

We are seeing quite a few of our Parks working with local governments to be able to offer our visitors more options and things to do in the sites. This is very good news.

Make plans to attend and make sure you bring your camera to this beautiful Texas State Park.

Stay safe this holiday season and we will see you in Lockhart.

John Cobb, President

Texas State Parks Announce \$4.6 million Appeal for Help - Record heat, drought, wildfires spark call for park visits, donations

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department hosted news conferences at different locations across the state earlier this month, with an unusual appeal the public to visit state parks and make donations to help offset a revenue loss caused by heat, drought, wildfires and a resulting drop in park visitor revenue.

Visitor fees fund about half the \$69 million operating budget for the state park system, subject to legislative appropriations. For many years, there's been a steady upward trend, with more people visiting parks generating more revenue to operate them--until this year.

Through the summer, traditionally a busy time for parks, many Texans stayed home because of record drought and heat. Shriveling lakes and rivers disrupted swimming, fishing and boating, and burn bans prevented campfires. Also, three popular state parks--Bastrop, Davis Mountains and Possum Kingdom--suffered major wildfire damage and produced no revenue for weeks, though all are now back open to varying degrees. As a result, in August state park system revenue declined 25 percent compared to the same month last year. So far this fall revenue is down 11 percent--improving, but still not close to what park leaders say is needed.

The Texas State Parks operating budget is based on legislative appropriations which includes the revenue generated by user fees. This year, an additional \$3 million income was anticipated, but the current pace of park revenue will not result in meeting this goal.

Also included in this year's budget is projected donation income from a new vehicle registration option that allows people to make a donation of \$5 or more when they renew their license plates, estimated to raise at least \$1.6 million per year. Starting Jan. 1 drivers can donate \$5 or more when renewing their registration by mail, at the county tax office or online in counties offering online payment.

The result, according to TPW Executive Director Carter Smith is that “the state park system 2012 budget was set anticipating that increased revenue from visitation and the donations from vehicle registration would raise a total of \$4.6 million, but the money is not there because park visitation and revenue are down markedly due to drought and wildfires, and the vehicle registration donation program is just getting underway for renewals due in January.”

According to Andrew Sansom, a member of the State Park Advisory Committee, state law authorizes as much as 94% of the revenue generated by sales taxes on sporting goods be distributed to TPW for state and local parks. However, the legislature continues to appropriate far below that amount, diverting the remainder to other purposes. Legislative appropriations to the department for the 2012-13 budget years are only \$82 million of the \$236 million available for this purpose, making the loss of visitor revenue especially critical.

P&W Historic Sites and Structures Program Launches *Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy Parks Initiative*

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) holds a special place in the history of state parks, in the history of conservation, and in the history of this nation. This year the Historic Sites and Structures Program, State Parks division, advances an initiative to celebrate that history.

Established during the Great Depression as one of FDR’s New Deal programs, the CCC employed over 3 million men nationwide and approximately 50 thousand in Texas between the years 1933-1942. They worked in soil conservation, reforestation, and park construction. The Texas state park system exists largely because of the CCC, and today Texas Parks and Wildlife stewards 29 CCC-built parks.

State parks constructed by the CCC stand in every region of this state. Disparate as they may be geographically, these parks share not only their history but also a common design aesthetic that makes them easily identifiable as CCC parks. They were constructed by hand and with local materials, factors that make them distinctive but also demand special requirements for proper maintenance. The cost of their upkeep, much less restoration, is costly, particularly in these lean economic times.

In conjunction with the State Parks Director and Deputy Director, this year the Historic Sites and Structures Program launches the CCC Legacy Parks Initiative. While the Historic Sites and Structures Program has for many years researched the CCC, this Initiative propels our efforts to promote CCC parks as historically significant, and to raise much needed funding - through grants, donations, and public-private partnerships - for their interpretation and restoration needs. We welcome this opportunity to honor and support the CCC’s legacy to the state of Texas.

You can read more about the CCC in our website, www.texascccparcs.org, *The Look of Nature: Designing Texas State Parks During the Great Depression*,

If you would like to learn more about the CCC Legacy Parks Initiative, or to find out how you can help, please Contact Angela Reed, CCC Initiative Coordinator, 512-389-8818 or angela.reed@tpwd.state.tx.us.

Goliad State Park and Amigos of Goliad SP host *First Day Hike*

“**Resolve**” to have more outdoor fun this year! On January 1, 2012 Goliad State Park in partnership with the Amigos of Goliad State Park will kick off the year to better health by hosting a First Day Hike. The First Day Hike is a nationwide event to raise awareness for our park system and healthy living.

“This is a time of year in which everyone is making resolutions. Why not spend more time outdoors?” encourages Park Ranger, Tammy Zellner. “State Parks are one place where you can hike, bike, fish, kayak, run, bird watch, and explore.”

This initiative encourages people to discover the outdoors and the many health benefits with being active. Goliad State Park will be offering a family-friendly, guided nature hike from 1:00-3:00 PM on Sunday, January 1, 2012. The hike will begin at the park headquarters building and continue along the San Antonio River trail. Along the way the Amigos of Goliad State Park will provide refreshments.

“Be sure to dress in layers, wear sturdy, comfortable shoes, and bring drinking water. The hike will be approximately two miles at a modest pace” Zellner advises.

For more information about Goliad State Park, please call 361-645-3405. Goliad State Park is located 1/2 mile south of Goliad on Highway 183. Entry fees are \$3.00 per adult, with children 12 and under free.

Washington on the Brazos SHS Presents *Hunting in the Republic of Texas*

Visit the Washington on the Brazos State Historical Site Jan. 21 for a special presentation on hunting in the Republic of Texas. Relive the excitement of the frontier as interpreters in period costume tell of hunting adventures and explain the vital role hunting played in settling the west. Come examine the many tools of the Hunter's trade or feel the pelts and hides of some of the animals that were prized in the 19th century. You may be surprised by how similar modern hunting is to the practices of the past. Presentations will be given at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. For more information visit the state historical site's site at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/washington_on_the_brazos/

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. If you have news or an event you would like to include, send it to leevans@texas.net.

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

www.Texansstateparks.org

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e-mailed

1. /TfSP - Caprock Partners Foundation;
2. T/fSP - Climbers;
3. TfSP - Friends, Galveston SP, Inc.;
4. TfSP - Pks Partners;
5. TfSP Friends;
6. TfSP Texas Volkssport Association Kittinger;
7. TfSP-Central Texas Climbing Committee; XXX
8. Board of Directors;
9. TfSP Members;
10. TfSP Members, P&W;
11. TfSP-Friends of Bright Leaf;
12. TfSP-Friends of Garner [13]

Rejected addresses

chspfriends@aol.com:
bla-sp@moment.net: bean1219@aol.com:
'Alex Fuller' <rockart01@aol.com>:
bethtaylor@broadwaves.net:
gcnha@stic.net:

TfSP-Central Texas Climbing Committee; sent twice



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, membership categories provide a way for you to become involved. For information and a membership application, see www.texasstateparks.org or e-mail leevans@texas.net.

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

Organizations

Business

___\$25 Regular

___\$50 Bronze

___\$100 Bronze

___\$50 Family

___\$100 Silver

___\$500 Silver

___\$100 Supporting

___\$250 Gold

___\$1,000 Gold

___\$1,000 Benefactor

___\$1,000 Platinum

___\$5,000 Platinum

___\$5,000 Life

___\$25 Youth Groups under age 18

\$ _____ **Additional Donation**

\$ _____ **Total Amount Enclosed**

Please note: New member _____

Membership Renewal _____

Name _____ **Address** _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____ **Phone (H)** _____ **(Bs)** _____

Fax _____ **E-mail** _____

Do you wish to receive TfSP E-news? _____ **Yes** _____ **No**

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, PO 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.