

**Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
Internship Program  
Welcome Packet**



Greetings,

I would like to welcome you to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and congratulate you on being selected to intern with our organization. We welcome you with open arms and are excited to see your personal growth while interning with TPWD. As our philosophy emphasizes, we wish to attract and retain the best, brightest, and most talented workforce to successfully execute our mission. We see this potential within you and cannot wait to see you learn and develop your skills throughout your time with us.

The mission of TPWD guides everything we do. It states, to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. I hope this mission truly guides your experience this summer and you are able to see how you play an integral part in fulfilling this mission each day. We see you as our ambassadors to ensure the intergenerational equity of our natural areas here in the great state of Texas.

Your Human Resources contact will be me, Nicolette Ledbury, the Internship Coordinator located at headquarters in Austin, TX. If you have any questions that are not answered in the attached intern handbook (and are outside the scope of your direct supervisor) please feel free to contact me via telephone at 512.650.6874, or via email at [nicolette.ledbury@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:nicolette.ledbury@tpwd.texas.gov). I am here to help you have the best experience possible. Please don't be a stranger! We hope that you are able to gain valuable experience related to your field of study which brings together your individual passion with our TPWD goal to conserve our natural areas for generations to come.

Have a wonderful summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicolette Ledbury".

Nicolette Ledbury  
Internship Coordinator  
Texas Parks and Wildlife  
4200 Smith School Rd  
Austin, TX 78702  
[Nicolette.ledbury@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:Nicolette.ledbury@tpwd.texas.gov)  
W:512.389.4402 | C:512.650.6874

## **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Internship Handbook**

### **Mission**

To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

### **Philosophy**

In fulfilling our mission, we will: Be a recognized national leader in implementing effective natural resource conservation and outdoor recreational programs; Serve the state of Texas, its citizens, and our employees with the highest standards of service, professionalism, fairness, courtesy, and respect; Rely on the best available science to guide our conservation decisions; Responsibly manage agency finances and appropriations to ensure the most efficient and effective use of taxpayer and user fee resources; Attract and retain the best, brightest, and most talented workforce to successfully execute our mission.

### **Diversity**

At Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, we see diversity as valuing differences that can be seen and having an appreciation for various backgrounds, perspectives, experiences, and cultures. Just as biological diversity gives strength and stability to the natural ecosystem, engaging a diversity of people adds significance and sustainability to our agency and makes us relevant to the people and communities we serve. When we draw on the wisdom of a workforce that reflects and embraces the population we serve, we are better able to understand and meet the needs of our customers-- the citizens of Texas.

At TPWD, we see our interns as an integral investment in the future of our organization. The Texas Parks and Wildlife internship program is focused on building a workforce that celebrates diversity and invests in our future leaders. Our aim is to promote a healthy and dynamic team that will fulfill our mission throughout the state of Texas.

### **Sustainability**

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is a conservation agency, therefore resource conservation holds significant importance in all that we do-- from our agency mission to our Land and Water Resource Conservation and Recreation Plan. TPWD leaders recognize that environmental sustainability has an impact on both the fiscal budget as well as the public's perception of our agency. As a conservation agency, we must be frontrunners in the area of sustainability by encouraging our visitors and constituents to follow our lead in their own homes and in their day to

day lives. Taking sustainable measures today will ensure a livable future for all living things, both human and nonhuman, which we are responsible for here in Texas; and we see our interns as our ambassadors for a more sustainable TPWD.

*Sustainability Program Mission:*

To manage and conserve the resources of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department through recycling and waste reduction efforts, energy efficiency investments, and water conservation practices in order to protect and preserve natural resources and to set an example as a resource agency.

## **Professionalism and Attire**

Your dress code is dependent upon the daily activities and location required for your internship. You are expected to present a neat, professional appearance, and to dress appropriately for your position. Uniformed employees should wear the appropriate uniform and conform to grooming standards specified by each division. Unapproved items of clothing or accessories should not be worn with TPWD official uniforms. Your supervisor may direct certain grooming standards, as appropriate for the duties required for your position.

We expect our employees to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner when engaging with fellow interns, employees, supervisors, and members of the general public. Interns must represent themselves appropriately while both on and off duty (i.e. identify yourself as a Law Enforcement intern, not as a TPWD Game Warden).

Some information you will obtain comes from regulated entities, contractors/partners, and members of the general public which is considered confidential. As a general rule, do not share this information during or after your internship with TPWD.

Division Directors, in consultation with Human Resources, have the final authority to interpret the provisions of this section.

## **Time and Attendance**

At TPWD, like all departmental employees, are expected to make appropriate use of leave privileges. Inappropriate use of leave, including tardiness and unexcused absences, is prohibited. Interns should speak with their supervisors about advanced time off requests, and should notify appropriate staff of emergencies/medical with reasonable notice. Employees are allotted a 30-60 minute unpaid lunch break, and two 15 minute paid breaks per eight hour work day. Observe the time limit set for meal and break periods, as well as scheduled work hours, including immediate notification to the supervisor of any unexpected absence from the job. Normal business hours at headquarters in Austin, as well as some field offices, are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Normal business hours are commonly different for field interns, based on business needs determined by division employer and the field supervisory staff. Annual, holiday, and sick leave are earned in accordance with TPWD Leave Practices Policy HR 03-14 or TPWD Standards of Performance and Conduct Policy number HR-03-10.

## **Payroll**

For interns paid by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, timesheets are due to payroll by the end of the second working day each month. All hourly employees (including interns) are paid no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month following the payroll period. Interns are eligible for sick leave and annual leave. At this time, direct deposit is not available for hourly employees. Pay for interns is dependent upon individual class standing, which is between \$12.00 - \$13.50 per hour. Interns who are paid through external entities should connect with their official employer for payroll details.

## **Communications and Social Media**

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is active on social media including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Snapchat. In addition to our main accounts, we have over 150 niche accounts for state parks, game wardens, fishing districts, and wildlife districts. You can find links to our online accounts at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/socialmedia/>. We are excited you are here and encourage you to share your internship experiences on social media by tagging our main accounts, which can be found here: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/socialmedia/>.

### *Social Media Guidelines*

Use of personal social media accounts during working hours is at the discretion of your supervisor and should not impede the conduct of state business.

Remember that you are representing the agency. Please no obscene, racist, or otherwise objectionable content on posts related to your internship. Any misconduct on personal social media accounts may be addressed by TPWD management to the same extent as other types of misconduct by employees.

If your account bio identifies you as working for TPWD, please put a disclaimer that your opinions are your own and do not represent the views of any organization.

Our Social Media Coordinator at TPWD is Whitney Bishop, and is able to answer any questions you may have regarding social media at [whitney.bishop@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:whitney.bishop@tpwd.texas.gov). For more information, please see TPWD Social Media Usage Policy number CO-09-01.

## **Alcohol and Drug Policy**

Student interns are expected to follow the general Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Alcohol and Drug Policy, listed below:

- The use, possession, sale, manufacture, or distribution of a controlled substance on Department owned or controlled property or any other place within the scope of Department activities is prohibited. The abuse of prescription drugs and/or their use in ways adversely affecting safe performance of duties is also prohibited. Abuse of inhalants is similarly prohibited.
- Employees will not use or possess alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs on duty time, when in Department uniform, during meal breaks, or on any state owned or controlled property

including in-state vehicles. Reporting to duty under the influence of alcohol or drugs is also considered a violation of this policy.

- Employees are required to notify their supervisor within five days of any drug, alcohol, or inhalant related conviction occurring during the course of employment or on Department owned or controlled property.
- Employees who are required to drive in the course of their employment are required to notify their supervisor of any arrest or charge of DWI/DUID. They are also required to inform the supervisor of the final disposition of the charge. Divisions are responsible for notifying the Department Federal Aid Coordinator and their federal aid contact in the appropriate agency within 10 days of receipt of the notification in the preceding provision.
- The operation of state vehicles of any type while under the influence or in possession of alcohol, drugs or other intoxicants is prohibited.
- Employees who reside in state housing are exempt from the prohibition regarding alcohol provided they are clearly off duty and in the immediate confines of their home and yard. This exception is with the explicit understanding that employees will not be in the immediate view of the public if still in uniform.

For more information, please see TPWD Noncommercial Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy number HR-09-01.

## **Smoking and Tobacco Use**

Student interns are expected to follow the general Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Smoking and Tobacco Use Policy, listed below:

- Smoking is prohibited in all Department offices and other enclosed spaces. This specifically includes Department vehicles with the exception of individually assigned vehicles. With individually assigned vehicles, smoking is only permitted when there are no non-smoking passengers.
- In cases involving tobacco use by employees required to work in close proximity, conflicts between tobacco users and non-users that cannot be amicably resolved by the employees must be resolved in favor of the non-tobacco user. This includes inconsiderate use of smokeless tobacco products.

For more information, please see TPWD Smoking at Facilities Policy number OP-12-01.

## **Safety**

Recognize your role in keeping yourself and others safe while working at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. It is your responsibility to review and adhere to our safety practices below:

### *Know your Limit:*

Properly and safely lift, hold, and carry whatever you are working with or will be working with, utilizing equipment to assist when available. Ask for a demonstration of proper procedures if you are unsure of best practices. Follow manufacturer's instructions on labels, when applicable. Inform your supervisor of any medical conditions which could impact your health while performing your duties for TPWD. Texas conditions (especially in the summer months) can become

dangerous quickly. Please equip yourself with extra water, snacks, sunscreen, and a hat when working outdoors.

### *Respect your Gear:*

Know the proper tool or vehicle to best complete the job you are performing. If you are unsure, ask for a demonstration and clear directions before beginning the task at hand. If at any time the conditions become unsafe—STOP the task immediately and inform your supervisor. Properly clean and maintain your vehicle and tools regularly. Ensure that all vehicles/tools have been returned to the correct place, secured, and not within range of anything hazardous or dangerous.

### *Keep an Eye on Safety*

When transitioning between worksite locations, plan ahead and know your route/destination. Inform others of the best way to reach you if you are out of contact outside of the predesignated amount of time. Know how to use appropriate communication devices, including radios, and do not rely solely on the use of cell phones. Do not use cell phones or other handheld equipment while driving a vehicle. Ensure you have the correct personal protective equipment such as: headgear, safety glasses, hearing protection, chaps, snake boots, life vests, and any other body gear needed to complete your task safely. Locate the closest automated external defibrillator (AED) and first aid kit near your worksite and become informed on what to do if you or others are injured. Become familiar with the terrain and potential hazards where you will be working and/or living.

### *Are you Good to Go?*

Inspect the fluids, tire pressure, lights, brakes and horn on your vehicle prior to each departure. Inspect your gear to ensure blades are sheathed and equipment is secured. Familiarize yourself with the specific environment of where you will be working. Consult others who know the terrain and have them explain the potential hazards, animals, reptiles, vegetation, weather, etc. Ensure you have properly functioning communication equipment with adequate battery charge/reception. If you will be in a remote location, consider traveling and working with another person.

For more information, please see TPWD Safety and Risk Management Policy number OP-98-04.

## **Vehicle Use**

As an intern at TPWD, you may or may not be required to drive a state-owned vehicle. Vehicle use will be determined by your supervisor, dependent on division needs and duties required. All TPWD employees are required to take the Distracted Driving online class prior to driving. While using a government vehicle, you are prohibited from using the vehicle for personal or recreational use. If you receive a citation while on official travel status, you will be held responsible and must report the incident immediately to your supervisor. It is allowable to use a state-owned vehicle for meals while on travel status. We expect that you use reasonable judgement on an individual basis, taking into account the facts of the situation involved. Using a TPWD vehicle to travel to bars, or other establishments with the primary purpose of entertainment, is strictly prohibited. Employees are assigned vehicles individually and must be particularly careful not to use the vehicle for personal reasons. For more information, please see TPWD Driver Safety Policy number OP-15-01.