

# Aquatic Education History

1986 Ilo Hiller appointed as Project (Aquatic) WILD Coordinator.

1987 TPWD hosted an Aquatic Resource Education Conference, San Antonio, TX.

1988 Steve Hall hired as the new TPWD Education Director.

1991 **Federal Aid Aquatic Education Project Grant originated.**

Purchased and used "*Sport Fishing and Aquatic Resources Handbook.*"

Partnered with American Fishing and Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA), Sharon Rushton, later called American Sportfishing Association (1995) and its educational arm, the Future Fisherman Foundation (FFF).

1992 Partnered with *Hooked on Fishing – Not on Drugs* (HOFNOD), a program of AFTMA and, later, the FFF. Began offering HOFNOD statewide training workshops at an average of 170 participants each) in three locations in Texas (Conroe, Corpus Christi, Austin) provided through a partnership/grant with AFTMA (D. J. Case, contractor).

Project WILD Coordinator, Kathryn Hampton joined the Education and Outreach team.

1993 Hall attended a HOFNOD Event in East Texas, Lake Sam Rayburn, with Paul Hinton, for over 1000 youth. Photo: Holt Taylor (L) and Jerry Grote (R), celebrities at the event, formed HOFNOD statewide committee along with Linda Haile, NE ISD San Antonio (center).

Texas Agricultural Extension Service Partnership/Subgrant – "Aquatic Education Initiative" - Don Steinbach (Texas A&M).



*HOFNOD attendees.*

2nd TPWD Texas Wildlife Expo (Austin) – Added Fishing/ Aquatic Education.

1<sup>st</sup> Texas Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop – Brownwood – including "Basic Fishing" ('Sugar' Ferris) and Fly Fishing (Sally Ann Brown).

1994 TPWD launches Angler Education alongside *Hooked on Fishing – Not on Drugs*.

Parrie Haynes Youth Ranch (near Killeen) Contract and Summer Camp Program began including fishing activities.

*Kidfish* Partnership launched – Jody Jackson. TPWD Corpus Christi State University Adopt-a-Wetland Partnership – Nivra Kelly.

- 1995 *Sport Fish Identification Guide* developed TPWD artwork, *Outdoor Empire Publishing*.  
Nancy Herron, Public Information Coordinator and Karl Cloninger, Outdoor Education /Conservation Ed Coordinator joined the Education and Outreach team.
- 1996 Aquatic Resource Education Association (AREA) national conference held in Corpus Christi.  
HOFNOD “Drug Prevention Day” held in Corpus Christi for 142 High School students.  
TPWD and AFTMA establish “Pathways to Fishing” Partnership.  
Inner City Fishing Institute Partnership “You Should be Fishing” video – Mark Cole.  
“Something’s Fishy” 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Curriculum developed under AEI Partnership – Billy Higginbotham  
New Adopt-A-Wetland Coordinator TAMU-CC – Ron Smith.
- 1997 4-H Sportfishing Program launched – Texas A&M Ag Extension Service project.  
Combined several programs including Aquatic Education and Project WILD into “Education Services” and coordinator Nancy Herron was appointed as lead.  
Incentive program began for both Angler Education and Aquatic WILD.  
Hall appointed to the HOFNOD National Advisory Group.  
New Coastal Education Coordinator position created – Christina Conner.  
New Angler Education Coordinator position created – Chris Lena Coordinator.  
Aquatic Education Specialist hired by Texas Ag Extension Service – Tamara Trail.
- 1998 Angler Education Newsletter “*Tail Walking Times*” – (3 issues)  
Tackle Loaner Program kicked off with six (6) loaner sites established.  
HOFNOD “Drug Prevention” Day – 1,360 high/middle school students in Corpus Christi.  
Live webcasts launched – featured life in a wetland at Brazos Bend State Park – Herron produced and directed this and future webcasts. Aquatic education staff helped create segments and served as “on air” talent.
- 1999 Four new “Electronic Field Trips” (Live webcasts) were launched including two with aquatic themes: 1) “Treasures of the Gulf Coast” and “Spaceship Earth – The Water Planet.”  
Partnership with POINT (now Turning POINT) – Paraplegics on Independent Nature Trips.  
Angler Education purchases a “Virtual Fishing” Simulator for fishing shows/outreach.  
New Project WILD Coordinator hired – Charles ‘Chuck’ Kowaleski.

**2000** AE Coordinator, Chris Lena, continued to coordinate statewide angler education student and instructor training efforts. Lena developed new materials and procedures for a new, revamped, angler education program certifying students as “Junior and/or Master Anglers.”

A total of 22,662 participants were reached through a “Rivers to Ocean” web cast including pre-, post- and a 3-hour live online interactive event and live dive in the Gulf of Mexico. Broadcast live from NASA’s Johnson Space Center and an oil platform 100 miles out in the Gulf and a diver 75 feet down. Diver photographed by National Geographic videographer.

Steve Campbell moved from Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) to Aquatic Education for the Dallas/Ft. Worth area to facilitate aquatic education activities in the North Texas region.

Christina Conner continued marine education efforts from her office in Corpus Christi. She helped spearhead an “Outdoor Kids” state outreach effort and a local summer camp for underserved youth in Corpus Christi.

New contractor for Adopt-A-Wetland – Jay Tarkington, Coordinator TAMU-CC

**2001** Ann Miller was hired as the Aquatic Education Coordinator. Miller revamped the Junior Angler activity guide and instructor manual and training, to include hands-on Texas specific activities and materials. She expanded the train-the-trainer program that grew to the largest volunteer-led program in the nation.



Broadcast live webcast “Water, Wildlife and You” to schools.

Reel Kids, a new program, was launched in March 2001 as an outreach tool to introduce angler education when an entire Junior Angler program was not appropriate. Reel Kids included one or two hands-on Junior Angler activities and a conservation message.

A *Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs* (HOFNOD) training event was conducted for 2,000 students at a youth conference and a HOFNOD day at Flower Bluff high school, both in Corpus Christi. A HOFNOD training workshop was also conducted at F.M. Black Middle School in Houston.

**2002** Broadcast live webcast “Take Me to the River” featuring the Colorado and San Marcos Rivers, live from Aquarena Springs in San Marcos.

Cappy (Manly) Smith joined Education and Outreach as the Project WILD /Aquatic WILD Coordinator.

Brenda Justice joined the Angler Education team (Houston office).

**2003** **First Area Chief training meeting was held in Austin.**

The first Fly Fishing Instructor workshop was held in the Houston area.

Due to state budget cuts, Aquatic Education coastal education staff were re-assigned to the Coastal Fisheries division.

Broadcast “From Sea to Shining Sea” live from Sea Center Texas live in Lake Jackson Texas and the Alaska Sea Life Center in Seward, Alaska.

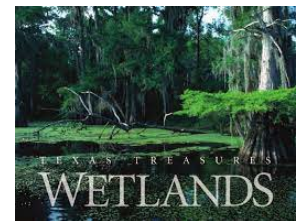
2004 Herron and Miller led several meetings of department staff to introduce the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation's (RBFF) *Best Practices in Boating, Fishing and Aquatic Stewardship Education* principles with the goal of developing a new Aquatic Education Strategic Plan.

Steve Campbell worked with volunteers from the Dallas Fly Fishers Club to provide the first fly fishing instruction for Boy Scouts at the Boy Scout University.

Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, Athens, TX hosted "Wetland Adventure" for schools and Fly Fish Texas for the public. Aquatic Ed staff assisted.

2005 Herron, Miller, Justice, and a group of TPWD staff members from every TPWD division worked together to lay the foundation for our *Take Me Fishing Houston!* pilot project. Golbow Elementary (Katy ISD) held a Fifth Grade Fishing and Aquatic Day, May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Staff created 25 Wetland Education Trunks and the booklet, *Texas Treasure: Wetlands*, along with wetland posters and fact sheet sets which were distributed at several conferences.



Steve Campbell revamped and coordinated the existing TPWD Tackle Loaner Program, reviewed, made recommendations, and expanded the program to include 15 state parks, and he became co-editor of the *Reel Lines* newsletter.

Karen Marks joined the Education and Outreach team.

2006 *Fishing in State Parks* initiative - seven contract workers hired to provide fishing events at each of the seven parks during the months of March through August of 2006, 41 events were held.

*Take Me Fishing Houston!* pilot project partnered six community groups and four schools to participate in the pilot. Participation included staff training in angler education, recruitment of and events for families and youth with fishing and aquatic stewardship activities. Schools held 13 events and 12 classes, with 1,654 youth and 197 adults participating.



*Hutsell Elementary staff at the first Take Me Fishing Houston event.*

Miller worked with Texas BASS Federation Nation (TBFN) volunteers to develop an incentive program to encourage TBFN club members to participate more fully in youth fishing education activities throughout the state.

Staff supported the *Groundwater to Gulf Institute*, a multi-partner group held a 2-day event for 40 teachers from across the state. Through field trips, field and lab investigations, lectures, and hands-on activities, teachers got a comprehensive view of water as it moves from its source to the gulf.

Redesigned *Fish Texas* booklets

Began using volunteer hours used as an in-kind match for the federal aid grant.

2007 *Fishing in State Parks* initiative continued, 44 events were held at 10 state parks.

Herron provided assistance to the producer of the department's PBS water documentary and is including all the documentaries and the Save Water for Wildlife in a package of water education materials for distribution this year.

A trailer was purchased for a mobile "Take Me Fishing" exhibit with angler education displays and interactive games to help recruit new anglers.

*The Texoma Tie-In* (fly tying activities) and *Texoma on the Fly* (fly fishing activities) were held at Eisenhower State Park.

Kevin Cunningham joined the Angler Education team (Houston), after Brenda Justice moved to State Parks.

2008 The *Take Me Fishing Interpretive Trailer* was completed and traveled to three events.

Staff worked with a videographer to produce a series of ten "How to Fish" segments that ran on the Texas Parks and Wildlife PBS program and were posted on the web site.



Outreach events with significant staff participation included the TPWD EXPO, Texas Toyota Bass Classic, Mayfest at Grand Prairie Nature Center, and Fly Fish Texas at TFFC.

Kiki Corry joined the Education & Outreach team as the Project WILD/Aquatic WILD Coordinator.

2009 Staff hosted the Aquatic Resource Education Association (AREA) national conference in October in Corpus Christi.

A major partnership was forged between the Houston ISD PE program and the Jr. Anglers and Hunters of America (JrAHA), a 510 (c3) non-profit organization. Along with certified instructors from JrAHA, we trained teachers in 9 high schools in our AE program and supported them with equipment and other learning materials as they taught over 2,025 students at the Basic Fishing level and 553 at the Advanced Angler level. Over 1,300 students participated in over 20 fishing field trips.

*Texas Healthy Habitats*, coordinated by Herron, initiative was launched by TPWD to engage students in habitat restoration or education service-learning projects related to the State Wildlife Action Plan. 71 youth and teachers traveled to TPWD headquarters for training in Service-Learning and consultations with Inland Fisheries, Coastal Fisheries and Wildlife biologists about their proposed projects.

Herron created the *Texas the State of Water Educational Resources* cd rom that included overviews of Texas water issues, presentations, partner resources, image library and children's publications.

2010 Worked with our marketing department to promote our state park fishing initiative, creating a new name and logo for the program called, *Go Fish! Learn-to-Fish in Texas State Parks*. Twelve contractors provided 59 events at 13 state parks.



An MOA was established with the Dallas Ecological Foundation (now known as Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation), to expand and deliver our Angler Education program as well as other outdoor skills programs to schools across the state.

The Groundwater to the Gulf Teacher Institute was expanded to include a two-day workshop on the coast, for an in-depth learning experience about Matagorda Bay and the Gulf of Mexico that included hands-on exploration of the river, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, bay, and shoreline. The Groundwater to the Gulf Collaboration received the *Keep Austin Beautiful Education Award*.

Three sets of six new table-top interpretive activity exhibit panels were created for the Take Me Fishing Trailer and regional staff to use at events.

Angler Education Facebook page was launched.

2011 Ann Miller retired, and Karen Marks was promoted as program manager.

Nancy Herron was promoted to Outreach and Education Director.

Cappy Smith was brought on as an aquatic resource education coordinator. She also stepped in to assist Healthy Habitats schools with technical assistance and identifying partners for their projects.

Texas The State of Water documentary and supporting materials debuted.

Freshwater and Saltwater Habitat mats were created.

Keith Miller's "Catch a Fish a Day" personal quest began on April 1, 2011 with the goal of connecting more young people to the outdoors and developing future stewards of the environment.

Junior Anglers and Hunters of America (JrAHA – Ed Gerhardt) conducted four summer "Fishing Camps." Day one of the 3-day program began with classroom time, day two was a freshwater field trip, and day three was a saltwater field trip.

2012 In September 2012, the agency adopted the use of Samaritan, a volunteer management software system where volunteers can sign-up for opportunities and report online.

The "State of Water Video Screening Toolkit" was created to encourage community partners to show TPWD's award-winning "Texas the State of Water" documentary video series in public venues (Cappy Smith).

Steve Campbell, DFW Training Specialist passed away. Steve created "The Art of Squiggles." The Aquatic Resources Education Association (AREA) renamed their Outstanding Educator national award in his honor.

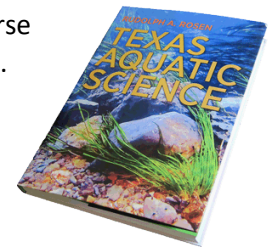
Caleb Harris (Austin) and Greg Akins (Houston) joined the Angler Education team to fill vacancies.



Steve Campbell  
1956-2012

2013 Go Fish! Learn to Fish contractors conducted 29 events at eight state parks.

In August, the *Texas Aquatic Science* electronic student guide, online videos and the comprehensive 729-page supplemental teacher guide debuted. The course was created by a collaboration of TPWD staff, contractors and Headwaters to Ocean, a foundation-funded cooperative project between Texas State University's Meadows Center for Water and the Environment and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Harte Research Institute. Based on a Missouri course and adapted for Texas and coastal systems. Herron was project coordinator. The Meadows Center and Texas A&M Press later produced a hardback student textbook of the course.



Keira Quam (Dallas/Fort Worth) joined the Angler Education team.

2014 A pilot program coordinated by RBFF and Radio Disney to engage Hispanic audiences in Texas and Florida was launched. Staff participated in two Houston and four Dallas events.

The Digital Outdoor Annual App was launched.

Johnnie Smith was hired as the Conservation Education Coordinator.

2015 The *Reel Lines* newsletter was converted to an electronic publication.

The Common Texas Sunfish ID card debuted.

TPWD and USFWS staff conducted outdoor activities for 100 African American male teens, ages 13-18, who attended the annual Steve Harvey Mentoring Program for Young Men summer camp near Dallas, TX.

An interactive *Texas Watershed Viewer* debuted online that allows users to identify local watersheds, sub watersheds, river basins, and river sub basins throughout the state.

Texas Senator Kirk Watson spoke to the teachers at the Groundwater to the Gulf Teacher Institute about the importance of science in setting policy, the key role teachers play, the importance of finding a balance between environmental protection and development, and the challenges of sustainable water planning.

2016 In April, a kick-off event for the *Vamos a Pescar* Education Fund was held at the George H. W. Bush Library in College Station with former President George H.W. Bush in attendance. The education fund named in honor of President Bush, an avid angler, was launched by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF).

Pass-thru grants were issued to partners in Texas and Florida to engage Hispanic families in fishing and boating. After brief presentations, families involved in the pilot project went fishing in the presidential pond. Even the former President caught a fish!

Staff supported the first annual Coastal Brigades summer camp hosted by Coastal Fisheries Div.

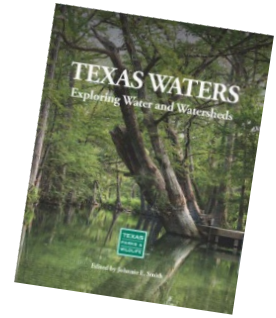
Hutsell Elementary located near Houston, TX celebrated their 10th anniversary of their student and family fishing event that is held in the



President Bush and Johnny Morris of Bass Pro Shops watch a scout catch a fish

spring after the students participate in angler education throughout the school year. Student alumni and their families also joined in the fun.

Texas Waters: Exploring water and watersheds book was published. Written for adult audiences, this was modeled after the successful Texas Aquatic Science student course (Johnnie Smith editor). Smith created a certification training course for Texas Master Naturalists.



Karen Marks served as Aquatic Resources Education Association (AREA) President, 2016-2018.

**2017** A second round of Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) pass-thru grants were issued and 25 Vamos a Pescar events were held.

The Texas Waters Specialist for citizens was launched, upon designation they perform volunteer service in their community related to water education and issues; 106 Texas Waters Specialists were designated.

Hurricane Harvey closed our Houston field staff office.

Area Chiefs and staff began the Instructor Guide updates.

Adam Comer joined the Angler Education team (Austin).

Nancy Herron, Outreach and Education Director retired. Johnnie Smith was appointed the new Outreach and Education Director.



*Area Chiefs review and make edits to the training guide.*

**2018** A simple dichotomous key for fish ID (adapted from Idaho's aquatic education program) was created to use with the TPWD Fish ID cards.

Melissa Alderson-Felty was hired as the Conservation Education Manager, overseeing Project WILD and Aquatic Resource Education programs.

**2019** NEW Instagram account, *#GoFishTexas* was launched.

Houston field staff moved into new warehouse/office space (post Hurricane Harvey).

Glenn Miller Conservation Camp/Ag Science camp was launched in Houston to introduce underserved Middle School and High School students to outdoor recreation and careers in agriculture, science, and conservation.

Microfishing was introduced at the Area Chief meeting.

Heather England joined the Angler Education team.



*Jere Anderson tries out micro-fishing at TFFC.*



2020 In-person workshops and events were cancelled from March to August due to COVID-19.

Staff adjusted to new routines and lots of video meetings. Thanks to the innovative proposal from Fishing's Future, we piloted a small online Instructor workshop – and it was a great success! A Zoom account was purchased to host future online workshops and clinics.



The first combo Angler Ed Instructor workshop and Boy Scouts of America “Certified Angler Instructor” training was hosted in Texas at the Sid Richardson Scout Ranch.

Mentor program with TPW Foundation launched. Events were held at Powderhorn Ranch on the coast and at Spoke Hollow Ranch in Central Texas.

A total of 61 adults were certified as Texas Waters Specialists via online trainings.

2021 A total of 36 Angler Education Instructor workshops were held, including 12 online workshops - a total of 313 instructors were certified.

The annual Area Chief training meeting was held online in August 2021.

An Area Chief “Legacy” designation was created - 26 Area Chiefs earned the NEW Legacy honor! These members were certified as Area Chiefs 10+ years ago and are still actively teaching.

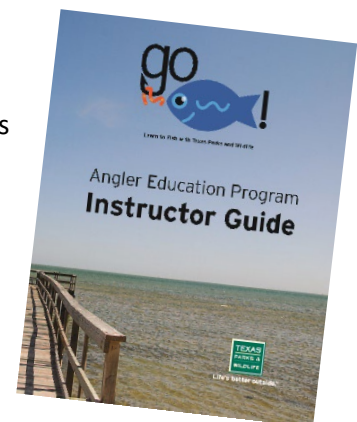


2022 The program celebrates its 30-year anniversary (from the date of the first federal aid report in 1992) and hosts the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Area Chief meeting.

The Angler Education Program Instructor Guide revision is printed (June).

The 15<sup>th</sup> annual Take Me Fishing Hutsell student and family event was held in Katy, TX.

R3 (Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation) Coordinator, Jason Mercer is hired.



# Angler Education Stats at a Glance

(stats prior to 2000 are not available due to changes in computer systems and record retention)

