

## **2021 Request for Applications**

### **Texas River Access and Conservation Areas Program**

Establishing Lease Agreements with Private Landowners to Expand Public Access to Fishing and Paddling on Texas Rivers

#### **SUMMARY INFORMATION**

**Application Due Date:** Interested landowners are encouraged to apply at any time. However, to receive preference for the 2021 funding cycle, landowners should apply by **September 30, 2020**.

**Available Funding:** Lease payments from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to cooperating landowners are anticipated to range from **\$500 – \$1,250 per month (\$6,000 – \$15,000 per year)**.

#### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Texas contains 40,194 miles of rivers and creeks that flow year-round. The state maintains public navigability laws that ensure the rights of paddlers and anglers to wade and float most Texas streams and rivers. However, private ownership of river banks limits the number of locations where the public can legally access those waters. To address limitations on public river access, TPWD launched the Texas River Access and Conservation Areas Program in 2012 with the explicit goal of utilizing private lands leases as a tool to increase river access for anglers and paddlers. Since 2012, 24 public river access leases have been established with cooperating landowners. The corresponding access areas enabled or enhanced paddling and river fishing on more than 211 miles of 10 different rivers across Texas.

For each river access area included in the program, TPWD cooperates with partnering landowners to assemble special conditions on public use (e.g., daily schedule, reservation requirements, limits on number of users or vehicles) and develop a resource conservation plan that guides recommended improvements to parking areas, trails, or river access features. Such improvements may be partially or fully funded by TPWD dependent on available funding. Lease payment rates are determined based upon evaluations conducted by TPWD that consider program priorities outlined below. Timeframes of individual leases are typically limited by available funding, with most leases established for two to three years and extended based on angler use and availability of additional funding. To review descriptions of the current river access areas supported through the program, please visit:

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/riverfishing>

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

TPWD requests that interested landowners complete the information included on the [Landowner Application Form](#) (enclosed).

Upon receiving an application and initial screening, TPWD will contact the landowner and schedule a site visit to evaluate how well the proposed access area addresses the following program priorities. These priorities also serve as the basis for determination of initial lease payment rates.

- River reach offers high-quality paddling and river fishing experiences River reach would otherwise have limited public river access
- River access area is strategically positioned to connect with other upstream or downstream river access areas
- River access area offers a natural setting with intact instream and riparian habitats; or, opportunity for stream habitat restoration or enhancement and/or can serve as a conservation demonstration area to the public
- River reach is located near an urban population center
- Presence and willingness of local partner organizations to help support maintenance of the access area, such as local fishing or paddling clubs, community organizations, school groups, or conservation non-profits
- Quality of layout, infrastructure, and amenities including gates, parking areas, trails, and ease of access
- Local services accessible to visitors, such as kayak shuttle and livery services or fishing guide services
- Length of river accessible for paddling and fishing

If an interested landowner and TPWD jointly agree to cooperate on establishment of a river access lease agreement, then TPWD will collaborate with the cooperating landowner to assemble a resource conservation plan to guide any recommended improvements to the area (e.g., improvements to parking areas, trails, kayak launch areas, or fish and wildlife habitat restoration). Examples of potential stewardship projects may include planting of native trees, shrubs, or grasses to stabilize erosional banks, or installation of informational kiosks or monofilament fishing line recycling bins. TPWD will assist the landowner in securing funding, technical expertise, or other resources needed to implement access area improvements identified in the resource conservation plan.

For 2021, TPWD expects to establish 15-20 new access agreements. New river access areas are tentatively expected to open in early spring 2021.

To submit an application, please email (preferred) or mail completed Landowner Application Form to John Botros at the below TPWD address. For more information about the Program, please contact:

John Botros  
River Access Coordinator  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
505 Staples Road, Building 1  
San Marcos, TX 78666  
(512) 754-6844 x208  
[John.Botros@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:John.Botros@tpwd.texas.gov)



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## Landowner Application Form

### Landowner Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last First M.I.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address Apartment/Unit #*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*City State ZIP Code*

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### River Access Property Information

Physical Location: \_\_\_\_\_

GPS coordinates (if available): Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: \_\_\_\_\_

Driving Directions (from nearest city or town):

### River Reach Description

River or Stream Name: \_\_\_\_\_

General Description of River Reach (including upstream and downstream boundary features, e.g., bridge crossings, dams, stream confluences, hydropower or seasonal flows):

Description of any upstream or downstream connection that the proposed river access area would have with existing or proposed TPWD Paddling Trails, other public river access areas, or adjacent publicly-owned lands such as wildlife management areas or state or local parks:

**River Access Area Features**

Ease of Access to River (bank height, existing or proposed access trails, approx. distance to river from parking area)(Provide pictures, if necessary):

Describe any improvements needed to make the river access area ready for public use (gates, restrooms, trash receptacles, other):

Is there any area to be used for parking?    YES    NO    If so, approx. how many vehicles? \_\_\_\_\_  
                     

**Other Information**

Fishing (types of fishing opportunity available at the proposed river access area)

BANK

WADE

KAYAK

Fish species that anglers typically target and general impressions of quality of fishery:

Description of any local services available in the area such as kayak rental, shuttle services or fishing guides: