



Customer Service Report  
for  
Texas Parks and Wildlife

June 1, 2002

Submitted to:  
Governor's Office of Budget, Planning, and Policy  
Legislative Budget Board



# CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT

## *A Report on Customer Service for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

### Customer Inventory

Texas Parks and Wildlife serves a wide array of customers. We consider the citizens of Texas our most important "customer" group—it is our mission to manage and conserve Texas' resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

Each of the strategies in the General Appropriations Act directs an effort to provide or enhance a facility, program, activity or service that benefits our customers directly and all Texans indirectly:

| Strategy | Description of Services   | Customers Served  |
|----------|---|---|
| 010101   | Public hunting lands, wildlife habitat acquisition, hatcheries for fish production, and fish stocking.                                  | Hunters, Anglers, Commercial Fishers  |
| 010201   | Operation of state parks, historic sites and wildlife management areas.   | State Park Visitors, Historic Site Visitors, Hunters, Anglers, Boaters, Non-consumptive Users |
| 010202   | Capital improvements, major repairs and cultural/natural resource management programs at TPWD sites. Acquisition of new priority sites. | State Park Visitors, Historic Site Visitors, Hunters, Anglers, Boaters, Non-consumptive Users |

| Strategy | Description of Services   | Customers Served  |
|----------|---|---|
| 020101   | Outreach programs which communicate TPWD's conservation messages.<br><br><i>Provide information about conservation and recreational opportunities</i> | Youth, Women, Minorities, Physically Challenged<br><br><i>Texas Parks &amp; Wildlife Magazine Readers, the General Public (TPWD News Releases/PBS Series/Passport to Texas radio series, promotional literature and brochures).</i> |
| 020102   | Grants and technical assistance to local governments.   | Local Governments and their Park Visitors, Boaters, Disadvantaged Populations   |
| 030101   | Law enforcement-protection of natural resources and human lives.  | Hunters, Anglers, Boaters, Private Landowners   |
| 030201   | Conservation of Texas' fish, wildlife and plant resources.  | Hunters, Anglers, Private Landowners, Boaters, State Park Visitors, Historic Site Visitors  |
| 040101   | Historically Underutilized Business Program.  | Minority Business Owners  |



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## FY 2001/2002 Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Two customer surveys were implemented in FY 2000/2001 and 2002. The following describes the information gathering methods, performance measures, survey results and findings.

### **Texas Parks and Wildlife for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Public Opinion and Attitude Surveys (FY 2000/2001)**

A major customer research project in FY 2000-2001 was contracted with Texas Tech University to better understand and work with TPWD constituents, stakeholders and the Texas public. The project is titled *Texas Parks and Wildlife for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Texas Tech University subcontracted with Responsive Management to conduct a series of focus groups and public opinion surveys.

The study objectives were to:

Better understand the attitudes of the general Texas public and constituent and stakeholder groups toward:

- Management of fish, wildlife, and state park and cultural resource management;
- Resource protection;
- TPWD program priorities and their willingness to pay and support those programs.

Better understand current participation rates in outdoor recreation.

Better understand customer and constituent group's unmet wants and needs.

Establish benchmarks of their attitudes to these issues, which will allow future periodic measurement of progress in meeting these needs.

## A. Information Gathering Methods

### Focus Groups:

A series of 12 focus groups was conducted of key constituents, customers and stakeholders in various locations around the state. The focus group participants were drawn from existing TPWD customer databases, from constituent groups and the general population of Texas. The following focus groups were conducted:

Key constituents and customers:

- Hunters
- Anglers (salt and freshwater)
- Boaters
- Day use state park visitors
- Overnight use state park visitors

Major stakeholders

- Rural landowners (agricultural)
- Rural landowners (ranchers)
- Outdoor recreationists (non- consumptive users, e. g. wildlife watchers, rock climbers, mountain bikers and other important recreational groups)

General Population

- Urban residents
- Suburban residents
- Hispanics
- African Americans



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## Public Opinion Surveys:

The second step of the study was a series of eight telephone surveys of the Texas general population and key constituent groups. The surveys helped to quantify the issues identified in the focus groups. The following population groups were surveyed:

- General population of Texas age 18 and older
- Hunters
- Anglers
- Boaters
- State park day users
- State park overnight users
- Outdoor recreationists
- Landowners

## **B. Performance Measures**

### **Outcome Measures**

Percent of surveyed customers, constituents and the general population expressing overall satisfaction and support for TPWD programs and services.

There is strong public support for the conservation of Texas' natural and cultural resources and the public wants to have the opportunity to participate in outdoor recreation activities. This is the foundation for the existence of TPWD, its mission and programs.

- 100% of the general public felt that it was either very important or somewhat important that Texas' water resources are safe and well protected;
- 98% felt that it was very important/somewhat important that people have the opportunity to visit state parks in TX;

- 97% felt that it was very/somewhat important to know that wildlife exists in TX;
- 97% felt that it is important that natural areas exist in TX;
- 96% felt that it was important that Texas' historic sites are protected and preserved.
- 94% felt it important that fish and wildlife populations be properly managed and conserved.

TPWD customers and the general population were asked how satisfied they are with TPWD as a governmental agency in Texas.

|                    | <u>Very Satisfied or<br/>Somewhat Satisfied</u> |
|--------------------|---|
| Saltwater Anglers  | 93%   |
| Hunters            | 93%   |
| Freshwater Anglers | 92%   |
| Boaters            | 89%   |
| General Population | 89%   |
| Landowners         | 87%   |

TPWD customers were asked how satisfied they were with fishing, hunting, boating and their visits to state parks and historic sites in the past two years.

| <u>TPWD Customer</u>          | <u>Very Satisfied or<br/>Somewhat Satisfied</u> |
|-------------------------------|---|
| State Park Day Visitors       | 98%   |
| State Park Overnight Visitors | 97%   |
| Historic Site Visitors        | 97%   |
| Boaters                       | 92%   |
| Hunting                       | 91%   |
| Saltwater Fishing             | 88%   |
| Freshwater Fishing            | 85%   |



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## Output Measures

### Number of Customers Surveyed

Over 7,600 constituents, stakeholders and TPWD customers responded to surveys as part of this public opinion study.

2,000 completed surveys of:

General population of Texas age 18 and older

800 completed surveys each from:

Hunters

Anglers

Boaters

State park day users

State park overnight users

Outdoor recreationists

Landowners

## Efficiency Measure

### Cost Per Customer Surveyed (completed surveys)

The total cost to subcontract the study was \$300,000. The public opinion survey totaled \$240,000, therefore, the cost per customer surveyed (completed) was approximately \$31.58.

### Timeframe

The focus groups were conducted in the spring of 2000.

The telephone surveys were conducted in the summer and fall of 2000.

## Methodology

Telephones were the preferred medium to conduct this survey. A central polling site allowed for rigorous control over the interviews and data collection. Interview staff were trained according to standards established by the Council of American Survey Research Organization. Monitoring of interviewers was randomly conducted to evaluate the performance of each interviewer. Interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm and on Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. A multiple-callback design was used to maintain the representativeness of the sample, avoid bias toward people easy-to-reach by telephone and provided an equal opportunity for all to participate. Subsequent calls were placed at different times of the day and different days of the week.

The general population survey was administered to randomly selected Texas residents from a sample purchased from Survey Sampling, Inc. The angler survey was administered to a randomly selected stratified sample of resident licensed Texas anglers who had been fishing in Texas during the past 2 years. The hunter survey was administered to randomly selected Texas hunters who had purchased a resident hunting license in Texas for the 1999/2000 hunting season. The boater survey was administered to randomly selected registered boaters who had been boating in Texas in the past 2 years. The landowner survey was administered to randomly selected landowners in Texas who owned 640 acres or more. The sample was obtained from county property tax records. The State Park overnight user survey was administered to a sample of persons making reservations to stay overnight at a Texas State Park. The State Park day user sample was randomly collected by park managers from May through June 2000 and the names and addresses were provided to the survey firm to conduct the telephone survey.



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## Limitations

The main limitation to this survey research was with the collection of the State Park day user sample. This sample was collected at state parks from May June only. To be fully representative of the day user population, the sample ideally should have been collected year round to capture all four seasons. Due to time and budgetary constraints this was not possible.

## Response Rates

The response rates for the customer groups surveyed ranged from 45% to 58%. Non-response bias tests were not performed. It is assumed that the samples are representative of the general population, however, bias might be present.

## Explanatory Measures

### Number of Customers Identified

The total number of customers was identified prior to the initiation of the research and samples were randomly drawn from the total population of customers. There are just under 1 million resident hunters in Texas; 1.5 million resident anglers; over 300,000 registered boaters; there are approximately 181,000 landowners who own ranches or farms in Texas; and over 20 million day and overnight visits are made to Texas State Parks.

### Number of Customer Groups Surveyed

8 TPWD customer groups were surveyed:

### Hunters

- Anglers
- Boaters
- Landowners
- State Park Overnight Visitors
- State Park Day Visitors
- General Population of Texas
- Outdoor Recreationists

## C. Customer Service Quality

The surveys identified quality of facilities, staff, services, and customer's interest in receiving additional information for each of the customer groups. Below are tables detailing the results on service quality for each of the surveyed customer groups.

### Customer ratings of Texas Parks and Wildlife's efforts to provide fishing, hunting, and boating opportunities.

|                                  | <u>% Excellent/Good</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Saltwater Fishing Opportunities  | 82%                     |
| Freshwater Fishing Opportunities | 78%                     |
| Boating Opportunities            | 76%                     |
| Hunting Opportunities            | 73%                     |



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## Would you agree or disagree that Game Wardens you came in contact with in Texas were professional and courteous?

| <u>Customer Group</u> | <u>% Strongly/Somewhat Agree</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| FW anglers            | 92%                              |
| SW anglers            | 93%                              |
| Boaters               | 96%                              |
| Hunters               | 93%                              |

## Customer's interest in receiving more information on hunting/fishing and boating.

- 65% saltwater anglers and 55% freshwater anglers would like to receive information on fishing opportunities.
- 58% of boaters would like to receive information on boating opportunities.
- 68% of hunters would like to receive information on hunting opportunities.

## State Park users' opinion of park staff

97% of park users felt that park staff was courteous; 98% felt that they were friendly, and 94% found park staff to be somewhat or very knowledgeable. 91% of park users rated the park staff as excellent or good in their ability to provide adequate information about the park's facilities and services.

## Overall condition of state park facilities

|                | <u>% Excellent/Good</u> |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Day User       | 89%                     |
| Overnight User | 91%                     |

## D. Analysis of Findings

The results of the public opinion surveys illustrate strong public support for the conservation of Texas' natural and cultural resources and for opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation activities. This is the foundation for the existence of TPWD, its mission and programs.

The surveys also provided an assessment of service quality and customer satisfaction. The survey findings illustrate that TPWD is providing quality service to its customers and that they are satisfied with the programs, services and recreation opportunities being provided. The survey results serve as an initial benchmark of service quality on a statewide basis and continued assessments should occur to continually measure customer satisfaction and improvements in quality of services for hunters, boaters, anglers, park users and outdoor recreationists. In response to this initial assessment, TPWD will continue to focus on measuring customer satisfaction of state park visitors. In FY 2003, TPWD will conduct on-site customer surveys at state parks and historic sites to monitor service quality and customer satisfaction and to provide managers with an individual assessment of their facilities, services and programs. The site managers can then use this information to better provide services and facilities to meet the needs of their customers.





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## State Park Fee Survey Research (FY 2002)

In the fall of 2001, research was conducted on state park overnight visitors to assess the opinion of current user fees and the willingness to support increased user fees. A mail survey was conducted of persons who made state park reservations during 2000/2001.

The survey collected information on:

- Opinions on user fees (too high/ too low/ about right)
- Willingness to support increased user fees;
- Amount visitors are willing to pay in addition to existing fees;
- Types of facilities used;
- Number of days/nights spent at Texas State Parks;
- Interest in users in staying overnight in the future; and
- Socio-demographics of visitors.

## Outcome Measures

Percentage of respondents supporting increased user fees

- 69% of overnight park visitors strongly to moderately supported increased user fees to ensure that Texas State Parks are able to cover their operating and maintenance costs (only 18% moderately to strongly opposed).

Respondent's perception of existing user fees.

- 76% of respondents felt that campsite fees are "about right"
- 73% of respondents felt that overnight shelter fees are "about right"
- 71% of respondents felt that daily entrance fees are "about right."
- 66% of respondents felt that cabin fees are "about right"

## Output Measures

Number of Customers Surveyed

2,000 surveys were mailed to a random sample of persons making state park reservations from 10/1/00 through 9/30/01. 1,193 surveys were completed and returned. This yielded a 63% response rate.

Number of Customers Served

The sample of customers surveyed was randomly drawn from over 80,000 persons making reservations to stay overnight in a Texas State Park from 10/1/00 9/30/01.

## Efficiency Measures

Cost Per Customer Surveyed

The out-of-pocket cost for printing and mailing the surveys was \$2,000. The majority of cost was in staff time in designing the survey, defining the survey methodology, and analyzing and reporting the survey results. Approximate staff time totaled 400 hours for a total cost in staff time of approximately \$10,000. The cost per customer surveyed, including estimated staff costs, was \$10.06 per completed survey.

Timeframe

The mail survey, including questionnaire design, printing, mailing, and analysis of results was conducted from October 2001 through December 2001.





# CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT

## Methodology

A well-known methodology for maximizing return rates on mail surveys, the Dillman Technique, was used to assure a statistically valid response rate. The technique calls for a series of mailings. Initially, the survey questionnaire with a cover letter is mailed, and is followed by a series of reminder letters and additional questionnaires, with self-addressed, postage-paid return envelopes.

A sample of 2,000 was randomly drawn from the total state park reservation database of over 80,000

## Limitations

The limitation to this research effort was that only overnight park visitors were surveyed. Due to study time constraints, obtaining an adequate sample of day users was not possible. No internal database exists on state park day users and that sample would need to be collected on-site at the parks.

## Response Rates

The response rate was 63% with 1,193 completed surveys returned.

## Explanatory Measures

### Number of Customers Identified

The total number of customers identified was 80,000 persons who had made state park reservations from 10/1/00 9/30/01.

## Number of Customer Groups Inventoried

For the purposes of this survey, only overnight state park visitors were surveyed since there was no time or budget to collect data from day users.

## FY 2003 Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Two survey efforts related to customer satisfaction will be implemented in FY 2003. A year-long study of Texas State Park visitors will include on-site customer surveys at select parks to assess the satisfaction of visitors with services, facilities, staff and programs.

The second survey effort for FY 2003 will assess usage patterns, navigation, usability and satisfaction of visitors with the TPWD website. This survey will be implemented in the fall of 2002.

Where applicable, the Standard Customer Service Performance Measures are addressed, and performance is estimated for FY 2003 for each survey effort.

## State Park On-Site Customer Surveys

### Outcome Measures

This is a study of day and overnight state park visitors to assess a number of key measures so we can develop programs and adjust services and policies to meet current and future customer needs. The study will assess:

- Visitor satisfaction with park services, programs, facilities, and staff;
- Visitation patterns (how often they visit state parks; who they come with; what activities do they participate in, etc.);
- Visitor socio-demographics.



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## Methodology

The visitor surveys will be conducted at over 30 state parks and data collection will begin in the summer of 2002. The surveys will be distributed randomly by park staff on weekdays and weekends and will be distributed for an entire year to capture data for all four seasons. Parks staff will ask the visitor to return the survey at the entrance gate before leaving the park or return it by business-reply mail.

## Output Measure

Number of Customers Surveyed (Completed)

FY 2003 performance is estimated at 800 completed surveys per park.

Each park is expected to distribute 60 surveys per week for a total of over 3,000 surveys distributed over the course of the year. A 30% response rate is expected yielding 18-20 surveys returned per week for a total of at least 800 completed surveys returned per park. (30 parks will yield a total of 24,000 completed surveys).

## Efficiency Measure

Cost Per Customer Surveyed (Completed)

The out-of-pocket cost of this survey effort is for printing and business reply mail return and is estimated at \$12,000. However, the majority of the cost will be for park staff time including distribution of the survey and data entry. Marketing staff will perform the data analysis and will coordinate the overall survey effort. A rough estimate of staff time for Marketing Services staff is 1,000 hours for a total of \$25,000. A very rough estimate of park staff time to administer the surveys is

500 hours per park per year (at \$10 estimated hourly wage) for a total park staff cost of \$150,000. The total cost per completed survey, including estimated staff time is \$7.79 per completed survey.

## Explanatory Measures

Number of Customers Identified

The total number of customers identified will be based on yearly visitation counts for each park. A sample of both the day and overnight visitors will be selected randomly for the survey effort.

Number of Customer Groups Surveyed

2 Customer groups to be surveyed:

- State Park Day Visitors
- State Park Overnight Visitors

## TPWD Website Visitor Survey

### Outcome Measures

This is a study of web site visitors to assess:

- User satisfaction with the TPWD website;
- Usage patterns (how often they visit the site; what areas of the site are of interest to them; what information do they primarily seek, how they learned about the site, etc.);
- Navigability issues (how easy is the website to use);
- Visitor socio-demographics.



# CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT

## Methodology

The web survey will be conducted online and will be placed in several conspicuous locations on the website (i.e. home page and areas of the site most often visited) to attract web users to complete the survey. The survey will be implemented at least twice over the course of the year to target high use times when users are most attracted to the website.

## Output Measure

Number of Customers Surveyed (Completed)

FY 2003 performance is estimated to be at least 800 surveys completed per survey cycle.

## Efficiency Measure

Cost Per Customer Surveyed (Completed)

There are no out-of-pocket costs for conducting this survey. All costs will be in staff time in designing the survey instrument, defining the methodology, and analyzing and reporting survey results.

## Explanatory Measures

Number of Customers Identified

The total number of customers will be identified based on the number of web hits over the course of the year. The survey will be randomly implemented to a sample of web users during the time of year when web usage is the highest.

Number of Customer Groups Surveyed

Many TPWD customer groups will be surveyed. Web users include persons interested in TPWD services and programs and potentially include the following customer groups:

- State Park Visitors
- Anglers
- Hunters
- Boaters
- Landowners
- Birders
- Bikers
- Wildlife Watchers
- Climbers
- Outdoor enthusiasts

## Texas Parks and Wildlife's Customer Service Complaint-Handling Process

As prescribed by Section VI, Texas Parks & Wildlife Personnel Manual and Employee Handbook, formal complaints received in the Divisions must be submitted to the Office of Internal Affairs for review, tracking and determination of proper follow-up action.

Correspondence containing non-formal complaints received at the Department through the Executive Office are logged into the Department Mail Tracking System and assigned to the appropriate Division Director for a timely response that appropriately addresses the concerns raised.



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Correspondence containing non-formal complaints received at the Department through individual divisions are logged into division tracking systems and assigned to the appropriate division personnel for a timely response that appropriately addresses the concerns raised.

Through our Natural Leaders Program, we are currently formalizing our complaint management policy and process for the maintenance of complaint information to include definitions of types of complaints for which the policy applies and a complaint tracking and reporting system.

## Compact With Texans

A Customer Compact is an agreement made with the customers of an institution to provide services that follow a predetermined set of guiding principles. Simply stated, it defines the standards that customers should expect. The following compact is provided to the many diverse customers of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Texas Parks and Wildlife provides outdoor recreational opportunities, manages state parks, historic sites, wildlife management areas and fish hatcheries; protects fish, wildlife and historical and cultural resources for present and future generations.

Over the years it has inherited the functions of many state entities created to protect Texas' natural and cultural resources. More information about the history of Texas Parks and Wildlife can be found at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/admin/about\\_us/descrip.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/admin/about_us/descrip.htm).

Texas Parks and Wildlife has 10 internal divisions: Wildlife, Coastal Fisheries, Inland Fisheries, Law Enforcement, State Parks, Infrastructure, Resource Protection, Communications, Administrative Resources, and Human Resources. Intergovernmental Affairs and Internal Audit and Investigations are administered

through the Executive Office. Texas Parks and Wildlife headquarters is located at 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744. State parks, wildlife management areas, fish hatcheries, and field offices are located across the state.

Texas Parks and Wildlife is largely user-funded. As a result, the Department works diligently to listen to our current customers, anticipate future customers' needs and adjust TPWD programs and services to deliver the greatest benefit to Texans, while protecting natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Our Customer Service Philosophy is:

*We affirm that excellent customer service is essential to our mission of managing and conserving natural and cultural resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*

Our goal is to provide highly responsive service to our customers. We will achieve exemplary customer service through:

- Listening to our internal and external customers, to better understand them and providing opportunities for our customers to submit comments,
- Courtesy,
- Personal responsibility,
- Professionalism,
- Problem solving,
- Respect,
- Being open, friendly, flexible and caring,
- Being responsive, and
- Working to resolve conflicts with different user groups.



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## Texas Parks and Wildlife's Service Standards

In serving our customers, Texas Parks and Wildlife employees will strive to do the following:

1. Answer correspondence (including faxes and e-mails) quickly and clearly.
2. See people as promptly as possible in all our offices.
3. Provide current information about services on the Internet and at field offices across the state. TPWD's home page is at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us). Frequently asked questions can be found at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/howdoi/index.htm/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/howdoi/index.htm/).
4. Answer telephone calls quickly and helpfully. Our toll free number is 1-800-792-1112. More information on specific TPWD telephone numbers can be found at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/admin/about\\_us/tele.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/admin/about_us/tele.htm).
5. Respond to inquiries typically within 10 working days of receipt.
6. Do everything reasonably possible to make services available to everyone, including those with disabilities.
7. Provide information about TPWD sites and programs to Texans statewide.

Concerns about TPWD's customer service, should be sent to:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
Communications Division  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744  
e-mail: [customer.feedback@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:customer.feedback@tpwd.state.tx.us)

Please include specific information, including the location, date, time and name of TPWD employee(s) if applicable.

The agency's customer service representative is Lydia Saldaña, Director of Communications. She can be reached at 512-389-4994 or 512-389-4448 (fax).

### What is a Customer?

Customers are the most important people in this office.

Customers are not dependent on us...  
*- we are dependent on them*

Customers are not an interruption of our work...  
*- they are the purpose of it.*

Customers are not doing us a favor by our serving them...  
*- they are doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so.*



Texas Parks and Wildlife  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744

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