



TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

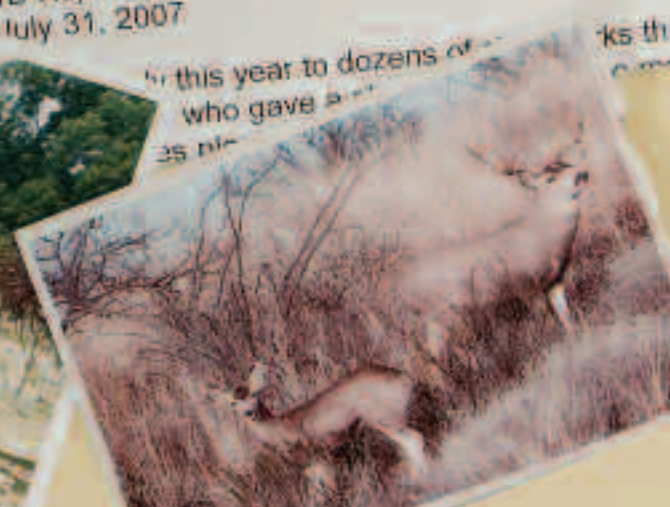
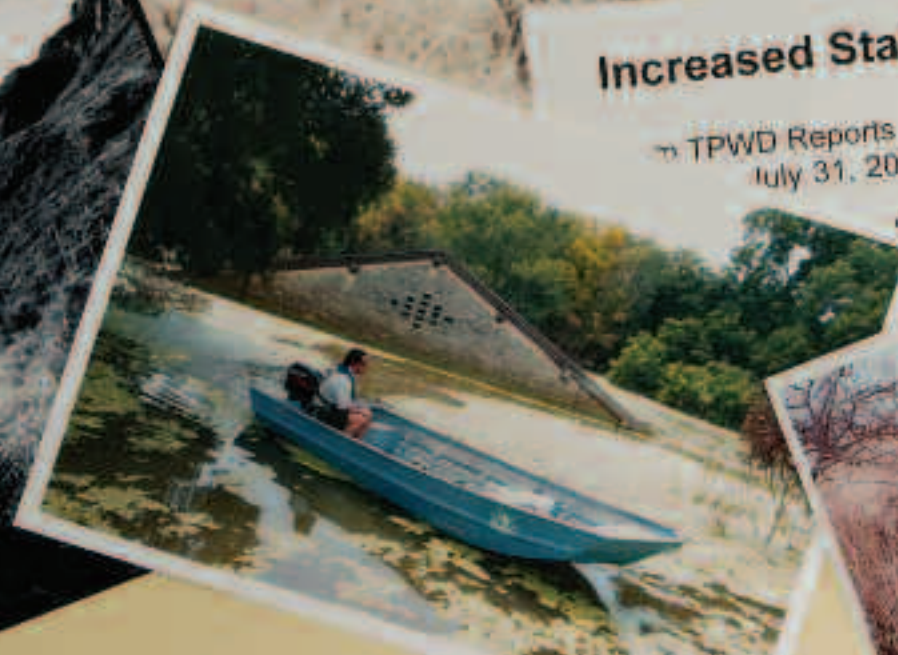


Annual Report 2007

Increased State Park Funding Brings

TPWD Reports
July 31, 2007

for this year to dozens of
who gave a
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To The People of Texas

From the Chairman and the Executive Director

Fiscal Year 2007 was a year of extremes, from droughts to flooding; from budget struggles to an inflow of much-needed funding; from tragedy to renewal. It was a year of coming together and sharpening our focus as we worked together with diverse communities, landowners and other agencies and to fulfill our mission.

The 80th Texas Legislature provided approximately \$182 million in additional funding for state park operations and maintenance, as well as funding for a new fish hatchery, water initiatives, law enforcement and border security. We were very grateful to receive this funding, which will make a positive difference in the level of services we are able to provide and the economic returns to local communities.

Of the total funding appropriated by the Texas Legislature, \$52 million was approved by voters in fall 2007 with the passage of Proposition 4. This constitutional amendment, which provided up to \$1 billion in bond authority for 11 state agencies, would not have passed without your support. We offer a big “thank you” to all who voted for Proposition 4.

The State Auditor’s Office conducted an audit of state parks, and we are working to implement the recommendations outlined in the audit report. We welcome this opportunity to improve our business operations.

When two game wardens died in the line of duty in spring 2007, game wardens and citizens across the state pulled together to honor and respect those who had lost their lives. We deeply appreciated your support during that difficult time.

Despite the challenges we faced, we continued to implement the goals of the Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan, the strategic operating plan that guides our work. Through dedicated teamwork and by building partnerships with landowners, we strengthened our work to facilitate land and water conservation and provided outdoor recreation opportunities for more diverse groups than ever before.

As our population becomes increasingly urban, it is more important than ever that we maintain our parks, fresh water, and high quality of service. In the coming year, we will continue to fulfill our mission to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities and to help conserve the natural beauty of our state for present and future generations.



Peter M. Holt
Chairman



Robert L. Cook
Executive Director

Legislature and Voters

During the 80th session of the Texas Legislature, the spotlight was on state parks.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Legislative Appropriations Request for the 2008 – 2009 biennium outlined funding needs for state parks and for other areas, as well. TPWD staff, along with the State Parks Advisory Committee and other officials, worked hard to provide legislators with the information they needed to make decisions about the agency's funding priorities. The outcome was very positive overall for TPWD, as the Legislature appropriated the largest amount of new funding in decades to support state parks, fisheries and law enforcement, and passed legislation to help ensure sufficient water flows to support fish and wildlife.

The Legislature approved approximately \$182 million in new funding and bonds for state park operations and staffing, including the addition of 229 full-time positions; minor and major repairs; capital equipment and land acquisition; and local park grants. The funding also allows for new positions in the Infrastructure Division to support the increased funding for capital repair projects in state parks. In other park-related legislation, House Bill (HB) 12 transferred 18 state historic sites from TPWD to the Texas Historical Commission. Senate Bill (SB) 1659 transferred the Texas State Railroad to a new railroad authority.

The Legislature appropriated \$12.3 million from Freshwater Fishing Stamp funds to support the construction of a new fish hatchery in East Texas. To support TPWD's work on the front lines of conservation, \$2 million was provided for Law Enforcement Division general operations, as well as an additional \$2.1 million through the Border Security Initiative, to fund 15 new game warden positions along the Texas-Mexico border.

In addition, TPWD received funding and three staff positions to participate in a major water resources initiative outlined in SB 3, which provides new measures to manage instream flows and freshwater inflows to bays and estuaries. SB 3 also established a statewide Environmental Flows Advisory Group, which will include a TPWD representative and will develop environmental flow recommendations for consideration by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The Legislature also passed HB 3249, which changed the agency's Sunset date from September 1, 2013 to September 1, 2009. The Sunset process consists of regular assessments of state agency programs by the Sunset Advisory Commission. Sunset provides legislators with the opportunity to review each agency closely and make changes to an agency's mission or operations if needed. Following the passage of HB 3249, TPWD staff worked hard over the summer to produce the Self-Evaluation Report required of all agencies that will be undergoing Sunset review during FY08. The report was submitted to the Sunset Advisory Commission in August 2007.

“The outcome was very positive overall for TPWD, as the Legislature appropriated the largest amount of new funding in decades to support state parks, fisheries and law enforcement, and passed legislation to help ensure sufficient water flows to support fish and wildlife.”



Provide New Funding

Staff Implements Audit Recommendations

In March 2007 the State Auditor's Office completed an audit report on TPWD financial processes. In the report, auditors recommended that TPWD improve the accuracy of its park revenue and visitation reporting, and of its management and operation of state parks. The report also made recommendations for improving the cost estimate process and prioritization of capital repair needs, and for correcting financial control weaknesses in state park operations.

"We take this report seriously, and staff concurs with the majority of the recommendations for improvement that were made," said Executive Director Robert L. Cook. "We have taken comprehensive measures to address the problems that were identified. We see this as an opportunity to improve and streamline some of our key business functions."

Agency staff responded quickly to address the audit findings and recommendations. To strengthen park accounting and reporting, TPWD created a new Park Revenue and Visitation Accounting branch in the Administrative Resources Division staffed with 11 accountants. The agency's Internal Audit staff will monitor the system closely to ensure that the new controls are effective. Park user surveys and marketing plans are also being developed to support the strategic management and visitation reporting of state parks.

The Infrastructure Division staff is developing and putting into place new project management processes for evaluating whether a capital repair project is needed, and for ensuring consistency in cost estimates for repair and construction projects.

The agency held training sessions in fall 2007 to familiarize state park employees and others with the new financial controls TPWD is putting in place to implement all the SAO audit recommendations. The goal is improved processes for budget monitoring, capital project prioritization, revenue enhancement and fiscal controls, many of which are now in place.



VOTERS APPROVE PROPOSITION 4

Of the \$44 million allocated for major repairs to Texas state parks, \$17 million will come from Proposition 8 bond funding approved by voters in 2001, and \$27 million from Proposition 4 bond funding approved in November 2007. An additional \$25 million of Proposition 4 bond money will be used for dry-berthing and repairs to the Battleship *TEXAS*.



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staff members pay their respects as the funeral procession of Game Warden Ty Patterson passes below.

“They represented the best of Texas Parks and Wildlife, and they were faithful public servants who cared deeply about our natural resources and the people of Texas.”



Game Wardens Weather Tragedy, Look Ahead



Spring 2007 was a difficult time for the Law Enforcement Division as staff dealt with the loss of game wardens Justin Hurst and Teyran "Ty" Patterson, who died in the line of duty. Hundreds of game wardens and citizens from across the state attended the funeral services to pay

their respects and show their support for the family members. On August 16, Hurst and Patterson were honored with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Memorial Cross. In October 2007, the Peach Point Wildlife Management Area was renamed the Justin Hurst Wildlife Management Area in recognition of Hurst's passion for waterfowl and marsh habitats.

"We are going to miss these courageous game wardens," said TPWD Law Enforcement Division Director, Colonel Pete Flores. "They represented the best of Texas Parks and Wildlife, and they were faithful public servants who cared deeply about our natural resources and the people of Texas."

On other fronts, game wardens conducted search-and-rescue operations during the floods of 2007, enforced fishing, hunting and boating safety laws, and helped law enforcement agencies apprehend criminals and stop the flow of illegal drugs into the state. Regular operations continued at the state's 28 law enforcement offices. The division also continued to actively promote the diversity of cadets entering the Texas Game Warden Academy. In July 2007, two cadets from the Mexican state of Nuevo Leon became the first foreign nationals to graduate from the academy. They will go on to pioneer conservation law enforcement in their state.



In the coming year, the division will see an expansion of its crucial role in homeland security for the state of Texas.

The 80th Legislature designated \$2.1 million in new funding for 15 additional game warden positions along the Texas-Mexico border. These additional positions will help ensure border security and will support the conservation of natural resources in those areas. Also on the horizon is the construction of a new Texas Game Warden Academy in Hamilton County.



Agency Leadership Changes

Fiscal Year 2007 brought major changes in the leadership of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. We said farewell to the chairman and vice-chairman of the Commission, as well as to a third commissioner and our executive director.

Governor Rick Perry named Peter Holt to the position of chairman and appointed three new Commission members. The Commission elected Dan Friedkin to serve as vice-chairman. Our former executive director, Robert L. Cook, returned in an interim capacity in October until that position was filled.

Joseph B.C. Fitzsimons, of San Antonio, was appointed to the Commission in 2001 and served as chairman from 2003 – 2007. Fitzsimons chaired the Commission's Regulations Committee for several years and served on the Environmental Flows Advisory Committee. He was a strong leader who accomplished much and will be remembered for his accomplishments in expanding wildlife conservation, securing additional park funding, and educating others about the important role of private land management in protecting the state's water resources.

Donato D. Ramos, of Laredo, served as vice-chairman of the Commission from 2005 – 2007 and was first appointed to the Commission in 2001. He chaired the Outreach and Education Committee and advocated for more hunting opportunities for youth. Ramos worked closely with commissioners and incoming Vice-Chairman Dan Friedkin to bring the Toyota Texas Bass Classic tournament to Texas in March 2007.

Ned S. Holmes was appointed to the Commission in 2003 and served until 2007, when Governor Perry appointed him to the Texas Department of Transportation Commission. He chaired the Commission's Finance Committee and is a strong supporter of the new Texas Game Warden Academy and other important causes related to the agency's mission and goals.

Executive Director **Robert L. Cook** retired from the agency in August 2007 following a career in conservation that spanned 42 years, including 31 years with TPWD. Over the past year, Cook worked tirelessly with agency staff to provide information to the Legislature regarding park funding needs and the water-quality issues outlined in SB 3. He will be remembered as a leader, mentor and friend to many within the agency, and as a "straight shooter" who had tremendous credibility with agency staff, the Commission and the Legislature.

The incoming chair and three new members of the Commission bring a range of expertise and experience that is certain to infuse the agency with energy and new opportunities.

Peter M. Holt was appointed chairman of the Commission in July 2007. Holt, who has served as a Commission member since 2003, is CEO of San Antonio-based Caterpillar dealership The Holt Companies and is the chairman and principal owner of the San Antonio Spurs of the National Basketball Association.

T. Dan Friedkin, first appointed to the Commission in 2005, was elected vice-chairman in August 2007. Friedkin is President and Chief Executive Officer of Friedkin Companies. He is an avid outdoorsman who is active in wildlife conservation initiatives. He was instrumental in working with Commissioner Ramos to bring the Toyota Texas Bass Classic tournament to Lake Fork in March 2007.

Incoming Commission member **Antonio Falcon, M.D.**, was appointed in August 2007. Falcon is a family physician and the medical director of the Family Health Center LLP in Rio Grande City. He is a presidential appointee to the United States Mexico Border Health Commission.

Also new to the Commission is **Karen J. Hixon**, who was appointed in August 2007. Hixon serves on the board of the Peregrine Fund based in Boise, Idaho, and on the advisory board for the Trust for Public Land and the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. She is a past Texas advisory member for Environmental Defense and past docent chairman of the San Antonio Zoological Society.

Margaret Martin was appointed to the Commission in August 2007. Martin is the owner-operator of a working ranch in Webb County and is developing a tea brokerage and export business. She has implemented a wildlife program and is developing a nature tourism project on her South Texas ranch.

We offer heartfelt gratitude to each of these leaders, whose talent and contributions have greatly benefited our agency and the state of Texas.

Outdoor Recreation Opportunities for All Texans

Despite the challenges that arose during Fiscal Year 2007, TPWD sharpened its focus on the goals of the *Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan*. Through dedicated hard work, and by strengthening public private partnerships, TPWD sustained and expanded hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for all Texans. Staff expanded outreach efforts to a diverse and growing urban population in all program areas of the agency.



Expanded Access to Outdoor Recreation

Providing access to outdoor recreation for all Texans is a primary goal of the *Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan*. With this in mind, TPWD undertook a number of projects that increased outdoor recreation opportunities for a diverse, urban population.

In fall 2007, Resaca de la Palma State Park became the newest site to join the World Birding Center, bringing 1,700 new acres of semitropical land teeming with birds and wildlife to birdwatchers and the general public. The nine World Birding Center sites are located along the border of the South Texas valley from Roma to South Padre Island.

The State Parks, Inland Fisheries, and Communications divisions collaborated to open and promote the new Goliad Paddling Trail in April 2007, providing an exciting new water recreation opportunity for Texans. Located on the San Antonio River, Goliad became the third inland paddling trail in Texas and the first to be anchored by a state park. Together, the state's three inland paddling trails and seven coastal paddling trails provide paddlers and anglers with recreational opportunities and a chance to learn about water issues involving Texas rivers and lakes, and the Gulf of Mexico.



The Gus A. Engeling Wildlife Conservation Center opened in May 2007 to provide landowners, local youth, and the general public with access to information and educational materials about wildlife research and habitat conservation at the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area and surrounding properties.

In West Texas, access will soon broaden in the vast 300,000-acre Big Bend Ranch State Park. Staff members of the agency's State Parks and Infrastructure divisions held public meetings in different areas of the state in FY07 to gather public input on a public use plan that is under development. Proposed improvements include converting old ranch roads to multi-use trails, expanding hunting opportunities, developing water sources in the park, adding new campsites, making more backcountry primitive roads available to the public, and expanding the park's Web presence.

According to State Parks Division Director Walt Dabney, "The expansion of public access in Big Bend Ranch State Park will allow us to provide a unique experience for a greater number of visitors seeking a rugged outdoor experience, while at the same time conserving the remoteness and natural beauty of the land."

In Fiscal Year 2007, the agency awarded over \$15 million in recreation grants to local communities, enabling them to provide access to more recreational opportunities for the Texans who live in those areas. Projects funded included outdoor and indoor recreational facilities, boating access facilities, recreational trails, and the community outdoor outreach programs to introduce underserved populations to the services, programs, and sites of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.



The Wildlife Division expanded its dove lease program, adding five new counties that are each within an hour's drive of a major city. This accomplishment supports the *Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan* goal of providing access to hunting opportunities for diverse urban populations.



Managing and Promoting Recreational Sites

TPWD continued to manage and operate statewide recreational sites serving more than 10 million visitors, and to promote them through outreach and marketing efforts. The State Parks and Infrastructure divisions operated and maintained 110 state parks, historic sites, state park/historic sites, and natural areas. The Wildlife Division managed 51 wildlife management areas, the Inland Fisheries Division managed five hatcheries, and the Coastal Fisheries Division oversaw three hatcheries. The Communications Division managed the Parrie Haynes Ranch retreat and youth activity center.



Extensive renovations to Indian Lodge at Davis Mountains State Park were unveiled on October 26, 2006. The five-year, \$4.35-million project restored the lodge, constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, to its original appearance while upgrading its mechanical, plumbing and air-conditioning systems. Following the reopening, Indian Lodge revenues from August 1, 2006 to July 31, 2007 have risen by \$448,000 over the same period the previous year.



In North Texas, parkgoers celebrated the opening of the Caprock Canyons State Park Visitor Center as well as the park's 25th anniversary. In September, the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site Monument celebrated the reopening of its elevator, which carries visitors up the 570-foot monument to an observation floor overlooking the historic battleground. The reopening was the culmination of 10 years of renovations to the monument, which is revered as the tallest stone column memorial structure in the world.



"We are thrilled to have completed these extensive projects and to be able to offer these improved facilities to Texas parkgoers," said Infrastructure Division Director Stephen Whiston. "They will provide a better experience for Texans wanting to get outdoors and enjoy our state's natural and cultural heritage."

The heavy rains of spring and summer 2007 caused extensive flood damage to facilities at Mother Neff and Palmetto state parks, among others. However, the rain was welcome relief from punishing drought conditions that had persisted for the last two years. In the late summer and early fall, Texans rushed to their favorite parks to enjoy lush foliage, rushing rivers and creeks and full lakes.

Looking ahead, the millions of new dollars appropriated by the Legislature will allow for the most substantial increase in parks maintenance, staffing, equipment and operations that the agency has seen in decades. The \$27 million in the Proposition 4 bonds approved by voters in November 2007 will allow for state park critical repairs, and an additional \$25 million will allow for the preservation and dry-berthing of a cultural treasure, the Battleship *TEXAS*.

The Communications Division promoted outdoor recreation through *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine, the outdoor magazine of Texas with over 144,000 readers. The March 2007 issue, featuring “50 Quick Getaways,” was the top-selling issue of the year, reflecting the growing interest in outdoor recreation among urban Texans. The division also continued to produce the weekly PBS series *Texas Parks & Wildlife*, which offers compelling stories to get people outdoors to enjoy our natural heritage. The agency Web site continued to promote outdoor recreation and conservation to approximately 600,000 visitors per month. The agency also initiated a Web-based e-mail subscription service to deliver customized recreation information directly to the customer. TPWD collaborated with Texas A&M University to produce a nature tourism video, which was distributed statewide.



Increased Participation in Outdoor Recreation

With the rapid urbanization of our population in Texas, the demand for outdoor experiences is greater than ever before. Last year, a record number of Texans participated in a wide range of outdoor recreational activities and TPWD events. Texas State Parks Pass sales continued to increase and were on track to surpass 74,917 sold in 2006.

According to the *2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, Texans spent about \$8.4 billion on fishing, hunting and wildlife-related activities in 2006. Texas led the nation in hunting in 2006, with 1.1 million Texans hunting that year and about \$2.3 billion in hunting-related expenditures. While Texas has long been known as a “hunting state,” it is an “angling state,” as well. Texas ranked second in angling participation, with 2.5 million anglers going fishing and spending about \$3.2 billion. Wildlife-watchers ranked third in the nation, with 4.17 million participants and expenditures of \$2.9 billion.

In April 2007 the Inland Fisheries Division, with support from the Communications Division, presented the three-day Toyota Texas Bass Classic, a major first-of-its-kind bass fishing tournament held on Lake Fork. The event, which offered a \$1 million purse, attracted 27,500 visitors and 160



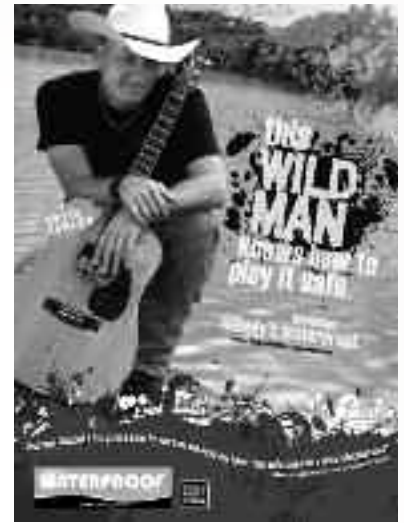
professional anglers from all over the country and showcased TPWD’s innovative fisheries management. “The Toyota Texas Bass Classic was the first major bass tournament held on a lake intensively managed with a high slot limit,” said Inland Fisheries Director Phil Durocher. “Since most of the fish caught were in the protected slot and had to be immediately released, the competitors weighed them on the boat and received credit for the catch.” The focus was on conservation of the bass resource through proper handling of the fish—a new format that could have a positive impact on professional bass fishing. Sponsors of the event donated \$250,000 to support TPWD youth fishing and outreach programs.





The Communications Division partnered with the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) to take the “Nobody’s Waterproof” marketing campaign statewide and support TPWD’s mandatory boater education program. Country music star Kevin Fowler joined the effort

to get the message out to the primary target audience of 18-to-34-year-old male boaters. Throughout the summer, the campaign outreach team took the “Nobody’s Waterproof” outreach boat to special water and shoreline events across the state to raise awareness about water safety by engaging people in fun, educational activities and social interaction. In March 2007, TPWD hosted the International Boating and Water Safety Congress in San Antonio to highlight Texas’ efforts.



The Texas Youth Hunting program celebrated 10 years of hunting last year. To date, the program has offered over 1,100 hunts to more than 11,000 youth from diverse backgrounds, one-third of whom are from large inner-city areas. Youth who

participate in the hunts are required to bring an adult; in addition, volunteers are trained to assist with the hunts. All in all, including youth, adults, and volunteers, the program has introduced 32,692 individuals to safe, educated and ethical hunting and provided them with outdoor experiences.



RECORD TARPON CAUGHT!

In October 2006, Deer Park angler Jeremy Ebert caught the largest tarpon on record in the state of Texas while fishing off the coast of Galveston. The tarpon weighed 210 pounds, 11 ounces, and Ebert reeled in his catch after 45 minutes of struggling.



The 16th annual Texas Parks & Wildlife Expo drew over 42,000 visitors, the largest crowd since 2002. The percentage of youth attending increased from 35 percent to 51 percent. Attendees reflected the diversity of urban Texas more than ever before, with outreach buses

traveling to the event from the Houston area, San Antonio and Laredo. TPWD received an award from the prestigious Weatherby Foundation International for providing a model for outdoor expos that has been emulated by 17 other states. Spain, Mexico and Austria are among other countries that are considering having similar events.

In 2006 TPWD assumed a statewide leadership role in the national Children & Nature Network (C&NN). C&NN provides resources to support people and organizations working to reconnect children with nature. Although the movement is in its early stages, it has already stimulated a groundswell of political support in many states. Through C&NN, agency staff are developing new partnerships and bringing new awareness to longstanding TPWD educational programs such as Archery in the Schools, Take Me Fishing, Becoming an Outdoors Family, and Project WILD. In FY07, these programs continued to draw in urban youth and families who may not have had previous outdoor recreational opportunities.

Enhancements to Hunting, Fishing, Boating and Outdoor Recreation

Maintaining healthy and sustainable ecosystems is crucial to providing high-quality hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities. The agency implemented a number of initiatives to ensure that ecosystems remain balanced and participants have the best outdoor experiences possible.

In fall 2007 the Coastal Fisheries Division implemented a regional approach to spotted seatrout management in response to declining spotted seatrout population trends in the Lower Laguna Madre. The new management plan, which was adopted by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in April 2007, marks the first time a regional approach has been used on the coast and will utilize coastal fisheries data programs to determine spotted seatrout population trends.

In addition, the division's world-class marine enhancement program continued to expand its capability to meet challenges such as red tide, hypoxia, and changes in fish species brought about by climate change. "We are shifting our focus and philosophy to be able to respond quickly and proactively to the effects of climate change," said Coastal Fisheries Division Director Larry McKinney. "An enhanced capacity for flexible and rapid response means our hatcheries can make a significant contribution to recovery from major events such as freezes and pollution, and keep our marine fisheries healthy and productive."

Fiscal Year 2007 was a record bass production year for the Inland Fisheries Division. TPWD's five inland fish hatcheries produced more than 8 million largemouth bass, in addition to 2.4 million catfish, 4.6 million striped bass and hybrid striped bass, and millions of other fish for stocking into Texas rivers, lakes and reservoirs.

The Legislature provided \$12.3 in new funding that will speed up progress on the construction of a new East Texas fish hatchery that is underway in Jasper County. The funding, which comes from Freshwater Fishing Stamp funds, will supplement money already budgeted by TPWD for the project.

In fall 2006 new buck deer antler restrictions were expanded from 21 to 61 counties in order to improve the age structure of the buck herd while increasing hunter opportunities. The regulations protect all branched-antlered bucks with an inside spread of less than 13 inches wide, which represent a large portion of the immature bucks in Texas. Hunting opportunity was increased by allowing hunters to take an additional unbranched-antlered buck (e.g., spike buck). This regulation has proven effective, and the agency continues to receive requests for further expansion of this unique regulated harvest strategy.



Project WILD reached the highest number of teachers and students since the program first came to Texas in 1986. More than 4,200 educators attended training workshops in fiscal year 2007, up from about 2,900 the year before.





In late 2007 TPWD added the USTS *Texas Clipper* to its Ships-to-Reefs program by reefing the venerable ship 17 miles off the Texas coast in the Gulf of Mexico, near Brazos Santiago Pass. Preparations for the sinking, including the removal of hazardous and non-hazardous materials, had been underway since 1998. In addition to providing new habitat for fish, the reef will expand recreational opportunities for divers, and fishing opportunities for anglers, which should generate an estimated additional \$50 million in tourism revenue for local economies.

Land and Water Initiatives

Because more than 90 percent of Texas is privately owned, building partnerships with landowners is an important part of TPWD's work to ensure sustainable wildlife habitat. The Wildlife Division continued to provide technical assistance to landowners requesting support for their work as committed land stewards. The most significant challenges to freshwater and saltwater systems in Texas are reduced water quality and decreased water quantity. In response to these challenges, water initiatives were at the forefront of the agency's work in 2007.

Land Conservation Milestones

The Wildlife Division staff increased their work assisting landowners in managing their lands for sustainable wildlife habitat to meet their goals, through initiatives such as the Landowner Incentive Program and the annual Lone Star Land Steward Awards. The division also continued to implement the Wildlife Action Plan and its land conservation initiatives.

The division continued its work with the Texas Panhandle Prescribed Burn Association to put into place a cooperative model that allows landowners to improve their habitat through prescribed burning and to share in the cost of equipment and resources. The division is working to share the successes of the association, which was started in 2005, and to use it as a model for prescribed burn associations in other areas of the state.

In November 2006, TPWD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service entered into an agreement that is intended to help landowners conserve the lesser prairie chicken. Under the agreement, landowners who take voluntary conservation measures, such as brush control, prescribed burning, grazing management, and periodic monitoring would be exempt from additional land use restrictions and conditions should the species ever be declared threatened or endangered.

Over the next three years, researchers from Stephen F. Austin State University will track and study Eastern wild turkeys in Nacogdoches, Anderson and Houston counties to try to determine the effects on the birds of various management strategies. The study follows up on a restoration partnership that began 10 years ago when TPWD, private landowners and the National Wild Turkey Federation began an initiative to restore Eastern wild turkeys to suitable habitat. While some turkeys have done well, others have been less successful. The study will help researchers and biologists better determine what constitutes sustainable habitat. In addition, studies of Rio Grande wild turkeys are being conducted in other parts of the state.





Governor Rick Perry attended the agency's 12th annual Lone Star Land Steward Awards program, which honors private landowners for their efforts in conservation and habitat management. In addition to recognizing 10 ecoregion winners, TPWD and the Sand County Foundation bestowed the Leopold Conservation Award on the 77 Ranch, located south of Dallas. "The Price's model ranching operation shows how landowners can manage their land in ways that benefit wildlife and the environment," said Wildlife Division Director Mike Berger. "We are proud to participate in the Texas Parks and Wildlife tradition of honoring examples of sustainable conservation that can serve as models for other landowners."

Land conservation initiatives have resulted in the increased numbers of some bird species. A record 237 whooping cranes were recorded in winter 2006, up from 220 the previous year. Whooping cranes have experienced a gradual comeback from near-extinction, thanks to legislation, conservation efforts and public awareness. The black-capped vireo has made a comeback in Texas as a result of TPWD's cowbird trapping training program, offered free of charge to landowners, which effectively reduces cowbird parasitism on songbirds. Nationally, the bald eagle was removed from the Endangered Species List in June 2007, signifying the success of efforts at the state level to protect the birds' habitat and help them recover.

In May 2007, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission approved a "white list" of 84 nongame species that can be collected from private property in Texas and sold commercially. The measure, which became effective in late October 2007, supports the agency's Wildlife Action Plan and is intended to protect those species not included on the list, particularly wild turtles. In recent years there has been an increasing trend in the commercial collection and sale of wild turtles, snakes and other nongame animals, in response to a growing demand for turtle meat in China and other Asian markets.

Water Initiatives to Support Fish, Wildlife and Recreation

TPWD broadened its work to improve water quality and wildlife habitat through watershed management and wetland restoration. The agency also became involved in new initiatives to manage instream and freshwater flows to sustain aquatic life.

The 80th Texas Legislature adopted Senate Bill (SB) 3, which provides ground-breaking measures to manage instream flows and freshwater inflows to bays and estuaries. As the population of Texas doubles over the next 30 years, the pressure will increase to divert more and more water to meet those needs. SB 3 provides a framework for deciding how much water should remain in our state's aquatic ecosystems to keep them ecologically sound, and how best to incorporate those needs into water permitting and allocation decisions. TPWD's role will be to support the process and refine the science necessary to meet those goals. SB 3 also established a statewide Environmental Flows Advisory Group, which will include a TPWD representative and will develop environmental flow recommendations for consideration by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

In September 2006 Governor Rick Perry announced the Trinity River Environmental Project, a major initiative to improve the ecology and economic sustainability of the Trinity River Basin. TPWD is a partner in the initiative, which will build on the agency's leadership role over the last five years in a collaborative effort to restore wetlands along the Trinity, including public land such as the Richland Creek Wildlife Management Area. The goals of the new project include setting new policy, leveraging federal funding for projects, and conducting effective outreach with landowners and other stakeholders.

The Communications Division continued its water communications initiative with the publication of *“The State of Lakes,”* the annual July water-themed issue of *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. In February, the division aired *“Texas: The State of Springs,”* narrated by Walter Cronkite, the third in a series of water documentaries. *“With the water communications initiative, we are using all media available to get the word out about the water challenges facing our state,”* said Communications Division Director Lydia Saldaña. *“Water for wildlife and water for people are not mutually exclusive, and we hope that by providing information about how everyone can get involved in water conservation, we can all become part of the solution.”*

The Brays Bayou/Mason Park wetlands project, a multi-partner, five-year project that was completed in October 2006, has garnered several awards and was featured in a Sierra Club report focusing on outstanding models of environmentally sensitive stormwater management. The project began in 2001 when TPWD made a recommendation to park staff to create wetlands as part of the project and subsequently obtained an EPA grant to develop the wetlands.

In January 2007 the largest episode of cold-stunned sea turtles ever recorded in Texas occurred. Approximately 130 lethargic juvenile green sea turtles drifted onto shorelines in the Lower Laguna Madre when a severe cold front caused a sudden drop in water temperature. Coastal Fisheries staff transported 90 of the turtles to the division’s CCA/CPL Marine Development Center in Flour Bluff and to the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi in an effort to save their lives. After rehabilitating the green sea turtles for a month in climate-controlled indoor tanks, hatchery staff transported the animals to Port Isabel, where they were placed on a Coastal Fisheries research vessel and released back into the Lower Laguna Madre. Green sea turtles are federally listed as a threatened species.

TPWD announced funding of up to \$450,000 in state and federal matching grants to begin research projects on golden alga in September 2007. Research priorities were developed by the TPWD Golden Alga Task Force. The goal of the task force is to conduct research and develop strategies to protect aquatic ecosystems by understanding toxic golden algal blooms and taking steps to mitigate their impacts. Golden alga levels fluctuate, and high levels have been known to be responsible for fish kills in Texas lakes and river systems.

As one of 14 states to receive grant funding totaling \$18.8 million from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, TPWD is partnering with the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority and Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust on a project to protect coastal wetland habitat in the delta where the Guadalupe River flows into San Antonio Bay.

TPWD entered into an agreement with the Lower Neches Valley Authority and Ducks Unlimited (DU) to preserve a wetland complex within the Alazan Bayou Wildlife Management Area in East Texas, a popular waterfowl hunting and birdwatching area. The new agreement was a milestone in a partnership between TPWD and DU that has spanned 20 years and resulted in contributions from DU totaling \$10 million to conserve 161,330 acres under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan from 1986 – 2006.

“Water for wildlife and water for people are not mutually exclusive, and we hope that by providing information about how everyone can get involved in water conservation, we can all become part of the solution.” *Lydia Saldaña*



Inside the Agency

The high-quality programs and services that TPWD provides to the people of Texas would not be possible without a strong internal support system and a high level of employee satisfaction. The agency continuously endeavors to improve its business systems and to provide a meaningful, productive environment for its most valuable resources—its people.

Streamlining Business Management Systems

Maintaining effective business systems is crucial to TPWD's ability to conduct business and communicate with its field staff across the state. Agency staff put in countless hours working on several major projects designed to streamline and refine the agency's automated business systems.

The Information Technology, State Parks and Administrative Resources divisions worked hard to develop the requirements and solicitation for a new state parks reservations system. The goal of this effort is to strengthen fiscal controls and improve park management processes, primarily in response to the 2007 audit of the State Parks Division but also in order to implement a turnkey system that will carry the agency into the future. "We are attempting to put into place a new Texas state parks application to replace the current system that has reached the end of its life and can no longer be modified to meet our needs," said Information Technology Division Director George Rios. "The new system will allow us to add the functionality necessary to address our business needs while allowing us the flexibility to meet new challenges."

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission adopted a number of changes to simplify the state's fishing and hunting license system, including consolidating the multiple types and variations of the temporary fishing license into a single one-day license for all fishing, with anglers buying as many days as they need; and clarifying the special resident hunting license by replacing it with a senior resident hunting license and a youth hunting license. In addition, the Administrative Resources and Information Technology divisions collaborated on the development of a new Web-based hunting and fishing license system, which went into effect on Aug. 15, 2007, with the start of 2008 license sales.

Administrative Resources Division Director Mary Fields explains, "With the help of our vendor, Verizon, we have successfully implemented a Web-based system and new equipment that provides better support to our license sales agents and results in a better license buying experience for our hunting and angling customers."

The Coastal Fisheries Division collaborated with the GIS Lab's Resource Information Systems on an online application that helps anglers determine where to fish by allowing users to query the catch rates in different areas, as well as to find descriptions of fish habitat and distribution.

In response to HB 1516, passed by the Legislature in 2005, the Information Technology Division continued to implement the Texas data center consolidation, which affects the state's 27 largest agencies. Staff



put in countless hours of work to ensure the smooth transition of agency servers and applications to the selected vendor, IBM. The legislation also requires state agencies to purchase automated information systems through contracts managed and negotiated by the Texas Department of Information Resources, which has resulted in changes to how TPWD handles its procurements of those items and services. The data center consolidation will continue through the next year.

The Communications Division Web group developed an Accessibility Action Plan to ensure that the agency complies with recent legislation requiring that all electronic information be accessible to people with disabilities. A cross-divisional team is working to implement the plan, which will allow the agency to better serve all of its internal and external customers.

Valuing and Retaining Employees

TPWD is known for recruiting and retaining employees whose dedication, courage, and willingness to “go the extra mile” bring quality and passion to all areas of the agency. The 2006 Survey of Organizational Excellence indicated that employees’ sense of responsibility to the organization increased by 15 percent, and scores improved in 17 of 20 areas of the survey.

The Human Resources Division worked hard to provide support and services to TPWD staff, which was no easy task with an average ratio of one HR staff member to every 109 employees. “Last year, we focused on the basics—performance management, giving people the opportunity to give back, and providing ways for them to develop themselves professionally and physically,” said Human Resources Division Director Al Bingham.

In 2006 the division revamped the performance management system to incorporate a competency-based approach and spent most of the year implementing the system and providing training to staff. The first evaluations using the new system began in fall 2007. The long-term goal is to automate the performance management process and move to a paperless system.

In 2007 graduates of the first six classes of TPWD’s Natural Leaders had the opportunity to renew their leadership development skills at a “refresh” event held at Camp Allen in July 2007. TPWD started the Natural Leaders program in 2001 to support succession planning and prepare supervisors and program managers for current and future challenges. Each year, a class of candidates and mentors is selected for the year-long program, which consists of leadership assessment and coaching, cross-divisional “stretch” projects to solve strategic issues, and statewide site visits.

The division continued to focus on helping staff members improve their wellness through a variety of classes at the headquarters fitness center, a post-legislative session golf tournament, and participation in Governor Perry’s annual fitness challenge, the Texas Round-Up. Employees also had opportunities to give back to the community through organized efforts such as blood drives and the State Employee Charitable Campaign.



VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE LABOR OF LOVE

Thousands of volunteers across the state contributed more than a million hours of their time and effort and trained tens of thousands of students. These volunteers provided invaluable support in all areas of the agency, from hunting, fishing, and boating to state park operations and resource conservation.

The Hunter Education Program trained 1,870 volunteers and 33,859 students.

The Boater Education program trained 308 volunteers and 8,234 students.

The Angler Education program trained 1,250 volunteers and 26,892 students.

Over 500 volunteers contributed time and effort to freshwater and coastal fisheries and contributed 3,341 volunteer hours at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center.

Volunteers put in 593,588 hours at Texas state parks, working in a range of areas from hosting to park operations.

Master Naturalists contributed over 635,000 hours of service and outreach to support resource conservation efforts.



Employee Recognition Awards

OUTSTANDING TEAM Green Sea Turtle Rescue Team

Coastal Fisheries and Communications

This team was involved in the successful rescue of 92 green sea turtles that nearly died in frigid South Texas coastal waters from a sudden cold snap during the winter of 2007. An urgent request for assistance from federal officials was quickly answered by TPWD. Team members coordinated and worked closely with conservation organizations and scores of volunteers and were able to rehabilitate 52 comatose green sea turtles over a 29-day period, releasing them into coastal waters near South Padre Island. The team dedicated about 200 hours of manpower to the rescue effort, including providing daily care of the turtles, water quality monitoring and maintenance of their tanks.



OUTSTANDING TEAM Texas Parks and Wildlife Honor Guard

Law Enforcement

This team is made up of game wardens who volunteer to represent TPWD at special ceremonies that require the presence of the agency with the posting of the colors. The team is a presence at funerals of deceased or fallen TPWD game wardens; they also represent the agency at the Texas Peace Officers Memorial Service and Candlelight Vigil at the state capitol and at the Texas Game Warden Memorial ceremonies in Athens. Members of the team complete their regular duties and still find time to practice and be ready to travel at a moment's notice to honor our deceased and fallen officers.





SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Charles Moon

Infrastructure, Construction Manager



LEADERSHIP

Clayton Wolf

Wildlife, Big Game
Program Director



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Bill Balboa

Coastal Fisheries, Matagorda
Bay Ecosystem Leader



CONSERVATION

Earl W. Chilton II

Inland Fisheries,
Staff Support Specialist



PARTNERSHIP

Dave Terre

Inland Fisheries,
Regional Director (East Texas)



NATURAL QUALITY SERVICE

Jamie McClanahan

Administrative Resources,
Revenue Systems Analyst



INNOVATION

Dijar Lutz-Carrillo

Inland Fisheries, Geneticist



CUSTOMER SERVICE

Lorna Herron

Law Enforcement, Office Manager

TPWD Leadership



THE TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Front row, from left:

Phil Durocher, Inland Fisheries Division Director
Col. Pete Flores, Law Enforcement Division Director
Lydia Saldaña, Communications Division Director
Gene McCarty, Deputy Executive Director, Administration
Al Bingham, Human Resources Division Director
Walt Dabney, State Parks Division Director

Back row, from left:

Dr. Mike Berger, Wildlife Division Director
George Rios, Information Technology Division Director
Mary Fields, Administrative Resources Division Director
Robert L. Cook, Executive Director
Dr. Larry McKinney, Coastal Fisheries Division Director
Ann Bright, General Counsel
Scott Boruff, Deputy Executive Director, Operations
Steve Whiston, Infrastructure Division Director

TPW Commissioners

The nine-member, governor-appointed Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission governs the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and bears the responsibility of adopting policies and rules to carry out all department programs. The executive director oversees the work of implementing and administering all department programs as directed by the Commission.



Peter M. Holt
Chairman
San Antonio



T. Dan Friedkin
Vice-Chairman
Houston



Mark E. Bivins
Amarillo



J. Robert Brown
El Paso



Antonio Falcon, M.D.
Rio Grande City



Karen J. Hixon
San Antonio



Margaret Martin
Boerne



Philip Montgomery
Dallas



John D. Parker
Lufkin



Lee M. Bass
Chairman-Emeritus
Fort Worth

Accountability Measures

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES (By Topic)	Responsible Division ¹	FY05	FY06	FY07
FISH PRODUCTION²				
Number of fingerlings stocked in fresh water	IF	13,748,432	11,662,828	15,780,476
Number of fingerlings stocked in salt water	CF	22,225,011	19,163,191	27,790,757
PARK VISITATION				
Estimated number of state park visits (in millions)	SP	9.6	10.2	9.3
CONSERVATION				
Percent of private land acreage in Texas managed to enhance wildlife	WL	12.59%	13.92%	15.56%
Percent of fish and wildlife kills or pollution cases resolved successfully	CF, IF	76.74%	82.85%	77.18%
Public compliance rate	LE	97.7%	97.56%	97.57%
EFFICIENCY				
Ratio of fingerlings produced to hatchery employees	CF, IF	424,465:1	330,574:1	509,605:1
INFRASTRUCTURE				
Percent of state park maintenance and minor repair projects completed ³	SP	28.6%	2.3%	1.95%
Number of minor repair projects completed	SP	287	204	165
Percent of scheduled major repair projects completed	INF	46.9%	63.89%	59.46%
Number of major repair/construction projects completed	INF	70	96	76
DIRECT SERVICE				
Percentage of agency's direct service expenditures to total expenditures	AR	89.9%	89.2%	88.4%

¹ Abbreviations as follows: Administrative Resources (AR), Coastal Fisheries (CF), Communications (K), Infrastructure (INF), Inland Fisheries (IF), Law Enforcement (LE), State Parks (SP), Wildlife (WL).

² The number of fingerlings stocked in FY 2006 showed a decline from prior years mainly due to various planned repair and construction projects that temporarily shut down production at several hatcheries.

³ FY 2006 and 2007 performance showed a decline compared to prior years primarily due to the statewide entry of needs into the Facilities Management Information System, resulting in a significant increase in the master list of needs.

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES (By Topic)	Responsible Division¹	FY05	FY06	FY07
PUBLIC ACCESS				
Number of WMAs available for wildlife viewing and other non-hunting forms of outdoor recreation	WL	51	51	51
Acres of public hunting land provided (including state parks)	WL, SP	1,413,021	1,399,622	1,320,830
Annual percentage change in public hunting days provided	WL	-9.0%	-4.3%	0.6%
Number of state parks open to public hunting	WL, SP	44	44	42
STATE PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS				
State park reservations ⁴	SP	254,628	233,057	241,511
Volunteer hours in state parks (including inmate labor)	SP	689,850	633,207	593,588
New state parks opened	SP	0	1	0
State park acreage	EO	610,319	608,716	602,892
Number of acres in the agency's Public Lands System per 1,000 Texans	EO	61.01	59.9	59.8
COMMUNITY OUTREACH				
Local park grants awarded ⁵	SP	\$10,890,000	\$6,699,886	\$6,559,992
Boat ramp grants awarded	SP	\$1,900,000	\$2,290,000	\$2,200,000
Students trained in Hunter Education	K	31,004	30,866	33,859
Students trained in Boater Education	K	10,467	9,840	8,234
Average monthly <i>TPW</i> magazine circulation	K	108,000	121,044	156,368

⁴ Figures represent Customer Service Center reservations only.

⁵ The amount of Local Park Grants Awarded has decreased due to legislatively mandated reductions in funding for the program.

Accountability Measures, continued

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES (By Topic)	Responsible Division ¹	FY05	FY06	FY07
FACILITIES MANAGED				
WMAs managed	WL	51	51	51
State parks managed ⁶	SP	117	112	110
HUNTING, FISHING AND BOATING				
Resident hunting-type licenses	AR, LE	452,496	433,766	433,711
Non-resident hunting-type licenses	AR, LE	73,167	75,491	76,001
Hunting stamps	AR, LE	177,044	260,806	248,261
Resident fishing-type licenses	AR, LE	994,245	940,259	962,924
Non-resident fishing-type licenses	AR, LE	92,471	95,714	100,884
Fishing stamps ⁷	AR, LE	31,442	24,004	20,383
Combination hunting/fishing-type licenses	AR, LE	535,131	516,050	524,489
Annual boat registrations	AR, LE	337,046	317,928	331,425
Public hunts on TPWD lands, leases	WL	5,587	5,660	5,655
FISH AND WILDLIFE				
Deer harvested	WL	438,116	470,854	454,784
Turkeys harvested	WL	63,723	52,287	42,634
Mourning doves harvested	WL	3,655,041	6,361,779	5,690,252
Ducks harvested	WL	909,600	1,252,460	1,047,800
Geese harvested	WL	248,100	457,300	298,400
LAW ENFORCEMENT				
Vehicle miles patrolled by game wardens	LE	10,675,225	10,973,592	11,122,875
Boat hours patrolled by game wardens	LE	127,681	133,100	120,361
Arrests (game and fish)	LE	21,534	20,086	21,128
Arrests (water safety)	LE	9,904	8,234	8,522
Law enforcement contacts by game wardens	LE	3,676,066	3,269,054	3,304,473
RESOURCE PROTECTION				
Environmental permit/document reviews	CF, IF, WL	1,409	1,227	1,121
Fish kills and pollution complaints investigated	CF, IF	258	210	298

⁶ FY 2006 reflects the transfer of several parks sites to other entities.

⁷ Figures reflect direct sales only, and do not capture freshwater or saltwater stamps sold as part of a combination or other package.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This is the Annual Report of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2007 [FY 2007]. The report is one of several documents the department produces to provide information to our employees and the public. More information can be found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Web site at www.tpwd.state.tx.us. This report was prepared by the Communications Division, with information provided by all other divisions.

CONTRIBUTORS

Communications Division Director Lydia Saldaña
Creative Director Tim Peterson
Art Direction and Design Sonia Casarez Yeck
Writer and Editor Karen Blizzard
Proofreader Carol Otto
Photography Chase A. Fountain, Chris Hunt, Earl Nottingham

STAFF CONTACTS

Administrative Resources Mary Fields, Julie Horsley
Communications Lydia Saldaña, Marian Edwards
Executive Office Robert L. Cook, Gene McCarty, Scott Boruff, Michelle Klaus
Human Resources Al Bingham
Infrastructure Steve Whiston
Inland Fisheries Phil Durocher
Information Technology George Rios
Law Enforcement Col. Pete Flores
Coastal Fisheries Dr. Larry McKinney, Mike Ray, Robin Riechers
State Parks Walt Dabney
Wildlife Dr. Mike Berger

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Funding for printing this report provided by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

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If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any TPWD program, activity or event, you may contact the Human Resources Director, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas, 78744, (512) 389 4808 (telephone), al.bingham@tpwd.state.tx.us (e mail). Alternatively, you may contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP 4020, Arlington, VA 22203, Attention: Civil Rights Coordinator for Public Access.

