

Diversity & Inclusion

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
2017-2022 Strategic Plan



Our Core Values

Stewardship

We are passionate about the natural and cultural resources of Texas, and we use our knowledge, supported by the best science, to manage and conserve those resources.

Service

We are a community of public servants focused on delivering outstanding service to all of our stakeholders and customers. We strive to be responsive with a sincere desire to inform, educate and help.

Excellence

We strive for excellence in every aspect of fulfilling our mission while relying on research and sound science to adapt to ever-changing environmental, economic and societal conditions.

Integrity

We have a culture that strives to inspire and maintain trust on the basis of ethical decision-making. We are accountable for our actions and communications.

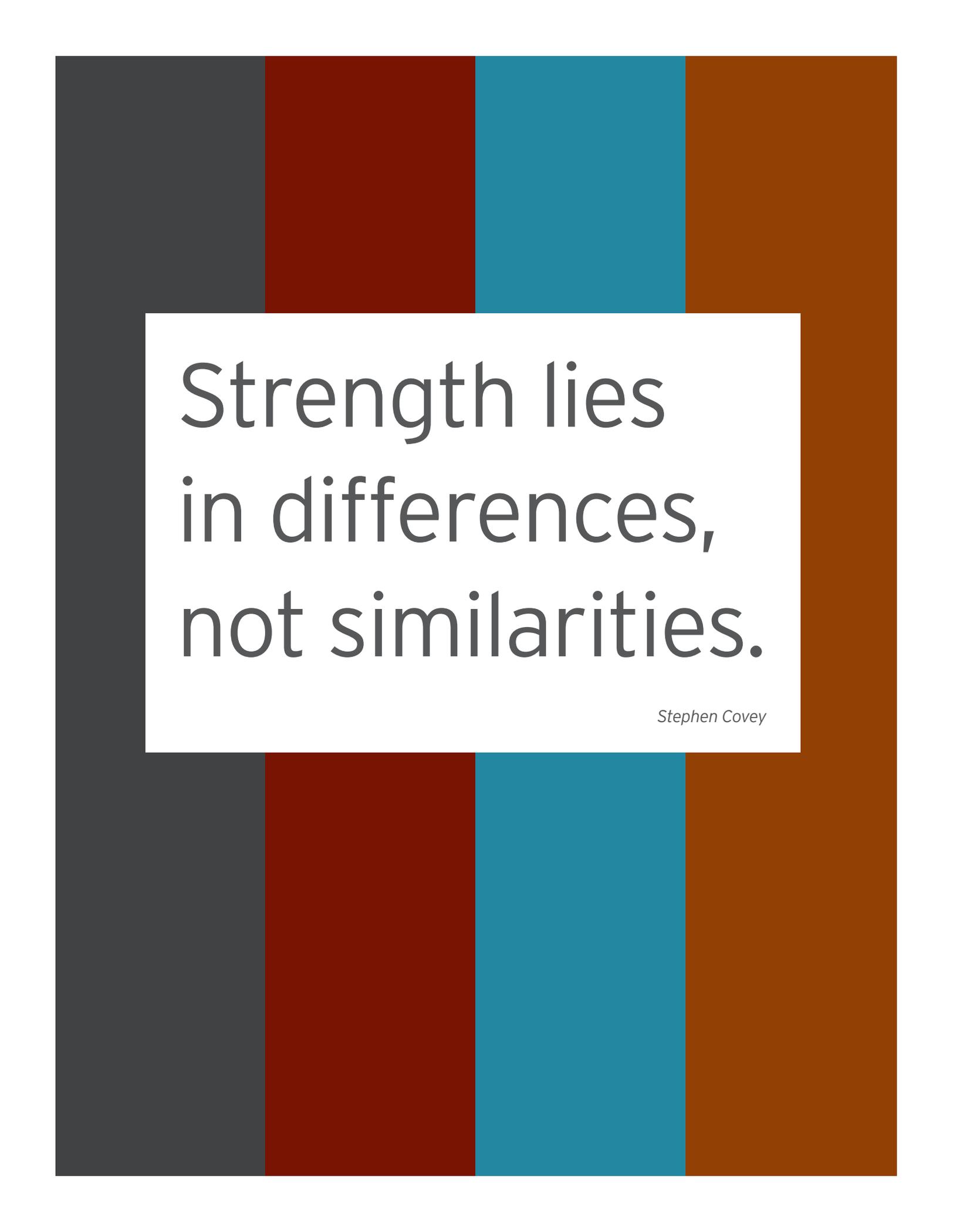
Teamwork

We treat each other with respect and communicate often and openly to foster collaborative efforts. We appreciate the value of diverse backgrounds, expertise, ideas and incorporate multiple perspectives in decision-making and strategic actions.

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Strength lies
in differences,
not similarities.

Stephen Covey

A Message from our Executive Director

Dear Colleagues:

The strength of our great state has always been in no small part due to our rich heritage and history, our bountiful natural and cultural resources, and our diverse and resourceful citizens. For parts of three centuries, the men and women of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) have had the privilege of not only helping to steward these unique and irreplaceable resources, but also serving the many and varied people across all of Texas. Without a doubt, the demographics of our state have changed dramatically since our inception, and, by all accounts, will continue to do so. As a mission-directed state agency which helps serve and advance the outdoor interests and values of all Texans, TPWD professionals must be at the forefront of adapting to these changes and addressing the dynamic opportunities and challenges that come with them.

To that end, I am pleased to present the Department's *2017-2022 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*. This Plan is intended to serve as a guidepost for how we as an agency can even better serve our varied constituencies, both old and new, traditional and non-traditional. Consistent with our mission, that service will come through many venues, including science and stewardship, public safety and enforcement, land- and water-based recreation, and education and outreach. It will also be an internally focused one that emphasizes maximizing our talent from within, creating opportunities for advancement for all, and augmenting and expanding the strengths for which TPWD is already well known. Ultimately, our success will be determined by how effectively we engage our diverse employees and communities in this effort.

The path ahead will be largely driven by all of you, our best and most effective ambassadors and representatives for and within TPWD. As we move ahead together with this Plan, we will stop and periodically take stock of important milestones in the Plan, as well as any factors that may be affecting our collective success. Course corrections and changes in this initiative should be expected. Your commitment to this important Plan will be essential as we work together to make our agency the best it can be in our service and stewardship of our beloved home ground.

Sincerely,



Carter Smith
Executive Director
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department



Defining Diversity and Inclusion

There are as many ways to define diversity and inclusion as there are organizations that desire to better reflect such goals into their culture. What they all have in common is an understanding that their most valuable asset is their people and that each person is unique and capable of bringing different important contributions to the workplace.

There are numerous dimensions to diversity, including those visible aspects such as race, ethnicity, gender, and age. There are also many invisible attributes like religion, disability, and sexual orientation, as well as many personal and professional characteristics such as communication style, work habits, behavioral attitudes, economic status, knowledge, thought processes, ideas, life experiences, cultural background, and geographical origin. Diversity and Inclusion focuses on relationships and how our varied backgrounds and experiences can add value to our mission, work, services, outreach, and culture.

Diversity and Inclusion focuses on both the present and future of a workforce:

PRESENT:

Internally, determine the organization's existing Diversity and Inclusion configuration, policies, processes, and beliefs, and utilize that information as a stepping stone toward bolstering the organization's people management and development programs to engage all employees. Externally, continue evaluation of outreach programs to ensure we are offering recreation activities that are accessible to all Texans.

FUTURE:

Engage all employees in enhancing the organizational culture where similarities, differences, complexities, and sometimes tensions are embraced and valued. In this environment, individuals may work to their full potential and the workplace presents a respectful and productive environment for everyone. In addition, future demographic trends are anticipated which will impact Diversity and Inclusion and must be reflected within the organization and with the constituents that we serve.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SHOULD:

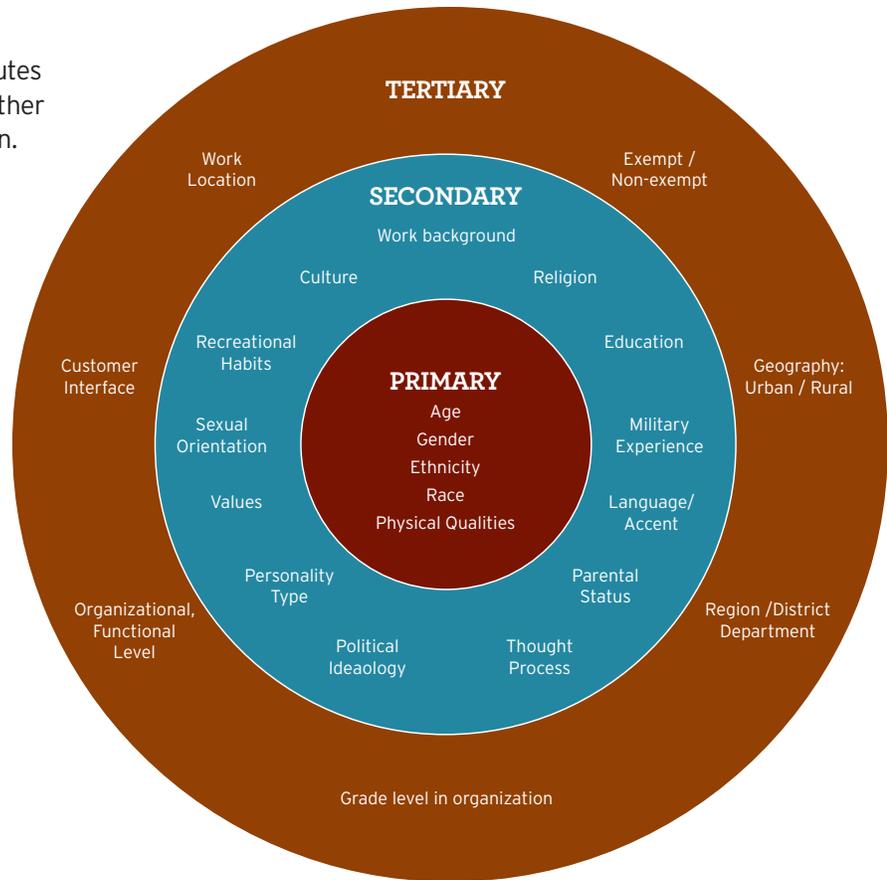
- Add value by enhancing opportunities for increased points of view among team members.
- Build awareness of the ways leaders can more effectively communicate internally and externally.
- Increase the size of the talent pool internally and externally.
- Reduce turnover through increased trust, morale and employee satisfaction.
- Increase customer satisfaction.
- Broaden customer base and revenue.
- Leverage employees' potential.
- Increase relevance to the state's diverse populace.
- Diversify customer and constituent participation.
- Should result in better product deliverables and solutions to challenges when broader experiences and perspectives are incorporated in decision-making processes.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SHOULD NOT:

- Foster processes that minimize the importance of other team members, especially white males.
- Have an objective to make others feel guilty about the past.
- Create a tool to pass over deserving team members for someone who is less qualified.
- Focus on getting rid of others who add value and replacing them with a non-traditional candidate.
- Push quotas.
- Lower standards.
- Diminish or undermine the importance of traditional partners and constituents.

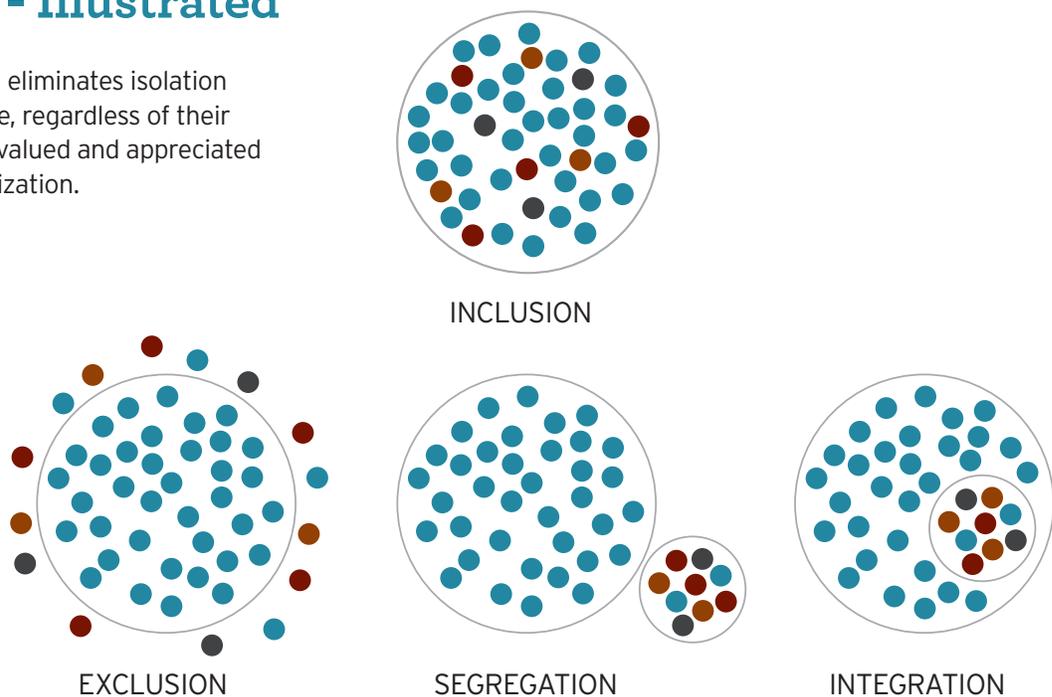
Diversity - Illustrated

Diversity includes unique dimensions of physical attributes that can be seen, as well as other attributes that cannot be seen.



Inclusion - Illustrated

Practicing inclusion eliminates isolation and allows everyone, regardless of their differences, to feel valued and appreciated by the entire organization.



TPWD Strategic Priorities

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is well poised to implement a successful Diversity and Inclusion program. TPWD's 2015 *Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan* includes the following priorities relevant to the agency's Diversity and Inclusion efforts:

Recruit and retain a professional and diverse workforce.

Promote an organizational culture which is informed, adaptive and innovative.

Increase the awareness and value of urban and suburban ecosystems.

Promote citizen participation in hands-on conservation.

Promote and provide outdoor education.

Encourage people of every age, backgrounds and ability to experience the outdoors.

Provide excellent customer service with integrity and professionalism.

The Value of Diversity and Inclusion at TPWD

The TPWD Diversity and Inclusion value proposition has a dual focus: internal and external.

Internally: TPWD has a rich history of serving the state of Texas with excellence. We have developed multiple initiatives to fulfill our mission of managing and conserving the natural and cultural resources of our state and to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for present and future generations. Our focus on providing outstanding service to this state has not wavered; however, as the demographics of our state have changed and will continue to change, our recruiting, hiring, and development must change to reflect this increasingly diverse populace. In order to better serve a more diverse populace, we must adjust our recruiting, hiring, and development practices. Our goal is to recruit and retain the best and brightest, and that includes people of different ethnicities, genders, ages, and backgrounds.

Externally: Our mission compels us to provide high-quality outdoor recreational experiences and to execute the most effective conservation initiatives for our state's lands, waters, fish and wildlife. In order to be successful at both, we need even more cooperation and input from our staff and constituents. That requires that we develop broader relationships beyond those already common to our agency. We have to make every effort to be inclusive in our programming, media, outreach, training, and partnerships. We must be vigilant in our efforts to engage all Texans in outdoor recreational activities and conservation efforts.

To accomplish this, TPWD will capitalize on the diverse attributes of our state to build an inclusive TPWD for tomorrow. TPWD will strive to be the Texas government model employer by leveraging diversity and inclusion to deliver the best public service on behalf of the citizens and resources of the state of Texas.

TPWD Diversity and Inclusion Pillars

The TPWD Diversity Working Group (chartered in February 2013) has embraced the theme “At TPWD, we are committed to promoting a diverse workforce and providing recreation opportunities that are inclusive of all Texans.”

TPWD will seek to become an employer of choice by achieving the following Diversity and Inclusion pillars:

RECRUITMENT: Recruit from a diverse, highly skilled group of potential applicants to secure a high performing workforce drawn from all segments of American society.

RETENTION: Cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH: Develop structures and strategies to equip leaders with the ability to manage diversity, be accountable, measure results, refine approaches on the basis of such data, and institutionalize a culture of inclusion.

The three pillars listed above are necessary to strengthen the integration of Diversity and Inclusion into the culture at TPWD. TPWD will meet these three goals by focusing on the six recommended priority areas established by the *TPWD Diversity Working Group Final Report* (December 2013):

1. Commit to a sustainable agency-wide Diversity and Inclusion program that fosters enhanced workforce and constituent diversity.
2. Encourage all TPWD employees to take responsibility for an enhanced culture of diversity and inclusion and provide the necessary tools and training to support them.
3. Leverage new strategies to expand diversity recruitment programs that have a clear pathway to employment.
4. Ensure that hiring and career development opportunities are transparent and available to all, and that employees are heard and supported.
5. Recognize the fundamental connection between efforts to diversify TPWD’s constituent base and workforce; and ensure that all outreach efforts and volunteer programs are fully leveraged.
6. Engage, invite and accommodate diverse audiences in TPWD facilities, activities and services.

TPWD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Implementation

RECRUITMENT PILLAR

OBJECTIVE: Develop and Execute Strategic Recruitment Outreach to a Broader Segment of the Population

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

1. Create a college and university recruitment plan that is inclusive of historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and institutions serving Asian Americans, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders.
2. Develop enhanced relationships with college administrators to assist in recruitment.
3. Track applicant flow for various demographics. Provide quarterly report to division leaders.
4. Require monthly report of outreach efforts.
5. Establish annual recruitment goals for each division.
6. Involve various levels and greater engagement of employees in the recruitment efforts.
7. Engage diverse recruiting venues, i.e. websites, magazines, business publications, and ethnic- and gender-focused professional outreach organizations.
8. Synchronize outreach and recruitment activities across all divisions.
9. Establish strategic relationships with internal and external constituents at colleges and universities.
10. Provide clear applicant education and certification requirements to all diverse colleges and universities.
11. Review all divisions' interview processes to ensure objectivity in candidate selections.
12. Establish employer branding strategy which includes images that reflect the target audience.
13. Develop a centralized internship focus for all divisions with one point of contact, a start-to-finish participation plan, and a way to capture participant and division feedback with the goal of full time employment.

SUCCESS MEASURES:

1. Increased number of diverse applicants for all open positions.
2. Expanded diversity in applicant pools.
3. Growth in acceptance rate of diverse applicants.
4. Increased number of diverse interns becoming full time employees.
5. Increased number of first-time viewers to the TPWD website.
6. Reports (appropriate intervals) that measure diversity of applicant pool.
7. Reduced early attrition of new hires.
8. Increased number of TPWD employees across the state equipped to assist with cross-divisional recruiting.
9. Increased interest in careers at TPWD by high school and college students of all backgrounds.

RETENTION PILLAR

OBJECTIVE: Promote an Inclusive Work Environment through Education, Development and Employee Engagement Activities

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

1. Appoint an employee advisory committee that supports Diversity and Inclusion (D & I) efforts and provides feedback to the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Executive Director.
2. Implement D & I management education.
3. Review leadership development programs, determine whether they draw from all segments of the workforce, and develop strategies to eliminate barriers wherever they exist.
4. Work with HR to develop succession planning processes.
5. Encourage managers to adopt broader career paths that meet current and future needs.
6. Distribute employee demographic data within each division bi-annually.
7. Require cultural awareness education for all customer-facing personnel.
8. Provide monthly D & I information via internal media.
9. Create D & I webpages for TPWD.
10. Develop D & I strategic messaging for use by all TPWD leaders.
11. Establish additional policies that address and discourage non-inclusive behavior.
12. Encourage participation and transparency in career development practices for all TPWD employees.
13. Incorporate into the New Employee Orientation program a presentation on the value of Diversity and Inclusion to TPWD .
14. Host quarterly employee information sessions to educate employees on other cultures.
15. Initiate and maintain recognition of diversity and inclusion via awards for inclusive behaviors at TPWD.

SUCCESS MEASURES:

1. Reduced voluntary turnover by diverse employees.
2. Improved scores on Survey of Employee Engagement and Culture survey.
3. Increased diverse hiring.
4. Effective communication between employees from different backgrounds.
5. Growth in support of Diversity and Inclusion education and policies.
6. Succession planning for all employees.
7. Decreased discrimination reports.
8. Increased promotions of diverse employees.
9. Increased support of employee development at all levels within TPWD.
10. More effective leadership due to cross-cultural understanding.
11. Participation in at least two developmental activities annually by all employees.
12. Better organizational and individual performance due to increased trust and cooperation.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PILLAR

OBJECTIVE: Create Inclusive Programs and Facilities and Services to Accommodate Diverse Constituents

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

1. Establish strategic relationships with local faith-based and community organizations to better understand their views on outdoor activities and conservation.
2. Educate outreach personnel, law enforcement and state park employees on cultural understanding and building relationships across cultures.
3. Include more diverse images in both print and electronic media.
4. Update website with images and languages that are inclusive of those in our state.
5. Partner with other in-state wildlife, recreation and conservation organizations to create synergy in messages to diverse audiences.
6. Seek opportunities to acquire and develop park lands and promote high-quality outdoor experiences close to urban communities.
7. Publish diversity outreach events in magazines and other publications.
8. Establish relationships with and participate in events with outdoor recreation sponsors that support D & I.
9. Solicit D & I stories from all TPWD employees and circulate via web, e-mail, and print media both internally and externally.

SUCCESS MEASURES:

1. Increased participation in outreach events by diverse population.
2. Increased visitation of state parks by diverse population.
3. Increased number of volunteers for outreach events at parks and other TPWD venues.
4. Higher positive scores on cultural survey.
5. Increase in diverse talent seeking careers at TPWD.

SCOPE:

This Plan applies to all TPWD divisions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Office, Directors, Managers/Supervisors

Responsible for the implementation and management of this Plan within their areas of responsibility.

Employees

Responsible for upholding organizational values and working to achieve clear organizational D & I goals and objectives in a mutually respectful work environment.

Human Resources

Responsible for facilitating compliance by managers and supervisors in accordance with the TPWD Human Resource Policy, and state and federal laws. For the purpose and execution of this plan, servicing human resources offices will be responsible for management and implementation of the various action items and measures as identified by the TPWD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Diversity Committee

Responsible for engaging managers and supervisors through departmental diversity policy development, and for collaborating with the TPWD Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer on diversity outreach, retention strategies, and cultural awareness training.

This document is the property of TPWD Diversity Office. Created in compliance with information from the following: TPWD Diversity Working Group, *TPWD 2013-17 Natural Agenda*, and *The 2015 Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan* for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Editing and compliance oversight executed by Lana Daniels of the Executive Office and Larry Sieck of Project Management Office. If you have any questions concerning this document, please contact David Buggs at david.buggs@tpwd.texas.gov

4200 Smith School Road Austin, Texas 78744

CONCLUSION:

Embedding Diversity and Inclusion into the Culture

Our outdoor spaces have never been more important to us than they are today. However, modern technology and other interests are competing for the time and attention of new and legacy outdoor users. The health of our environment, and specifically, our lands, waters, fish, wildlife and parks, needs to be the concern of all residents. As Texas turns into more of an urban state, our outdoor spaces become increasingly important for the preservation of nature and the restoration of our people. They must become a priority for all and not just the faithful few.

Sharing the importance of conservation and outdoor recreation and getting our increasingly diverse population engaged in what we do will not happen by chance. We must implement an organized approach that is strategic and practical. It has to be culturally sensitive enough to attract those who have not been customarily targeted and balanced enough to retain those who have traditionally engaged with conservation-focused organizations like ours.

The execution of our Diversity and Inclusion strategy should be carried out in conjunction and in partnership with TPWD's other organizational strategies. This collaborative engagement of strategies is key to the agency's long-term success and relevance to those we serve now and in the future. The implementation and success of these strategies rests with the senior staff's commitment to implement these plans and to provide guidance to the broader employee base on the benefits and the value of Diversity and Inclusion.

