



September 22, 2020

Texas Sunset Advisory Commission
P.O. Box 13066
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Chairman Cyrier and Commissioners:

The Texas Recreation and Park Society (TRAPS) strongly supports the mission of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and believes the department has been under insightful and effective leadership. TRAPS appreciates the effort the Commission has demonstrated in preparing for the review of TPWD. Certainly, the review and assessment by the commission; and their effort to seek public feedback on the department, demonstrates the overall commitment to continuous quality improvement of the department and services to our citizens and visitors.

The Texas Recreation and Park Society values good stewardship and conservation of our natural resources, while providing access to the great outdoors and recreational opportunities, which is central to TPWD and its purpose; and should be continued.

- Texas is one of the fastest growing states in the country; and the demand on our resources will continue, making the mission and services of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department critical to economic development and quality of life within Texas. However, new and expanded state parks and protected areas are needed to keep up with the population boom, while protecting the wildlife habitat that is threatened.
- "The urban metropolises have a much lower per capita allocation of recreation and conservation acreage than counties with smaller populations. "20 out of 254 counties" reported zero recreation-conservation acres." More than 25% of Texans "indicate that their community lacks various outdoor recreation opportunities."(2018 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan). Equitable access to conservation and recreation lands, particularly in urban areas, is much needed and should be the focus of state and local decision makers.
- There has been limited federal funding, and no state appropriations towards the goal of expanding the number of state parks noted in the *Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan* (TPWD, 2002).

Therefore, TRAPS supports the recommendation for TPWD to develop a strategic long range plan, with measurable outcomes, to address these issues; as well as other issues such as water resources, funding mechanisms and youth engagement in the outdoors (developing the next generation of environmental stewards and conservationists). Without question, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is needed ... they are an ESSENTIAL agency of the State of Texas.

Respectfully,

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