

# **1. PRACTICE AND PROMOTE SCIENCE-BASED STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

*Texans should strive to conserve, manage and restore the vitality of our terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems to protect the rich natural and cultural legacy of Texas. Science drives our understanding of the functions of natural systems and allows us to anticipate changes and to address emerging issues that impact fish and wildlife resources. Relevant science informs our Commission and focuses the actions of staff, constituents, and partners on the highest priority needs.*

## **A. TPWD will be an exemplary steward by utilizing and promoting the best available science and ecosystem-based management**

1. Conduct research and demonstrate native ecosystem management on TPWD lands and waters
2. Conduct comprehensive research on wildlife, fish and ecosystem status and trends
3. Manage landscapes and watersheds holistically using state-of-the-art geospatial mapping and analytical tools
4. Manage lands and waters for sustainable harvest of fish and wildlife
5. Monitor and evaluate trends and impacts of invasive species
6. Conduct archeological investigations as part of the site planning process
7. Maintain a level of compliance which meets or exceeds local, county, state and federal environmental regulations

## **B. TPWD will provide leadership that supports healthy aquatic ecosystems**

1. Provide relevant biological data to local, state and federal partner agencies to help ensure water quality and quantity for fish and wildlife
2. Integrate stream, estuarine and marine data to improve management of hydrologic systems
3. Establish cooperative strategies to promote long-term fish and wildlife needs in all statewide and local water planning, distribution, and permitting processes
4. Develop and refine tools and methodologies for evaluating water quality
5. Maintain natural hydrology and hydrologic events in Texas rivers and streams
6. Promote native aquatic biological diversity in Texas riparian, estuarine and marine environments
7. Develop a prioritization model for protection of stream segments
8. Control the spread of nuisance aquatic species by identifying and addressing the mechanisms and pathways by which they are introduced and distributed
9. Encourage the transfer of water rights to the Texas Water Trust or appropriate non-profit water trusts

**C. TPWD will maintain, restore, and protect healthy terrestrial ecosystems**

1. Promote land-management practices that benefit fish and wildlife
2. Prioritize conservation at landscape scales, such as watersheds, recharge zones, migratory bird flyways and ecoregions
3. Focus resources and attention on highest priority threats to native fish and wildlife habitats
4. Pursue dedicated funding for land acquisition
5. Inventory conservation, recreation and historic properties to identify threats and opportunities
6. Develop an acquisition model that is flexible, opportunistic, emphasizes landscape scale conservation and lands of particularly high biological or cultural value
7. Acquire additional wildlife management areas in underrepresented ecological regions for habitat conservation, demonstration, and public hunting
8. Develop guidelines and protocols for habitat restoration and management
9. Educate citizens on the significance and sensitivity of riparian zones, corridors, and other sensitive habitats
10. Establish protocols to address invasive species, wildlife diseases and other threats to fish and wildlife
11. Control exotic and feral species on TPWD lands

**D. TPWD will foster conservation of native ecosystems on private lands**

1. Prioritize voluntary incentive-based management strategies as an alternative to regulatory strategies
2. Increase opportunities for landowners to participate in research and demonstration projects on Wildlife Management Areas
3. Increase acreage covered by Wildlife Management Plans with a focus on high value fish and wildlife habitats
4. Integrate watershed health and water quality and quantity recommendations in all wildlife management plans
5. Educate private landowners on the economics of conservation
6. Increase the number of wildlife cooperatives, with a focus on native habitat restoration
7. Educate wildlife cooperative leadership on funding opportunities to help accomplish habitat restoration goals
8. Encourage neighboring landowners to establish cooperative conservation agreements

***E. TPWD will maintain the highest level of scientific validity and credibility***

1. Collaborate with other science-based organizations to improve scientific methodologies
2. Encourage TPWD scientists to pursue rigorous scientific studies and to pursue publication of results in peer reviewed publications and journals
3. Expand our research efforts by facilitating scientific collaboration over the internet and assisting in data analysis, standardization, and consolidation
4. Conduct periodic science reviews to ensure the best science methodologies are used

***F. TPWD will protect and assist in the recovery of threatened, endangered, and high priority species***

1. Utilize the Texas Wildlife Action Plan as the guiding document for prioritizing agency action to address rare and imperiled species
2. Conduct research on the status of threatened, endangered, and high priority species
3. Manage biotic communities to protect, recover, and prevent species from becoming threatened or endangered
4. Provide technical guidance to private landowners, local, regional, and state communities for protecting and managing habitats for rare and priority species
5. Include consideration of high-priority and rare species in Wildlife Management Plans (WMPs) and divisional operating plans

***G. TPWD will cultivate partnerships that result in tangible conservation benefits***

1. Work with federal, state, local, international and private partners to generate creative ways to achieve landscape-scale management
2. Continue to utilize the Texas Conservation and Recreation Forum (TxCRF) to foster regional and statewide dialogue
3. Use joint ventures as a model to identify large scale habitat recovery goals and the tools needed to accomplish those goals

***H. TPWD will protect native ecosystems with regulatory actions and enforcement***

1. Provide enforceable regulatory recommendations to the Commission based on science and human dimensions that encourage legal, sustainable, and ethical use of natural resources
2. Advise agencies and developers on the avoidance and minimization of fish and wildlife impacts associated with highway, utility, and public infrastructure projects
3. Coordinate with local, state and federal agencies to combat environmental crimes
4. Educate and work collaboratively with business and industry regarding compliance with natural resource regulations
5. Promote Operation Game Thief to curb illegal exploitation of wildlife resources

***I. TPWD will protect and interpret its cultural resources for Texans***

1. Document impacts to cultural resources in all planning activities
2. Expand efforts to connect families and landowners with the cultural heritage of Texas
3. Coordinate with the Texas Historic Commission on activities and promotion of historic sites
4. Implement archeological site monitoring plans
5. Develop training for site staff in the identification and protection of archaeological and historic resources

***J. TPWD will anticipate and plan for emerging conservation issues***

1. Participate in regional, state, national and international scientific forums to identify and address emerging issues
2. Consider the best available science on climate change in all conservation planning
3. Support conservation actions which help mitigate climate change impacts and facilitate fish and wildlife adaptation needs
4. Evaluate emerging energy, utility, and fuel technologies and implement when appropriate
5. Encourage renewable energy development projects to consider effects on native fish and wildlife habitats and populations

## **2. INCREASE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN THE OUTDOORS**

*Access to a variety of outdoor experiences is critical for Texans' health and quality of life. As the vast majority of Texans reside in large urban areas, the need to provide affordable and accessible outdoor recreational and educational opportunities of all kinds to traditional and non-traditional users will only increase. As an agency, TPWD must remain relevant and engaged with citizens from all walks of life. We acknowledge the need to maximize the use of limited public lands and incentivize public access to private lands.*

### **A. TPWD will provide a variety of high-quality, nature-friendly, outdoor recreational opportunities on TPWD sites**

1. Acquire and develop a premier state park in the Dallas-Fort Worth region within the next biennium
2. Seek opportunities to create large state parks in areas of high biological and recreational value within two hours of urban centers
3. Expand and enhance agency sites by acquiring inholdings and adjacent tracts
4. Provide a broad spectrum of outdoor opportunities including wilderness experiences
5. Plan, design, and construct facilities that provide better access to the outdoors for people of all ages, abilities and interests
6. Enhance public recreation opportunities by providing appropriate amenities
7. Increase public fishing and hunting opportunities on suitable agency sites
8. Increase public awareness of recreational opportunities at appropriate agency sites

### **B. TPWD will increase access to public and private lands and waters for recreation compatible with natural resources**

1. Partner with local, state, and federal agencies to provide increased access to public lands and waters
2. Work with private landowners to secure additional public access to lands and waters
3. Increase public access to recreational opportunities on streams, reservoirs, and gulf waters
4. Encourage private and public/private collaborations among adjacent landowners to link recreational venues
5. Encourage wildlife cooperatives to organize recreational activities and events
6. Increase the number of special permit drawn-hunts on private lands

**C. TPWD will encourage people of all ages and abilities to experience the outdoors**

1. Promote the enjoyable and ethical use of natural, cultural and recreational resources
2. Expand the outdoor family concept on both public and private lands
3. Reach out to new and unengaged audiences such as youth and urbanites and non-traditional constituents
4. Reduce language barriers through multilingual programs
5. Offer recreational workshops which physically engage participants in outdoor activities
6. Promote recreational opportunities through outreach events
7. Collaborate with educators, health, and physical education instructors to advocate a lifelong interest in outdoor recreational activities
8. Increase shooting opportunities by promoting construction of gun and archery ranges and simulation facilities
9. Continue to provide federally-funded certification programs such as Aquatic, Hunter and Boater Education
10. Educate the public on the contributions made by hunters and anglers to conservation through user fees/license purchases
11. Expand contribution of volunteers at agency sites
12. Ensure the *Outdoor Annual* and *Texas Parks Guide* are accessible and easy to use

**D. TPWD will encourage nature and heritage tourism**

1. Assist private landowners in developing businesses to increase recreational venues for wildlife viewing, photo safaris, and other nature-based recreation
2. Partner with public and private organizations to establish and promote natural and cultural areas and trails
3. Promote paddling trails, recreational fishing, and other forms of aquatic based recreation in and around urban areas
4. Employ marketing campaigns to promote agency sites and other nature tourism activities and destinations

### **3. PROMOTE ADVOCACY FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES**

*Texas has a vast diversity of ecosystems and resources, many of which are unique to Texas. These landscapes transcend political and ownership boundaries. As a result, wide-ranging awareness and cooperation are a must for effective stewardship. We will develop an array of public and private strategies that build broad-based support for successful and adaptive management, restoration, and conservation.*

#### ***A. TPWD will expand outreach to increase awareness and participation in the conservation of natural and cultural resources***

1. Cultivate relationships across national and international boundaries to promote ecosystem and landscape-scale actions
2. Expand efforts to connect Texans with nature
3. Expand, encourage and support citizen science programs
4. Collaborate with conservation partners to engage youth in programs such as Bob-White Brigade, Bass Brigade, and Junior Angler
5. Expand training and curriculum tools available to educators
6. Act as communication liaisons to promote ecological literacy

#### ***B. TPWD will advocate for water quality and quantity for fish and wildlife***

1. Actively participate in regional and watershed planning teams and organizations to help ensure consideration of fish, wildlife, inflows and water quality
2. Advance public awareness and understanding of the significance and benefits of well-managed water resources
3. Educate Texas students on how land use and water quality affect the lives and health of people, flora and fauna
4. Promote the reduction of urban pollution and water consumption

**C. TPWD will increase citizen awareness of the value of urban ecosystems**

1. Provide technical guidance to local governments regarding urban conservation issues
2. Provide recommendations and assistance to urban land managers regarding the importance of green spaces, watersheds, aquifer recharge zones and park lands
3. Promote the benefits of restoring habitats with native plants by conducting demonstration projects
4. Demonstrate the benefits of rainwater harvesting, renewable energy and other green technologies
5. Support the professional development of appropriate staff to address conservation issues specific to urban audiences
6. Contribute to state and national urban wildlife discussions

## **4. EMPLOY EFFICIENT, SUSTAINABLE, AND CREDIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES**

*Efficient and effective management of people, assets and finances is critical for the success of any organization's operation. Responsiveness, transparency, and accountability are cornerstones of our commitment to the public. We will strive to eliminate communication boundaries by using a cross-divisional, multi-disciplinary and skilled workforce.*

### **A. TPWD will provide excellent customer service with integrity and professionalism**

1. Use emerging and established technologies to better serve customers and remain competitive in the marketplace
2. Ensure accessibility of all programs, facilities, and services
3. Encourage Texans to speak to us through expanded social media tools, public meetings, public forums, one-on-one conversations and customer surveys
4. Expand web-based opportunities to provide fast, secure one-stop services

### **B. TPWD will continuously improve business management systems, business practices, technologies, and work culture**

1. Maintain exemplary fiscal controls consistent with industry standards and compliant with government requirements
2. Increase understanding of business practices by using transparent processes
3. Conduct independent audits to ensure public funds are expended in a responsible manner
4. Enhance internal business systems to improve, integrate and protect agency information
5. Adopt best practices to reduce use of utilities, fuel, and consumables

### **C. TPWD will maximize human and financial resources**

1. Partner with stakeholders to seek consistent state funding for agency operations
2. Identify and leverage new and existing sustainable revenue streams to maximize recreation and conservation efforts
3. Pursue dedicated state revenue funding for land and water acquisitions
4. Seek additional grant opportunities
5. Manage natural and cultural resources for social and economic benefits
6. Periodically gauge the success of the *Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan*

***D. TPWD will promote an organizational culture which is informed, adaptive and innovative***

1. Encourage and reward creativity and “outside the box” thinking
2. Keep agency policies, plans, and programs relevant through periodic review
3. Advance employees’ understanding of their contribution to the agency mission

***E. TPWD will establish and enforce regulations that are balanced, effective, and easy to understand***

1. Provide the Commission with both the science and human dimension implications of potential regulatory actions
2. Simplify regulations and minimize regulatory changes
3. Raise level of voluntary compliance by increasing the number of public contacts

***F. TPWD will efficiently manage our assets to achieve the highest standards of conservation and recreation***

1. Balance customer and ecosystem needs when planning site acquisitions and development
2. Implement plans for maintenance and repair of agency equipment and for preservation of all agency facilities
3. Add conservation lands through regulatory tools such as compensatory mitigation and natural resource damage assessments
4. Provide site managers with the skills and tools to work with neighboring landowners
5. Transfer agency sites that do not contribute to the mission
6. Assess the cost-benefit for appropriate re-use of historic buildings versus new construction
7. Implement practices that promote green construction

***G. TPWD will develop effective communication processes***

1. Improve dialogue with regulatory and oversight agencies
2. Advance the internal and external exchange of information through existing venues and expanded social networking tools
3. Improve cross-divisional communication to maximize efficiency and minimize duplicative efforts
4. Ensure staff have electronic access to resources, applications, services and each other
5. Implement suitable recommendations from the Survey of Organizational Excellence
6. Develop branding strategies for products and services

***H. TPWD will recruit and retain a professional and diverse workforce***

1. Develop competitive compensation strategies
2. Provide professional development and training to improve employees' knowledge, skills and abilities
3. Implement a recruitment strategy that positions the agency to find the best and brightest