“CONSERVING OUR TEXAS OUTDOOR HERITAGE”

THANK YOU!
“CONSERVING OUR TEXAS OUTDOOR HERITAGE”

TERRIFIC SPEAKERS!
A few years ago, I was watching a program on television; it was on public speaking, and they had this expert on there. I never will forget his words, when he said, “The human brain is a wonderful organ. It begins functioning when you are born and it continues to work all the way up until it is time for you to give a speech.” So, before I begin to resemble that statement, I’d like to take this opportunity to introduce a few individuals.

Would Marko Barrett, J. David Anderson, and Dr. Louis Harveson please stand. Ladies and gentlemen, these individuals represent the other three Officers of the Texas Wildlife Association, and I’m looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and working alongside them over the next year or two. Let’s please give them a round of applause.

Words cannot do justice in trying to describe how I feel right now. I am so incredibly humbled to stand here before you right now, and I feel so incredibly honored to serve this organization and its members in this capacity.

I initially joined TWA back in 1986, while I was still in college. It does not seem that long ago that I attended my first TWA Convention, back in 1989, at the YO Ranch Hilton in Kerrville. I can still recall how in awe I was back then, meeting folks like Larry Weishuhn, David Langford, Charly McTee and many others; being able to meet people who embodied the kind of things that inspired me back then and embody the kind of things that continue to inspire me today.

Growing up on the banks of the East Fork of the Trinity River in Kaufman County, I was raised a modest lifestyle. My dad was a fireman, and while I was in college at A&M, my mother cleaned houses so that they could afford to send me to school to pursue my dream of obtaining a wildlife management degree.

The ranch that I grew up on was our three-acre ranch. Obviously, three acres does not really constitute a ranch, but for a 6, 7, 8, 9-year old boy, during those early formative years, those three acres represented my little ranch.

 Located on the east end of those three acres was a tree-line that ran down the edge of our property line and dumped into a larger block of woods. And in the middle of that tree-line stood a large post oak tree that was largest tree in that area. I can recall spending hours underneath that big post oak, shooting at every bird that was within reasonable or even unreasonable distance of my BB gun. And I can recall, when I had just turned 7, shortly before his death, my grandfather telling me, “You best leave those mockingbirds alone, and only shoot the sparrows and starlings.” To say I had trigger itch back during those days would be a colossal understatement, I assure you! I eventually graduated up to the old Benjamin pump pellet gun, and then to a Savage .22 and .410 over and under. I took many a squirrel at that spot where the big post oak still stands today. That particular spot represented this incredible Sense of Place to me. And it still does today.

I think most of you can probably relate to what we are talking about, here. For some of you, that Sense of Place may be along the back sendero in South Texas, or a small pond behind your home, or even in an inner-city park in Houston, Texas, or perhaps a grand vista in West Texas. Or, maybe for some of you, that Sense of Place is simply a particular deer stand that puts you in a state of mind that only you can fully comprehend and appreciate how that makes you feel.

It should be our endeavor to hope that someday, all kids will have an opportunity to experience a Sense of Place that involves some type of outdoor setting. This Sense of Place I am talking about is certainly one of the fundamental ingredients in helping to advance conservation value.
Another fundamental ingredient in advancing conservation value is the importance of community, or in this case, what we might refer to as Sense of Community. It’s interesting to me that when you have interaction of individuals that make up a group, or make up a community, it’s this interaction that often creates synergies. These synergies create values. And value is often the precursor of action, or in this case, conservation action.

Uniquely, our TWA community, from a membership standpoint, is one that we often refer to as our proverbial big tent. And in many ways, TWA is a very large tent. The spirit of our mission spans many different stakeholder groups and many different stakeholder interests. This, in itself, can sometimes inherently be a recipe for challenge and can sometimes be a recipe for conflict. But that’s okay. Simply put, TWA cannot always be everything, to everyone, all of the time.

Despite the diversity that exists within the stakeholder interests of our organization, we tend to lack diversity in other areas. When you look at the percentage of women that make up our membership, though we have gained a little ground in this area over the last few years, we are still lacking. When you look at the percentage of young adults, those in college or freshly out of college; when you look at our ethnic diversity...Folks, we need to do a better job at developing a better formula for addressing these shortfalls. It is my sentiment that this diversity provides us with a unique platform to amplify our voice to reach larger and broader audiences.

A third aspect of advancing conservation value, especially in a state like Texas, is the relevance of private lands. Not only is it important for us to recognize, promote, and celebrate the vast and diverse values of wildlife that are produced on our private lands, but it is also extremely important for those landowners to be rewarded for their stewardship practices that sustain those resources and sustain those values. Aldo Leopold, who was an intellectual giant in the history of our Conservation Community, summed it up well in 1934, when he claimed, “Conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public’s interest.” I think it’s amazing how contemporary this philosophy remains today.

This three-pronged approach, that I just described, is a fundamental recipe for advancing conservation value in Texas. And we must always remember that a society that is lacking conservation value is a society that is certainly destined for third-world greatness. When I think of TWA, I think of an organization that is in the business of advancing conservation value, but we must learn to play this game even smarter, and we must learn how to play this game even harder.

We must recognize that it is not only important for our mission to be relevant to those people in rural Texas, but it is also very important for our mission to be relevant to those citizens who live in those metro areas and to those legislators who represent those urban districts. Diversity in our membership allows us to help bridge that gap.

We will continue to be a good steward of our mission. We will continue to be a good steward of our values. And we will continue to fight a good fight whenever it is necessary. And we will not, let me repeat, we will NOT back down from, waiver from, or compromise these three principles.

That, I assure you!
Quickly changing gears, I want to briefly share with you what a few of my visions are for TWA over the next few years. These are not goals, but are visions that I hope will be embraced by each of you in this room, as well as by our membership, in general.

1. First, I look forward to TWA placing more emphasis on assuming a more creative and enterprising approach at generating revenue, growing our programs, and deploying our mission.
2. I look forward to TWA placing more emphasis on engaging our broad leadership, especially with our Directors.
3. I look forward to TWA providing more landing platforms for those members who wish to participate in whatever fashion uniquely suits them, whether that be through their time, their money, their various other resources, or their sphere of influence with their community of people.
4. I also look forward to TWA continuing to cultivate our existing partnerships, as well as exploring the possibilities of new partnerships and collaborative efforts with other groups, as a means of leveraging our resources.
5. And on January 13, 2015, at the start of the 84th Texas Legislature, I look forward to the Texas Wildlife Association providing visible strength at the Capitol of Texas, advocating on behalf of landowners, advocating on behalf of hunters, and advocating on behalf of our state’s amazing natural resources.

Regarding immediate needs, as many of you know, this Convention is far and away our biggest fundraiser of the year. With this in mind, I have a few requests.

Number 1: During tonight’s auction, I want you to raise your hand so high and so often that you feel like you are playing a tap dance on the ceiling of this room.

Number 2: For years, Dr. Wallace Klussmann had busted his tail sitting out here in the hallway holding out his tin cup asking for us to make a contribution to our important PAC fund, and for years we have rewarded him with a modest contribution. Ladies and gentlemen, when you consider what’s at stake…private lands, hunting, and our important wildlife resources, there is absolutely no reason we why should not be able to raise a minimum of a $100,000 every year at this Convention for our TWA PAC. I will pledge $2,500 right now out of my pocket, and I ask that each of you, when you leave this room, the first thing you do is go see Dr. Klussmann at our PAC booth.

I beg you….I plead with you….please help us today with these immediate needs.
In closing, I want to quickly reflect back on a time in Texas history. The year was 1836. Shortly after crossing over into Texas, a man from Tennessee sat down and penned a letter that he sent home to his son and daughter. In this letter, he wrote, “I must say as to what I’ve seen of Texas, it is the garden spot of the world. The best land and best prospects for health I ever saw.”

Less than two months after writing that letter, David Crockett died at the Battle of the Alamo, just a few miles from where I stand right now. Obviously, Crockett recognized Texas as having an incredible Sense of Place. So incredible, that in fact, he was willing to give his life to fight for and try and defend these values and qualities.

Some 177 years later, I think it’s remarkable that we have a room full of people here today who recognize the same values and qualities that make Texas a very special place for us all to call home. Thank you so much for all that you do for Texas and for all that you do for Texas Wildlife Association.
The Texas Wildlife Association welcomed Greg Simons of San Angelo as the organization’s 15th President, as well as three other Officers and 67 new Board members, following elections on July 12 at the TWA Joint Membership and Directors Meeting.

Simons owns and operates Wildlife Systems, Inc., a company he formed in 1987. Wildlife Systems, Inc., based out of San Angelo, operates hunting and wildlife programs on approximately 800,000 acres of private land in Texas. The company has been involved with hunting programs in several other states and foreign countries, as well. Simons is a Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences degree graduate of Texas A&M University.

Simons previously served the Texas Wildlife Association as Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. He succeeds Glen Webb of Abilene as President, following Webb’s completion of his second one-year term as President.

Simons defeated Mike Murski of Dallas in a ballot election for TWA President (2013-2014). Murski was nominated for TWA President from the floor. It was the first contested election for TWA President in the organization’s history. TWA Directors vote on all TWA Officer elections.

“I am so incredibly humbled to stand here before you right now, and I feel so incredibly honored to serve this organization and its members in this capacity,” said Simons during his Presidential Address to convention attendees. Other Officers elected to serve the 6500-member statewide organization were Marcus T. Barrett IV of San Antonio – Vice President (one-year term), Dr. Louis Harveson of Alpine – Second Vice President for Programs (three-year term), and J. David Anderson of Houston – Treasurer (one-year term).

In addition, 67 individuals were elected to a three-year term on the Texas Wildlife Association Board of Directors (see list on page 31). Directors also rejected a proposed amendment to the TWA By-laws that would have allowed voting proxies by Directors at the July 12 meeting and at Directors meetings in the future.

Barrett serves as a Geologist for Barrett Brothers Oil & Gas. Currently, he is part owner and wildlife manager of Las Raices Ranch in Webb County and the Lago Escondido Ranch in Medina County.

Dr. Harveson is the Dan Allen Hughes, Jr., Endowed Director of the Borderlands Research Institute for Natural Resource Management at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas. The Borderlands Research Institute focuses on assisting landowners and managers of west Texas in managing the natural resources they have been entrusted with. Dr. Harveson is a Professor of Wildlife Management at the university.

Anderson serves as the CEO of Andon Specialties Inc. and Andon Energy Services LLC in Houston. He joined TWA in 1993. He is also a member of St. Luke’s Methodist Church Board of Stewards in Houston.
TWA Officers elected on July 12, 2013, to a one-year term were:

President – Greg Simons, San Angelo
Vice President – Marcus T. Barrett IV, San Antonio
Second Vice President for Programs – Dr. Louis Harveson, Alpine
Treasurer – J. David Anderson, Houston

TWA Directors (67) elected on July 12, 2013, to a three-year term ending in 2016 were:

Andy Allen, Boerne
Ernie Anglo, Midland
Terry Anderson, Martinsville
Hon. Katharine Armstrong Love, Austin
Bradford Barnes, Fort Worth
Rene Barnentos, San Antonio
Susi Bell, Ingram
Andrew Bier, Houston
Mark E. Bivins, Amarillo
Warren Bluntzer, Lometa
Lamar Brown, Austin
Dr. Larry Butler, Weatherford
E.A. “Bud” Christy, San Antonio
Hon. Susan Combs, Austin
John Baker, Houston
Clayton Wolter, Sarita
Stephen “Randy” West, San Antonio
Bryan Wagner, Ft. Worth
Tom Vandivier, Austin
Peggy Van Cleve, Carrizo Springs
David Synatzske, Cotulla
Lane Sumner, Kent
Don Steinbach, Burton

Other TWA Directors are:

DIRECTORS EMERITUS

Heilner Appling Jr., El Campo
Richard Bennett, Batesville
M. McLean Bowman, Carrizo Springs
Charles M. Davidson, San Antonio
Ed Dutch, Marble Falls
Derry T. Gardner, San Antonio
Luke C. Kellogg, Amarillo
Steve C. Lewis, San Antonio
Gary Machen, Pearsall
Paul E. McSween III, San Antonio
Murphy E. Ray Jr., Somerset
Wallace “Happy” Rogers III, Carrizo Springs
Charles Schreiner IV, Salado
Jimmie V. Thurmond III, San Antonio
Larry L. Weishuhn, Uvalde

HONORARY DIRECTORS EMERITUS

James L. “Jaimie” Hayne Jr., San Antonio
A.C. “Dick” Jones IV, Corpus Christi

DIRECTORS (TERMS EXPIRING 2014)

Curtis Anderson, Houston
J. David Anderson, Houston
Thomas Arnn, San Antonio
Joe Baker, San Antonio
Ty Boatsskewitz, Weatherford
Tom Beard, Alpine
James Blackwell, Littlefield
R. Warren Blesh, Goldthwaite
Gary Bomar, Abilene
Randy Cadwallader, San Antonio
Randy Cadwallader V, San Antonio
Linda Campbell, Austin
Jim Cathey, College Station
James Collins, McAllen
Gary Dietzmann, Cat Spring
Robert Dullnerg, San Antonio
Justin Feld, Kingsville
Joseph Fitzsimons, San Antonio
Dan Flournoy, Houston
Joel Glass, Encinal
Johnnie Hudman, Albany
Randall Hudson III, Ft. Worth
Ronald Johnson, Missouri City
Clayton Leonard, Hondo
Steve Mafrige, Tilden
Joey McCarty, Bulverde
Dr. Michael McCulloch, Odessa
Bruce McNabb, Fair Oaks Ranch
John B. Miller III, Houston
Jason Parrish, Austin
Scott Petty, Hondo
Bryan Pickens, Dallas
Randi Rehmann, Austin
Mike Reynolds, Austin
Homer Saye, Cypress
Carroll W. Schubert, San Antonio
Gary Schwarz, Harlingen
Greg Simons, San Angelo
Don Steinbach, Burton
Lane Sumner, Kent
David Synatzske, Cotulla
Sidney Terry, Houston
J. Timmins, Brownwood
Peggy Van Cleve, Carrizo Springs
Tom Vandivier, Austin
Bryan Wagner, Ft. Worth
Stephen “Randy” West, San Antonio
Craig Wingrove, San Antonio
Clayton Wolter, Sarita

DIRECTORS (TERMS EXPIRING 2015)

John Baker, Houston

CONRAD BARKER, MONTGOMERY
Marcus Barrett IV, San Antonio
James Barrow, San Antonio
Kenneth Bell, Spring Branch
Mike Berger, Spring
Albert Biedenharn, San Antonio
Al Bisbey, George West
Christine Buford, Harlingen (Past President)
William Carrington, San Antonio
Chuck Cashdollar, Spring
Ken Cearley, Happy
Deborah Clark, Henrietta
Kevin Comisky, Katy
Keith Crawford, Austin
Bob Dittmar, Kerrville
Steve Dutton, San Antonio
Keith Ferrell, Lake McQueeny
Donnie Freys, Hunt
Chaz Glace, Round Rock
Chuck Greco, Houston
Jeff Hanselka, La Vernia
Rebecca Heidelberg, Midland
Cal Hendrick, Odessa
Roger Hill III, San Antonio
James Hurst, Barnhart
Amanda Hurst, El Campo
Crystal Ivy, Brackettville
Karl Kinsel, San Antonio
Dan Kinsel III, Cotulla
William Knollee, Austin
Bart Koontz, San Antonio
Ben Love, Marathon
Mike Martinez, Fresno
Con Mims, Uvalde
Mike Murski, Dallas
William Osborn III, San Antonio
John Park, San Antonio
Chance Parker, Alpine
Jay Robertson, San Antonio
A. M. “Mac” Stringfield, San Antonio
Arthur Uhl III, San Antonio
Bob Warren, San Antonio
Beth Watson, Fredericksburg
David Watts, Houston
Rex Webb, Austin
William Wilson, Houston
Brad Wolfe, Brownsville
“I’m honored to have the chance to spend a little bit of time with this tremendous group of patriots. This is a room of Texans, of fighters, of lovers of liberty,” said Sen. Cruz, in his opening remarks. “You love the land and you love the God-given rights that each of us enjoy. And that is inspiring to break bread with you.”

Sen. Cruz highlighted some of the important challenges facing the federal government and our nation, but he said there is momentum among those promoting a new course.

“These are times of great challenge in our country. No one can look at what’s happening nationally and not be troubled for the future. But I want to give you a word of encouragement. I think we are in the process of turning this country around,” said Sen. Cruz. “We are seeing millions of Americans coming together and saying ‘Enough, already,’ we can’t keep going down these roads. We’ve got to turn around and get back to the principles this country were founded on. And I’m going to suggest two simple things that I think we need leaders in Washington to do and we need all of us to do to turn this country around: Number one, stand for principle. Number two, champion growth and opportunity.”

Sen. Cruz described the political mood in Washington, D.C. following the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, with pundits and “all of the gray beards” saying more federal gun-control laws were imminent. But, he said, something remarkable happened.

“And what happened, with a little bit of leadership in Washington, is the American people got involved. Millions of Americans began standing up, calling their Representative, sending emails, speaking out, saying, criminals – we ought to come down on them like a ton of bricks, but we shouldn’t be undermining the Constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans.

“And the voices of millions of American speaking up were heard in Washington, and I remember that evening when every one of the anti-gun bills came to the floor, every single bill that would have undermined the Second Amendment was voted down on the floor of the United States Senate.”

Sen. Cruz is serving his first term in the U.S. Senate, following his election in November 2012. He serves on the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; the Senate Committee on Armed Services; the Senate Committee on the Judiciary; the Senate Special Committee on Aging; and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.
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Friday night at WildLife 2013 was a big hit as over 800 people gathered to celebrate our state's strong hunting and outdoor heritage at the Texas Big Game Awards (TBGA) Statewide Sportsman's Celebration.

The top three animals from each scored category, as well as the hunters and the landowners from these entries, were recognized during the evening's festivities. Among these top three animals from the 2012-2013 season were four animals that made their way into the TBGA's all-time top five list. Seven Texas Slam recipients were also recognized for their dedication in harvesting a qualifying animal from all three “scored entry” categories during the same season.

The Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) was on display early in the program as TYHP hunters Victoria Voorhis and Shelby White gave moving speeches about their experiences with the program. Victoria captured the audience's attention with a heartfelt story about how hunting with TYHP has helped her deal with the loss of her father and grandfather. She said after meeting TYHP volunteers at Camp Agape, a bereavement camp for kids, her family began to participate in TYHP hunts. These hunts gave Victoria and her brother an opportunity to make great memories in the field and even the special opportunity to use their dad's and grandfather's old hunting gear themselves. These valuable experiences in the field with family have been meaningful in her life and something, she said, in which her father and grandfather would be very proud.

Shelby followed with a touching story of her own about how hunting with TYHP has offered her an opportunity to carry on the legacy of her late father, who was an avid outdoorsman. She shared some of her earliest childhood memories of spending time afield with her father and how she thought her chances of experiencing the outdoors were gone. She spoke of the strength gained from these outdoor experiences with TYHP and how they have prepared her for the next step in her life, as she prepares to attend college in the fall in pursuit of a degree in nursing.

These talented young ladies epitomize what the Texas Youth Hunting Program is all about, and the program is extremely fortunate to have them both as ambassadors. Carter Smith, Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), emphasized the strong partnership between the Texas Wildlife Association and TPWD. He highlighted the Texas Big Game Awards partnership that has been working now for 22 seasons, and he also outlined several TPWD successes that the state agency has experienced during its 50-year existence.

TBGA Conservation College Scholarship winner Shelby Kilpatrick was on hand to accept her award and to offer a few words to the large crowd. She talked passionately about why hunting is important to her and how she plans to use her Texas A&M University Entomology degree to make a positive difference in the field of natural resources.

King Ranch, Inc. was on hand to accept its award as TBGA Statewide Landowner of the Year. Tio Kleberg, accompanied by several ranch biologists, came up to accept the award and offer some historical perspective on ranch operations. Along with its extensive land stewardship practices, the King Ranch last season hosted 161 youth hunters and 34 Wounded Warriors.

Thanks to Chasco Constructors and the Nyle Maxwell family of dealerships for their sponsorship of the Friday evening events. It was a wonderful evening of camaraderie that celebrated our state's remarkable hunting heritage.
LANGFORD, WILKINS HONORED WITH SPECIAL TWA AWARDS

The Texas Wildlife Association honored two prominent Texas conservation leaders with special awards at the TWA General Session and Awards Luncheon on July 13.

David K. Langford of Comfort, a longtime Texas Wildlife Association and natural resource conservation leader and proponent of private lands stewardship, was presented the TWA Ray Murski Friend of Wildlife Award.

The TWA Ray Murski Friend of Wildlife Award recognizes a member of the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) that has made outstanding contributions to the Association and to wildlife habitat conservation. Ray Murski was a TWA Life Member and generous supporter and proponent of TWA’s mission and programs. He passed away in 2011.

“David K. Langford has been a cornerstone in the natural resource conservation arena for almost three decades in Texas. He has given tirelessly to TWA in many ways, both while serving as a TWA Executive Vice President and as a contractee, as well as serving as a valued TWA volunteer,” said TWA Vice President Marcus T. Barrett IV, in presenting the Award to Langford. “He uniquely understands some of the finer, more esoteric aspects of private lands stewardship, not only from a practitioner’s standpoint, but from a public policy standpoint, as well. He is a great advocate for the important cultures that relate to Texas, Texas landowners, and Texas citizenry. TWA would most assuredly not be as strong of an organization today if it were not for David K. Langford.”

Langford’s efforts contributed to promotion of the recognition of the stewardship role landowners take on, resulting in implementation of strong Conservation Legacy and Hunting Heritage programs within TWA and the development of essential staff to meet these needs.

“This is especially meaningful for me because it has Ray Murski’s name on it. And Ray Murski was as good of friend of mine, during my time at TWA, as and good a friend to me, personally, as I’ve had,” said Langford, in accepting the award. “I appreciate it, and I appreciate Ray’s name on it. Thank you.”

Langford is owner of Western Photography Company. His award-winning photographs have appeared in Texas Parks and Wildlife, Western Horseman, Outdoor Life, Field and Stream, Texas Highways, The Cattleman, American West, Texas Monthly, and other magazines.

Dr. Neal Wilkins of San Antonio, a respected wildlife biologist and wildlife conservation professional, was presented the TWA Sam Beasom Conservation Leader Award.

The TWA Sam Beasom Conservation Leader Award recognizes a member of the professional conservation community that has made and outstanding contribution to the conservation of Texas wildlife and shares the philosophies of TWA. Dr. Sam Beasom served as TWA Vice President from 1989-1993. He passed away in 1995.

“Dr. Neal Wilkins is one of the rare wildlifers who has been able to bridge a wildlife academia career with that which transcends boundaries into the private sector and onto the private landscape. He not only understands principles of natural resource conservation and private lands stewardship from a conceptual standpoint, but he understands how to deploy these disciplines,” said TWA Vice President Marcus T. Barrett IV, in presenting the Award to Wilkins. “He has served TWA as a dedicated volunteer for many years, including as TWA’s Vice President from 2004 thru 2012.”

Before becoming President and CEO of the East Wildlife Foundation in 2012, Wilkins was a Professor of Wildlife Science and served as the Director of the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources and the Texas Water Resources Institute, where he coordinated the programs of more than 45 scientists and professional staff.

“Listen, this is a great honor,” said Wilkins, in accepting the award. “I’ve got a bunch of years left, so perhaps I can do something to actually earn this. So, thank you, thank you, a lot.”

Wilkins has over 25 years of experience leading research and conservation efforts across private lands in Texas, Tennessee, Florida, Washington, and Oregon. His primary focus has been habitat management and conservation of land, water, and wildlife resources on private lands. Much of his work integrated science, policy and economics for developing wildlife conservation programs.
The Texas Wildlife Association Political Action Committee (TWAPAC) shattered previous fundraising records at the TWA convention with over $37,000 in contributions at WildLife 2013.

The previous record by the TWAPAC at convention was $14,000 in contributions.

The new total represents direct contributions to the TWAPAC and contributions to the TWAPAC resulting from the purchase of several Silent Auction items and a Grand Auction item at the convention.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott was a special guest at a TWAPAC Reception on July 13. General Abbott spoke to TWAPAC supporters about the importance of an effective political action committee to compliment an organization’s overall advocacy efforts.

At the reception, TWA Director Wallace Klussmann presented General Abbott with a campaign contribution from the TWAPAC. General Abbott announced his candidacy for Texas Governor the next afternoon in San Antonio.

Campaign contributions from the TWAPAC are recommended by the TWA Legislative Committee and then approved by TWA Officers. TWA members interested in making a voluntary contribution to the TWAPAC may call (210) 826-2904 for more information.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott graciously accepts a campaign contribution from the TWAPAC from TWA Director Wallace Klussmann at the TWAPAC reception. General Abbott announced his candidacy for Texas Governor the following day.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott gives “thumb up” to news that the TWAPAC was climbing in the rankings of Texas political action committees, as a result of record contributions to the TWAPAC by TWA members at WildLife 2013.
Zachary chose to complete Huntmaster training so he could better serve the program. To serve TWA, he volunteered and assisted with the last two TBGA banquets in Abilene.

The Texas Wildlife Association recognized two individuals at the TWA General Session and Awards Luncheon on July 13 for their outstanding contributions to the organization as volunteers.

Jenny Sanders of Freer was presented the 2013 TWA Volunteer of the Year Award.

Jenny is involved with all of TWA’s activities and its supported programs. She is a TWA Director and is actively involved with regional development in Region 8.

She serves on the Conservation Legacy Advisory Committee; she hosts Freer schools at the Temple Ranch for educational field investigation days; she serves as Vice President of Texas Brigades, is a member of the South Texas Buckskin Brigade Steering Committee, and is the coordinator of the W.I.L.D. Program; and she has assisted in promoting educational field days for land managers.

In regards to youth hunting, she hosts youth hunters at the Temple Ranch.

In terms of advocacy, Jenny is a strong proponent of private land stewardship and has testified on several occasions in Austin. She serves on the TWA Legislative Committee. She has supported the TWAPAC and the TWA “Boots on the Ground” event in Austin.

TWA is honored and grateful for her outstanding efforts. Jenny Sanders is making a difference!

Zachary Glass of Eola was presented the 2013 TWA Youth Volunteer of the Year Award.

Zachary has been a Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) Assistant Huntmaster since 2011, and he has demonstrated leadership, initiative and willingness to serve the program. He has been assisting with TYHP for at least 10 years. During this period, he helped put on at least 60 youth hunts, doing a lot of little “go-fer” jobs that are necessary for success. He did these without complaining, and he eagerly accepted all assignments.

Each of these years, he has assisted with maintaining and warehousing organizational property. This year, he dedicated over 500 hours to the program, by assisting with hunts, 13 promotional/educational events, and warehousing. At his young age, he is an excellent outdoor youth leader who serves as a youth role model and is willing to educate others.

Zachary chose to complete Huntmaster training so he could better serve the program. To serve TWA, he volunteered and assisted with the last two TBGA banquets in Abilene.

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AFTER THE HUNT

Proper Taxidermy Preparation: James Newport, owner of Mesquite Creek Taxidermy, highlighted the best handling practices to employ to make sure your animal is in the best possible condition for your taxidermist. The session was very informative, and it even had long-time hunters leaving the room with a new perspective on how they handle their capes and meat. James had multiple taxidermy specimens on hand to use as examples, and he discussed a number of things to look for when shopping for a taxidermist.

Ways to Make Wild Hog Gourmet: The JW Marriott did more than its share to help out as Executive Chef Ryan and Executive Sous Chef Brett conducted a popular seminar presentation. Both hunters, themselves, Ryan and Brett guided attendees through three delicious recipes that featured a wild hog that they had hunted, harvested, cleaned, and butchered. Not only was the instruction fantastic, but the samples were a hot commodity, too. This is a seminar very likely to make another showing at future conventions.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Success of the MT7 Ranch: Located near Breckenridge, in Stephens County, the MT7 Ranch is a privately-owned ranch that focuses not only on sound wildlife management and land stewardship but also on the recreational value of the property. Ranch and Wildlife manager Ty Bartoskewitz, a TWA Director, outlined the various management practices that have contributed to the ranch’s great success. From traditional white-tailed deer management to enhancement of water resources, multi-species management, education and outreach, non-game management and research, the MT7 has been transformed into a premier wildlife property and a testament to what can be accomplished with a vision and a desire to manage.

Voluntary Conservation Practices – Balancing Wildlife Conservation and Oil and Gas Development: Jay Evans of Austin discussed what landowners need to consider as they work with oil and gas companies. Evans assisted in the development of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department’s recent bulletin: Voluntary Conservation Practices – Balancing Wildlife Conservation and Oil and Gas Development in the Eagle Ford Shale Region of South Texas.

The bulletin, which was published in the August 2013 issue of “Texas Wildlife,” is also available for download at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/private/voluntary-conservation-practices/.

In Evans’ opinion, the keys in the negotiations are to:
• Plan (Dream a little)
• Communicate
• Secure
• Manage & Monitor
• Reclaim
• Understand your lease/SUA/Rights
• WATER, WATER, WATER (make sure you have what you need)

Evans said landowners should be concerned about the loss or degradation of habitat, disturbance (topsoil, erosion, introduction of exotic species), and restoration (native versus exotic species). Evans suggested landowners contact South Texas Natives in regard to information on using native plant species in land restoration.
An enthusiastic crowd gathered Saturday night at WildLife 2013 to show its support for the Texas Wildlife Association at the Grand Auction and to bid on many one-of-a-kind trips, vehicles and hunts.

Many thanks to all of the generous Grand Auction donors, bidders and buyers! Your efforts and support of the Grand Auction are greatly appreciated! We also want to thank our auctioneer Terry Reagan and his talented ringmen for all of their great work and support at the auction.

This year’s popular Silent and Not-So-Silent Auctions featured BidSmart Technology. Attendees at the convention, as well as supporters and members off-site, placed bids on items of interest via their mobile phone. Auction participants were sent text alert messages, when their bid had been surpassed, with an opportunity to re-bid.

The proceeds generated by our convention’s Grand & Silent Auctions contribute a sizable amount to TWA’s annual operating budget. The budget provides the financial foundation for TWA’s mission, message, and various programs.
Each year at the TWA Convention, the Little Lonestars program has a theme. This year, our theme was “Feathered Friends.” From the looks of it, there were quite a few people that wanted to learn more about Texas Feathered Friends, as the room was packed both Friday and Saturday.

To get things kicked off, the Little Lonestars (ages 4-12) on Friday dressed up and got their “Wanted” pictures taken. They really enjoy putting on a silly face and acting like they are “Wanted” for something. Next, they had the opportunity to make bird feeders out of recycled milk jugs. It was GREAT to see how many different “Feathered Friends” showed up with interest in the feeders. Friday also included a visit by our friend Kameron Bean of Wild Times Edutainment. She always dazzles the kids by allowing them to learn about Texas Wildlife, hands-on. This year, she brought an Armadillo, Opossum, and Porcupine. When you hear “Ewww” – that’s a good thing!

Saturday is always a BIG day as we hold a drawing contest and then hand out awards at the luncheon. Each Little Lonestar is invited to draw a picture that goes along with our theme. Since this year’s theme was “Feathered Friends,” we got some really nice pictures of Texas Birds. Poster Contest winners for this year were: (Ages 4-6) 1st place – Mackenzie Dees, 2nd place – Brooke Field, 3rd place – Conner McWilliams; (Ages 7-9) 1st place – Beth Anne Stein, 2nd place – Cameron Roller, 3rd place – Weston Brooks; (Ages 10-12) 1st place – Paige Field, 2nd place – Ty Hehman, and 3rd place – Elizabeth West. The Best Of Show poster was drawn by Haigen Hemphill. Congratulations to all!

To add to the already fun day, Nytta Brown of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department joined us and shared some information about bats. She had pictures, handouts, books to look through, a bat that had been prepared by a taxidermist, and some cool bat sounds. When a room full of kids are very quiet, unless asked a question, you know it’s a GREAT presentation.

Later that day, we were thrilled to have Sea World Animal Ambassadors Missy Lamar and Justin Kenkel join us. They entertained everyone and taught us valuable lessons about other “Feathered Friends,” by introducing their parrot, two owls, and a rose-colored spoonbill. To top off their presentation, they brought a rescued baby Alligator and talked about the importance of NOT keeping them as pets. It was an exciting opportunity to touch and feel these animals, first-hand.

Several Texas Brigades Cadets took the Little Lonestars on a scavenger hunt. They searched for plants, insects, grass, something with feathers, and were then asked to draw what they found. Boy, did we have fun!

To everyone’s delight, the Brigades Cadets then taught the Little Lonestars how to march in sync. I can still see ALL OF THE KIDS in line, lifting up their right leg and saying; left, right, left, right, left. It was priceless.

A BIG THANK YOU to the following people for their assistance and time in making Little Lonestars 2013 such a success: Kameron Bean, Elizabeth Brogan, Nytta Brown, Susan Ditto, Cathy Downs, Raelene Forrester, Suzanne Frels, Aundie Gunning, Justin Kenkel, Missy Lamar, Amanda Lanier, Lane Lanier, Justin Meyer, Mary Pearl Meuth, Laura Poole, Andrew Skipton, Cheryl Synatzske, Rebekah Wagner, Gracie Waggener, Kiki Warden, and Leslie Wittenburg.