

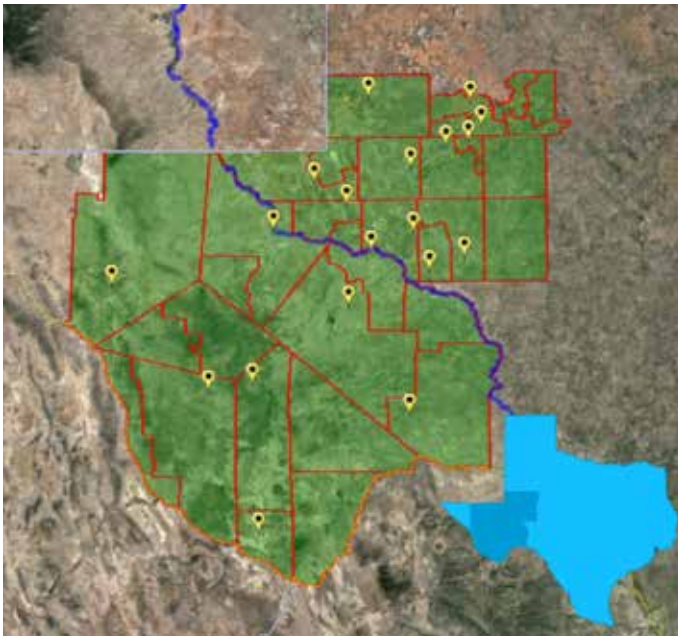


# An Extraordinary Partnership

*Noble Energy and Texas Wildlife Association*

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Photos courtesy of CONSERVATION LEGACY



This image shows the 33 school districts within Region 18 and the communities receiving L.A.N.D.S. Outreach programs during the 2017-2018 school year.



**N**oble Energy energizes the world by safely and responsibly delivering oil and natural gas to the marketplace with a focus on positively effecting communities within its footprint. In January 2017, Noble Energy acquired 71,000 net acres in the core of the Southern Delaware Basin in Reeves and Ward counties. With converging missions and a desire to combine and leverage resources for maximum impact, Texas Wildlife Association and Noble Energy have partnered to expand natural resource education opportunities in West Texas.

The Texas Wildlife Association has educators around the state, deploying the Conservation Legacy lineup of programs

to empower and educate Texans with knowledge of fundamental, science-based ecological principles. For youths, the Learning Across New Dimensions in Science (L.A.N.D.S.) program brings conservation education curricula directly to Texas teachers and students through a variety of methods. Whether using hands-on Discovery Trunks, going outdoors for a Field Investigation Day, or integrating engaging lab experiences focused on native Texas species, L.A.N.D.S. is sequentially designed to improve students' essential knowledge and skills related to wildlife, habitat and land stewardship.

I am a native Texan who grew up exploring the playas and arroyos on the Chihuahuan Desert outskirts and in August 2017, was hired as a L.A.N.D.S. Educator, tasked with bringing L.A.N.D.S. programming to the uncharted wilds of West Texas. The partnership with Noble Energy stipulates that I deliver Wildlife by Design presentations to classrooms, promote Discovery Trunks and implement L.A.N.D.S. Intensive programs. The West Texas conquest began immediately as I started building relationships and promoting L.A.N.D.S. Outreach to all school districts within Texas Education Agency (TEA) Region 18, using a combination of in-person visits, electronic correspondence and telephone calls.

The West Texas deployment of the L.A.N.D.S. Program aligns with TEA Region 18. Although not formally associated, I maintain a cooperative relationship with Region 18 Education Service Center.

Region 18 is comprised of:

- 37,553 square miles
- 19 counties
- 33 school districts
- 169 schools
- 7 charter schools
- 5 institutes of higher education
- 6,300+ educators
- 88,000+ students

Although TEA Region 18 is considerable in size, 85 percent of the region's students lie in the 18 school districts on the southern edge of the Llano Estacado. As the terrain drops off into the Pecos River Valley to the southwest, so does the population. This area is known as the Trans-Pecos region of Texas and is encompassed by the Chihuahuan Desert, which is the largest desert in North





TWA L.A.N.D.S. Educator Phil Salonek presents “Skins and Skulls” to third graders at GE “Buddy” West Elementary in Ector County.

America and one of the most biologically diverse deserts in the world. This area is a well-known hotspot for nature lovers with its rugged mountain ranges and sky islands, the Pecos and Rio Grande Rivers, the world’s largest spring-fed swimming pool, an abundance of unique plants and multiple endangered species. These marvels highlight the importance of residents learning about the natural resources found in their own backyard.

The Wildlife by Design program allows teachers to bring a L.A.N.D.S. Educator into the classroom to present interactive, hands-on, wildlife-based lessons, activities and demonstrations to students. The bulk of my time and energy is spent presenting Wildlife by Design programs in classrooms throughout the region with the goal of seeing students’ eyes light up in ‘Aha!’ moments. During these presentations, students investigate adaptations of animal skins and skulls, explore soil composition, experiment with aquifer models, observe bird biofacts and compete in life cycle game shows.

In the 2017-2018 school year, there were 84 days of Wildlife by Design programming totaling 480 presentations engaging 12,153 students and 357 teachers within 45 schools. One teacher said, “I’m thoroughly impressed with the services TWA provides to our students. It was eye opening for them to hear how everything we depend on is derived from natural resources. I’m hoping it will make stewards of them.”

Discovery Trunks are stand-alone resources that are mailed directly to teachers for two-week periods. These are filled with hands-on materials focusing on a variety of natural resource topics relevant to Texas wildlife and conservation. Each Discovery Trunk contains materials specific to its topic such as multimedia, books, puzzles, animal skulls, feathers and labs.

Although already available to teachers of West Texas, I

continually promoted this resource and increased demand for Discovery Trunks in the region. Compared to the previous school year 2016-2017, there was a 242 percent increase in requested Discovery Trunks, which reached 410 percent more students. During the 2017-2018 school year, 48 Discovery Trunks were shipped to 30 different schools in West Texas, allowing 140 classes, 121 teachers and 5,587 students to utilize these resources.

Conservation Legacy staff also broadcasts Distance Learning programming from an in-office studio, offering students the opportunity to learn about, understand and enjoy Texas wildlife, habitat, management and conservation via live videoconferencing and On-Demand Webinars. Twelve West Texas schools beamed 26 Distance Learning programs into their classrooms reaching 902 students. Similarly, Distance Learning was already available but my promotion resulted in a 116 percent increase in utilization, reaching 126 percent more students than the previous 2016-2017 school year.

I also enjoy educating the public about the efforts of Texas Wildlife Association and Noble Energy. It is rewarding to see the amazed faces of parents and children alike when they learn about our native Texas wildlife at these events. TWA programs were promoted at six public events across the region and reached 157 individuals, from Big Spring to Pecos. Many are happy to learn about the abundance of educational resources offered to West Texas youth and applaud both TWA and Noble Energy for these efforts.

Beginning in the summer of 2018, West Texas’ formal and informal educators had access to five L.A.N.D.S. Outreach Teacher Workshops to learn how to use the Conservation Legacy’s collection of lessons and activities. In total, 66 teachers attended a L.A.N.D.S. Outreach Teacher Workshop in West Texas. These teachers are





West Texas Impact August 2017 - August 2018

Wildlife by Design	Discovery Trunks	Distance Learning	L.A.N.D.S. Outreach Teacher Workshop	L.A.N.D.S. Intensive Educator Training Teaser	Public Outreach Events
12,153	5,587	902	66 / 11,974	4	157 / 367
Student Impact	Student Impact	Student Impact	Participants / Potential Student Impact	Participants	Visited with/ Total Attendees

estimated to impact 11,974 students in the coming school year.

Nineteen schools have utilized some combination of Discovery Trunks, Distance Learning and Wildlife by Design. Eleven schools used two different programs and eight schools used all three programs. TWA encourages the use of all available resources and these schools are the embodiment of TWA's vision for all Texas schools.

The impact of the Texas Wildlife Association and Noble Energy Partnership has been strongly felt throughout West Texas in the past year. Programming was ultimately delivered to 19 school districts, which contain 88 percent of the student population. Through the utilization of programs such as Wildlife by Design, Discovery Trunks, Distance Learning and Teacher Workshops, thousands of students and hundreds of teachers are learning the fundamentals of land stewardship and natural resource conservation as well as how to appreciate our native Texas wildlife.

New relationships have been formed with nature centers, wildlife preserves, state parks, museums and other organizations that are dedicated to conservation, which will no doubt help the efforts to create and educate the next generation of Texas land stewards. In the first year, I established a presence and built the momentum to thrive and expand in the second year.

Per the partnership, a concerted effort has been made to bring L.A.N.D.S. programming to Reeves County. Although Reeves County contains only 2.9 percent of the students in TEA Region 18, they received 4.8 percent of the Wildlife by Design presentations, 8.5 percent of the Discovery Trunks and 20 percent of the L.A.N.D.S. Outreach Teacher Workshops. To date, 1,054 students and 29 teachers have been reached within Reeves County. Every school in the city of Pecos has implemented at least one L.A.N.D.S. program into their curriculum.

Additionally, 23 Wildlife by Design presentations in Reeves County engaged 657 students from first, second and fifth grades, while four Discovery Trunks captivated 397 students from kindergarten, first and fifth grades.

In Reeves County, 25 educators from elementary, middle school and high school levels attended a L.A.N.D.S. Outreach Teacher Workshop. The L.A.N.D.S. Intensive Educator Training Teaser also reached four teachers from elementary, middle school and high school levels. These workshop attendees are estimated to impact over 2,500 Reeves County students in the coming school year.



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Our vision is to continue offering these resources to all teachers and youth of West Texas. I am expanding into new schools and further implementing the L.A.N.D.S. program by building upon the successes of the previous year. In the fall, I plan to attend the Conference for the Advancement of Science Teaching (CAST), a L.A.N.D.S. Intensive Field Investigation Day and a Trinity River Field Day, all of which will be instrumental in TWA's efforts to bring L.A.N.D.S. Intensive programming to West Texas.

Children have an innate curiosity about the natural world and connecting them to nature is an important element of successful conservation education. TWA's efforts promote awareness of conservation issues and provide opportunities to acquire knowledge and skill, which can deepen commitment and create new patterns of behavior. I am excited to share my passion for youth education and the stewardship of our natural world while bringing this valuable and impactful program to the communities of West Texas. With partnerships such as this one between the Texas Wildlife Association and Noble Energy, an increased bandwidth is available to broadcast eco-centric messaging and cultivate future caretakers of our natural resources. ♻️

