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Special Projects Funded at State Parks Across Texas

Thanks to park lovers from all over the Lone Star State, Texas State Parks will soon have new offerings for park visitors. In honor of the 2023 Centennial of Texas State Parks, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) raised almost \$2 million in private funds to enhance the visitor experience at every state park across Texas.

The funded projects are as diverse as the parks and the people who visit them. Projects include a Braille Trail for visually impaired visitors at Caddo Lake State Park (SP) in East Texas; a portable planetarium at Resaca de la Palma SP in South Texas; kayaks, paddles and life jackets for a new paddling program at South Llano River SP in Central Texas; shade trees for Balmorhea SP's iconic pool in West Texas; and bike repair stations at Palo Duro Canyon SP in the Panhandle. Thanks to generous donors, these projects will delight visitors of all ages.

Major support for the centennial fundraising campaign came from our Centennial Champions, a group of Texas philanthropic leaders who understand the enduring significance of our state parks. The Centennial Champions include the Fondren Foundation, The John M. O'Quinn Foundation, The Elkins Foundation, The J.W. Couch Foundation, and The James A. "Buddy" Davidson Charitable Foundation. Thanks to their generous support, all donations were matched dollar-for-dollar, doubling the impact of each and every gift.

Hundreds of Texans responded to the call to support Texas State Parks, including Randy and Dawn Bissell of Corpus Christi. The two are familiar faces at Mustang Island State Park near their Corpus Christi home, where they are steadfast volunteers. In 2019, the two became Master Naturalists, and became even more engaged with parks near Corpus Christi.

“We were delighted to learn about Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, a well-run nonprofit that supports Texas State Parks that allows for direct investment in the parks we choose to support,” said Randy Bissell. “And then we heard about the centennial celebration of our parks in 2023, and we wanted to help locally.”

The Bissells made a generous donation to TPWF’s 2023 state park fundraising campaign. The campaign raised almost \$2 million for needed park projects across the state, and the Bissells earmarked their donation to benefit the parks close to their hearts: Mustang Island, Goose Island and Lake Corpus Christi.

Funds will flow to 88 state parks across Texas to implement the projects, which should be completed this year.

“There were so many wonderful moments to cherish from the centennial celebration of our parks and the many contributors exemplify the very best of our park supporters,” said Texas State Park Director Rodney Franklin. “As we head into our next century, we are grateful to everyone who donated, and the Centennial Champions who appreciate what our parks provide for all Texans. The generous support of park lovers who funded these impactful projects will be felt by families for years and decades to come.”

Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation partnered with TPWD and H-E-B to celebrate 100 years of Texas State Parks throughout 2023. H-E-B was presenting sponsor of the celebration and helped Texas State Parks engage all Texans in discovering and enjoying their state parks.

Since 1991, [Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation](http://www.tpwf.org) has raised and invested more than \$235 million to advance Texas' proud outdoor traditions and conserve our state's wildlife, habitat and natural resources. Our vision is for all Texans to have access to the wild things and wild places of our state, both now and for generations to come. For more information, please visit www.tpwf.org.