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MEDIA CONTACT: Jenifer Sarver
512-577-9099
Jenifer@SarverStrategies.com

STATE PARKS DELIVER FOR TEXAS' ECONOMY

Parks generated more than \$774 million in sales in 2013

AUSTIN — The Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation today highlighted data about the important role that parks play for the state's economy. According to a [recent survey](#) of the economic contributions of state parks, our parks generated more than \$774 million in sales in 2013, and produce a tremendous return on investment of more than 2,500 percent for the State of Texas in economic impact.

"State Parks provide a significant public service by protecting and stewarding the state's major natural and cultural resources," said Dan Allen Hughes, Chairman of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. "Texas voters understand that a strong and thriving system of state and local parks contributes to a vibrant economy, is an important source of recreation for Texas families and helps protect the natural environment that makes Texas unique," Hughes said.

A [survey](#) released in January by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation showed overwhelming voter support of a strong, well-funded system of state and local parks. A tremendous 84 percent of all voters agreed with the statement: "Unless we protect Texas' natural areas, we will lose the very things that make Texas a special place in which to live." This level of support for conservation of Texas' natural areas has been consistently above 80 percent since 1999. The poll demonstrates consistent support in good and bad economic times, and shows that voters would support a constitutional amendment to dedicate sales tax revenue for more and consistent funding for parks.

It is clear that Texans enjoy and appreciate the parks, providing immeasurable entertainment and recreational value for Texas families. In fact, over the last five years, state park visitation has increased by nearly 10 percent. However, despite strong voter support, increased visitation and a tremendous economic impact, challenges to the park system persist: deteriorating and outdated infrastructure, a lack of consistent and sufficient funding, harsh environmental conditions and a diverse and growing population, are among them.

In 1993, the Texas Legislature passed a bill that takes a portion of an existing Sporting Goods Sales Tax and reserves that money to fund our state parks. However, since that time the State of Texas has collected more than \$2 billion in sporting goods sales tax revenues, yet only 36 percent has been appropriated for parks.

With the 84th Texas Legislature currently in session, many parks advocates have been actively engaged at the Capitol, reminding members of the important role our state and local parks play for our economy and for citizens, and urging the Legislature to provide proper funding. Both the House and Senate have largely maximized the appropriation of the Sporting Goods Sales Tax in their biennial budgets – budget conferees will soon begin to meet to iron out differences between their bills. The Senate Select Committee on Government Facilities, under the able leadership of Senator Kevin Eltife, has proposed \$75.3 million to pay for deferred maintenance on many of our parks. These funds are critical for capital construction and repair needs at our aging state parks.

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The Texas State Park Advisory Committee has recommended a constitutional amendment permanently guaranteeing that revenues generated from the Sporting Goods Sales Tax be dedicated to supporting state and local parks. According to a public opinion survey, 70 percent of voters would support a constitutional amendment to permanently dedicate sales tax revenue for state parks.

Resources referenced in this release can be found online at:

<http://www.tpwf.org/news/publications/>

https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/media/2014-11-06_economic_contributions_to_tsp.pdf

http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/nonpwdpubs/media/pwd_rp_p4000_1801.pdf

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