

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 5, 2017

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**Competitive grants enhance State Parks across Texas**

Thanks to funding provided by the Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation, 17 state parks across Texas will soon be providing enhanced visitor experiences or improved habitat to benefit wildlife. Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) is raising dollars to match the funding for the competitive grants, which will provide a total of more than \$50,000 for projects across the state.

The winning grants will fund efforts ranging from enhancing night sky viewing opportunities at Atlanta State Park in East Texas, to creating habitat for birds, bees and butterflies at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park to providing better equine facilities at Monahans Sandhills State Park in West Texas. All the projects are aimed at providing a higher quality visit for state park visitors. Engaging volunteer labor to provide a non-monetary match for the requested funds is one criteria of the competitive grant.

“As we enter the second year grant cycle, I’ve had the chance to see some of the improvements funded through this initiative,” said Adelaide Leavens, president of Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation in Fort Worth. “They are the products of some highly creative thinking by staff and volunteers, most certainly resulting in increased opportunities to experience our beautiful state parks. I am amazed and inspired by the ingenuity of staff who squeeze every inch of value out of the grant funds while encouraging the dedicated volunteers who bring the projects to life.”

The projects that are funded in the 2017 grant cycle are:

<b>STATE PARK</b>	<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Atlanta	Cass	Telescope and accessories	\$2,328
Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley	Hidalgo	Habitat improvement	\$4,850
Caddo Lake	Harrison	Ecology kits for interpretive programs	\$2,583
Daingerfield	Morris	Restore CCC Picnic Island	\$4,750
Devils River	Val Verde	Enhanced bird/butterfly viewing	\$3,000
Dinosaur Valley	Somervell	Texas Aquatic Science Trunk	\$2,500
Hueco Tanks	El Paso	Trail restoration	\$2,511

Inks Lake	Burnet	Provide free loaner tackle	\$2,500
Kickapoo Cavern	Kinney	Nature viewing area near campground	\$1,100
Meridian	Bosque	Bird blind, night lighting for dock	\$2,500
Mission Tejas	Houston	Enhance interpretive programming	\$4,240
Monahans Sandhills	Ward	Improve equine facilities	\$5,000
Mother Neff	Coryell	Enhance birdwatching programs	\$5,000
Resaca de la Palma	Cameron	Link trails to enhance birding	\$2,000
Sheldon Lake	Harris	Pollinator plants/enhanced education	\$2,000
South Llano River	Kimble	Enhance night sky viewing	\$2,057
Village Creek	Hardin	Improve trails/enhance bird habitat	\$1,600

Another round of competitive grants will be offered in 2018. TPWF is raising funds to match the grants.

“We’re pleased to see how much is being accomplished with these relatively modest grants,” said TPWF executive director Anne Brown. “We’re currently raising funds to leverage these funds dollar for dollar so that we can double the impact of this generous donation and fund more projects in the future.”

Donations can be [made online](#).

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*Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation raises private funds to advance Texas’ proud outdoor traditions and conserve our state’s wildlife, habitat, recreational areas, and natural resources. Since 1991, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation has raised more than \$170 million in private philanthropy to ensure that all Texans, today and in the future, can enjoy the wild things and wild places of Texas.*

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