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1980 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan



1981-1983
Action Program

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1980 TEXAS OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

1981—1983 Action Program

DATE DUE

Conducted By:

Resource Planning Section, and
Statewide Planning and Coordination
Section of the Comprehensive Planning Branch

With Staff Assistance From:

Consumer Planning Section
Comprehensive Planning Branch

Under Direction Of:

Head, Comprehensive
Planning Branch

**TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
AUSTIN, TEXAS
1980**



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE CAPITOL
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

WILLIAM P. CLEMENTS, JR.
GOVERNOR

Dear Fellow Texans:

Texas' natural and recreational resources, their development and management as well as their conservation and preservation, have long been an important element in the lives of the people of Texas. In this respect, all of us, as Texas citizens, are fortunate to live in a State endowed with an abundance and variety of such resources.

Growth in our population and changes in socio-economic trends are causing increases and changes in the demand and need for recreational opportunities in Texas. In view of these dynamic trends, we face a significant challenge in seeking to provide and maintain a sufficient quality and quantity of diversified outdoor recreation opportunities. For this reason, careful planning for the wise use of the State's natural and fiscal resources in meeting this challenge should be of considerable concern to us all.

The Parks and Wildlife Department has prepared this 1980 Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan as part of its responsibility to strive for the provision of adequate recreational land, water, and associated facilities in every region of the State. As a five-year document, this Plan should serve as a flexible guide for action in providing recreational opportunities throughout the State in the coming years. It provides an inventory and analysis of our existing recreational resources and facilities as provided by private and public sources, including all sectors of government. Further, it includes data and recommendations for use in planning and decision-making relative to the future provision of additional recreational opportunities.

Therefore, I am pleased to offer this Plan for your use and reference. The Plan includes 24 volumes pertaining to each of the 24 state planning regions in Texas and one volume representing a statewide summary. It is my hope that the Plan and its data will be valuable tools in helping to utilize, improve, and enhance recreational opportunities in our great State during and beyond the next five years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Clements". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William P. Clements, Jr.
Governor of Texas

CONTENTS

Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Introduction	v
Section I The 1981-1983 Action Program	1
Overcrowding of Land and Facilities	1
Insufficient Provision for the Needs of Bicyclists	2
Littering and Vandalism	2
Recreation Areas Frequently Not Safe	2
Loss of Uniques Natural Areas	3
Insufficient Hunting Opportunity	3
Insufficient Trail Opportunities	4
Destruction of Fish and Wildlife Habitat	5
Public Access to Rivers	6
Loss of Outstanding Qualities of Rivers and Streams	7
Lack of Coordination among Public Agencies and Research Institutions	8
Lack of Effective Guidance at Local Level for Planning, Development, and Maintenance of Recreation Areas	8
Section II Priorities for Obligation of Land and Water Conservation Funds Through 1983	11

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This 1981-1983 TORP Action Program was prepared by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Comprehensive Planning Branch, as part of the Texas Outdoor Recreation Planning Program. The Department extends its appreciation to the agencies, organizations, and individuals who contributed to development of this document and the Action Program.

INTRODUCTION

Outdoor Recreation and Resource Conservation in Texas

The population of Texas is growing rapidly. There are over 14 million people in the state, and projections indicate that there may be as many as 20 million people in Texas by the year 2000. As our population increases, continued emphasis must be placed on meeting the needs for outdoor recreation and resource conservation so that the citizens of Texas will continue to enjoy high quality recreation.

It is becoming increasingly evident that opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and our natural and cultural heritage have a positive affect on our health and well being, and that an important factor in the economic welfare of our communities and the state is the "quality of life." Recreation resources play a significant role in contributing to a high "quality of life," and new industries and individuals are locating where this quality is high.

The Texas Outdoor Recreation Planning Program

The Texas outdoor recreation planning program produces several aids for the public and private sector to meet the outdoor recreation needs of Texas. The Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TORP) presents an estimate of needs, and recommendations to meet those needs. The TORP is published every 5 years. Developed from the TORP is the Action Program which describes actions that state-level agencies will attempt to meet some of the recommendations of the TORP.

The Action Program

The Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan 1981-1983 Action Program, the first program based on the 1980 TORP, includes issues and objectives gained through public input. It presents issues identified as critical for improving outdoor recreation in Texas for the next two and a half years. The Action Program will be updated periodically.

The actions identified under each issue and objective in the program are primarily the responsibility of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and/or other state agencies. The actions listed are not comprehensive or exclusive, but are illustrative of the type of activities and programs which need to be carried out to accomplish the objectives. Target dates are indicated for each action.

The 1981-1983 Action Program is divided into two sections. Section I presents issues, objectives, actions, and schedules. The issues and objectives were obtained from Table 2.1 of the 1980 TORP State Summary document. They are the result of perceptions of which issues and objectives

are most in need of work during 1981, 1982, and 1983 in the State, and have been developed from various surveys, reviews, and public meetings conducted to develop the 1980 TORP and Action Program over the last several years.

The actions and schedules for each issue and objective in Section I were developed from the knowledge and expertise of the TORP planning staff regarding types of work that can be undertaken with the manpower and budgets expected through 1983.

Issues

There are many issues facing recreation in Texas in 1980. Extensive data collection, analysis, and discussions among public and private recreation agencies and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department have resulted in a compilation of many of these as problems listed in Table 2.1 of the 1980 TORP State Summary volume. Provided as a guide and information source for all recreation interests in the State, these problems will help to focus and coordinate activities among the diverse groups working to improve recreational opportunities. However, the list of problems facing recreation and resource conservation in Texas is a long one. Some of them are more in need of urgent attention than others. As a result, and since the 1981-1983 Action Program is only for 2½ years, only some issues and objectives have been selected for work at this time. These are as follows:

Overcrowding of Land and Facilities

Overcrowding and overuse of recreational land and facilities has come with the rapid increase in population, especially in and near the larger urban areas of Texas. These resources can deteriorate rapidly under this high use, and budgets and manpower reductions may compound the effects. The ideal, "acquisition of land in advance of development," is replaced by "catch up" efforts in many communities. Land prices are high and taxpayers are demanding conservation in capital improvements and land acquisition expenditures.

Insufficient Provision for the Needs of Bicyclists

Despite the increased awareness of bicycles as a mode of transportation and as a means of physical exercise, not enough is being done to accommodate the bicyclist in Texas. In many cases there has been a lack of consideration of the special needs of bicyclists, such as traffic mix, roadway surface, safety, and provision of new hike and bike trails.

Littering and Vandalism

The operation and maintenance costs of parks escalate dramatically with litter and vandalism. When this happens, money which could otherwise be spent on facilities and programs must be used on cleaning and repairing damage. Many communities devote tremendous amounts of time and money trying to combat littering and vandalism. Results of citizen surveys conducted for the 1980 TORP reveal increasing concern from recreationists about these problems.

Recreation Areas Frequently Not Safe

Crime in parks is another area which needs attention in many communities. Ways of reducing risk in parks through improved design, defensible space and patrolling manpower need improvements. There is a need for a more concerted effort on the part of the federal, state and local governments to solve this problem. Some areas of the state are beginning to experience declining use of various parks due to fear of the citizenry.

Loss of Unique Natural Areas

The growth of population in Texas is increasing the demand for land, timber and other natural resources. The search for these resources and increasing awareness of the value of preserving unique natural areas has created conflicts which will continue without some positive actions. Sensitive unique natural areas are being lost due to a lack of more aggressive programs to conserve our natural heritage. Preservation through acquisition, sensitive management, and careful use are worthy goals.

Insufficient Trail Opportunities

Long distance hiking, horseback riding, and nature study trail activities are almost non-existent in Texas. Increased landowner awareness and cooperation, trail user responsibility, and involvement in providing trails could help meet some of the needs for these activities. Positive steps need to be taken to insure that the needs for trails are more adequately addressed.

Public Access to Rivers

There is a significant demand for improving the accessibility of high quality rivers and streams for canoeing, kayaking and rafting in Texas. Some of the problem areas are: limited "put in" and "take out" areas; riparian rights disputes; and abuse of private lands. While several rivers have adequate use areas, many others need improved access. Urban waterfronts possess outstanding potential for the development of cultural and recreational resources. The urban waterways can offer numerous recreational and cultural resource possibilities which could be improved with more attention to their value for recreation.

Loss of Outstanding Qualities of Rivers and Streams

Many outstanding Texas rivers are being damaged due to poor planning, unsympathetic use, carelessness, and pollution. Coordinated efforts need to be made to improve the monitoring of rivers, educating users, and recommending appropriate administrative or legislative actions.

Lack of Coordination Among Public Agencies and Research Institutions

The absence of systematic statewide communication procedures among researchers, planners, and park officials working on recreational matters in Texas is leading to duplication of effort, underutilized resources, inaccuracies, and poor planning. Methods need to be developed for keeping abreast of new information in the field of recreation, activities of various agencies, and improvements.

Lack of Effective Guidance at Local Level of the Planning, Development and Maintenance of Recreation Areas

Increased attention needs to be focused on giving local park providers information and advice so they may continue providing quality resources to the citizens of Texas. Assistance should increase the capability of these providers to keep up with techniques for meeting the mounting demand for recreational opportunities. The state and federal government should be leaders in assisting the public and private suppliers with "state of the art" techniques and information.

SECTION I

1981-1983 ACTION PROGRAM

I. ISSUE: OVERCROWDING OF LAND AND FACILITIES AND INSUFFICIENT OPEN SPACE

A. Objective: Conduct Market Analyses and Develop Master Plans of Park, Recreation Area and Open Space Needs

1. ACTION Provide TORP based guidance to federal, state, and local agencies in planning, locating, and implementing all types of projects via meetings, correspondence, and the state and regional A-95 clearinghouse review process.

Schedule continuing

2. ACTION Prepare master development plans and programs for units of the state park system.

Schedule 4 annually

3. ACTION Acquire two recreational units of the state park system annually, and continue the Historic Sites Acquisition Program as sites become available.

Schedule continuing

B. Objective: Design Parks, Facilities and Open Space to Disperse Recreationists

1. ACTION Investigate potential sites for units of the state park system.

Schedule 45 annually

2. ACTION Maintain approximately 350, and construct 15 state boat ramps.

Schedule annually

(GRANT AWARD ACTIVITIES UNDER THIS OBJECTIVE ARE ALSO ADDRESSED IN SECTION II OF THIS DOCUMENT)

II. ISSUE: INSUFFICIENT PROVISION FOR THE NEEDS OF BICYCLISTS

A. Objective: Designate, Mark, and Map Statewide and Regional Bicycle Routes

1. ACTION Study the feasibility of designating and mapping bicycle touring routes originating from and returning to state parks.

Schedule June 1981

2. ACTION Coordinate with the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation about mapping, marking, providing education and safety programs, and advertising bicycle routes on the state highway system.

Schedule March 1981

III. ISSUE: LITTERING AND VANDALISM

A. Objective: Encourage Education Programs and Media Efforts Against Littering and Vandalism

1. ACTION Evaluate the actions of the 1981 Session of the Legislature to determine activity and statutes that may result from the work of the House Select Committee on Litter, and determine Action Program needs for 1982 and 1983.

Schedule

Monitor Legislative Action

January - August 1981

Determine Future Work

September - December 1981

IV. ISSUE: RECREATION AREAS FREQUENTLY NOT SAFE

A. Objective: Establish Aid to Local Governments for Crime Prevention in Parks and Open Space Areas

1. ACTION Conduct interagency discussions for determining methods of assistance.

Schedule

Coordinate with Criminal Justice and Texas Agricultural Extension Service and others to discuss current roles and potential future directions and activities for 1982 and 1983

April 1981

V. ISSUE: LOSS OF UNIQUE NATURAL AREAS

A. Objective: Encourage Natural Resource Preservation

1. ACTION Monitor the status of several unique natural areas for possible inclusion in the state park system.

Schedule continuing

(GRANT AWARD ACTIVITIES UNDER THIS OBJECTIVE ARE ALSO ADDRESSED IN SECTION II OF THIS DOCUMENT)

B. Objective: Increase Preservation Efforts Through the Texas Conservation Foundation

1. ACTION Coordinate with Texas Conservation Foundation concerning possible Texas Natural Heritage Programs.

Schedule continuing

2. ACTION If a Natural Heritage Program is established, assist with inventory and monitoring of additional natural areas as appropriate.

Schedule to be determined

VI. ISSUE: INSUFFICIENT HUNTING OPPORTUNITY

A. Objective: Explore Lease Agreements with Private Landowners and Public Agencies

1. ACTION Provide public hunting opportunity on 225,000 acres of habitat managed by TPWD.

Schedule continuing

VII. ISSUE: INSUFFICIENT TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

A. Objective: Increase Emphasis on Developing Trails on Existing Public Lands

1. ACTION Construct backpacking, hiking, equestrian, nature study, and bicycling trails at new state park sites according to master plans.
 - Schedule
 - 4 parks with trails August 1982
 - 3 parks with trails August 1983

2. ACTION Study the feasibility of developing trails at TPWD Wildlife Management Areas (WMA).
 - Schedule
 - Review the Federal experience of providing trails in wildlife refuges September 1981
 - Research TPWD's authority to allow recreational use of WMA's November 1981
 - Distribute findings February 1982

3. ACTION Consider the inclusion of trails in 4 master plans for new state park sites.
 - Schedule annually

4. ACTION Prepare and distribute a "Trails in Texas" pamphlet from the Texas Outdoor Recreation Inventory and other sources.
 - Schedule
 - Prepare pamphlet April 1983
 - Distribute pamphlet continuing

B. Objective: Establish Trails on Public and Private Lands through Leases or Similar Agreements

1. ACTION Identify trail user needs and preferences for trail design and location.
 - Schedule
 - Attend user group meetings 4 per year
 - Develop a trail user needs questionnaire April 1982
 - Complete survey July 1982
 - Prepare and distribute a report on trail user needs September 1982

2. ACTION Continue pursuing the concept of leasing private lands for trail opportunities with trail user groups and private landowner organizations.

Schedule continuing

3. ACTION Prepare a technical assistance presentation on identifying potential trail rights-of-way for public use.

Schedule April 1981

C. Objective: Establish a "Texas Trails System"

1. ACTION Work with trail user groups and other agencies to encourage the establishment of a Texas Trails System.

Schedule continuing

2. ACTION Monitor and update the listing and criteria for proposed components of the trails system.

Schedule annual review and update: June

3. ACTION Monitor and update the listing of potential trails resources in Texas.

Schedule annual review and update: July

D. Objective: Support the National Trails System Act

1. ACTION Support, review, and provide input to federal trails planning efforts including the HCRS Nationwide Trails Inventory and National Scenic, Historic, and Recreation Trails studies.

Schedule continuing

VIII. ISSUE: DESTRUCTION OF FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT

A. Objective: Intensify Educational and Technical Assistance Efforts

1. ACTION Give technical assistance to interested landowners and sportsmen in preservation and development of wildlife habitat through personal contact, demonstration of wildlife management practices and dissemination of information through publications, seminars and workshops.

Schedule continuing

IX. ISSUE: PUBLIC ACCESS TO RIVERS

A. Objective:	Establish Public Use Areas on Rivers and Streams
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1. ACTION Determine alternatives for establishing public areas as parts of state park system.
Schedule June 1981

2. ACTION Identify those river-associated State Parks where specialized river use areas would be desirable.
Schedule June 1981

3. ACTION Publish a technical report on developing canoe trails in Texas for general distribution.
Schedule
Revise existing draft March 1981
Printing and distribution June 1981

4. ACTION Consider the inclusion of specialized canoe launching facilities for newly acquired state park sites on rivers.
Schedule continuing

5. ACTION Continue to encourage the development of urban waterfronts for cultural, recreational and open space activities.
Schedule continuing

6. ACTION Assist the legislature in researching and developing an urban waterways program. This program was recommended by the House of Representatives Environmental Affairs Committee Report dated September 1980.
Schedule as requested

(GRANT AWARD ACTIVITIES UNDER THIS OBJECTIVE ARE ALSO ADDRESSED IN SECTION II OF THIS DOCUMENT)

B. Objective:	Provide information to the Public on Canoeing and Opportunities and the Availability of River Access
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1. ACTION Renew cooperative agreement with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service to republish the report "An Analysis of Texas Waterways".
Schedule as required

- 2. ACTION Provide information on the availability of canoeing opportunities.
Schedule continuing
- 3. ACTION Work with river groups regarding legislative clarification of public rights to recreational rivers.
Schedule continuing
- 4. ACTION Publish maps and brochures on canoeing opportunities associated with state parks.
Schedule August 1983

X. ISSUE: LOSS OF OUTSTANDING QUALITIES OF RIVERS AND STREAMS

A. Objective: Respond to the National Wild and Scenic River Act as appropriate

- 1. ACTION Review and provide input to federal river planning efforts for the HCRS Natural River Inventory, Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River Plan, and any studies of potential components of the national system.
Schedule continuing

B. Objective: Establish a "Texas Natural Rivers System" which protects landowner rights, public access and the natural quality of rivers

- 1. ACTION Work with river interest groups and other agencies to encourage the establishment of a Texas Natural Rivers System.
Schedule continuing
- 2. ACTION Monitor and update the list and criteria for classifying proposed components for a state rivers system.
Schedule annual review and update: June

C. Objective: Emphasize River Corridor Planning and Protection through open space plans, federal flood insurance program, and water quality and local planning functions

- 1. ACTION Review and comment on all projects which may impact the natural or recreational quality of Texas Rivers.
Schedule continuing

7. ACTION Develop a presentation and hold a workshop on how COG's and others can implement and apply the TORP to local recreation planning situations.
- Schedule July 1981
8. ACTION Prepare and distribute publications on how to estimate urban outdoor recreational needs and suggested recreational areas and facilities for small communities.
- Complete draft of publications February 1981
Obtain review of draft publications April 1981
Finalize and distribute publications July 1981
9. ACTION Provide 9 workshops throughout the state on public and private funding sources (Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas Recreation and Parks Society, Councils of Governments, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department).
- Schedule annually
10. ACTION Prepare and distribute a publication on the Texas state outdoor recreation planning operation.
- Schedule April 1981
11. ACTION Prepare and distribute a publication on suggested county government recreation responsibilities.
- Schedule July 1982
12. ACTION Update the TPWD handbook on state programs impacting outdoor recreation.
- Schedule October 1981
13. ACTION Prepare and distribute a bibliography on recreation and open space planning and management.
- Schedule August 1982

SECTION II

PRIORITIES FOR OBLIGATION OF LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUNDS THROUGH 1983

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program; the contents of the Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan (TORP); and the Action Program developed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in support of the TORP are governed by federal regulations administered through the Heritage, Conservation, and Recreation Service (HCRS). The priorities for obligation of LWCF monies is a federal requirement for the Action Program. Meeting this requirement is the purpose of this section.

A project selection process contained in the TORP, also required by federal regulation, must be in accord with priorities outlined within the TORP. The addendum document of the 1980 TORP entitled Local Government Project Review Procedures contains the project selection process developed by the State. The project selection process must contain a priority rating system for selecting projects which places a strong emphasis on project conformance with priority needs identified in the 1980 TORP. The priority rating system is outlined in the Local Project Review Procedures document of the TORP.

Opportunity for public input must be provided in the development of the TORP documents, the Action Program, and the project selection process for obligation of LWCF's. Texas has accomplished this through surveys involving citizens, government agencies, and private organizations in 1978, through reviews of the first draft of the TORP documents in January and April of 1980, and through the A-95 review process which also included five (5) concurrent public meetings in July of 1980. Additional opportunity for input was provided via A-95 review of the draft Action Program in December, 1980.

Other federal regulations governing the TORP process require that the Governor approve and transmit the TORP and Action Program documents to the HCRS for their approval. The 1980 TORP and Local Government Project Review Procedures document containing the priority rating system for projects has met the above organizational concurrence and is now the approved method by which LWCF's will be obligated in Texas.

As a result of these approvals by the Governor and HCRS, the Action Program requirement for presenting priorities of obligation of LWCF's through 1983 is a restatement of information contained in the "Recommended Priorities" section of Chapter 2 of the 1980 TORP State Summary document. It is also a summarization of the types of projects which score highest according to the criteria presented in the priority rating system contained in the Local Government Project Review Procedures document.

The priorities for obligation of LWCF's for local government projects through 1983 will be:

- To provide a more balanced mix and wider variety of outdoor recreation opportunities in the project area.

- To provide a better geographic distribution of outdoor recreation opportunities in the project area.
- To maximize the use of funds for basic recreational facilities.
- To provide more improved recreational opportunities for handicapped, low income, elderly, and/or minority group citizens in areas where these groups need improved opportunities.
- To provide for needed recreational opportunities in those locales where differences between supply and demand are the greatest.
- To improve water-related recreational opportunities where feasible.
- To improve cooperative efforts to provide recreation between providers and educational institutions.
- To preserve and protect identified natural areas for recreational purposes.

NOTE: The reader should refer to the Local Government Project Review Procedures document of the 1980 TORP for further detail regarding the review, prioritization, and award of funds for projects. The priority statements above are not intended to explain the process for award of funds, and it is not expected that every project for which funds may be awarded in the future will meet all of the priority statements to the fullest extent possible. The priority statements provide general guidance so sponsors and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department can measure their programs.