

# CONSERVING TEXAS

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## Natural Resources are Measurable Assets

**C**onservation in Texas holds the promise of many exciting possibilities. From the majestic pine and hardwood forests in the east to the golden desert lands of the west to our lakes, streams and Gulf Coast, Texas' natural heritages make an impact on our quality of life and our state and local economies. Therefore, we have an opportunity and an obligation to preserve and protect our state's most treasured assets.

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### ENJOYING THE LAND IS THE TEXAS WAY OF LIFE AND A MAJOR FINANCIAL BENEFIT

Ask any Texan and chances are good that he or she takes part in some form of activity that connects them to the outdoors. It's the Texan way of life to spend weekends at local or state parks, to travel to wildlife habitat areas for bird and game watching, to fish our rivers and coastal waters, or to go out on the opening day of hunting. Hundreds of thousands of Texans make their living as stewards of the land, caretakers of our wildlife, hunting and fishing guides, sporting goods merchants, and tourist lodge owners.

Thus, conservation is a powerful economic engine for Texas and local communities. Every year millions of Texans and our visitors are attracted to parks, wildlife areas, rivers, streams, bays and estuaries, generating **billions of dollars of income, millions of dollars in sales tax receipts and hundreds of thousands of jobs**. Those communities with good local parks draw millions of hikers, joggers, bikers, ball teams and families picnicking and they are one of the primary factors when businesses are deciding to build local or relocate. Conversely, no parks – no payrolls.

**CONSERVATION'S NOT A LUXURY FOR THE FEW,  
IT HAS BROAD SUPPORT OF TEXAS' CITIZENS**

**100%** believe it is important that Texas' water resources are safe and well-protected

**98%** said everyone should have the opportunity to visit state parks in Texas

**97%** feel natural areas should exist in Texas for experiencing habitat and wildlife

**94%** believe fish and wildlife populations should be properly managed and conserved\*

\* "Texas Parks & Wildlife for the 21st Century," Texas Tech University, March 2001

That support extends to a willingness to pay for those conservation measures that Texans cherish so deeply. Many states have already recognized that conservation financing is an investment in their future that will pay dividends for years. From the joint Missouri/Illinois/St. Louis Metro Region plan to the Florida Forever \$3 billion program, citizens and elected officials have joined together to fund parklands and open space, and to purchase development rights to enhance their states and communities and attract visitors and new business. There's no reason that we can't forge a Conserve Texas plan and reap similar or better benefits for our citizens.

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**65% OF VOTERS INDICATE SUPPORT** for a "small increase in taxes" to fund state and local government programs to purchase land to "protect water quality, natural areas, lakes rivers or beaches, neighborhood parks and wildlife habitat." \*

\* Poll results from the Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy national voter survey, released April 2004



**A DEDICATED COALITION**

The Texas Coalition for Conservation is a non-profit group founded in 2001 to help Texas protect its natural and environmental treasures by educating the public and our leaders that it makes good economic sense to do so. Our board and advisory council includes prominent Texans who have devoted much of their lives to preserving the Texas landscape. Members include Bob Armstrong, Former Commissioner of the General Land Office, Ms. Terry Hershey and Mr. Tim Hixon, Former Commissioners of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Commission, Mr. Ignacio Garza, Former Chairman of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Commission, and Ms. Ann Lents, a parkland and open space advocate in Houston, and many other dedicated individuals with distinguished records of conserving our last best places.

**IT'S ESTIMATED THAT THERE WERE OVER 96,700 JOBS SUPPORTED IN TEXAS IN 2001 FROM FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED ACTIVITIES ALONE.**

**YOU CAN HELP/BUT TIME IS RUNNING OUT**

When you consider the value that parklands, wildlife, water and outdoor recreation bring to our citizens and communities, there's no question that they are worth saving and enhancing. But we don't have much time. We must act, and act soon, if we are to insure that enough special places for our lands and waters are set aside for a population that will grow to 40 million by 2050. Therefore, we hope these monthly reports will make you aware of the benefits to Texas so that you will join us in supporting a lasting natural legacy.

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If you would like more information about conservation in Texas, contact the Texas Coalition for Conservation at [txcoalition@aol.com](mailto:txcoalition@aol.com), fax (512) 349-2439, or phone (512) 349-2449.