

# Texas Wildlife



## ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Since the beginning nearly 40 years ago, TWA has been an organization full of passionate people willing to put the work in to make sure landowners and hunters had a strong voice through our advocacy work. Through the years, our volunteers and staff have built on that foundation and worked to create connections to the land for Texans of all ages through conservation education and hunting recruitment.

As you will see in the coming pages, our Conservation Legacy and Hunting Heritage programs were responsible for impacting over 500,000 Texans through our events and educational products in 2023. Additionally, we were able to maintain that strong voice for Texas landowners and hunters in policy discussions that would directly affect our way of life and our ability to steward the land we love so much.

We are extremely proud of our organizational impact in 2023, but it doesn't happen by accident. It takes generous donors willing to invest in programs and people. It takes generous landowners to open their gates to the next generation of Texan land stewards. It takes selfless volunteers to give their time to take others outdoors. It also takes a team of passionate staff and volunteer leaders to keep things organized and pointed in the right direction.

Thank you for your continued support of TWA and TWAF. Together we are making a difference for the future of Texas. 🌟

**JUSTIN DREIBELBIS**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Texas Wildlife Association  
Texas Wildlife Association Foundation

**JONATHAN LETZ**  
President  
Texas Wildlife Association

**ALAN CURRY**  
President  
Texas Wildlife Association Foundation





## Texas Wildlife Association **ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

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## **TWA MISSION**

Serving Texas wildlife and its habitat, while protecting property rights, hunting heritage, and the conservation efforts of those who value and steward wildlife resources.

## **2023 OFFICERS**

**JONATHAN LETZ**, President

**NYLE MAXWELL**, Vice President

**PARLEY DIXON**, Treasurer

**LOUIS HARVESON**, 2nd Vice President for Programs



📷 Jonathan Vail

## **STAFF** as of June 1, 2024

### PROFESSIONAL STAFF/CONTRACT ASSOCIATES

#### **ADMINISTRATION & OPERATION**

JUSTIN DREIBELBIS, Chief Executive Officer

DAVID BRIMAGER, Chief Operating Officer

QUITA HILL-HAYNES, Director of Finance

BECKY ALIZADEH, Office Administrator

#### **OUTREACH AND MEMBER SERVICES**

DEBBIE COPELAND, Director of Membership

SEAN HOFFMANN, Director of Communications

CHARLIE STOCKSTILL, Regional Development Coordinator

#### **CONSERVATION LEGACY PROGRAM**

KASSI SCHEFFER-GEESLIN, Director of Youth Education

ANDREW EARL, Director of Conservation

AMBER BROWN, Conservation Education Specialist

GENE COOPER, Conservation Education Specialist

JARED SCHLOTTMAN, Conservation Education Specialist

KAY BELL, Conservation Educator

DENISE CORRELL, Conservation Educator

YVONNE KERANEN, Conservation Educator

TERRI MCNUTT, Conservation Educator

JEANETTE REAMES, Conservation Educator

MARLA WOLF, Curriculum Specialist

KARLY BRIDGES, Conservation Legacy Program Assistant

#### **HUNTING HERITAGE PROGRAM**

COL(R) CHRIS MITCHELL, Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) Director

BOB BARNETTE, TYHP Field Operations Coordinator

TAYLOR HEARD, TYHP Field Operations Coordinator

BRIANA NICKLOW, TYHP Field Operations Coordinator

KIM HODGES, TYHP Program Coordinator

MATTHEW HUGHES, Ph.D., Adult Learn to Hunt Coordinator

KRISTIN PARMA, Hunting Heritage Program Specialist

#### **TEXAS WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION**

JUSTIN DREIBELBIS, Chief Executive Officer

TJ GOODPASTURE, TWAF Director of Development

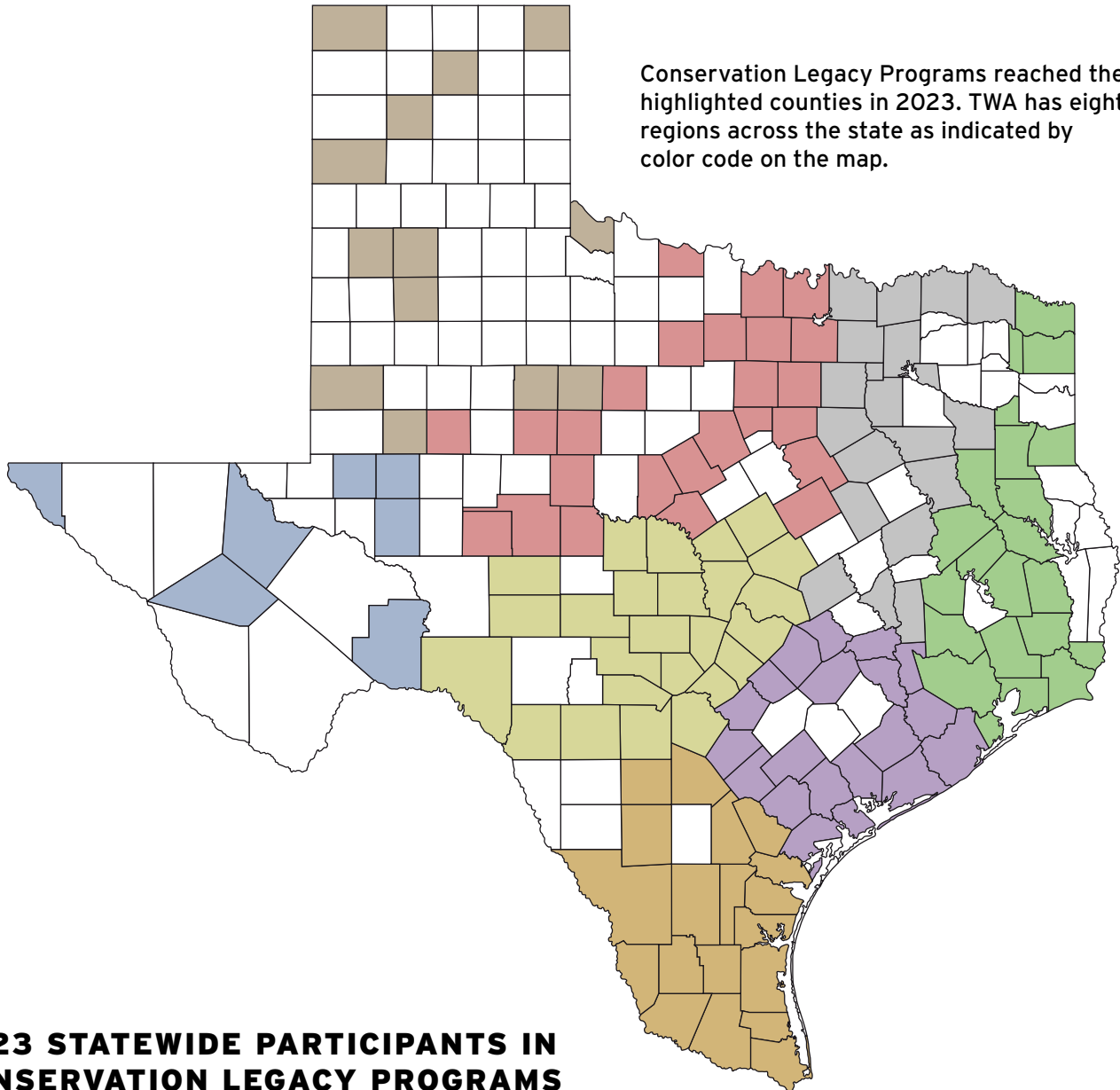
QUITA HILL-HAYNES, Director of Finance

#### **ADVOCACY**

JOEY PARK, Legislative Program Coordinator



# Conservation Legacy



## 2023 STATEWIDE PARTICIPANTS IN CONSERVATION LEGACY PROGRAMS

Distance Learning . . . . .	48,085	Youth Education Workshops & Presentations . . . . .	777
Discovery Trunks . . . . .	136,751	Family Expeditions Program & Partnered Events . . . . .	406
Wildlife by Design . . . . .	60,257	Adult Education Workshops & Conferences . . . . .	1,146
Critter Connections . . . . .	186,047	Adult Education Wild at Work Webinars . . . . .	16,408
Student Expeditions . . . . .	945	Public Events . . . . .	2,630
Youth Education Partnered Curriculum . . . . .	6,121		

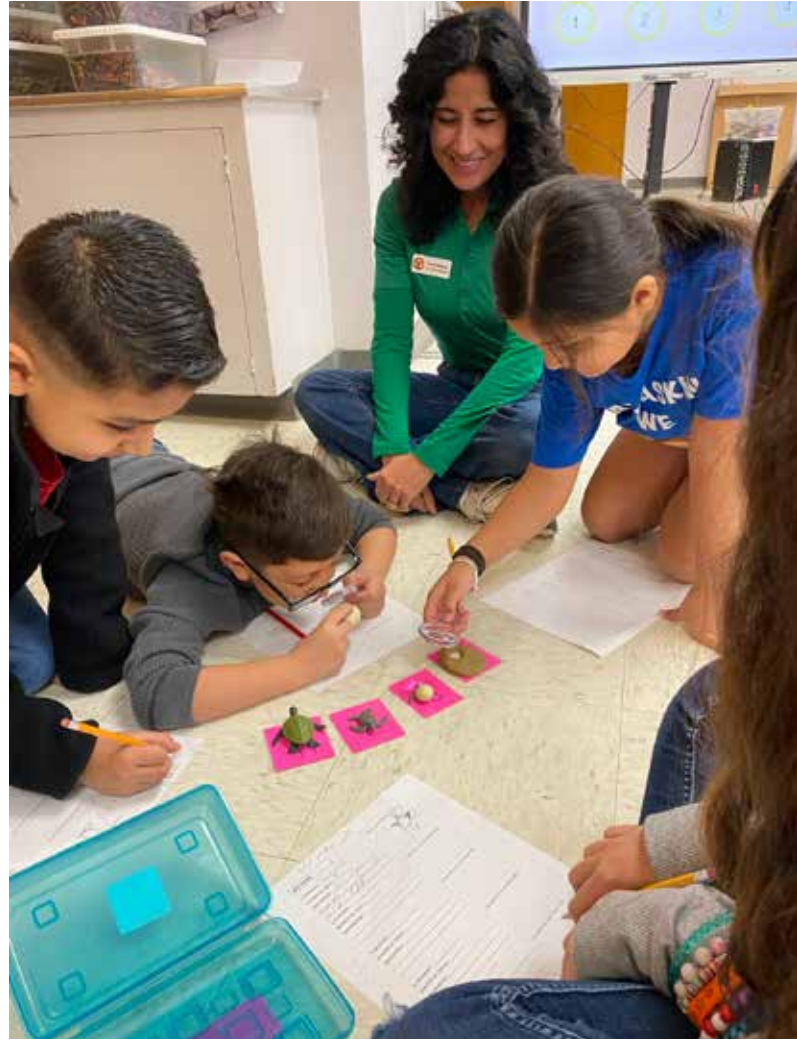
# The Conservation Legacy team is dedicated to educating Texans of all ages and backgrounds across the state.

## YOUTH EDUCATION

Two new conservation educator positions were established in 2023 to serve the greater Austin and greater San Antonio areas. Statewide a total of six conservation educators are engaging with local teachers and students three days a week through Wildlife by Design classroom presentations, Teacher Workshops during the summer, and manning booths at community events throughout the year.

The Land, Water & Wildlife Expeditions Program creates outdoor classrooms that offer anywhere from dozens to hundreds of students an engaging and hands-on field day on private properties, many of which are owned by a TWA member. The numbers are impressive considering 945 students from five schools participated in the 2022-2023 school year while more than 2,000 students from 10 schools participated in the program in the 2023-2024 school year.

Increased marketing of programs in 2023, usually with a seasonal emphasis, yielded spectacular results for Distance Learning and *Critter Connections*. In October and November more than 21,000 students watched a recorded educational video produced by TWA. *Critter Connections* subscriptions continue to rise as well, with 186,047 printed in 2023 and an expected record number of issues to be printed in 2024.



## One of the most fulfilling parts of the Texas Wildlife Association is their commitment to educating young Texans about the great outdoors.

In April, Jimmy and I were so thrilled to host the “Land, Water and Wildlife Expedition” for the second year in a row with nearly 400 seventh graders from Brenham ISD at our homeplace in Washington County. The students learned about water quality, native grasses, quail and bird habitat, among many other important science lessons. We are grateful to the 55 volunteers who were involved in nine different learning stations, teaching these young boys and girls about nature and how they can each play a role in being good land stewards.

The weather was absolutely perfect and hopefully the learning environment was, too! In today’s fast-paced digital world, we need to make sure that children learn about the importance of our natural world and the great outdoors. Along with academic and computer literacy, there must be a place for wildlife literacy!

**LOIS W. KOLKHORST**  
State Senator, District 18

★ CONSERVATION LEGACY TESTIMONIAL



**TWA is a priceless resource to me, but most importantly to my students. I cannot count how many times I have had students and staff comment or ask about when the next activity will be.**

My name is Ronna Clawson and I am excited to share my love of Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) with you. I have been in education for nine years. Initially I taught third grade, then first grade students. The past two years I have worked as an elementary librarian on a third through fifth grade campus.

Originally, I found TWA through an internet search for resources for science lessons I was doing with my first grade students. From that, I participated in a workshop over the summer that was held at Fenwick Nature Center in Pearland. The lovely Adrienne and Ali were the workshop hosts that day. They were wonderful at explaining how you can use the program to reinforce learning in the classroom. It also counted as an update to my gifted and talented education hours for the next year. After that workshop, I was hooked. Have I mentioned that their resources are absolutely free? As an educator with limited resources, this was music to my ears! I started mapping out the following years' lessons using the free resources provided by TWA, found ways I could incorporate the recorded and live webinars, and also shared these with my fellow grade level teachers. I highly recommend taking the time to attend one of the workshops, and to invite a friend along.

When we hosted the first live webinar in my classroom, the students were so excited. They did not fully understand what it was when I explained it to them, but once we had the specialist on the screen, they were in rapt attention. They loved that we could answer questions and interact with them, and they really loved that they were 'competing' against other classes around the state to answer the questions. I was able to connect the science

TEKS for second and third grade to some of the ones for first grade. I remember second and third grade teachers coming to me later to tell me that such and such students remembered about conserving water when we talked with TWA. It really has an impact on the students when they can hear and learn from a diverse group of educators.

As a librarian, I have had the opportunity to expand how I use the TWA resources. If you are not able to do some of these things, please check with your librarian on campus. They would most likely love to collaborate with you on some of the lessons.

TWA is a priceless resource to me, but most importantly to my students. I cannot count how many times I have had students and staff comment or ask about when the next activity will be. The students are making connections to books they are reading. They ask to check out books that pertain to something they saw or heard about in the lesson using the trunks or webinars. They are truly impacted by what I am sharing with them.

I could not do that to the depth I am doing without the help from TWA and their amazing resources.

I said it before, I want to give students an experience through learning they may not get otherwise. Exposure is the key! You never know what will inspire our students to become a great leader, an important innovator, or the next conservationist that continues the important work that TWA is doing.

**RONNA CLAWSON**  
**Librarian, Alvin ISD**



**The organization's youth education efforts impacted more than 438,000 young Texans in 2023.**



### **ADULT EDUCATION**

As the number of new Texans continues to increase daily, efforts continue to create adult learning opportunities. For example, the Small Acreage – Big Opportunity program is a joint effort with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Designed to help stewards of small properties address unique management challenges, 50 landowners across Brown, Comal and Travis counties participated in the program in 2023. TWA also partnered with the Welder Wildlife Foundation in Sinton to host its recurring Women of the Land: From the Ground Up program.

The Wild at Work webinars, held during the lunch hour, moved from quarterly to monthly, and provided opportunities for members and non-members alike to learn from experts on a variety of wildlife, conservation and hunting initiatives. This online content was viewed by more than 16,000 in 2023.

TWA was also an active partner in co-hosting the Statewide Quail Symposium in Abilene and the White-tailed Deer Symposium in La Vernia. Staff presented at the Houston Rodeo Ranching & Wildlife Expo, Hill Country Alliance Leadership Summit, and guest lectured at Texas A&M, among other events.

All told, more than 17,000 adults were impacted through TWA educational programming in the past year. 🌟





# Hunting Heritage

TWA's Hunting Heritage initiative continues to make strides toward getting youth and adult Texans into the field to experience the hunting way of life firsthand and into the community of Texas hunters. Comprised of the Texas Youth Hunting Program, the Adult Learn to Hunt Program and the Texas Big Game Awards, participants are exposed to the important role that private landowners play as stewards of our natural resources.



## 2023-24 HUNTING HERITAGE IMPACT

### Adult Learn to Hunt Program

Hunts .....	24
Applicants .....	634
Drawn hunters .....	122
Volunteers and mentors .....	146
Total volunteer hours .....	5,800

### Texas Youth Hunting Program

Hunts .....	231
Youth drawn for hunts .....	1,053
Youth, parent and volunteer participation .....	3,159

### Texas Big Game Awards 2023

Scored entries.....	357
First harvest .....	212
Youth division .....	102
Landowner certificates .....	273

As a child my parents raised my younger brother Cody and me to love God, hunting, fishing, and sports.

But it wasn't until I was 15 years old that I got my Hunter's Education and my dad started signing me up for youth hunts. My first youth hunt that I was drawn for was at the King Ranch in South Texas. This was my first time to go on a hunting trip with just my dad. I remember leaving after school, driving all night, and sleeping in a Whataburger parking lot before meeting with the rest of the hunting guests later that morning.

Arriving at the beautiful King Ranch, we pulled in and there were high rise jeeps waiting for us at the Main Lodge entrance. We met our guide, James, and our weekend of hunting started soon after. Though I was able to successfully harvest game during the hunt and enjoyed the rustic cabins and the great meals, what I grew to appreciate more than anything was the quality time spent with my dad.

The next year my brother and I were drawn for a youth hunt on the School House Ranch in West Texas. This hunt was special because once again we all got to go as a family, and it was the last one for me to attend as a youth.

Out of all my memories that I gained from those two trips, nothing will compare to my experience this past winter. Fast forward 19 years and now I have two boys aged 15 and 12. Over the summer of 2023, my dad started preparing the boys to attend a Hunter's Education course. My oldest, Tucker, got drawn on his first youth hunt in December 2023 which he attended with his dad. This was a special trip for both, as my husband's hunting experience was primarily bird hunting as a teenager. The father and son duo got to experience and enjoy their first youth hunt together and came home with a ton of stories about their trip.

In January 2024, my youngest, Rayden, was drawn for a youth hunt at the Whitworth Ranch in



**My oldest, Tucker got drawn on his first youth hunt... which he attended with his dad. This was a special trip for both, as my husband's hunting experience was primarily bird hunting as a teenager.**

London, TX. From the moment we received the confirmation email, Rayden was so excited. Since it was a tent camping hunt, my dad and I were approved to attend. As a mom/daughter one of the best things in life is watching your parent and child spending time together. I found myself multiple times on this trip just sitting back and watching my dad and Rayden enjoying time together. The game warden even came out to visit with the guests and socialize with the youth which was a great experience for Rayden. We enjoyed three hunts and made countless more memories.

As a former youth participant and now as a parent, I really appreciate the Texas Wildlife Association's Texas Youth Hunting Program for giving young hunters the opportunity to hunt and learn about the outdoors. I recommend that parents take the opportunity to experience the youth hunts with their children because it is an experience that you will never regret and always remember.

**ASHLEIGH ARMSTRONG**

TYHP participant and mother of TYHP participant

★ TYHP TESTIMONIAL



The **Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP)** offers children and teens opportunities to hunt native and exotic game thanks to private landowners who generously open their gates to host the hunts. While TWA oversees the program, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department serves as a vital collaborator for these safe, educational and affordable hunts designed to create memorable learning experiences for the next generation of conservationists--many of which are first-time hunters. The application process is open to all and mentors, lodging and meals are included thanks to our generous donors and countless hours provided by volunteers. During the 2023 hunting season, 1,053 youth were drawn for hunts. With the addition of parents and volunteers, the total number of participants reached 3,159.

There has been an increase in the number of Texans who have a desire to procure their own organic protein through the **Adult Learn to Hunt Program**. This past season, 100 new hunters were ushered into the hunting brethren through 25 hunts. Like our TYHP hunts, the success of this program hinges on private landowners who are willing to host hunts on their property.

More than 600 adults applied for these mentored hunts which exemplifies the growing demand for adult Texans to connect with land and wildlife.

The offseason remains busy, with three planned Huntmaster training sessions, community awareness presentations and a fundraising event.

Now in year 33, the **Texas Big Game Awards (TBGA)** recognizes first time harvests from youth and adults, as well as exceptional native Texas big game animals—and the land managers who produce them. More than 600 entries were submitted in 2023, including 357 scored entries, 212 first harvest and 109 in the youth division. TWA is proud to partner with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department in this effort to promote our strong Texas hunting heritage.

Hunters who participate in the TBGA are celebrated at one of three Regional Sportsman's banquets each summer. The 2023 banquet season began in Fredericksburg, then headed to Abilene before the final banquet in the Bryan-College Station area. There was a great turnout of awardees at our 38th annual TWA Wildlife Convention in July 2023 where the top three in each category were awarded along with our eight Texas Slam awardees.

Since the program's inception in 1991, the TBGA has recognized over 42,000 hunters, first time hunters, youth and landowners.

Additionally, TWA offers \$25,000 in the TBGA Scholarship Program to college students who major in agriculture or natural resource related majors. One hundred and twenty-five students applied for the scholarship in spring 2023. The TBGA program is made possible through generous donations from sponsors such as Hixon Land and Cattle Company, Carter's Country Outdoor Stores, Shiner Bock and Nyle Maxwell Family of Dealerships. ✨



**More than 600 adults applied for these mentored hunts which exemplifies the growing demand for adult Texans to connect with land and wildlife.**



**A simple Google search started it all: Adults Learn to Hunt Texas. I had no idea my life was about to change in such a remarkable way!**

I've always wanted to learn how to hunt, but I didn't have any friends or family who could teach me. Texas Wildlife Association gave me a safe place to not only learn how to hunt, but to learn more about conservation and how what we do impacts Texas. The learning experience, the connection to the outdoors, and the incredible people I've met have added such value to my life as a whole. My journey with TWA has just started, but I can't wait to take my next step and be a mentor! I think the greatest gift we can share with each other is knowledge, and I'm excited to do my part.

**LAIAH PEAVY**  
**Adult Learn to Hunt Program**  
Participant



★ ALHP TESTIMONIAL



# Advocacy

TWA is a proponent for landowner and hunter-friendly wildlife conservation policy in Texas. We actively engage in state and federal legislative and regulatory processes to protect property rights, advocate for landowner protections and wildlife management tools, and promote and preserve our state's strong hunting heritage. During 2023, TWA staff and volunteer leadership represented the organization in front of the Texas Parks & Wildlife and Texas Animal Health Commissions and served on several agency advisory committees and task forces.

In a state with an ever changing political landscape, TWA advocacy volunteers and staff work hard to educate policy makers and their staff about the value of our natural resources and the important role that private landowners play in the health and abundance of those resources.

TWA advocacy means our members give of their time and treasure in many ways. We advocate our views at legislative hearings and agency meetings. We travel to all corners of the state to share our knowledge and experiences that contribute to solid policy decisions. We intend to build a solid foundation for the next generation of Texans who intend to protect our land, wildlife and water resources. 🌟



**In a state with an ever changing political landscape, TWA advocacy volunteers and staff work hard to educate policy makers and their staff about the value of our natural resources and the important role that private landowners play in the health and abundance of those resources.**





# Financials

TWA Statement of Financial Position  
As of December 31, 2023 (un-audited)

## **ASSETS**

Cash and Investments .....	\$1,101,024
Receivables .....	\$1,021,009
Other Current Assets .....	\$28,032
Fixed Assets .....	\$566,829
<b>Total Assets .....</b>	<b>\$2,716,895</b>

## **LIABILITIES**

Account Payable .....	\$182,306
<b>Total Liabilities .....</b>	<b>\$487,873</b>

## **NET ASSETS**

Unrestricted .....	\$974,074
Restricted .....	\$1,254,948
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity .....</b>	<b>\$2,716,895</b>









# Texas Wildlife Association Foundation

This year, the Texas Wildlife Association Foundation (TWAF) played a pivotal role in nurturing the next generation of conservation stewards and hunters in Texas. Thanks to your unwavering support, we were able to meet the growing needs of TWA's educational and hunting heritage programs. From engaging science curriculum for classrooms to immersive Expedition field trips on private ranches, TWAF-backed Conservation Legacy Education programs fostered a love for the outdoors in countless young Texans. These programs equip future generations with the knowledge and passion to become responsible stewards of our wild places.

Support for TWA's Youth and Adult Hunting programs provided safe and meaningful hunting experiences for new and novice hunters across the state. These experiences not only instilled the values of responsible hunting ethics but also served as valuable opportunities to connect with family, friends, and the natural world.

This impact wouldn't have been possible without strong fundraising efforts that allowed us to fully fund these critical programs.

In 2023 the Foundation established the TWAF Legacy Society which recognizes and honors those donors who help protect the land, water, and wildlife of Texas by contributing to the funding of TWAF through testamentary or other planned giving opportunities in an amount of \$25,000 or greater. Past donors at this level, and those who do so going forward, are recognized as members of the TWAF Legacy Society. During calendar year 2023, the Foundation endowments grew from \$1,586,539 to \$2,083,057.

Additionally, with immense pride, we announce the final payment on the TWA headquarters building at the close of 2023. This accomplishment ensures a stable foundation for TWA's vital work for years to come.

Without the generous support of our TWAF donors, none of this would be possible. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your investment in the future of Texas' wildlife and wild places. Thank you! 🌟

## **2023 OFFICERS**

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**ALAN CURRY**, President

**TOM VANDIVIER**, Vice President and Secretary

**CHARLES DAVIDSON**, Treasurer

**STEVE C. LEWIS**, President Emeritus

## **2023 TRUSTEES**

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**TERRY ANDERSON**

**MARKO BARRETT**

**KYLE BASS**

**SARAH BIEDENHARN**

**GEORGE "TIMO" HIXON**

**BRYAN KING**

**J.B. RICHTER JR.**

**GREG SIMONS**

**STAN STUDER JR.**

**JIMMIE V. THURMOND III**

**FAY WALKER**

# Financials

TWAF Statement of Financial Position  
As of December 31, 2023 (un-audited)

## ASSETS

Cash and Investments .....	\$4,848,324
Receivables .....	\$1,021,795
Other Current Assets .....	\$11,883
Fixed Assets .....	\$4,170,134
<b>Total Assets .....</b>	<b>\$10,052,136</b>

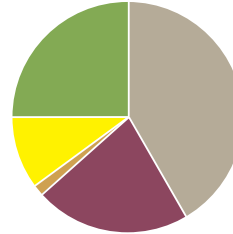
## LIABILITIES

Account Payable.....	\$933,468
<b>Total Liabilities.....</b>	<b>\$933,468</b>

## NET ASSETS

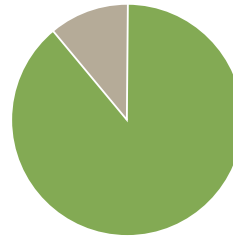
Unrestricted .....	\$7,001,369
Restricted .....	\$2,117,299
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity.....</b>	<b>\$10,052,136</b>

## REVENUE



- Grants 25%
- Public Support 39%
- Events 18%
- Lease Income 5%
- Investment Income 13%

## EXPENSES



- Grant Giving 91%
- Operations 9%



## 2023 TWAF DONORS

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Barclay Adams	Todd L. Brockwell	Dallas Safari Club	Heather Haynes
William Adams	James Brooks Jr., MD	South Texas	Joe Haynes
Kenneth Adams IV	Kathryn Brown	Dudley Bros. LTD	Wassenberg Ranch
Mallory Ahl	Katie Brown	Donald Duffin	Jobi Heartsill
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The Ruth & Edward Austin	Wade Chappell	George Ferguson	The Horizon Foundation
Foundation	Sue & Lee Christie	Joseph & Blair Fitzsimons	Collin Horner
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Nancy Leonard	Claiborn Peterson	Andrew Slaughter	The Waterproof Foundation,
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Spencer Lewis	Family Foundation	Paula & Ernest Smith	Curtis Watson
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