

# Natural AGENDA



A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR  
TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT  
**FISCAL YEARS 2009-2013**

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Demographic Trends

Demographic trends show a state growing, diversifying and aging substantially in the coming decades. These shifts have already and are likely to continue to have a profound effect on TPWD as it carries out its primary functions of management and conservation of fish and wildlife resources, provision of outdoor recreational opportunities, conservation education and outreach, and cultural and historical interpretation. For example, as Texans have increasingly moved out of rural communities to cities, the department has increased outreach, education and promotion efforts to attract more urbanized and diverse audiences to hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational activities. Future plans call for the acquisition of new park lands located within one-to-two hours of major metropolitan areas (i.e., Austin, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, etc.).

### Economic Variables

Economic variables significantly influence TPWD's financial position and ability to effectively serve Texans. For example, personal income levels can affect public willingness to participate in recreational/commercial activities that require payment of license or user fees, such as hunting, fishing, boating and state park visitation. In addition, many TPWD functions are also highly sensitive to the price of market commodities such as electricity, natural gas and fuel. Routine daily operations such as vehicle and boat patrols conducted by game wardens, population and harvest surveys, research, state park maintenance and construction site inspections, are all heavily fuel intensive. For the 2010-2011 biennium, economic forecasts indicate that the U.S. economy as a whole will experience a slow-down that is likely to have ripple effects in Texas. While current record-level fuel and energy costs present significant operational challenges, the department could see increased participation and revenues as constituents stay closer to home and pursue relatively lower-cost recreational opportunities in state parks, nature centers and wildlife management areas.

### New Legislation

Article IX of the General Appropriations Act provided for increases in employee compensation for fiscal years 2008-2009. Most notably, salary schedules A and B were revised to reflect a 2% pay increase for both years of the biennium. Salary Schedule C was also revised to reflect significant increases and the State Classification Plan was changed to include establishment of a project manager classification. These changes will have a positive impact on TPWD's ability to recruit and retain a quality workforce.

Other new legislation with human resources impact included:

- HB 1275 which provides individuals who are entitled to veteran's employment preference with an option to appeal hiring decisions
- HB 957 which provides for a 1% automatic participation in a 401 (k) deferred compensation plan for all new state agency employees unless the employee chooses to opt out of the program
- HB 12 which implements physical fitness standards for certain law enforcement officers
- HB 590 which requires state agencies to adopt a written ethics policy

## INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

### Budgetary Limitations/ Issues

#### Salary Equity Issues

The challenge is for TPWD to design and package a total compensation system that is affordable, internally equitable, and externally competitive while fitting the organization's culture, structure and objectives. Specific objectives are to:

1. Attract people with the needed knowledge, skills and abilities
2. Retain top performers, especially those in core and critical mission areas
3. Motivate exemplary performance through a competency-based performance management system, and monetary and non-monetary incentives

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## Appendix F – Workforce Plan

4. Spend limited compensation dollars on hard-to-recruit and retain classifications and people
5. Align staff with TPWD's organizational mission, vision and values
6. Reward valued behaviors

Surveys and compensation studies have consistently identified fair pay and compensation as significant issues for the department. Analysis of TPWD's current salary structure indicates that by almost any measure, salaries at TPWD lag behind those of agencies of comparable size and mission overall, by salary group and by virtually every classification.

Consistent with compensation philosophies practiced at most private sector and public agencies, TPWD's long term goal is to achieve a point at which one-half of employees are paid above the median pay point for their position and one-half are paid below that amount. To achieve this goal, the agency will work to implement a host of future strategies such as salary equity adjustments, merit increases, and posting of critical positions in a wider salary range. Thanks largely to Rider 27, which allowed the department to spend revenues from park fees and license sales in excess of the Comptroller's Biennial Revenue Estimates for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, the department began making some specific agency-wide equity adjustments effective July 1, 2008. The equity adjustments ranged from 5% to 9.5% and affected approximately 60% of department employees.

### Additional FTEs

During the 2006-07 biennium, across-the-board funding reductions and Article IX limitations resulted in reductions to TPWD's authorized FTE levels. For many TPWD divisions and programs, these reductions have not yet been restored despite a growing need for services and new programs. As an example, additional staff will be required to operate expanded production facilities at the new East Texas Fish Hatchery. The current FTE cap also limits flexibility to address seasonal increases in demand, such as those experienced at state parks during the summer months, and can limit opportunities to maximize the use of federal grant funds. Obtaining an increase in the FTE cap and sufficient funding for additional positions are critical if TPWD is to continue to effectively address natural and cultural resource issues and meet the outdoor recreational needs of Texas' growing population.

### Changes in Leadership/Key Staff

The Parks and Wildlife Commission has experienced a number of changes within the last year. In July 2007, Peter Holt was appointed as chairman and T. Dan Friedkin was elected vice-chairman in August of 2007. In addition, the governor has appointed four new commissioners. Commissioners Antonio Falcon, Karen Hixon, and Margaret Martin were appointed in August, while Commissioner Ralph Duggins was appointed in February.

The department experienced several key leadership position changes due to retirements. Carter Smith was named the new Executive Director and assumed official duties in January of 2008. The Director of Internal Audits was also vacated due to retirement in December 2007, and the TPW Commission selected a new director at its March 2008 meeting. Finally, the department will be losing division directors for the Infrastructure and Coastal Fisheries divisions in the upcoming months.

As evidenced by recently announced retirements, many members of the executive management team and senior-level managers are either currently eligible to retire or will become eligible within the next two years. Likewise, many program staff, particularly in the areas of law enforcement and state parks, are also at or approaching retirement eligibility. Agency-wide, a total of 11% of TPWD employees are currently eligible to retire.

## CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

As of the end of fiscal year 2007, TPWD's workforce consisted of:

- 2,696 classified regular full-time (CRF) employees
- 123 classified regular part-time employees
- 361 temporary employees working on short-term projects and other temporary work assignments up to one year. The TPWD workforce increases significantly in summer with the addition of a seasonal temporary workforce.

TPWD is continuing to address the challenge of attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. Of the 2,696 CRF employees:

- 32% are female
- 68% are male
- 23% are ethnic minorities
- 77% are white

## WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Analysis of TPWD's workforce identified under-representation in the following Equal Employment Opportunity Categories:

- Administrative Support – African-Americans and Hispanics
- Official/Administrator – African-Americans, Hispanics and Females
- Professional – African-Americans, Hispanics and Females
- Service and Maintenance – African-Americans and Females
- Skilled Crafts – African-Americans and Hispanics
- Technical – African-Americans, Hispanics and Females

For a complete report on TPWD's workforce utilization, please refer to the supporting tables section at the end of this plan.

## WORKFORCE COMPARISONS

TPWD continues to have fewer young employees compared to the overall workforce within Texas state government. Only 8% of TPWD's workforce is under the age of 30, compared to close to 15% of the state's overall workforce.

TPWD has an experienced workforce with 22% of employees having over 20 years of state employment, compared to 15% within Texas state government overall. Additionally, 41% of employees have worked for TPWD for at least 10 years. By comparison, only 22% of employees within Texas state government overall have worked for their current state agency for at least 10 years.

For complete workforce comparisons, please refer to the supporting tables section at the end of this plan.

## TURNOVER

While having an effective recruiting effort is essential, it is equally important to ensure that TPWD retains its current employees. TPWD traditionally has had a lower turnover rate than the state average and this trend is expected to continue. TPWD's fiscal year 2007 turnover rate was 13.9% compared to the statewide average of 17.4%. As referenced in the "Changes in Leadership/ Key Staff" section, many of the department's key leadership positions, including members of the executive management team and

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## Appendix F – Workforce Plan

senior managers in all the major program areas across the department, are eligible for retirement. For example, approximately 50% of the executive management team is currently eligible to retire or will be eligible to retire within the next five years. The impact of these retirements is loss of experience and historical perspective, especially in the areas of law enforcement, information technology and similarly technical and specialized fields.

To assist with both recruitment and retention, the Human Resource Division systematically conducts both internal and external turnover analysis. Internally, TPWD assesses trends overall, by division, by classification and by levels within classifications to identify trends. In addition, the analysis includes a comparison of TPWD to other state agencies of comparable size (1,000 to 10,000) and mission (Article VI, Natural Resources). As an integral part of the overall TPWD total compensation plan, classifications with high turnover will be systematically targeted for salary equity adjustments and merit increases.

### FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE

While TPWD's authorized FTE level increased to 3,100 in the 2008-2009 biennium, these increases were specific to state parks and related support activities, increased law enforcement border security efforts, and implementation of Senate Bill 3, and did not result in additional FTEs for other agency programs that were cut in prior biennia. Funding to achieve competitive staff compensation in support of both retention and recruitment will be a priority for the upcoming biennium and in the future.

### INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN RESULTS

Reflective of trends market-wide, there is a continuing need for TPWD employees with strong technical, analytical and communication skills. As part of the internal workforce planning environmental scan, TPWD conducted a series of division focus groups in conjunction with a workforce survey. Each division identified up to five job classifications as being critical to meeting the business objectives and the TPWD mission. A total of 36 job classifications were identified. Over 70% of the current agency workforce was linked to those classifications. Of the 36 job classifications selected, seven were common to more than one division (Natural Resource Specialist I-IV, Administrative Assistants I-III, Staff Services Officers, Manager I-V, Fish and Wildlife Technicians, Training Specialists and Project Managers).

The competency feedback for the agency reflects that the majority of the critical positions are staffed with personnel with intermediate to advanced levels and that these levels meet current needs. With regard to future needs, the agency consistently identified that the distribution of the competency levels would need to shift to advanced in order to fulfill the agency's mission.

### GAP ANALYSIS

#### Women and Minorities

Many of the department's key leadership positions, including members of the executive management team and senior managers in all the major program areas are underrepresented. Historically, Engineering Specialist, Natural Resource Specialist, Network Specialist and Program Specialist positions have been dominated by white males. While recruitment efforts for Game Wardens have been more lucrative for women and minorities than in previous years, this trend needs to be sustained for the overall Game Warden force to more adequately reflect the face of Texas. Despite the fact that numbers of college graduates have risen in science and technology, they continue to be underrepresented in TPWD's workforce.

**Non-Competitive Salary Structure**

The most recent Survey of Organizational Excellence, which tracks TPWD employee opinion, has confirmed that fair pay is a critical issue for job satisfaction. TPWD is experiencing high turnover in some job classifications and has been unable to recruit for many positions due to below-market salary levels. This pay disparity is most evident in the administrative support classification (including fish and wildlife technicians) and also in lower and mid-level professional staff. With almost no exception, all of TPWD's Schedule A employees (administrative support) are in the first (lowest) quartile of the four pay ranges. There is a better distribution in Schedule B but it is clear that TPWD is not competitive in the entry and mid-level classifications.

**State Parks Staffing**

Non-competitive pay is impacting recruitment, retention and morale throughout most of the major classifications within the State Parks Division. Systematic funding of most positions at the entry pay level within the classification pay range has led to significantly reduced applicant flow for core classifications such as Park Ranger, Park Specialist, and Program Supervisor. In addition, absence of a Park Ranger career ladder, a systematic salary equity adjustment strategy and the fiscal ability to post jobs from entry-point to the mid-point has led to increased turnover and declining morale as documented in the most recent Survey of Organizational Excellence.

**Law Enforcement**

Lack of competitive pay with comparable public sector police forces continues to impact the number of applications for the TPWD Game Warden Academy commissioning training classes, especially for women and minorities. To further complicate Game Warden staffing, large numbers of wardens are reaching the retirement eligibility window over the upcoming biennium.

**Biologists (Coastal Fisheries Division, Inland Fisheries Division and Wildlife Division)**

Benchmark salary studies confirm lack of pay comparability in key TPWD biologist classifications. For example, an American Fisheries Society study disclosed that TPWD is not competitive in the lower- to mid-level fisheries workers. Similarly, a wildlife biologist analysis revealed that Texas now ranks next to last nationally for entry level biologists. Significantly, this study noted that from 2000 to 2007, TPWD has slipped noticeably in pay for many classifications to below the mid-range of other states, yet the department was in the upper range in the 1995 survey.

**Spanish Speaking Capability for our Service Population**

The Spanish speaking public represents a significant and growing segment of the Texas population, yet surveys show that Hispanics tend to be less aware of TPWD and participate in agency programs and services at lower levels than Anglos. Reaching out to and developing effective communication and programming strategies aimed at the Spanish-speaking population represents a challenge for TPWD. Accordingly, the department must give special consideration to the ethnic/racial diversity of the population in planning its programs, notably to increasing/developing the number of service delivery/customer service staff with at least minimal conversational Spanish-speaking skill.

**STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

The Strategy Development portion of this Workforce Plan provides recommendations to address skills gaps in TPWD's workforce.

**Non-Competitive Salary Structure**

The TPWD senior leadership team is addressing the issue of fair and equitable compensation through a sequential process. By the end of fiscal year 2008, specific agency-wide equity adjustments will be made to two categories of positions:

- TPWD's lowest paid positions
- Positions suffering from high turnover and poor recruitment, as well as other major business needs as identified by the individual divisions

## Appendix F – Workforce Plan

These equity adjustments will affect all divisions and will impact more than 60% of TPWD employees. Salary increases will range from 5% to 9.5%. To achieve the long term goal of one-half of TPWD staff paid at the mid-point of the salary range, the senior leadership team will make compensation enhancement one of its top priorities in TPWD's fiscal year 2010-2011 Legislative Appropriation Request (LAR).

### Comprehensive Recruitment

Outreach and workforce development are tools to reach students and potential employees well in advance of their employment with TPWD. Recruitment is the process of finding and attracting those most suitable for TPWD employment. Finally, retention and training are tools to assist in retaining those employees who have bridged the skills gap and to help these employees keep their skills current and applicable to the TPWD work environment.

TPWD's comprehensive recruitment program includes the following components:

- Utilize the full salary range to post vacancy announcements in order to ensure salary competitiveness
- Expand recruitment efforts to local and rural areas where positions exist
- Increase outreach efforts to partner with elementary, middle and high schools and other organizations to “promote” TPWD employment and professional growth opportunities
- Continue to focus on summer intern programs
- Continue to target minorities and women by refining and expanding existing partnerships with Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
- Continue to examine, broaden and standardize minimum qualifications, especially specific degree requirements, and carefully assess quantifiable experience requirements to ensure experience is based upon absolute minimums, not preferred qualifications
- Analyze the hiring processes to identify opportunities to implement an electronic transfer of the personnel action form, allowing for the faster addition to payroll and faster start date from the time of the job offer
- Continue to research behavioral-based interview techniques and if feasible, develop and implement these techniques to assist hiring authorities in the selection process for appropriate candidates

### Leadership Development

Leadership development is a pressing need for TPWD. As the department's key executive and management staff retires, it will become increasingly important to continue to identify and develop potential leaders who possess the necessary leadership skills. More specifically, to effectively address future and potential talent loss, it is important for TPWD to:

- Continue to concentrate on leadership development – TPWD periodically assesses the leadership training and development opportunities for staff at all four levels of the leadership continuum: Senior Managers, Middle Managers, First-Line Managers/Team Leaders and individual contributors. Executive staff continue to attend the Center for Creative Leadership's five-day Leadership Development Program, as well as the three-week Governor's Executive Development Program. In addition, these staff, on a competitive selection basis, may have the opportunity to participate in the National Conservation Leadership Institute, an intensive seven month program consisting of in-residence leadership training and online collaboration on individual leadership projects.
- Mid-level managers routinely serve as mentors in the TPWD Natural Leaders leadership development program. In addition, TPWD adopted Franklin Covey's three-day “4 Roles of Leadership” for training of these 100 mid-level leaders. To date, 94 members of this group have been trained in five training sessions by certified in-house facilitators.
- First-line managers and team leaders are the target audience for the Natural Leaders program and the five-day Successful First Line Management Program (SFLM). To date, 134 of this approximately 400 target group have participated in the Natural Leaders program and 399 have graduated from the SFLM program, which is regularly offered four times per year.

The following are additional recommendations

#### **Improve Business Techniques and Responsiveness**

- Enhance productivity and professional growth by expanding cross-training opportunities
- Continue to analyze business operations by determining additional functions that may be centralized and decentralized and allocate sufficient positions to local and rural areas in order to perform decentralized functions
- Enhance business processes by conducting in-depth analyses of required competencies, training opportunities, and organizational structure and staff allocations

#### **Improve Employee Retention Rate and Morale**

Several specific initiatives to improve retention and morale are currently underway:

- In fiscal year 2007 TPWD implemented a competency based performance management system and is converting to an online e-appraisal platform in fiscal year 2008
- A Natural Leaders project team is conducting a study and will provide recommendations and a report detailing the overall benefits of telecommuting
- Another Natural Leader project team is developing a comprehensive TPWD diversity strategy which identifies and includes all internal and external stakeholders and partners
- TPWD has established a three-pronged approach to improving its overall scores on the Survey of Organizational Excellence. A Natural Leaders project team is conducting a series of agency-wide focus groups on specific action steps to take to improve Supervisory Effectiveness, Team Effectiveness and Total Compensation (monetary and non-monetary motivational incentives). A team of HR staff is working with each Division Director and his/her staff to develop a comparable listing of best practices for two to three of the other workplace areas addressed in the survey. TPWD is also working cooperatively with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), an ideal benchmark organization, due to comparability of mission and size.
- In fiscal year 2007, TPWD conducted a pilot conversational Spanish course through an inter-governmental agreement with Austin Community College. This course, which was piloted with 18 Communications Division employees, consisted of 21 hours of instruction at a cost of \$96 per participant, and was conducted on-site at TPWD Headquarters in Austin. TPWD will explore expansion of this or a comparable program, as well as video based and online conversation Spanish options.

Other general efforts in this area include:

- Implement an effective merit program based upon performance-based measures
- Expand career ladder progressions for “hard-to-fill” positions that traditionally experience high turnover, and other positions deemed critical to the department which fit the criteria for a career ladder
- Encourage flexible work hours and job sharing opportunities to allow employees to balance work/life activities
- Expand the use of recognition programs to allow supervisors, with division director approval, to award administrative leave to their staff for outstanding performance
- Increase awareness and utilization of employee tuition and educational assistance programs

**Appendix F – Workforce Plan**

SUPPORTING TABLES

**AFRICAN-AMERICANS**

	STATE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE	TPWD WORKFORCE		
	Percentage	Number	Population	Percentage
Administrative Support	11.2%	21	380	5.5%
Officials & Administrators	6.6%	1	23	4.3%
Professional	8.3%	23	984	2.3%
Service & Maintenance	13.8%	32	872	3.7%
Skilled Crafts	6.0%	12	186	6.5%
Technical	12.4%	13	251	5.2%

**HISPANICS**

	STATE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE	TPWD WORKFORCE		
	Percentage	Number	Population	Percentage
Administrative Support	24.1%	84	380	22.1%
Officials & Administrators	14.2%	3	23	13.0%
Professional	13.4%	122	984	12.4%
Service & Maintenance	40.7%	172	872	19.7%
Skilled Crafts	37.5%	30	186	16.1%
Technical	20.2%	53	251	21.1%

**FEMALES**

	STATE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE	TPWD WORKFORCE		
	Percentage	Number	Population	Percentage
Administrative Support	64.7%	344	380	90.5%
Officials & Administrators	37.3%	6	23	26.1%
Professional	53.2%	329	984	33.4%
Service & Maintenance	39.0%	131	872	15.0%
Skilled Crafts	4.8%	17	186	9.1%
Technical	53.8%	35	251	13.9%

The State Civilian Workforce Data source is from the January 2008 Texas Workforce Commission, Civil Rights Statistics. Protective Services © and Para-Professionals (Q) categories are combined with the Service & Maintenance (M) category for this report. The Texas State Workforce Utilization Analysis reflects the last quarter of Fiscal Year 2007 and includes classified regular full time employees only. The TPWD source is from the August 31, 2007 USPS SIRS reports and includes classified regular full-time employees only.

**TOTAL POPULATION**

<b>TPWD</b>	<b>Statewide</b>
2,696	144,934

**GENDER**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>TPWD total</b>	<b>TPWD %</b>	<b>Statewide total</b>	<b>Statewide %</b>
Female	862	32.0%	77,661	53.6%
Male	1,834	68.0%	67,273	46.4%

**RACE**

<b>Race</b>	<b>TPWD total</b>	<b>TPWD %</b>	<b>Statewide total</b>	<b>Statewide %</b>
White	2,088	77.4%	79,143	54.6%
Black	102	3.8%	30,085	20.8%
Hispanic	464	17.2%	32,653	22.5%
Other	42	1.6%	3,054	2.1%

**AGE**

<b>Age</b>	<b>TPWD total</b>	<b>TPWD %</b>	<b>Statewide total</b>	<b>Statewide %</b>
16 to 29	222	8.2%	21,617	14.8%
30 to 39	652	24.2%	33,077	22.7%
40 to 49	847	31.4%	42,638	29.3%
50 to 59	806	29.9%	37,584	25.8%
60 to 69	164	6.1%	10,161	7.0%
70 and over	5	0.2%	611	0.4%

**Appendix F – Workforce Plan**

**LENGTH OF STATE SERVICE**

<b>Length of Service</b>	<b>TPWD total</b>	<b>TPWD %</b>	<b>Statewide total</b>	<b>Statewide %</b>
Fewer than 2 years	269	10.0%	26,823	18.4%
2 to 5 years	404	15.0%	21,256	14.6%
5 to 10 years	630	23.4%	31,516	21.6%
10 to 15 years	434	16.1%	25,977	17.8%
15 to 20 years	361	13.4%	18,437	12.7%
20 to 25 years	289	10.7%	11,355	7.8%
25 to 30 years	181	6.7%	6,723	4.6%
30 to 35 years	92	3.4%	2,799	1.9%
Greater than 35 years	36	1.3%	822	0.6%

Length of Statewide service taken from the Annual Report on Classified Employee Turnover for Fiscal Year 2007, SAO Report No. 08-703.

**LENGTH OF AGENCY SERVICE**

<b>Length of Service</b>	<b>TPWD total</b>	<b>TPWD %</b>	<b>Statewide total</b>	<b>Statewide %</b>
Fewer than 2 years	441	16.4%	44,982	28.4%
2 to 5 years	503	18.7%	50,974	32.2%
5 to 10 years	638	23.7%	26,733	16.9%
10 to 15 years	391	14.5%	18,394	11.6%
15 to 20 years	285	10.6%	8,896	5.6%
20 to 25 years	243	9.0%	5,227	3.3%
25 to 30 years	131	4.9%	2,436	1.5%
30 to 35 years	53	2.0%	482	0.3%
Greater than 35 years	11	0.4%	151	0.1%

Length of Statewide tenure with agency based on FY07 data from the SAO E-Class system on June 10, 2008.



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