



Life's better outside.®

September 17, 2021

The Honorable Jane Nelson
Senate Finance Committee
Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711

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Chairman-Emeritus
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Carter P. Smith
Executive Director

Re: Availability of Federal Coronavirus Relief Funding

Dear Chairwoman Nelson:

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) understands the Legislature is charged with leading the process to appropriate federal Coronavirus Relief Funding (CRF) from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for the State of Texas.

TPWD recognizes there are significant unmet needs and critical functions of our state that can be addressed with this funding. If given the opportunity, we believe that TPWD is well-equipped to utilize some portion of the available funding to address the outdoor recreational needs of Texas.

As you know, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Texans engaged in outdoor recreation and visited our state parks and other outdoor facilities in historic numbers. Core to TPWD's mission is providing outdoor opportunities such as camping, fishing, hunting, boating, shooting, etc. A significant infusion of federal funds would be instrumental in meeting the many unmet outdoor recreational needs of Texans, needs that have proven to be essential to one's physical and mental wellbeing.

TPWD's analysis has identified the following categories of initiatives and investments for our agency which we believe meet the criteria established for CRF:

- Land acquisitions and infrastructure development to expand and improve existing state parks, state natural areas and wildlife management areas (\$90.6 million)
Land acquisitions of new sites to expand access to outdoor recreation in strategic areas throughout the state (\$34 million)
Construction of new or repair of existing facilities to address demand for outdoor experiences and opportunities, to include repair or replacement of critical water and wastewater infrastructure (\$104.1 million)
Modifications to existing facilities to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide improved access for all (\$25 million)
Construction and repair of fish hatcheries, fishing piers and boat ramps, as well as increasing shoreline access, to provide additional angling opportunities on public water bodies (\$110.9 million)
Construction of new shooting ranges (\$6 million)
Texas Farm and Ranch Land Conservation Program conservation easements (\$10 million)

To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The Honorable Jane Nelson

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- Broadband and technology improvements throughout rural and remote areas of the state to improve communications capabilities for our visitors, communities, law enforcement, and public safety providers (\$30 million)

Although our list of potential projects is much more extensive, we feel that highlighting specific examples will demonstrate one vision for utilizing this potential funding. The Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area north of San Antonio and Powderhorn State Park on the Gulf Coast are two new areas under development. Similarly, we are in the process of rebuilding the historic Wyler Tramway at Franklin Mountains State Park in El Paso. For these three facilities, TPWD has carefully budgeted our limited capital construction dollars to achieve development and implement improvements over the course of several years. The availability of federal funding would enable our agency to deliver these projects much more quickly and expedite our vision of providing new and expanded opportunities for Texans to enjoy our state's outdoor resources.

It is worth noting that TPWD continues to analyze and monitor the interim guidance developed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for the CRF program to determine how TPWD could utilize these funds to benefit the citizens of Texas. We are prepared to work with your staff to identify eligible uses for these funds that are consistent with the mission and focus of our agency, while also refining the project list and cost estimates.

TPWD is grateful for the Legislature's diligent efforts to oversee the appropriation of these funds, and we look forward to providing any assistance or information to you and your staff.

If you have questions concerning this information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ms. Allison Winney, Government Relations Specialist, by email at Allison.Winney@tpwd.texas.gov or by phone at 512-389-4530. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Carter Smith
Executive Director

CS:dh

Attachment

cc: Mr. Clayton Wolf
Mr. Reggie Pegues
Mr. Rodney Franklin
Ms. Andrea Lofye

Attachment A

Land Acquisition and Infrastructure Development – Expand/Improve Existing Sites

Edwards Plateau Ecoregion – Park Expansion (950 acres) - \$6 million
Post Oak Savannah Ecoregion – Purchase Leased Park (1,775 acres) - \$15 million
Edwards Plateau Ecoregion – Park Expansion (181 acres) - \$4.5 million
Edwards Plateau Ecoregion – Park Expansion (500 acres) – \$6 million
Edwards Plateau Ecoregion – Park Expansion (41 acres) - \$1 million
Rolling Plains Ecoregion – Park Expansion (7,000 acres) - \$26 million
Trans-Pecos Ecoregion – Wildlife Management Area Expansion (16,000 acres) - \$16 million
Trans-Pecos Ecoregion – Wildlife Management Area Expansion (7,000 acres) - \$5 million
Gulf Prairies and Marshes Ecoregion – UCWEP Expansion (1,000 acres) - \$3 million
Edwards Plateau Ecoregion – Wildlife Management Area Expansion (500 acres) - \$2.5 million
Edwards Plateau Ecoregion – Wildlife Management Area Expansion (500 acres) - \$2.5 million
Piney Woods Ecoregion – Wildlife Management Area Expansion (1,235 acres) - \$3.1 million

Land Acquisition – New Sites

Piney Woods Ecoregion – New Wildlife Management Area, Mitigation Bank (20,000 acres) - \$34 million

New Construction and Repairs

Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area – Development of New Facility - \$20 million
Davis Hill State Natural Area – Development of New Facility - \$15 million
Powderhorn State Park – Development of New Facility - \$15 million
Wyer Tramway at Franklin Mountain State Park – Construction of New Infrastructure - \$20 million
Recreational Trails - \$15 million (\$10 million-trails at TPWD facilities, \$5 million-grants to local communities)
Mission Tejas State Park - Water and Wastewater Improvements - \$1 million
Cooper Lake State Park - Water and Wastewater Improvements - \$3 million
Martin Creek State Park - Water and Wastewater Improvements - \$1.5 million
Purtis Creek State Park - Water and Wastewater Improvements - \$1.5 million
Palo Duro State Park - Water and Wastewater Improvements - \$10 million

Powderhorn Wildlife Management Area – Development of New Office/Check Station Facility - \$1.5 million

J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area – Development of New Hunter Parking Lot - \$600,000

Accessibility and Americans with Disabilities Act

Statewide ADA Modifications and Improvements - \$25 million

Increased Fishing Access, Construction/Repair of Fish Hatcheries, Fishing Piers, Boat Ramps

Statewide Boat Ramp Replacement and Restoration - \$25 million

Urban Fishing Initiative – Statewide Angler Access/Purchase of Catchable-Size Fish - \$3 million

Enhance Shoreline-Based Angler Access – Statewide Angler Access - \$10 million

Renovation of HOH Fisheries Science Center – Supplement Hatchery Production for Sportfish Production - \$25 million

Sea Center Texas – Coastal Fisheries Infrastructure - \$7 million

Perry R. Bass Marine Research Station – Coastal Fisheries/Hatchery and Broodstock Infrastructure - \$37 million

CCA Marine Development Center – Coastal Fisheries/Broodfish, Water, Flounder Production Infrastructure - \$2.4 million

MDC J. Vaughan Aquarium – Coastal Fisheries Infrastructure - \$1.5 million

Construction of New Shooting Ranges

Alazan Bayou Wildlife Management Area – Construction of Public Shooting Range - \$3 million

Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area – Construction of Public Shooting Range - \$3 million

Texas Farm and Ranch Land Conservation Program Easements

Statewide Conservation Easements - \$10 million

Broadband and Technology Improvements – Communications Capabilities

Statewide Broadband Installation and Enhancement - \$30 million