

Proposition 14 Volunteer Toolkit



This toolkit is your guide to advocate for Texas state parks this fall. It includes specific actions you can take to spread the word and mobilize support for Proposition 14, as well as sample materials. Together, we can secure a brighter future for our state's natural heritage.

With questions about this toolkit or any additional assistance, please reach out to Environment Texas Conservation Associate, Andrea Laureano, at alaureano@environmenttexas.org.



Campaign Context

This spring, the Texas Legislature passed a bill that paves the way for the creation of the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund—a visionary initiative allocating \$1 billion to establish new state parks. This measure is set to be decided by Texas voters on the statewide ballot this November 7th, where it will be listed as Proposition 14.

State parks hold a special place in the hearts of Texans. From Big Bend Ranch to Brazos Bend, Texas' state parks system protects some of the state's most beautiful places and waterways, and provides a home for iconic creatures like ocelots, horned lizards and sea turtles. Every year, millions of Texans visit our state parks to go camping, hiking, boating, climbing, fishing and hunting.

We know that state parks are incredibly popular with Texas voters— a poll commissioned by the Texas Coalition for

State Parks found that 77% of likely voters are inclined to vote for it. However, despite the overwhelming support, historical trends suggest that constitutional amendment elections, like the one featuring Proposition 14, often see very low voter turnout. This highlights the importance of informing and to raising awareness among as many Texans as possible about the significance of Proposition 14.

1: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are powerful advocacy tools because they:

- Reach a broad audience.
- Are monitored by lawmakers.
- Can refute or bring up information not addressed in a news article.
- Help create an impression and build widespread support for/opposition to an issue.

Here are some tips on writing a letter to the editor:

- **Keep it brief.** Most papers limit to 150-200 words. Find guidelines for your local paper's submission process by searching your web browser for "[name of the paper + letter to the editor submission]"
- **Stay focused on the central issue.** Do not introduce multiple issues; stay focused on Proposition 14.
- **Make it personal and compelling.** How will this directly impact you, your family and your community?
- **Don't forget about small community papers.** With smaller circulation papers it may be easier to get your letter placed.
- **Include your contact information.** Papers like to run content from local residents; include your email, mailing address and phone number so they can quickly verify any information with you if necessary.
- **Make references to the newspaper if possible.** While some papers print general commentary, some will only print letters that refer to a previous article they've published. Here are some examples of easy ways to refer to articles in your opening sentence:
 - I was excited to read your endorsement of Proposition 14 ("Name of editorial, date)...
 - I strongly disagree with (author's name) view on this important issue ("Name of Op-Ed," date)...
 - I was pleased to read about ongoing celebrations for the centennial of the state parks system ("Name of article, date)...

Sample Letters to the Editor

Below are sample Letters to the Editor that can be modified for your business, community, and local newspaper:

Subject: Vote Yes on Proposition 14 for Our State Parks

I am writing to urge my fellow Texans to vote “Yes” on Proposition 14 this November. This ballot measure is a critical step towards securing the future of our cherished Texas State Parks.

Proposition 14, also known as the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund, allocates \$1 billion towards the creation of new state parks and the improvement of existing ones. This investment would mean more accessible green spaces for our communities, more opportunities for outdoor recreation, and more preserved natural beauty for generations to come.

This issue is deeply personal to me and my family. We have spent many weekends in [your local state park] connecting with nature, and creating memories. We’ve seen firsthand how these spaces enrich our lives and strengthen our bond as a family. Proposition 14 ensures that future generations can have these same opportunities.

I implore members of the [your city] community to vote “Yes” on Proposition 14. It’s a chance to protect our state parks, increase our access to outdoor recreation, and provide unforgettable experiences for all Texans. Let’s ensure that our natural treasures remain accessible and preserved for future Texans.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Subject: Proposition 14 for the Future of Texas

I am writing to urge my fellow Texans to join me in casting a “Yes” vote for Proposition 14 on this November’s ballot. Proposition 14 is not just about the present; it’s about securing a vibrant future for our state.

As a lifelong Texan, I have had the privilege of exploring our stunning state parks and witnessing their profound impact on our communities. These natural wonders are not only a source of beauty but also a driving force behind local economies and a sanctuary for families seeking outdoor adventures.

Proposition 14, the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund, presents a unique opportunity to expand and preserve our state parks for generations to come. It’s an investment in Texas’ natural heritage and the well-being of our communities.

If you’ve ever gazed at the night sky in awe while camping at one of our state parks, dipped your toes in a river, or shared a picnic with your family beneath the shade of towering trees, you understand the value of our state parks. Voting “Yes” on Proposition 14 is a vote for these cherished experiences and for the Texas we hold dear.

Let’s come together as a community and make our voices heard for a brighter future. Encourage your friends, family, and neighbors to join us in supporting Proposition 14. Together, we can ensure that Texas remains a place of natural beauty, outdoor adventure, and cherished memories.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

2: SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Off-year elections often have lower voter turnout, so its critical that we boost the visibility of Prop 14 and drive voter turnout. Social media is an easy, fast way to reach potential voters and share with your networks.

The basics for making a #Prop14 post on your social media:

1. Share a photo of yourself (in a state park or some other appropriate setting)
2. Write a brief statement about why you love state parks and support Prop 14 this November
3. Tag our official social media accounts (listed below) and use the hashtag #Prop14
4. Encourage your followers to share their own stories about TX state parks, and to follow our official accounts (below) to get involved!

Texas Coalition for State Parks:

Website: <http://www.GrowTexasParks.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TexasCoalitionforStateParks>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/SupportTexasParks>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GrowTexasParks>

Environment Texas:

Website: <http://www.environmenttexas.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EnvironmentTexas>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/environmenttexas>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EnvironmentTex>

Tips for making a good social post:

Authenticity and personal connection is important. Establishing a personal connection through these stories allows us to connect on a human level and can remind others what it is they love about state parks. *(Why are state parks important to you? Think about childhood memories, recreation, and other experiences you've had in our state parks.)*

Tie your experience back to Proposition 14 and the creation of new state parks. *(Some ideas: expanded access to parks, wildlife conservation, wishing there were parks closer to TX's biggest cities, past frustrations making reservations at current parks in high demand.)*

Some examples of good posts:



Ann Hamilton and Thomas Hamilton in Caprock Canyon State Park

My son Thomas Hamilton and I spent Christmas 2022, in Canyon, Texas where we were hosted on a fabulous tour of nearby Caprock Canyon State Park by Superintendent Donald Beard. Despite cold weather, we enjoyed incredible scenic vistas and were able to get close to the historic bison herd. I have visited several state parks over many years and wholeheartedly support Prop 14 to create more state parks for visitors to enjoy the wonders of nature.



Kelsey Huse in Enchanted Rock

Growing up, my dad took us camping and hiking in state parks multiple times a year. Being outdoors and experiencing nature are some of my most cherished memories. I support Prop 14 because I support protecting the great outdoors and making it accessible to more people.

3: CONNECT WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

To help promote Proposition 14, Environment Texas has teamed up with the Texas Coalition for State Parks, a group of organizations that share our love for Texas parks. You can check out a list of our current coalition members here: [Coalition Members](#).

We want to keep growing the coalition, and we are always looking for more groups to add. That's where you come in.

If you're a member or supporter of another organization that supports parks and open spaces, wildlife, outdoor recreation, or community development, reach out to them and ask if they can endorse Prop 14 and join the Texas Coalition for State Parks. Share information about Proposition 14 and its significance for our parks, and why that particular organization should be interested.

How to pitch an organization on joining the coalition:

- Introduce yourself and your affiliation: clearly state who you are and your connection to the group (volunteer, member, etc.)
- Give a brief background on Proposition 14 and the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund. Explain why it's important and emphasize shared values and interests.
- Convey your enthusiasm and passion for the cause, and express your hope that they'll consider joining.
- Make the ask: would they consider joining the Texas Coalition for State Parks?
- Offer to discuss further or provide additional information if needed.

Sample Pitch to Join the Coalition (Email)

Hello,

My name is *[NAME]*, and I am *[a volunteer with / a member of x]*. I am writing to ask *[ORGANIZATION]* to endorse Proposition 14 and join the Texas Coalition for State Parks.

As you may know, thanks to support from a coalition of organizations, the Texas Legislature passed SJR 74, which proposes to create the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund-- a \$1 billion fund to grow the Texas state park system. This is subject to voter approval in November's state-wide ballot, where it will be listed as Proposition 14. To help our efforts in helping Prop 14 pass, we have joined

efforts with the Texas Coalition for State Parks and created a PAC to support the campaign.

We know that state parks are incredibly popular with Texas voters– a new poll commissioned by the Texas Coalition for State Parks found that 77% of likely voters are inclined to vote for it. However, we also know that, historically, constitutional amendment elections attract a low turnout, which is why it is still our job to educate voters on Prop 14 to ensure widespread awareness among as many Texans as possible. This is why we are hoping you will join the coalition and help spread the word.

As a member of the coalition, we will provide you with key resources such as messaging guides and sample social media posts to share with your members and other interested parties. We will also ask to use your name and logo on the coalition [website](#).

Please let me know if we can count on your support or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
[Your name]

You can also include this [Fact Sheet](#) in your emails to share further information, or you can utilize it as a resource to pull facts from.

Coalition Reporting and Updates

Keep us informed about your efforts to connect with other organizations. We want to track our progress with coalition members and provide support where needed.

If a group has shown interest in endorsing Prop 14, you can forward the information to Andrea Laureano at alaureano@environmenttexas.org

4. HOST VISIBILITY EVENTS

Visibility events are a great way to engage with your community and raise awareness about Proposition 14 and the Texas Coalition for State Parks.

Host a Honk and Wave Event on October 23rd – First Day of Early Voting

A honk and wave event is a fun and engaging way to generate visibility and excitement for Proposition 14 on the first day of early voting. It's an opportunity to catch the attention of passersby, garner media coverage, and inspire support for your cause.

Here are the key components of a successful event:

- **Plan and prepare:** Decide on a strategic location with high foot and vehicle traffic, perhaps near an early voting location or busy intersection.
- **Recruit volunteers:** Ask your friends, family, or neighbors to join in!
- **Materials:** Print some of our signs, or make your own! If you choose to make your own, make sure to use colorful, eye-catching letters that clearly promote Proposition 14.
- **Energy:** enthusiasm is what makes an event like this work! As vehicles pass by, hold up your signs, wave, smile, cheer. Engage with passersby who show interest by providing information about Proposition 14 and ways to get involved.
- **Capture the moment:** make sure to take photos and videos of the event to share on social media and with local media outlets.
- **Promote on social media:** share photos, video clips and messages to highlight the event.

Additional Visibility Tactics:

- **Hang posters** on bulletin boards, your office windows, your front door, telephone poles, outdoor kiosks, etc
- **Send emails** to friends, coworkers, family, organizational mailing lists, etc
- **Organize park tours/events** at your local state park
- **Distribute flyers** at community events, farmers markets, when you go for a hike, etc

5. STAY INFORMED AND ENGAGED

Keep a close eye on our [website](#) for updates, resources, and information related to Proposition 14, state parks, and our coalition's activities. Sign up to receive regular newsletters, event notifications, and important updates directly in your inbox.

When receiving updates on the campaign, pay special attention to upcoming events, activities, and volunteer opportunities. Your active participation makes a huge difference in our mission to support Proposition 14 and grow Texas parks!

Political ad paid for by Environment Texas, a project of Environment America Inc.