



## **Position Description and Ideal Candidate Specification**

Executive Director, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
Austin, Texas



With twelve distinct ecoregions covering approximately 268,500 square miles, Texas is blessed with an amazing biodiversity – nearly 800 species of fish, 660 species of birds, 145 native terrestrial mammals, and over 4,600 species of native plants. This natural bounty is enjoyed every year by more than 1 million hunters, 2.5 million anglers, 4 million boaters, and nearly 10 million state park visitors. It is critical to steward and conserve Texas’ natural resources, not only for the health of the lands, waters, and wildlife of Texas, but for the well-being and benefit of its people.

The mission of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is “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 Department regulates hunting, recreational and commercial fishing, and boating; operates state parks; preserves cultural and historical sites; manages game and non-game fish and wildlife; protects natural resources; provides technical assistance to private landowners and carries out other activities, including grant programs that promote outdoor recreation and resource conservation.

For fiscal year 2022, TPWD has 3,300 employees (70% in the field) and an operating and capital budget of more than \$440 million.

The TPW Commission consists of nine members appointed by the Governor. The Commission’s chief responsibility is the adoption of policies and rules, such as fishing and hunting regulations, to carry out TPWD programs. The Commission approves the biennial budget and appropriation requests for submission to the Legislature, sets departmental policy, approves all real estate matters, and appoints an Executive Director to be its chief executive officer and perform the administrative duties of TPWD.

For more background information, see [www.tpwd.texas.gov](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov).

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Texas has a vast diversity of ecosystems and natural resources, many of which are unique to Texas. With over 95% of Texas land privately owned, these landscapes transcend political and ownership boundaries. As a result, wide-ranging awareness and cooperation are critical for effective stewardship of natural and cultural resources. It is essential to develop an array of public and private strategies that build broad-based support for successful and adaptive management, restoration, and conservation.

As Texas' population grows, so do the impacts and pressure on the state's lands and waters. With the majority of Texans residing in urban areas, the need exists for availability of affordable and accessible outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. In addition to meeting the needs of traditional hunters and anglers, TPWD will also need to meet the demand for other non-consumptive recreational opportunities.

The new Executive Director will succeed a long-tenured, well-regarded incumbent, and will face the immediacy of the 2023 legislative session. This search seeks a leader with the vision, energy, and shared values to build on TPWD's mission and leverage its strengths. Change can be positive for all organizations. The new Executive Director will have the opportunity to chart new paths for the continued success of TPWD for the benefit of all Texans.

## POSITION SUMMARY

The Executive Director is the chief executive officer of the Department and serves as the liaison between the Commission and the staff of TPWD, as well as representing the Department with the Legislature, other state and federal agencies, constituent groups, and the public.

## RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director is appointed by and reports to the Commission through the Commission Chair and has a direct working relationship with all nine Commissioners.

The Executive Director works directly with the Law Enforcement Division, which has its own command structure and law enforcement policies and responsibilities, and with Internal Affairs and General Counsel/Legal Division. Ten other divisions report through the Chief Operating Officer, as shown on the [TPWD organization chart](#).

The Executive Director serves as the Department's chief spokesperson, and works closely with the Legislature and state leadership, other state agencies, out-of-state and federal agencies, constituent groups, and the public.

The Executive Director also works closely with Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF). TPWF is the official nonprofit partner of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and engages philanthropy to support conservation initiatives and projects (for more information see [www.tpwf.org](http://www.tpwf.org)).

## POSITION PRIORITIES *(TO BE ADDRESSED DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS)*

- Work closely with the outgoing Executive Director to ensure a smooth leadership transition.
- Prepare for and represent the Department in the 2023 legislative session of the Legislature and oversee the implementation of its final results.
- Review and participate in 2023's year-long Texas State Parks centennial celebrations.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Serve as the chief executive officer; direct the Department's staff and manage its resources effectively toward fulfilling its mission.
- Provide all necessary staff support and background information to the Commission in fulfilling its responsibilities.
- Direct the Department's strategic plan ([Natural Agenda](#)) and implement and evaluate its programs, initiatives, and priorities, proposing revisions to the Commission as appropriate.
- Provide leadership in defining, balancing, and providing for the conservation needs and interests of Texans, including hunting and fishing, private property owner rights, law enforcement, parks and open spaces, recreational activities, and the environment.
- Provide effective support to and work closely with the members of the Commission, making effective use of their interests and expertise.
- Maintain a strong and effective working relationship with the Texas Legislature, the Governor's office, and other state leadership.



- Build and maintain good working relationships with state and federal agencies, private landowners, and a broad spectrum of wildlife, hunting and angling, conservation, recreation, and other related groups who are natural partners for the Department.
- Direct the preparation and administration of the Department's budget, and its presentation to the Legislature, the Governor's office, and the Legislative Budget Board.
- Manage the Department's finances, providing for maintenance, growth, and improvement.
- Support TPWF's efforts in securing philanthropic funding for projects identified as priority needs by TPWD.
- Lead the recruitment and training of top-quality employees committed to the mission; ensure that resources are available to provide career development opportunities and appropriate resources and policies to retain skilled staff.
- Lead the Department's marketing initiatives and strengthen its efforts to extend its mission to the increasingly diverse and urban-based population of Texas, expanding the customer base and strengthening public support for the mission.
- Lead the development of innovative programs to educate the public on the value of conservation of natural and cultural resources, and to increase outdoor recreational opportunities and participation in natural and cultural resource conservation activities for all segments of the Texas public.
- Represent TPWD effectively in the state and national arenas, particularly through participation in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

## IDEAL EXPERIENCE

- **Education:** minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; graduate studies in relevant fields is desirable.
- **Work experience:** at least ten years of experience, including progressively responsible management level experience over significant staff and budget in a public or private organization. Experience in a conservation or other related organization is a plus.
- **Financial/administrative:** proven experience in fiscal management is important; knowledge of government budgets and revenue streams (federal or state level) is a strong plus.
- **Communications:** excellent oral and written skills, and proven ability to make effective presentations on complex subjects. A strong personal communications ethic is essential. Understanding of social media, and a high comfort level with the immediacy of texting, is important.

- Knowledge of and appreciation for Texas, its heritage, lands, cultures, history, and resources, as well as its changing needs, is desirable.
- A natural resources background is a plus but is not required; a strong personal commitment to conservation and outdoor recreation and to balancing the competing needs of the constituencies is essential. Hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and other outdoor pursuits should be an ongoing part of a candidate's experience.
- Experience in working with state or federal legislative bodies, and particularly in Texas, is a plus; proven political acumen is essential.

The ideal candidate will also have some combination of the following:

- Experience in working with a strong board of directors.
- A vision for a modern workforce and an understanding of building and enhancing workplace culture, including the diverse needs of headquarters employees and those in the field.
- Understanding of the significance of the law enforcement function and the ability to work effectively with it.
- Experience with or understanding of the landowner community and the private lands perspective.
- Crisis management and response experience.
- Evaluation and management of risk.
- Significant partnership-building and fundraising experience.



## IDEAL PERSONAL PROFILE

- A proven leader who can make tough decisions on the allocation of priorities and resources.
- An executive who understands how to negotiate among competing interests; a team player who can build coalitions and consensus.



- A knowledgeable and experienced individual with a strong commitment to and balanced philosophy of the needs and interests of Texans in terms of the TPWD mission, and who can deal with legislative and regulatory constraints without losing focus on the mission.
- An individual who has a strong personal commitment to serving the needs of all Texans within the Department and in its programs and public outreach.
- An experienced senior executive who has the business and management skills to lead a complex organization, and who understands how to delegate to and support the decisions of the management team.
- A candid and forthright communicator who can represent the needs and accomplishments of the Department to those whom it serves.
- An entrepreneur who can lead the team to develop new ways to fulfill the mission and creative means to provide the resources needed to accomplish this.
- A visionary executive with a passion for the mission who can develop and communicate strategy and goals, evaluate, and establish priorities, and motivate and lead employees in fulfilling them.
- An outstanding individual who has the character, integrity, experience, and judgment to represent the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department as its leader.



## THE SEARCH PROCESS

The Commission and the Department have retained an executive search firm to assist in selecting the new Executive Director. Applications can be made directly on the Texas state application system ([Job Search \(taleo.net\)](https://www.taleo.net)) or nominations, inquiries, and expressions of interest (cover letter and resumé) can be directed in confidence to:

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