

Texas Parks and Wildlife CO-OP Grants Helping Texas Children Reconnect with Nature

AUSTIN – Twenty-two organizations across the state will be receiving Texas Parks and Wildlife Department community outdoor outreach grants to help them in their efforts to get Texas children back in touch with nature.

“This grant program was designed to introduce non-traditional constituents to nature-based programs as well as increase environmental stewardship,” says TPWD CO-OP Program Director Darlene Lewis. “We’ll be able to serve nearly 12,500 participants with these awards.”

Grantees include cities, non-profits, school districts and entire communities with one thing in common: A focus on natural and cultural resources and developing future stewards of the environment. Participants may have the opportunity to attend nature day camps and take part in outdoor recreation programs as well as help with service projects.

Currently, \$750,000 is available for eligible tax exempt organizations and local governments to help fund these types of programs around the state. Grants range from \$5,000 to \$40,000.

The following organizations are receiving grants:

(Austin) Ascend Outdoor Adventures – Participants from several non-profit organizations will get to experience nature first hand on planned weekend adventures which will include backpacking, canoeing, rock climbing and environmental education. **(\$40,000)**

(Austin) Camp Fire Balcones – 250 inner city kids from Austin and Manor ISD will enroll in outdoor skills classes and participate in field trips which include camping, backpacking and paddling as part of their path to becoming environmental stewards. **(\$40,000)**

(Austin) Chautauqua Foundation –The Colorado River will become an outdoor classroom for 250 Austin elementary school children participating in Project Paddle. Activities will include paddling, nature photography, camping and Project WILD. **(\$38,000)**

(Austin) Explore Austin – 260 underserved youth will participate in a 6-year mentoring and outdoor adventure program. It is designed to introduce them to mountain biking, kayaking, orienteering and mentoring in outdoor nature based programs. **(\$40,000)**

(Austin) YouthLaunch – The Austin Outdoor Peer Education Program will introduce at-risk youth to geocaching, hiking, birding, fishing, camping and other activities through this mentoring program. **(\$40,000)**

(Brenham) Brenham ISD – This funding will help expand their outdoor environmental education program activities in kindergarten through 8th grade. More than 3,000 students will experience birding, orienteering, environmental education and nature photography. **(\$20,183)**

(Brownsville) University of Texas at Brownsville – UTB’s STEMS Mentor club will work closely with high school students honing their skills in outdoor education and leadership. 400 participants will be served in this project. **(\$39,870)**

(Conroe) Twelve Stones, Inc. – The Adventure Camp program will allow 155 youth to explore activities such as camping, outdoor safety, fishing, archery, land navigating and trip planning. **(\$39,590)**

(Corpus Christi) Youth Odyssey, Inc. – Youth between the ages of 10-17 will learn team building skills through activities such as rock climbing, backpacking, camping, kayaking and hiking. **(\$40,000)**

(Dallas) Audubon Texas – Educational programs will be conducted at the Trinity River and Dogwood Canyon Audubon Centers in north Texas. Students from over 20 school districts will conduct river geology exploration, conservation problem solving, and animal adaptation and bird studies. **(\$40,000)**

(Deer Park) Deer Park Parks and Recreation – This Outdoor Adventures program will offer participants family campouts, kayaking trips, nature camps, hunter, angler and boater education programs and birding. **(\$40,000)**

(El Paso) El Paso Water Utilities – 200 students in El Paso County will participate in WISE Actions, a program to promote and increase knowledge of urban wetland ecosystems. Activities include Project Wet and trips and sessions held at Franklin Mountains State Park. **(\$12,637)**

(Fort Worth) Botanical Research Institute of Texas– 75 students will attend a yearlong environmental leadership program that focuses on stewardship. Activities include field trips, archery, fossil hunting, canoeing and camping. **(\$40,000)**

(Georgetown) Williamson County Juvenile Services – 250 youth within the juvenile justice system and their families will take part in outdoor adventure experiences such as biking, fishing, rock-climbing, camping, kayaking in state parks and along Texas Rivers. **(\$20,000)**

(Houston) Bayou Land Conservancy – Middle and high school students head to the nature preserve for hands-on learning in forest and insect studies, birding, water quality and aquatic science studies and invasive species identification and removal. **(\$26,346)**

(Houston) Houston ISD - 350 urban and inner-city youth and their families from Carnegie Vanguard High will participate in outdoor recreation activities including camping, hiking, archery and community service projects. **(\$11,093)**

(Houston) Houston Parks and Recreation– 3,400 inner city kids will participate in Houston PARKS Adventure, which will include birding, archery, fishing, habitat gardening and wildlife viewing. **(\$38,000)**

(Houston) The Woods Project – 500 low income middle and high school students will participate in environmental service projects such as invasive species removal and trail building. They will also experience the outdoors backpacking, canoeing and more. **(\$39,800)**

(Laredo) Webb County Sheriff's Office Police Activities League – 250 youth will participate in a series of state parks visits and activities including fishing and hunting. **(\$40,000)**

(Nacogdoches) Stephen F. Austin University – 250 participants will take part in this after-school and weekend family program which will allow them to experience bird watching, fishing, canoeing, Leave No Trace principles, plant and animal identification and orienteering.. **(\$36,584)**

(New Waverly) Sunshine Network Corporation – Rural students and families in this community will experience natural science and environmental education programs. Other activities include camping, fishing, hiking and trips to state parks. **(\$39,246)**

(San Antonio)— This funding will allow Project ACORN to expand five additional schools in Northside ISD. 250 Students will travel to Government Canyon State Natural Area to collect native seeds from trees for replanting later. **(\$25,175)**

For more information about this grant program visit <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/trpa/#coop> or contact the TPWD grant office at 512-389-8224.