**Stewards of the Wild – Bryan/College Station Chapter**

**Executive Summary**

**Stewards of the Wild**

Stewards of the Wild is a young professionals program supporting the mission of Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. With member-led chapters in major cities throughout the state, Stewards of the Wild engages 21-to 45-year-old outdoor enthusiasts by providing exclusive access to Texas’ great conservation heroes and success stories. Every day, Stewards of the Wild across the state are connecting with thousands of their peers and building a community built on a shared love for Texas’ wild things and wild places.

All Stewards members receive invitations to special events including multi-chapter outdoor excursions, service events and educational social gatherings. Membership contributions are $85 for individuals and $150 for couples. Membership contributions are utilized for chapter programming with a percentage dedicated to chapter-selected conservation projects. Additionally, annual Texas State Parks passes and one-year subscriptions to *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine are available for purchase at a special Stewards of the Wild discount.



**Stewards of the Wild Chapter Information**

Stewards of the Wild chapters connect young professionals in their communities with conservation efforts in their region and around the state. Each chapter hosts events for its members and guests throughout the year. Below is detail on each chapter and examples of the types of special events held by Stewards chapters in the last few years.

**Service Events**

in September, 2017, Stewards of the Wild – Austin hosted a service event at McKinney Roughs Nature Park in Bastrop. Children from Austin Children’s Shelter and SafePlace joined Stewards for hiking, grilling, fire-building, and more, enhanced with the help of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s Texas Outdoor Family program. Other service events include the Flyfest Service Event Supporting Tarrant Regional Water District in Fort Worth and a kids’ fishing excursion in partnership with the Periwinkle Foundation in Houston.

**Social Events**

On March 16, 2016, Stewards of the Wild – Dallas hosted a ladies only wild game cooking event, providing 30+ members and non-members the opportunity to learn the proper preparation of wild game, including how to breast a dove, assemble and grill dove poppers, and make venison chili. The Austin chapter organized a Full Moon Standup Paddle event on Lady Bird Lake and the Houston chapter hosted a happy hour with Coastal Conservation Association President Pat Murray.

**Outdoor Excursions**

On April 22, 2016, a group of Stewards from across the state visited The Nature Conservancy’s Devils River Preserve for a weekend on Texas’ most pristine river. Activities for the weekend included swimming, fishing, hiking, a visit from the Devils River State Natural Area superintendent, and native fish sampling with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists. Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation has also hosted other trips around the state to Powderhorn Ranch, Marfa and the South Llano River.

**Stewards of the Wild – Bryan/College Station Chapter Advisory Council**

This document outlines the organizational hierarchy of the Stewards of the Wild - Bryan/College Station chapter. At the top of this hierarchy is the Advisory Council (Council), which will serve as the core leadership team for the chapter. The Council will consist of two co-chairs, as well as committee co-chairs and committee members in the areas of communications, events, membership, and service.

In collaboration with a small group of Bryan/College Station peers, a selection committee will choose a group of individuals to serve on the inaugural Stewards of the Wild – Bryan/College Station Advisory Council. Once established, the inaugural Council will work to better define its own roles, selection process, terms and term limits.

The Council’s responsibilities will include planning the official launch of the Bryan/College Station chapter and devising a strategy for membership recruitment, special events, and service opportunities, as well as shaping the long-term direction and goals of the Stewards of the Wild - Bryan/College Station.

The following is a Stewards of the Wild organizational chart followed by currently-defined Council/committee descriptions:

**Advisory Council Co-Chairs**

* Dedicate approximately two to five hours per week to the position.
* Serve as the primary liaison between the TPWF and the Council.
* Set a vision for the Council and, with the Council, create actionable goals.
* Monitor the progress of the Council as a whole and of individual Council members.
* Provide direction and advice to Council members when necessary.
* Plan, organize and run monthly Council meetings and update the TPWF after each meeting.
* Serve as the face of the Bryan/College Station chapter.

**Communications Committee Co-Chairs**

* Dedicate approximately two hours per week to the position.
* Develop strategies for internal group communication.
* Identify methods for SOTW to share their experiences with others.
* Coordinate with TPWF on SOTW communication efforts that may include:
	+ Media strategy
	+ Social media strategy
	+ Event invitations
	+ Membership recruitment
	+ Documentation and storytelling

**Events Committee Co-Chairs**

* Dedicate approximately two hours per week to the position.
* Oversee plans and preparations of SOTW events that may include:
	+ Outdoor engagement opportunities
	+ Site visits to TPWD and partner organization projects
	+ Social events with TPWD or partner organization speaker(s)
* Develop lists of potential activities, speakers, and locations for events with TPWF/TPWD staff.
* Coordinate event logistics with TPWF/TPWD staff.
* Develop event communications strategy with the communications committee and TPWF.
* Identify sponsors for events.

**Membership Committee Co-Chairs**

* Dedicate approximately two hours per week to the position.
* Oversee programs to assist with the recruitment and retention of SOTW members.
* Establish membership goals and procedures.

**Service Committee Co-Chairs**

* Dedicate approximately two hours per week to the position.
* Identify opportunities (conservation projects, volunteer opportunities, etc.) for SOTW to support TPWF and TPWD in their efforts to share the outdoors with new audiences.
* Coordinate with TPWF, TPWD and partner organizations to plan service projects.

**Contribution Levels and Benefits**

**$85 Base Membership Level**
Invitations to special events

Service opportunities

**$150 Membership Level**One Texas state parks annual pass
Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine one-year subscription
Invitations to special events

Service opportunities

**Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation**

The mission of Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation is to provide private support to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to ensure that all Texans, today and in the future, can enjoy the wild things and wild places of Texas.

Founded in 1991, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation is the nonprofit funding partner of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Overseen by 19 trustees and administered by 10 full-time and three part-time staff members, the foundation has raised over $170 million since its inception. The funds we raise ensure all Texans, today and in the future, can enjoy, explore, and be inspired by the incredible wild things and wild places in Texas.

In 2017, the foundation is focusing on diverse strategic initiatives like multi-year conservation projects, wildlife research and safeguarding, community development and outreach programs, and expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation. Private funding, gifts, and grants secured by the foundation are directly improving and expanding state parks and wildlife management areas, addressing critical conservation needs, and enhancing opportunities to enjoy and appreciate the abundance of natural beauty throughout Texas.

**Texas Parks and Wildlife Department**

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) mission balances outdoor recreation and sustainable use of resources with conservation and management of natural and cultural resources. TPWD operates 95 Texas state parks, natural areas and historic sites, 46 wildlife management areas, three saltwater fish hatcheries, and five freshwater hatcheries. TPWD game wardens and wildlife and fisheries biologists work in every Texas county, enforcing laws and encouraging management to conserve fish and wildlife.

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**Frequently Asked Questions**

Many questions arise during the formation of a new chapter of the Stewards of the Wild. Below are some frequently asked questions by those interested in becoming members.

**What is the purpose of Stewards of the Wild and the goal for the Bryan/College Station chapter?**

Stewards of the Wild is a young professionals program under the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (21-45 age group). The purpose of the program is to promote awareness of conservation issues and support the mission of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation: "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 new chapter in Bryan/College Station will be an opportunity for our generation to pick up the torch for conservation. We will accomplish this through events, education, trips and the many ways of enjoying Texas’ wild places.

**What sort of time commitment should I expect if I apply for a leadership position?**

The application suggests two hours a week for chair positions, 2-5 hours for council co-chairs. Those numbers are likely on the high end of expectations, but each chapter has the ability to set goals and operate how the chapter sees fit. The important point is the chapter has the freedom to set its own priorities and devote its resources according to its own design.

**How long is the commitment for the Advisory Council positions?**

The chapter will also have the ability decide the length of commitment, but a commitment of one year is typical.

**Is it a conflict of interest if I am associated with a similar organization?**

Not at all. We welcome involvement in other organizations. In many cases, we will work alongside these organizations to meet similar goals.

**Does my non-outdoors background matter?**

Not at all. If you have an interest, we would love to have you. Individuals without an outdoors background will be an important segment of our chapter both now and increasingly as we grow.

**Will there be family-oriented events?**

Yes. It will be up to the chapter to decide what those are, but Stewards chapters are particularly inclusive of families and we encourage leadership from men and women equally.

**Will we work with other Texas chapters of Stewards?**
Yes, there are opportunities for joint chapter events. The other chapters are also available to provide feedback on events and best practices for the Bryan/College Station chapter. At this stage in our process and with chapters already begun in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and Midland we will benefit from their experience.

**Can I be a member of the Bryan/College Station chapter of Stewards or serve on the advisory board if I do not live in Bryan/College Station?**

Yes. Travel may be required as needed for participation, but those interested from outside the city are more than welcome.

**How much fundraising do we have to do for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation?**

None. The purpose of the Stewards of the Wild is to engage young professionals in conservation and stewardship of our wild places and wild things. We encourage this through various types of events and outreach. You will not be required to raise money on behalf of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation. However, if you host any large specialty events it will be the responsibility of the chapter to cover costs for said events. This may require fundraising or seeking sponsorships to host that event.