

# Alliance Founder Ned Fritz, a Legend in Conservation

No single individual has led as many successful initiatives to protect the forests, rivers, and wildlife of Texas as the Alliance's founder Ned Fritz.



**Mr. Edward C.  
"Ned" Fritz**

Ned's tireless energy on behalf of wildlife and natural areas resulted in an exceptional legacy of more than a quarter million acres of land in private or public protection. His vision and persistence changed state and federal policies to protect natural resources. His great love of nature inspired a generation of conservationists who carry on his work.

Ned was the motivating spirit for establishing five wilderness areas in the National Forests in Texas and a major player in creation of the Big Thicket National Preserve. He drafted key provisions of the National Forest Management Act of 1976. He successfully challenged clear-cutting on hundreds of thousands of acres of national forest land.

Ned cultivated state legislators to establish state parks. His actions led to the White Oak Creek Wildlife Management Area and a number of other lands available for hunting and other outdoor recreation. Wildlife sanctuaries established under this leadership at The Nature Conservancy and Texas Land Conservancy add to his legacy.

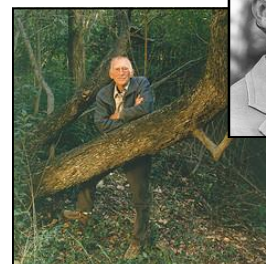
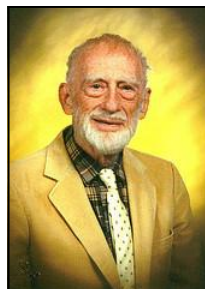
Alliance Executive Director Janice Bezanson loved Ned and learned from him, "Ned had the most amazing stick-to-itiveness I or anyone else has ever known. His persistence is legendary. He also was a master at selecting the best arena to fight a given battle, whether in Congress or the Legislature, the courthouse or the court of public opinion. His grassroots techniques are now widely used by other organizations."

In addition to his long leadership of Texas Conservation Alliance, Ned co-founded the Texas chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Texas Land Conservancy, Texas League of Conservation Voters, Texas Consumers Association, and Audubon Dallas. He organized the first nationwide network of activists for national forest issues, the Forest Reform Network, which spawned grassroots efforts around the country. His successful legal practice established precedence in consumer law and he served as an advisor on consumer affairs in President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration.

Ned authored three books: *Realms of Beauty* (University of Texas Press, 1987), with photographs taken by Jess Alford in the wilderness areas in East Texas, *Clearcutting: A Crime Against Nature* (Eakin Press, 1989), and *Sterile Forest* (Eakin Press, 1983).

Ned Fritz received many accolades from his peers. He was given an honorary doctorate by Southern Methodist University in 1991. He was presented the Theodore Roosevelt Award by President George H. W. Bush in 1991. He was honored with the American Motors Conservation Award (later Chevron Conservation Award) in 1970 and the Sol Feinstone Environmental Award in 1978. Fritz received lifetime achievement honors from National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, the League of Women Voters, Sportsmen Conservationists in Texas, and Texas Conservation Alliance. "Ned was Mr. Conservation," says Maxine Johnston of the Big Thicket Association.

Ned's wife Genie was his partner every step of his decades of conservation work. He often said that he could not have accomplished what he did without her. Texas Conservation Alliance's board, members, and staff extend our love, appreciation, and sympathy to Genie and our affection to their family as we honor Ned's many accomplishments.



**TEXAS CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JANICE BEZANSON  
REFLECTS ON**

**NED FRITZ**

There are two aspects of Ned Fritz's career as a conservation volunteer that deserve special attention. The first is the incredible enthusiasm and vigor he infused into every issue he worked on. Walking through the woods with Ned was like have the Land of Oz open before you. His knowledge of the plants and birds made him a walking encyclopedia, but his companions never felt he was lecturing them --- only that he was sharing something special. He brought the same vigor to his conservation work, inspiring others to accomplish more than they ever dreamed they could. My own life was changed when he recruited me as a volunteer to work on the Texas Wilderness Act in the early 1980s. At first, I said only that I would type and file and answer the phone and do things "behind the scenes". Within the year, I was visiting with editorial boards of area newspapers and debating the Forest Service Supervisor on the local TV station.

The second aspect of Ned's character that my long years of working with him showed is how incredibly farsighted he has been. Ned's ability to look at an environmental problem, and analyze the best way to go about solving it, was phenomenal. And once he'd designed a campaign to address a particular issue, his persistence was infinite. I wish I had kept a list of all the tasks that others said were impossible that Ned Fritz succeeded at. The first I observed was the Texas Wilderness Act, but there were many others before and after.

Texas has had the benefit of many fine environmental leaders, but it would be hard to quarrel with the assertion that Ned is our premiere conservationist -- whether judged by how early and how long he fought to protect habitats, by the number of acres of land his influence protected, the number of people he recruited as conservationists, or simply by his overall success record.