

TEXAS CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

2021 Winter



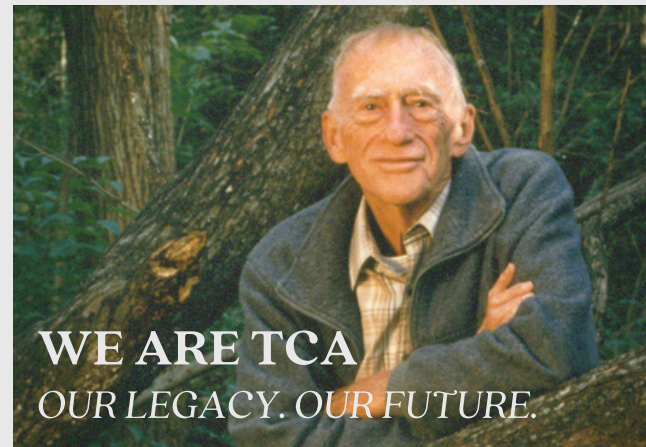
WE'RE TURNING 50!

BEN JONES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy 2021 and Happy 50th Anniversary TCA! New years and anniversaries are special times, opportunities to celebrate, ponder the future, and reflect on how far we've come together. I'm doing that now as TCA and I both hatched 50 years ago in January 1971.

While I was learning to stand on my own two feet, TCA was standing up for everything I would grow to love: wilderness, wildlife, and people. While I navigated adolescence, swimming, dodging alligators, and checking trotlines, TCA heroes tirelessly navigated political waters to keep our Neches wild and free. While I wandered the Pineywoods and made plaster casts of tracks along the banks of Turkey Creek, TCA helped protect the area forever as the Big Thicket National Preserve. And while my brother and I fought for bragging rights, TCA heroes fought clearcutting and saved red-cockaded woodpeckers from the brink of extinction.

Though I've only been on staff for months, I feel like TCA - you and I - have been together for years. At TCA we work on behalf of future Texans, but do we ever pause to consider who that really means? Fifty years ago, that meant me. Thank you, TCA!



The original "face" of TCA was the inimitable Ned Fritz - famous for his vision, persistence, and laser focus, AND for his amazing conservation accomplishments. On Ned's watch, TCA defeated the Trinity Barge Canal; gained public protection for five wilderness areas, the Great Trinity Forest, and other wildlife areas; and ended clearcutting on national forests across the Southeast. Ned and his wonderful wife Genie are our foundation and inspiration.

As he approached 90, Ned handed the baton to Janice Bezanson, who has overseen another 20 years of TCA's conservation successes. Now TCA welcomes Ben Jones, whose dedication and experience promise an exciting future.

Our 50 years of TCA success and strength are because of each of you. Keep an eye out as we highlight members of the TCA family and how they have brought us to where we are today.





FROM THE CHAIRMAN MACK TURNER

Despite the pandemic, TCA moved forward in 2020 with our long-planned transition of executive directors. The search committee, TCA board members headed by Allyn Dukes, vetted applicants from as far away as Oregon. By then the world of Zoom was upon us and we narrowed the search to three outstanding candidates.

Ben Jones is proving to be a great choice. Ben is leading Lights Out Dallas, recruiting downtown Dallas building owners to turn off lights at night during bird migrations, to avoid bird collisions. He is recruiting young people of all backgrounds for a new intern program and our newly-launched TXCAT program, as well as raising money and overseeing day to day operations.

Janice Bezanson continues to lead programs to save rivers, forests, and prairies. Thanks to a grant from National Wildlife Federation, we've added a part-time fundraiser, Julie Bates.

Needless to say, we are upbeat about 2021. Your continued support and encouragement, as always, are vital to our success and you are greatly appreciated. As TCA celebrates its 50th Anniversary, we wish you and TCA a great year!



INTRODUCING TXCAT TEXAS CONSERVATION ACTION TEAM

In celebration of TCA's 50th Anniversary, we are excited to launch a new program to engage scores of new communities in the work of protecting Texas wildlife and wild places. It is critical TCA invests in the next 50 years and as such, we are proud to introduce TXCAT: Texas Conservation Action Team.

With a core belief that, "doing leads to caring" TXCAT will offer hands-on conservation opportunities for Texans of all backgrounds. Unfortunately, opportunities to be actively involved in wildlife conservation are as rare as a red-cockaded woodpecker. TXCAT aims to change that.

Through accessibility and a focus on including new communities, TXCAT will facilitate opportunities for hands-on involvement in saving wildlife. We'll plant trees, remove injurious litter pollution from rivers, creeks, and bays, and we'll restore pocket prairies for Monarch butterflies and other imperiled pollinators. We'll survey downtown districts for bird collisions and advocate for Lights Out. Working together, we'll make new friends, strengthen the conservation community, and improve our communities for people and wildlife. TXCAT aims to cultivate an army of new conservationists and warmly welcome them into TCA and the movement.



THE TCA 50 Champions of Conservation

Coming Soon!

Throughout our 50th Anniversary year, we'll share stories of TCA successes. We begin with our legacy of protecting public lands. Rarely does a park or wildlife sanctuary get created without a coalition of activists pushing for its designation. TCA has led many such coalitions, with stellar results.

TCA's work netted Congressional designation of five wilderness areas in Texas's national forests. We played key roles in establishment and later expansion of the 113,000-acre Big Thicket National Preserve. Our fights against unnecessary reservoir projects resulted in protection of the fabulous bottomland hardwood forests of the Little Sandy National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Neches River NWR. TCA helped garner the donation of the first chunk of the Trinity River NWR and we were part of the coalition of groups that pushed to convert a former Army depot into Caddo Lake NWR. Other efforts protected the largest urban forest in the country, the Great Trinity Forest in Dallas, and various state parks and wildlife management areas.

Over 50 years, TCA has helped protect more than a quarter of a million acres of Texas public land. (Photo by Sean Fitzgerald)



TCA SUCCESSES PROTECTING PUBLIC LANDS



Register at TCA's website under [Events](#). Check back often for more anniversary celebrations - much more to come!

- January 18: Plant longleaf pines at Big Thicket National Preserve
- January 30: Remove litter pollution from the Trinity River
- February 13: Count birds in the Great Backyard Bird Count
- February 21-27: Boat the San Antonio Bay region removing abandoned crab traps. Keep an eye out for whooping cranes!
- April 1-May 31: Lights Out Texas! Darken skies for migratory birds. Survey for collision mortalities.
- April 10: Count critters (census biodiversity) at Caddo Lake State Park
- April 24: Learn about the Sabine National Forest on a guided hike
- May 11: Help band red-cockaded woodpecker chicks with Donna Work at W.G. Jones State Forest
- May 13: Help band red-cockaded woodpecker chicks with Donna Work at Fairchild State Forest
- May 15: Enjoy an educational walk in the woods of Davy Crockett National Forest with Larry Shelton

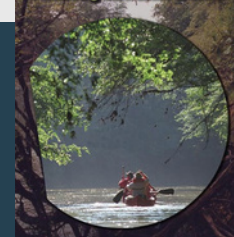


Get these gifts and others
for the conservationist in your life!

TCATEXAS.ORG/SHOP

THE LIVING WATERS of TEXAS
EDITED BY KEN KRAMER / PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHARLES KRUVAND

Paddling the Wild Neches



RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT

Did you know one-third of America's fish and wildlife species are at increased risk of extinction? Many songbirds, bees and butterflies, amphibians and reptiles, mammals, and freshwater species are suffering dramatic declines—right here in Texas, too.

Unfortunately, our country lacks a dedicated funding stream to conserve at-risk wildlife before they become endangered. Current levels of funding are less than 5 percent of what's needed to implement proactive, cost-effective conservation measures that will help reverse these declines.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is a bipartisan solution that matches the scope of the problem. This federal legislation would provide \$1.4 billion per year from existing revenues to wildlife and habitat conservation efforts in the various states and tribal lands—without a new tax. Of this, Texas would be eligible for more than \$50 million per year to stabilize the hundreds of at-risk fish and wildlife in our state—and to help recover those already threatened or endangered. For example, it could help reintroduction efforts like with the Texas horned lizard, fund more bay and estuary conservation for coastal birds, and expand cost-share programs for private landowners to restore and maintain healthy forests and native grasslands that benefit numerous wildlife.

When Recovering America's Wildlife Act is reintroduced in this session, you can help by asking your congressmembers to support and cosponsor the Act. In the last legislative session, the U.S. House bill reached several important milestones and acquired 185 bipartisan cosponsors—including 14 Texans. We're excited to build on that success in the 117th Congress and are hopeful we are ever closer to its passage.

For bill introduction updates, and to keep posted on how to help, visit our website (txwildlifealliance.org) and sign up for our mailing list.

PROTECT TEXAS WILDLIFE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

A photograph of four young owls perched on a dark, textured branch. The owls have brown and white mottled feathers and bright yellow eyes. They are looking in various directions, some towards the camera and others away. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and brown.

Their Future Can Be Your Legacy

For more information on TCA Legacy Giving and how you can help secure our next 50 years, e-mail janice@tcatexas.org