

Texas Brigades Annual Report

30+ Years of Developing Conservation Leaders

2023



A Message

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

In 2023, Texas Brigades successfully organized nine week-long summer Brigade camps and two single-day Experiences. These events collectively engaged over 250 middle and high school students, imparting knowledge about the conservation of our natural resources. Equipped with newfound confidence and communication skills, these students have assumed the role of passionate conservation ambassadors, disseminating their knowledge on land, water, and wildlife stewardship to others.

Reflecting on her experience, Bella Avolio, a 15-year-old graduate of Buckskin Brigade, recounted her involvement in educating her community: *"On September 17th, I went back to the Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve and led a plant identification nature walk. I talked about the different plants and how animals use them"*.

This remarkable impact wouldn't have been possible without the unwavering support of hundreds of dedicated volunteers who serve as mentors to these young stewards. In 2023, the collective efforts of these volunteers culminated in a phenomenal year marked by successful programs, enriched youth education, fulfilled volunteer engagements, and positively impacted communities.

Texas Brigades remains steadfast in its mission to educate, empower, and connect younger generations to wildlife, natural resources, and native landscapes, stewarding a sustainable future. As stewards of our environment, it is imperative to preserve and conserve our natural resources for the benefit of future generations. Investing in the continued mission of Texas Brigades provides an unparalleled opportunity to nurture conservation education and foster the development of young leaders.

Sincerely,



Natalie Wolff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TEXAS BRIGADES



Board of Directors

Jeff Petter - *President*

Dannielle M. Pope - *Vice President*

Robert Zearfross - *Treasurer / Finance Chair*

Blaise Korzekwa - *Secretary/Program Chair*

Mary Katherine McNabb - *Development Chair*

Jennifer Neuhaus - *Governance Chair*

Jon Taggart - *Immediate Past President*

Rose Cooper

Clinton Faas

Anson Howard

Bryan Jones

Phillip McKinney

Cole Payne

Dayne Prochaska

RJ Shelly

Charriss York

Seasonal Staff

Jack Bussey

Adoriam DeWalt

Johnathan Diaz

Luke Scribner

Full-Time Staff



NATALIE WOLFF

Executive Director

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ELIZABETH PALARSKI

Program Manager

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About Texas Brigades

Bobwhite Brigade, dba Texas Brigades is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that began 30+ years ago as a single youth camp focused on the ecology of bobwhite quail. Since, it has expanded to include additional programming in pursuit of furthering natural resource conservation education, strengthening leadership development, and connecting youth across Texas to the outdoors. Texas Brigades aims to ensure that land stewardship and conservation are a long-term priority and passion for urban and rural backgrounds alike.

Texas Brigades offers transformative educational initiatives and leadership training for adolescents across Texas through three comprehensive, conservation-focused programs: Summer Brigade Camps, Experiences, and Wildlife Intensive Leadership Development (W.I.L.D.). Annually, these programs shape the lives of nearly 300 young leaders. Texas Brigades has extended its positive influence to over 1,000 communities through its empowered participants, who depart equipped with the confidence to initiate conservation dialogues in their communities. Beyond enriching their understanding of natural resources stewardship, participants forge valuable professional connections that pave the way for their future endeavors.

MISSION

To educate and empower youths with leadership skills and knowledge in wildlife, fisheries, and land stewardship to become conservation ambassadors for a sustained natural resource legacy.

MOTTO

Tell me, and I forget. Show me, and I remember. Involve me, and I understand.

VISION

Conservation leaders in every community.



Celebrating Milestones

OF TEXAS BRIGADES

In 2023, Texas Brigades marked its ongoing achievements and also celebrated the 30th Battalion of the Bobwhite Brigade, which has alumni hailing from across the state and beyond, including board directors and staff. Pictured here is Dr. Dale Rollins, the founder and ultimate visionary behind the Bobwhite Brigade, which evolved into Texas Brigades. Dr. Rollins delivered a keynote address at the 30 Year Celebration in March 2022, reflecting on the partnerships and support that propelled the first battalion in 1993. The event concluded with Dr. Rollins and alumni joining in a rendition of the Bobwhite Brigade anthem, "Hail O' Hail Bobwhite Brigade"!



IN THE LAST 31 YEARS:

156 Brigade Battalions

3,995 Brigade Camp Graduates

\$500,000+ Awarded in College Scholarships

1,000,000+ Dedicated Volunteer Hours



VISIONARIES

Texas Brigades recognized several Visionaries that have committed themselves to advance the organization. These visionaries not only invest their time and treasure but are a part of Texas Brigades' legacy. Pictured left to right: Natalie Wolff, Garry Stephens, Jon Taggart, Mike Petter, Chris Farley, Helen Holdsworth, Tye Stephens, Larry Pierce, Keith Lake, Dayna Prochaska, Dale Prochaska, Weldon Riggs, Dale Rollins, and Becky Wilson.

Not pictured: Bill Eikenhorst, Roy Wilson, Steve Nelle, Jimmy Rutledge, Celeste Dickschat, Joe Taylor, Kent Mills, Russ Hayward, and Carol Hayward.

BE VISIONARY

Join us in advancing the crucial mission of Texas Brigades to cultivate the next generation of conservation stewards. Visionaries and volunteers alike contribute their time, dedication, and financial support to propel this vision forward. Don't miss an opportunity to be a part of shaping a brighter future for our natural landscapes and wildlife, and empowering young leaders in conservation.



Brigade Camps

BY THE NUMBERS

9 SUMMER CAMPS



Texas Brigades hosted nine camps across the state in the summer of 2023. Each camp offers 5 days of concentrated curriculum, ranging from the various breakdowns of wildlife habitat & land management principles, to leadership, public speaking, and team-building.

2nd Battalion of South Texas Ranch Brigade
7th Battalion of Coastal Brigade
9th Battalion of Waterfowl Brigade
11th Battalion of Ranch Brigade
17th Battalion of Bass Brigade

21st Battalion of North Texas Buckskin Brigade
23rd Battalion of South Texas Buckskin Brigade
25th Battalion of South Texas Bobwhite Brigade
30th Battalion of Rolling Plains Bobwhite Brigade

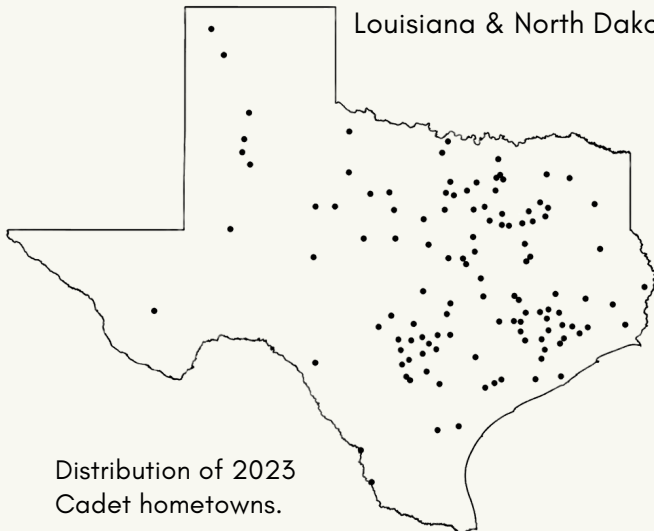


212 VOLUNTEERS

Texas Brigades volunteers are the backbone of the organization and come from various conservation and professional fields to assist in the planning, preparation, and execution of Brigade camps. Texas Brigades would like to thank the 212 volunteers that donated their time and effort to making our 2023 camp season a success!

208 CADETS

Texas Brigades educated and empowered 208 conservation leaders across the state of Texas and beyond. Out of state participants were welcomed from Oklahoma, Louisiana & North Dakota.



Distribution of 2023 Cadet hometowns.

\$54,800 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

Collectively, the 9 Brigade camp committees awarded 41 college scholarships totaling \$54,800. These scholarships are awarded based on the record of conservation outreach and activities submitted by cadets in the form of a Book of Accomplishments (BOA). Graduates complete activities in their communities immediately following camp.

Experiences

Experiences are single-day programs that allow Texas Brigades to engage with more youths across the state, while opening up the target age to as young as 9 years. The curriculum focus of Experiences is adaptable, allowing maximum flexibility with partnering organizations and hosts, target regions, and volunteer capacity.

EXPLORE SOUTH PADRE ISLAND LAGUNA MADRE

- Bird Identification
- Squid Dissection
- Fish Tagging and Monitoring
- Pollinators
- Water Quality and Pollutants

22 Participants Joined



Volunteer, Shane Stephens, demonstrating fish tagging and monitoring techniques.



Participants engage in a squid dissection demonstration with Volunteers from Sea Turtle, Inc.



Major Jason Bussey leading a "Who Done It?" drill to simulate an encounter between hunters and Wardens.



Participant practicing live range skills and safety instruction.

TEXAS GAME WARDEN EXPERIENCE GAME WARDEN TRAINING CENTER

- Active Shooter Simulation
- On-Duty Drills
- Range Skills and Safety
- Fishing Skills and Regulations

25 Participants Joined

W.I.L.D.

WILDLIFE INTENSIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

W.I.L.D. was created to further develop participants' knowledge of wildlife and natural resource conservation. It is an advanced program, engaging and exposing participants, ages 18-24, to natural resource policies and procedures, hands-on field research and data, career-building, and professionalism. Stay tuned for new and exciting W.I.L.D. opportunities coming soon!

Cadet Ambassadorship

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

Camp graduates submit Early Bird Books of Accomplishments (BOAs) in the Fall months immediately following camp season for an opportunity to earn an Early Bird BOA reward. Graduates must complete at least 10 outreach activities during this time frame to qualify for the reward, which varies among the camps. Early Bird incentives range from gift cards to guided hunting and fishing trips, as well as valuable feedback for Final BOA submissions. Final BOAs are submitted in the Spring and are evaluated by each committee to determine college scholarship recipients and selections of camp leadership roles.

67 FINAL BOAs SUBMITTED IN THE SPRING
39 EARLY BIRD BOAs SUBMITTED IN THE FALL
418 ACTIVITIES SUBMITTED THROUGH THE EARLY BIRD BOAs



◀ Madison Lugo, Zoe Barilla-Deuschle, Chappell Carter, and Isaiah Atoe spoke on behalf of Texas Brigades at the TPWD Annual Public Hearing in Austin, TX; August 2022.

Graduates presented their poster and shared their Texas Brigades experience at the Harris County Fair and Rodeo; October 2022. ▶



Graduates at the Fort Worth Texas Trophy Hunters Extravaganza, manning a booth on behalf of Texas Brigades and presenting their posters; August 2022. ▶

◀ Graduates presented their posters and facilitated educational activities at the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo's Kids Gone Wild event; January 2022.



Texas Brigades aims to share as many outreach opportunities with its graduates as possible. These events build confidence and speaking skills that help develop young leaders. Throughout the year, please let us know of any local events in and around your community that might benefit our Cadet Ambassadors to attend and participate in.

CYCL

CONFLUENCE OF YOUNG CONSERVATION LEADERS

Confluence of Young Conservation Leaders (CYCL) is a collaboration between natural resource agencies and youth conservation organizations in multiple states. The groups meet biennially across the nation to share ideas and support the growth of youth conservation organizations.

Five Texas Brigades graduates attended the 2022 CYCL event in Poynette, Wisconsin. 2023 was used as a building year with partner organizations and volunteers to help plan for a trip back to Texas, for 2024 CYCL! Participants from across the country will be immersed in regional efforts relating to urban agriculture, and will network with other participants of conservation organizations. Participant age range is from 18-22 years, making it a great event for young college professionals eager to expand their knowledge and network.



◀ International Crane Foundation; Baraboo, WI.

Mackenzie Environmental Center; Poynette, WI. ▶



◀ Aldo Leopold Shack and Farm; Baraboo, WI.

Rendezvous Receptions

Meet and Greet Receptions or “Rendezvous” are intended to re-engage past supporters and alumni and connect Texas Brigades with its current constituents across the state. Check out our social media and calendar pages for a Rendezvous Reception in your area and come join us! Have a location in mind? Let us know!

Meet and Greet Reception in the Midland/Odessa region; October 2022. ▶



Financial Position

2022 INDEPENDENTLY REVIEWED FINANCIALS

ASSETS

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Cash | \$868,052 |
| Accounts Receivable | \$80,000 |
| Other Assets | \$21,699 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$969,751 |

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Liabilities | \$3,114 |
| Net Assets | \$966,637 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS | \$969,751 |

Financial Statement

2022 INDEPENDENTLY REVIEWED FINANCIALS

REVEUNES

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Contributions | \$218,522 |
| Grants | \$118,874 |
| Fundraising Events (net) | \$118,079 |
| Donated Facilities & Supplies | \$307,628 |
| Tuitions, Other | \$71,783 |
| Total Gains & Support | \$834,886 |

EXPENSES

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Program Services | \$681,580 |
| Management & General | \$65,575 |
| Fundraising | \$36,824 |
| Total Expenses | \$783,979 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Change in Net Assets | \$50,907 |
| Net Assets, Beginning of Year | \$915,730 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR | \$966,637 |
|--------------------------------|------------------|

Ways to Support

As a nonprofit, Texas Brigades depends on the generous donations of individuals, foundations, groups, and corporations in monetary, in-kind, and material forms. These contributions support the year-round efforts of staff and volunteers who mentor cadets throughout their ambassador efforts and assist with conservation connections for young, motivated participants.

DONATE www.texasbrigades.org/donate

The Texas Brigades website is set up to accept donations on both a one-time and recurring basis. Alternatively, physical donations can be mailed to the office headquarters in New Braunfels.

SEND A KID TO CAMP www.texasbrigades.org/donate

The tuition cost per cadet is \$500, which covers all food, lodging, and materials needed for the 5-day camp experience. To sponsor a cadet's tuition, donate online or mail a check to the office headquarters. Just be sure to designate "camp tuition" in the donation!

VOLUNTEER www.texasbrigades.org/resources

Texas Brigades relies heavily on its volunteers throughout the calendar year, and provides volunteer opportunities ranging from meal preparation and outreach to instructions and providing medic services. Complete the volunteer registry to join the Texas Brigades network!

SHARE www.texasbrigades.org/applications

Word of mouth is consistently reported to be the most likely way for someone to learn about Texas Brigades (76% in 2023). Camp applications for Summer Brigade Camps are available through March 15th of each year. Share the application information with a young person, friend, or teacher in your life!

SHOP www.texasbrigades.company.site

Texas Brigades relies on its alumni, volunteers, and supporters to spread the word! Doing so is easier when you have Texas Brigades merchandise and apparel. Additionally, Amazon shoppers are encouraged to select Texas Brigades as their charity and support Texas Brigades with their Amazon Wish List.

FOLLOW US @ *TexasBrigades*

FACEBOOK / INSTAGRAM / TWITTER / LINKEDIN / YOUTUBE

Texas Brigades has grown the reach of its Facebook page by over 115% in a few short years. Page reach refers to the number of people who have seen any content on or about an individual page. Please help Texas Brigades continue this growth by following, sharing, and inviting others to join via social media! To follow along with specific camp news and updates, be sure to give their individual camp page a follow and like as well!



CONTACT US

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