

Texas

2025 Annual Report



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Front cover: Heath Canyon Ranch. © Braden Echols
This page: Bass at Independence Creek Preserve. © Kenny Braun



FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on the past year, I’m filled with appreciation for the incredible progress we’ve made together and energized by the path ahead.

The Nature Conservancy in Texas is charting a bold course toward 2030 with a vision of a livable climate, healthy communities and thriving nature leading the way. To address the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, we’ve set ambitious goals for our state. These include protecting 525,000 acres of key lands, conserving 3,400 miles of rivers and streams and improving management on 1.6 million acres to ensure cleaner air, more resilient waters and intact landscapes for future generations. We are also amplifying the impact of our conservation successes across the broader Great Plains landscape by collaborating for greater outcomes with TNC conservation experts from other states.

We see the urgency of our work every day. From the catastrophic July 4th floods to the annual loss of more than 350,000 acres of working lands to the growing strain on our freshwater resources, nature is signaling the need for action. That’s why we’re investing in nature-based solutions, supporting regenerative agriculture practices and partnering with communities to help them not only adapt, but thrive in a changing world.

Policy is a powerful tool for change, and we’re leveraging it to reflect the value of nature. Through Texas’ statewide flood planning process, we’re shaping strategies that prioritize using nature to reduce risk and increase resilience. At the same time, our native seed initiatives are driving policy and practice to restore grasslands with locally adapted species, strengthening our lands and improving their management. All this amazing work is grounded in science, driven by partnership and powered by supporters like you.



This year, we celebrated major milestones that are moving us closer to our 2030 goals. We expanded public access through the protection of Heath Canyon Ranch and lands near Colorado Bend State Park, ensuring more Texans can connect with nature. We completed the first-ever permanent land protection agreement in the Refugio-Goliad Prairie, safeguarding legacy ranchlands and vital grassland habitat that TNC has been actively stewarding for over 25 years. A TNC-led, map-based initiative is defining where tidal wetlands along our coast can best be protected, restored or allowed to migrate inland as sea levels rise. These successes are a testament to what’s possible when we work together. With your generosity, we’re continuing to build momentum toward achieving our 2030 goals through efforts like these and much more.

Finally, thank you for being part of my five-year journey with TNC. I will be retiring this December, filled with deep gratitude for all we’ve accomplished and for the incredible people I’ve had the privilege to work alongside. Because of you, conservation in the Lone Star State is gaining ground—acre by acre, stream by stream and species by species. Your support has helped turn bold ideas into real results, laying the foundation for a brighter future and a better Texas. I’m confident this strategic work will carry on with determination and purpose, thanks to the Texas Chapter’s passionate staff and dedicated trustees. Together, I know they will continue to lead and advance conservation across our state, making lasting impacts for years to come.

All my best,

Suzanne B. Scott

Texas State Director, The Nature Conservancy

2025 Bright Spots

JAN

TNC worked with the City of San Antonio to protect more than 550 acres of land in Uvalde County over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, bringing our total contribution to this important water protection program to nearly 98,500 acres.



© Ian Shive

APR

Earth Month was filled with a flurry of events that brought hundreds of people together to explore and connect with nature, including the East Texas Fire and Nature Festival, the City Nature Challenge and tours at our Davis Mountains, Love Creek and Clymer Meadow preserves.



© Jacquie Ferrato/TNC



© Jonathan Vail

FEB

Shield Ranch and the City of Austin finalized a 202-acre conservation easement to protect water quality in the Barton Creek watershed. TNC has long held an easement on the ranch, and this newly safeguarded tract will expand our efforts to preserve open space in Central Texas.

While protecting water flows and habitat for native species in northeast Texas, TNC became the first nonprofit in nearly two decades to dedicate a water right to the Texas Water Trust.



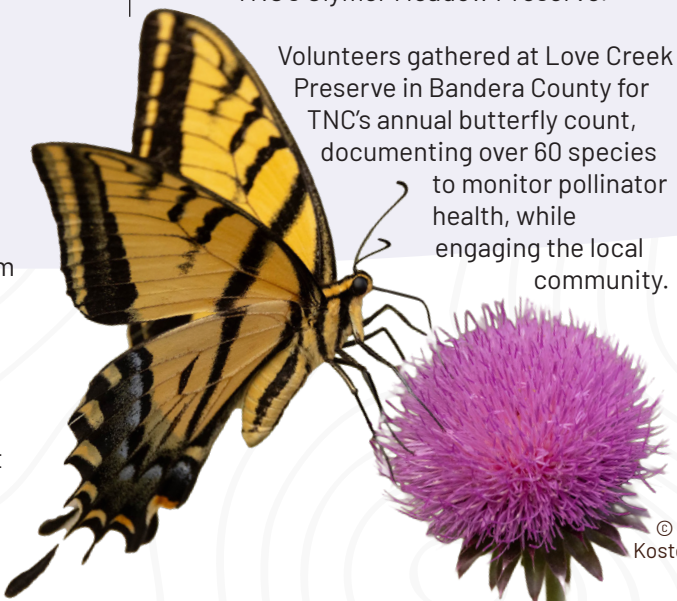
© Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

MAR

We assisted the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in acquiring the 1,100-acre Yancey Creek property along the Colorado River in Central Texas to support the creation of a new Texas state park and expand public access to nature.

JUN

The Judge Charles R. Rose Community Park celebrated its grand opening, complete with native Blackland Prairie habitat restored by seeds sourced from TNC's Clymer Meadow Preserve.



© Rich Kostecke

Volunteers gathered at Love Creek Preserve in Bandera County for TNC's annual butterfly count, documenting over 60 species to monitor pollinator health, while engaging the local community.

JUL

During an immersive five-day retreat at TNC's Davis Mountains Preserve, a group of college students had the chance to learn hands-on skills from conservation professionals and participated in activities ranging from bird and bat research to botany to fire ecology.



© Kenny Braun

OCT

With the help of a coalition of partners, TNC published the Texas Wetland Action Plan as part of a collaborative effort to coordinate tidal wetland conservation and restoration across the Texas Coast as sea levels rise.



© Kenny Braun

AUG

TNC and Ørsted were honored to accept the Solar Ecosystem of the Year award for the Mockingbird Solar Center at the North American Agrivoltaics Solar Farm Summit, a project that exemplifies how conservation and clean energy can work together.

In a landmark milestone, we completed a conservation easement on over 6,400 acres of coastal prairie at the T.M. O'Connor Ranch—the largest acquisition of land or conservation easement protected with RESTORE funding in the Gulf.



© Ørsted

NOV

Give thanks by giving back to the lands you love this November. Support Texas conservation at nature.org/donate/texas.



© Rich Kostecke

SEP

The Texas Board of Trustees joined us to celebrate the dedication of Independence Creek Preserve as a National Natural Landmark, with a special event honoring its rich ecological significance.



© Galveston Bay Foundation

DEC

Monitoring concluded on Beezley Reef, a 40-acre oyster reef built in 2021. Findings show that many new oysters have settled on this resilient, sanctuary reef and that it may be a good source of baby oysters to help repopulate nearby reefs in Galveston Bay.



© Anne Zuparko/TNC



PROTECT

Expanding Access to the Outdoors



nature.org/millionacremilestone

In a state as vast and richly diverse as Texas, every acre tells a story—and in 2025, two new chapters were written. With voter-backed funding and partners at the table, TNC helped open up more of our beloved Lone Star landscapes for everyone to explore.

HEATH CANYON RANCH

Out west, Heath Canyon Ranch—a 671-acre tract nestled near Big Bend National Park—was secured for public access and ecological preservation. Here, plummeting cliffs give way to the winding Rio Grande, creating a place where wild Texas breathes freely and the horizon stretches into forever. Once a missing puzzle piece in a swath of protected lands, the ranch now links critical wildlife corridors and safeguards over a mile of river frontage. It also protects the only take-out point for the iconic Boquillas Canyon multi-day river trip through Big Bend National Park. Just downstream, a rare gateway opens to the Lower Canyons—Texas’ only designated National Wild and Scenic River.

TNC purchased the property with the help of a coalition of private foundations and transferred it to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), who will manage the land as part of the Black Gap Wildlife Management Area. Working with the National Park Service, they’ll maintain the public’s access to the Rio Grande and establish a management plan that will create new opportunities for visitors to recreate, whether they’re paddling the river, hiking, spotting wildlife or simply soaking in the views.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS:

Horizon Foundation, WoodNext Foundation, a component fund administered by Greater Houston Community Foundation, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation and Meta Alice Keith Bratten Foundation.

BIG SPRINGS RANCH

In Central Texas, TNC assisted TPWD in acquiring 1,100 acres of Big Springs Ranch, spanning both Lampasas and Burnet counties. The property lies directly across the river from Colorado Bend State Park and features 1.5 miles of Yancey Creek, which showcases dramatic limestone bluffs and several bubbling natural springs. Combined with TPWD’s recent acquisition of 2,020 acres in Burnet County, these lands will form a brand-new state park, totaling more than 3,000 acres and creating over 8,000 acres of parkland on both sides of the river. The new park’s sweeping views and river access will invite visitors to paddle its waters, wander its trails and lose themselves in the beauty of nature, when it opens to the public.

But this park only came together because Texans made their voices heard at the ballot box. The ranch was purchased using a combination of one-time funding and revenue from the sporting goods sales tax. Development of the new park will be supported by the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund—a \$1 billion fund overwhelmingly approved by Texas voters in 2023 to form a dedicated revenue stream for creating state parks.

WHERE PEOPLE MEET NATURE

These milestones were not only about protecting land and water, but also about better connecting people to nature. They reflect TNC’s commitment to making nature accessible, preserving Texas’ wild heart and building partnerships that turn big conservation ideas into real places people can visit. In 2025, we’ve seen how, when Texans speak up for nature, trails open wide, rivers invite adventure and the outdoors becomes a place for everyone to enjoy.



Big Springs Ranch. © Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

DID YOU KNOW?



Heath Canyon Ranch is a refuge for a variety of species, including more than 250 types of plants, several of which are found nowhere else on Earth.



The Rio Grande winds for nearly 120 miles along the southern boundary of Big Bend National Park, sustaining native wildlife and habitat.



Big Springs Ranch is home to endangered golden-cheeked warblers, rare plants like canyon rattlesnake-root and stunning bigtooth maple canyons.



PROVIDE

Where Legacy Meets Land





T.M. O'Connor Ranch.
All photos © Kenny Braun

nature.org/oconnorranch

Beneath a sweep of drifting clouds and the rustle of tallgrass, a quiet triumph has taken root. TNC and a group of dedicated partners and funders have safeguarded one of the last great grassland remnants in the Refugio-Goliad Prairie—Texas’ largest remaining intact coastal prairie. In August 2025, we executed the largest conservation easement safeguarded through RESTORE funding on 6,409 acres of the T.M. O’Connor Ranch, ensuring part of this rapidly vanishing prairie landscape will be forever protected.

A FAMILY OF STEWARDS

This land, rich with history and ecological significance, will remain a working cattle ranch under the stewardship of the O’Connor family, whose legacy stretches back to 1834. Through this partnership, the critical grasslands surrounding the historic headquarters will be protected for generations to come so that the rhythms of ranching and the pulse of the prairie can carry on, side by side.

Despite TNC having worked in this region for years, this marks one of the first major permanent protections in the Refugio-Goliad Prairie. It all comes thanks to the O’Connors’ stewardship of the land, which flourishes as a living mosaic. Fertile coastal prairies and marshes sprout with little bluestem, yellow Indiangrass and brownseed paspalum. They shelter rare and endangered species like the Attwater’s prairie chicken—one of the most

imperiled birds in North America—as well as black rail, Sprague’s pipit and globally rare plants like the Refugio rain lily and Welder machaeranthera.

These grasslands also provide important benefits like buffering nearby communities from floods and hurricanes, cleaning our air and water and storing carbon deep underground in their root systems. But today, coastal prairies like these are among the most endangered habitats in Texas, with less than 5% remaining statewide.

PRAIRIE PROTECTION TAKES ROOT

The purchase of the easement was made possible through a \$7.6 million grant from the RESTORE Council and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, part of a broader effort to heal the areas of the Gulf Coast impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Additional support from the Knobloch Family Foundation,

Frank Klein and H-E-B helped bring this vision to life, reflecting the power of public-private collaboration in conservation.

The conservation easement serves to prevent development and habitat fragmentation, threats that loom large across Texas’ rapidly changing landscapes. It also allows for continued ranching and stewardship, so this working land remains both productive and protected. The agreement’s comprehensive management plan includes working with Texas A&M University’s Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries

Management and their Center for Grazinglands and Ranch Management, which will bring extensive research, guidance and monitoring provisions to support the long-term health of the prairie.

PRESERVING WHAT MATTERS MOST

By securing this easement, we are not only preserving nature, but also honoring a legacy. The O’Connor Ranch, once part of a 600,000-acre empire assembled in the 1800s, now stands as a beacon of conservation in the 21ST

century. This landmark agreement ensures the land will continue to thrive under the care of future generations, setting a precedent for long-term conservation and encouraging other landowners to consider protecting their land’s ecological value.

This is conservation at its most powerful. Rooted in history and sustained by partnership, the protection of this ranch is a promise etched into the prairie, ensuring the region’s heritage endures with each blade of grass that dances in the Gulf breeze.

DID YOU KNOW?



This is the first conservation easement purchase funded by the federal RESTORE Council, which was created to mitigate the impacts of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.



Not only does this easement preserve a large piece of the Refugio-Goliad Prairie, but it also safeguards riparian habitat along the San Antonio River.

270

The endangered Attwater’s prairie chicken—an iconic species of Texas’ coastal prairies—rose to a population of nearly 270 this year, reflecting the impact of TNC’s habitat protection efforts in the Refugio-Goliad Prairie.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS:
The Knobloch Family Foundation, Frank Klein, H-E-B and a TCEQ grant funded through the RESTORE Council.



CLIMATE

Mapping the Future of Texas' Wetlands





Wetland soil sampling. © Kenny Braun

nature.org/texascoast

This year, TNC and a coalition of partners reached a defining moment in coastal conservation: the completion of the Texas Wetland Action Mapping (WAM) tool and the identification of 17 priority action areas along the Texas Gulf Coast. This achievement is more than a milestone—it’s a promise to protect the natural places that protect us.

Tidal wetlands—think salt marshes, mangroves and tidal flats—are the quiet heroes of our coast. They support native species, buffer against storm surge and hold carbon deep in their soils. They are nurseries for commercial fisheries, resting grounds for millions of migratory birds and a refuge for endangered and threatened plants and wildlife, like whooping cranes. But these habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate. Rising seas, stronger storms and expanding development are closing in. Without action, we risk losing what remains.



© Jacquie Ferrato/TNC

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS:
COMON Foundation, Edaren Foundation,
Janet Harman and Kevin and Alice Steiner.



© Karine Aigner

A TOOL BUILT FOR ACTION

WAM is a solution designed to meet the challenges of a changing coast. Built through a collaborative process involving landowners, scientists, planners and conservationists, the tool provides a way to visualize, build consensus around and prioritize wetland areas that should be protected, restored or given room to move inland as sea levels rise. The overall goal is to reduce and reverse the trend of tidal wetland loss in Texas. Currently, it’s the only coast-wide plan for wetlands of its scope in the Lone Star State.

The tool’s maps combine science with local knowledge, helping us prioritize areas that support coordinated planning and collaboration within a defined geography. This WAM approach enables decision-making grounded in a strategic framework, as the maps reveal



© Annie Mulligan

where actions to protect and restore wetlands can provide the most benefits, like reducing flooding, storing carbon and creating new places for people to connect with nature. In effect, these insights have guided us to focus on 17 identified action areas where collaboration will make the greatest impact.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN, LOCALLY ROOTED

The heart of WAM is the people who shaped this work. During regional workshops with a dedicated Texas WAM working group and hands-on mapping exercises, partners selected and refined action areas—places where future projects can take root. These 17 areas, stretching from Sabine Pass to South Padre Island, represent 78% of the state’s best potential locations for wetland renewal. Each one is a launchpad for collaboration and progress.



© Kenny Braun

A LIVING MAP FOR A SHIFTING COASTLINE

This work isn’t just about mapping; it’s about staying steps ahead of our evolving coastline and creating a forward-looking blueprint for resilience, drawn with care and conviction. As we move forward, WAM can help guide wetland conservation by focusing funding, tracking progress and bringing new voices to the table to ensure there is a concerted effort in the most critical areas. Because thriving wetlands aren’t just a win for nature—they’re central to shaping Texas’ future.

DID YOU KNOW?



143 participants and 58 participating organizations, including state and federal agencies, land trusts, nonprofits and academic institutions, participated in the Texas WAM workshops and planning sessions.



The WAM process prioritized a total of 1,282,771 acres for potential wetland conservation, restoration and migration space across the Texas Gulf Coast.



WAM’s planning tools identified where wetland action can deliver multiple benefits like flood mitigation, carbon storage, biodiversity protection and equitable access to green space.

Saving Habitat Starts with Seeds

nature.org/texasseeds

Seeds are an essential lifeline to ensure the survival of all our native landscapes in Texas. Our prairies, forests and wetlands across the state depend on the careful preservation and strategic dispersal of native seeds to survive and thrive.

For decades, TNC has been collecting native seeds from our nature preserves and distributing them throughout the state to bring back these historic habitats.

This year, for instance, the Judge Charles R. Rose Community Park opened in Dallas, where community members revitalized endangered Blackland Prairie using seeds from TNC's Clymer Meadow Preserve. Restoring the health of natural habitats helps protect communities from extreme rainfall, storm surge and other climate-related risks, advancing a key TNC conservation strategy and utilizing nature to support public health and safety.

By working hand in hand with partners, we're not just planting seeds—we're reviving the landscapes that define our state and safeguarding the natural legacy that future generations will inherit.



TNC Preserves

- 1 Smiley Meadow Preserve**
Once slated for development, this rare Silveus' dropseed prairie remnant now fuels restoration of a critically endangered prairie type.

1,050
ACRES



- 2 Clymer Meadow Preserve**
One of the most diverse remaining endangered Blackland Prairies, this preserve is an essential place to harvest seeds and serves as a seed processing hub for TNC's North Texas preserves.

1,475
ACRES

- 4 Nash Prairie Preserve**
A historic remnant prairie with over 300 native plant species that have helped restore prairies across Houston and beyond.

427
ACRES



- 7 Lennox Foundation Southmost Preserve**
As TNC's hub for thornforest restoration, the preserve's nursery helps revive endangered Mexican sabal palms and Tamaulipan thornforest in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

1,016
ACRES

40,000+ SEEDLINGS GROWN PER YEAR



- 5 Brazos Woods Preserve**
This preserve hosts a climate-controlled facility for seed storage.

681
ACRES



- 8 Marathon Grasslands Preserve**
Native agave, an essential nectar source for pollinators like bats and hummingbirds, is collected here for partner seed cultivation efforts.

2,701
ACRES



- 3 Texas City Prairie Preserve**
Many varieties of seeds are collected at the preserve, which also acts as the hub where TNC's coastal seeds are cleaned and processed.

2,314
ACRES

- 6 Clive Runnells Family Mad Island Marsh Preserve**
The preserve supports robust seed production for coastal prairie and wetland habitat.

7,063
ACRES

Restoration Site Highlights

- 1 Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge**
This South Texas landscape is being restored with thornforest seedlings grown at regional nurseries, including our Lennox Foundation Southmost Preserve.



25K
NATIVE
SEEDLINGS

- 2 Judge Charles R. Rose Community Park**
Community volunteers helped build a new green space at the park by planting native seeds and plants from TNC's Clymer Meadow Preserve.

25 LBS. OF NATIVE SEED PLANTED

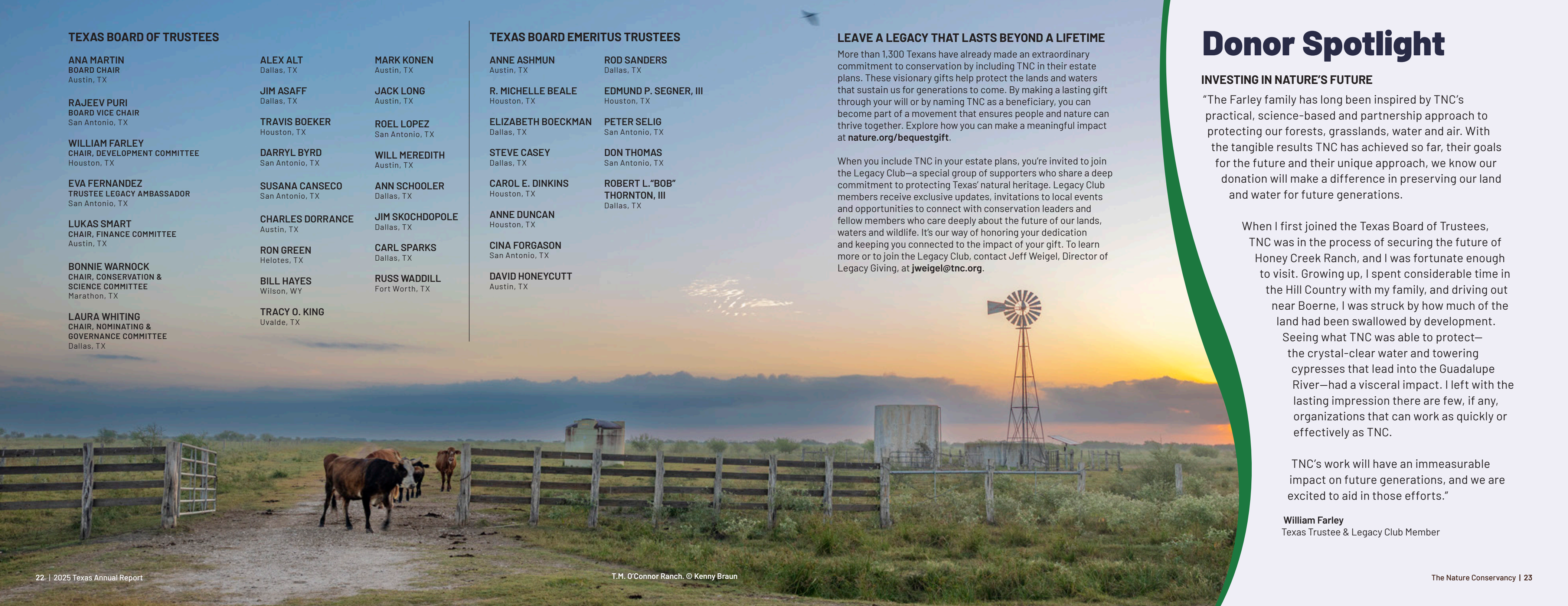


100
NATIVE
PLANTS

- 3 Memorial Park Land Bridge & Prairie**
TNC supplied thousands of pounds of seeds to help restore habitat in this wildlife corridor that also functions as a buffer during severe storms.



40
ACRES
PLANTED



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LEAVE A LEGACY THAT LASTS BEYOND A LIFETIME

More than 1,300 Texans have already made an extraordinary commitment to conservation by including TNC in their estate plans. These visionary gifts help protect the lands and waters that sustain us for generations to come. By making a lasting gift through your will or by naming TNC as a beneficiary, you can become part of a movement that ensures people and nature can thrive together. Explore how you can make a meaningful impact at nature.org/bequestgift.

When you include TNC in your estate plans, you’re invited to join the Legacy Club—a special group of supporters who share a deep commitment to protecting Texas’ natural heritage. Legacy Club members receive exclusive updates, invitations to local events and opportunities to connect with conservation leaders and fellow members who care deeply about the future of our lands, waters and wildlife. It’s our way of honoring your dedication and keeping you connected to the impact of your gift. To learn more or to join the Legacy Club, contact Jeff Weigel, Director of Legacy Giving, at jweigel@tnc.org.

Donor Spotlight

INVESTING IN NATURE’S FUTURE

“The Farley family has long been inspired by TNC’s practical, science-based and partnership approach to protecting our forests, grasslands, water and air. With the tangible results TNC has achieved so far, their goals for the future and their unique approach, we know our donation will make a difference in preserving our land and water for future generations.

When I first joined the Texas Board of Trustees, TNC was in the process of securing the future of Honey Creek Ranch, and I was fortunate enough to visit. Growing up, I spent considerable time in the Hill Country with my family, and driving out near Boerne, I was struck by how much of the land had been swallowed by development. Seeing what TNC was able to protect—the crystal-clear water and towering cypresses that lead into the Guadalupe River—had a visceral impact. I left with the lasting impression there are few, if any, organizations that can work as quickly or effectively as TNC.

TNC’s work will have an immeasurable impact on future generations, and we are excited to aid in those efforts.”

William Farley
Texas Trustee & Legacy Club Member

HAVE QUESTIONS OR WANT TO LEARN MORE?

CONTACT ONE OF OUR PHILANTHROPY REPRESENTATIVES DIRECTLY:

For direct correspondence about making a philanthropic donation or supporting our conservation work in Texas, please send mail to The Nature Conservancy in Texas Headquarters at 2632 Broadway, Suite 201S, San Antonio, TX 78215.

Visit nature.org/donatetexas to make a gift online.

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OUR MISSION

To conserve the lands and
waters on which all life depends.

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