

Texas Plains Trail Region



2022-23 Annual Report



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Pictured above from left to right: Quanah Parker Trail Arrow, Tulia, TX; The City of Mosaics, Levelland, TX; Downtown Mural, Colorado City, TX.

Letter from the Director

The three images above all have something in common and it's not just that they are in our region.

Each photo captures a piece of art. The steel arrow with the colors of the Comanche nation and the concrete that encircles it; the intricate, mosaic mural with tiny pieces of tile making up the larger picture; the downtown Colorado City mural with vibrant colors and icons of the region. They are all completely different in their physical materials and meanings, but they enhance the preservation of the heritage of our region. They cause people to stop and learn more.

The granite marker by the arrow tells the history of the Comanche in that specific location. Our logo in the mosaic markets our regions as well as represents Levelland, the City of Mosaics. The mural represents Colorado City and how it is a unique part of the Lone Star State.

When I stopped to reflect on this last year, much like these pieces of art, I've been working to cause people to stop and learn more. I've taken many different aspects of our region, and worked to tell the story in different ways, utilizing different techniques. However, the common goal remains: to enhance the preservation and heritage of our region.

"Storytelling is our obligation to the next generation. If all we are doing is marketing, we are doing a disservice, and not only to our profession, but to our children, and their children. Give something of meaning to your audience by inspiring, engaging, and educating them with story.

Stop marketing. Start storytelling."

--Laura Holloway, Founder & Chief of The Storyteller Agency

This report is a tool to showcase the ways in which we've **told our story** for 2022–2023, and how we plan to continue work towards our goals in FY24.

The work I am able to do would not be possible without your support and my outstanding board. We are stronger together as an organization and region because of you.

As we are coming to the end of 2023, I cannot help but to be excited for 2024. It truly feels like things are back in full swing with new opportunities arising each day.

We kick off January with our THC Statewide meeting, then a tradeshow where I'll be telling thousands of people about the region, followed by the Texas Historical Commission Real Places Conference and then a spring filled with more tradeshows and travel in the region.

I'm honored and excited to continue to tell the story of our region. Please let me know how I can assist in this next year. I hope to see you soon on the trail!



Allison Kendrick **Executive Director**Texas Plains Trail Region



Letter from the Board

With memories of fiscal year 2022-2023 fresh, it is time to recall the year that saw our 52 county region continue to regain traction and grow in the wake of the pandemic that drastically affected heritage tourism to the region. The past year was marked by new connections, recharged efforts, and continued cooperation among our board and Executive Director, our partners, and our communities.

The Texas Plains Trail held bimonthly board meetings in Seminole, Hale Center, Denver City, Wheeler, Colorado City, and our organization's executive committee held meetings in off months between these meetings to plan and coordinate ahead of board meetings. We will visit even more communities across the region in the upcoming year in our never ending goal of consistently visiting each corner of the region. Involvement at our meetings has been consistent as community leaders and members have spoken and welcomed our group to their facilities.

Trade Shows, conferences, and other special events throughout the year highlighted efforts to enhance outreach to different stakeholders in our region and across the state. We had representation at the Texas State Fair, the Winter Texan Expo, the West Texas Historical Association conference, bicentennial events celebrating the Texas Rangers and the centennial celebration of Route 66, among many other events along the way. In the upcoming year, we will maintain these efforts to be present at as many of these community events as possible. They represent one of the main outlets for strengthening our visibility and the visibility of our partners.

Along with normal board operations, our board worked on and submitted several required documents to the Texas Historical Commission. Our usual scope of work document was completed on time, and we were given a new document, the THTP Organizational Check Up Tool, to submit late in the spring. Our board rallied and completed these forms and also utilized the information we gathered to build and strategize for the coming year.

In 2022, direct travel spending in the Plains Trail Region accounted for roughly \$2.9 billion of the overall \$91.7 billion spent by visitors to the state. Visiting historic sites, communities and museums is a significant component of the state and region's travel industry.

The Texas Plains Trail region is an exciting and bountiful area of the state not only because of our 52 counties and our 300+ heritage tourism partners, but also because of the people that make them work for our region and those who choose to visit. We are blessed and fortunate to be supported by our various partners as we work to support them in the best way that we know how. As we look ahead to the next year and beyond, we take note of our position as an intermediary connecting heritage tourism to our region as we continue the push to drive more tourism and more revenue to our 50,000 square mile corner of the Lone Star State. Big and small, far and wide, the Texas Plains Trail is home to communities of all sizes and historic and cultural sites that accurately detail the region's story, and it is our job to ensure these aspects get the support they deserve.



Austin Allison

Board President

Texas Plains Trail Region



About the Plains Trail Region

Enjoy the rugged beauty and shimmering sunsets of the Texas Plains. Miles and miles of short grass prarie gives way suddenly and unexpectedly to spectacular canyon vistas as you cross this 52-county region that covers approximately 50,000 square miles! The normally pleasant weather can change in an instant and quickly change back again. One of the last parts of the continental United States to be permanently settled, the Texas Plains have been occupied for millennia. More than 12,000 years ago, the Clovis people, the earliest known residents of North America, roamed this land hunting the ancient bison and the Columbian mammoth. In time, the Apache and Comanche nations came, followed by Spanish explorers, cowboys on the free range, and finally, homesteaders seeking opportunity in a new place. The stories of the land and the people are the history of the Texas Plains —and the true stories of the West.

Our 52 counties

Armstrong	Deaf Smith	Hemphill	Motley
Bailey	Dickens	Hockley	Ochiltree
Borden	Donley	Howard	Oldham
Briscoe	Floyd	Hutchinson	Parmer
Carson	Foard	Kent	Potter
Castro	Gaines	King	Randall
Childress	Garza	Knox	Roberts
Cochran	Gray	Lamb	Scurry
Collingsworth	Hale	Lipscomb	Sherman
Cottle	Hall	Lubbock	Swisher
Crosby	Hansford	Lynn	Terry
Dallam	Hardeman	Mitchell	Wheeler
Dawson	Hartley	Moore	Yoakum

About the Texas Heritage Trails Program

The Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP) is the award-winning heritage tourism initiative of the Texas Historical Commission (THC). This economic development program encourages communities, heritage regions, and the state to partner and promote Texas' historic and cultural resources. These robust local preservation efforts, combined with statewide marketing of heritage regions as tourism destinations, increase visitation to cultural and historic sites and bring more dollars to Texas communities. This in turn supports the THC's mission to protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, economic benefit, and enjoyment of present and future generations. The THTP is based around 10 scenic driving trails created in 1968 by Gov. John Connally and the Texas Highway Department (now the Texas Department of Transportation) as a marketing tool. The trails were established in conjunction with HemisFair, an international exposition that commemorated the 250th anniversary of the founding of San Antonio.

Mission

Responsible for promoting heritage tourism and economic development throughout 52 counties of West Texas:

empowering volunteers and communities, guiding local history initiatives, and drawing visitors and residents to appreciate the regions historical, cultural and natural resources.

Vision

We envision Texas as a place where: The diverse places of the Lone Star State are preserved and promoted for present and future generations. Visitors and residents delight in experiencing, firsthand, the real places telling the real stories of our state's heritage and cultures. The total visitor experience of Texas' diverse places stimulates local economies. Heritage tourism is a community-based enterprise that contributes to its livability and sense of place.

In this photo: Cotton Harvest in Borden County, Kayla van Zielst

FY23 2022- 2023

Summary of Work

Our Staff and Volunteer board work yearround to preserve history, educate visitors and residents, and spread the word about the rich heritage of the Texas Plains and Panhandle.

The events and efforts listed below could not have been done without the amazing support and understanding of the true champions in our region.

We kicked off FY23 in **September** by celebrating **Quanah Parker Day**. We posted a series on social media and on our website to encourage visitors to get out and discover the arrows. The **State Fair of Texas** was back and we helped set up the booth. We also had **Downtown Levelland** participate as a Destination Day at the Fair! Board member and Mainstreet Director, Tania Moody, worked on a mosaic and let fairgoers put a piece on the artwork. It was a huge hit! We gave away a ton of literature showcasing our 52 county region.







Photos: Tania Moody, with Downtown Levelland at the State Fair of Texas; Quanah Parker artwork picking up another granite marker for an existing arrow; TPTR board members at the December 2022 board meeting at the Hale Center Farm and Ranch Museum.

In **October**, we kicked off our first board meeting of FY23 in Seminole at the **Gaines County Museum.** We visited the downtown merchants and ate a wonderful lunch. We then traveled to Dallas to work the State Fair booth with Downtown Levelland. We participated in a session for the **Statewide Heritage Preservation Plan**. We rounded out the month by packing up our booth at the State Fair in Dallas.

November was filled with meetings; a meeting with Authentic Texas, the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, Hale County Farm and Ranch Center, and the Route 66 Centennial planning group.

The month of **December** brought a great new opportunity; **The Charles and Mary Ann Goodnight Ranch SHS** stakeholder meeting in Amarillo. We had a wonderful Christmas board meeting the the **Hale County Farm and Ranch Center** and toured their facility. We closed out 2022 with another **Statewide Heritage Preservation Plan** meeting and an **Authentic Texas** meeting.

FY23

Summary of Work Lontd.

2022 - 2023







Photos: Board chairs and Executive Directors for the Heritage Trail Regions in Austin; Route 66 Festival sticker on the bus tour; Dugout presentation at the Goodnight Ranch SHS

January began with our Texas Historical
Commission Statewide meeting in Austin. We headed further south for the Winter Texan Expo in McAllen, Texas, where we gave away over 1,000 pieces of travel literature about our region. We ended the month with a booth at the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo promoting Authentic Texas magazine and our region.

In February we participated in the THC Real Places conference and partnered with the Forts Trail Region at the Fort Worth Home and Garden Show to promote heritage tourism. It was a very successful show where we gave out over 1,000 pieces of literature. We had a wonderful board meeting in Denver City at the Chamber and toured the Denver City Heritage Museum.

In March we participated with TSHA and had our brochure at their tradeshow in El Paso. We also attended the Goodnight Ranch State Historic Site dugout presentation. We hit the trail to Yoakum County to visit with County Judge Ybarra. We ended the month with a presentation over women in the railroad industry at Slaton Harvey House.

We kicked off **April** with a trip to **Snyder** for the day to meet with their Development corporation team and explore the amazing downtown and **Scurry County Museum.** We also participated in **WTHA Annual Conference** as well as the **West Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association** conference.

May began with Consultation and Collaboration: A Starting Point for Museums and Indigenous Tribes in the beautiful and sacred Palo Duro Canyon. We also traveled to the Pecos Trail Region – Midland, for the grand opening of the new Bush Family Home State Historic Site.

In June we commemorated **D-Day with Silent Wings Museum**. We then got our kicks on **Route 66** with a bus tour of the western portion of the iconic highway to celebrate the upcoming Centennial in 2026! We also had a great board meeting at **Lake Colorado City State Park**, where Teresa Caldwell with THC joined us. We toured the **Heart of the West Texas Museum** and downtown as well.

July was full of fireworks at the American Windmill Museum. We hit the road to Abilene and the Forts Trail Region for our THC Statewide meeting. We finished up the month with a Texas Association of Museums meeting in Lubbock.

August began in full planning mode for FY24. **The Plains Trail Executive board** met for a half day workshop in **Lubbock** to fill out our Scope of Work. We did lots of planning for the end of the year and turned in all of our FY24 reports and documents to the THC. We ended the month at a meeting at the **Slaton Harvey House.**

By the Numbers

52
Pounties

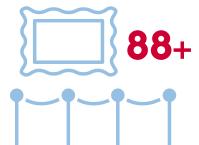


Square Miles

Attractions



Museums



87

Quanah Parker Trail Arrows

Heritage Preservation

State Historic Site







Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program Recipients



By the Mumbers



The information below has been captured by Datafy for FY23. Datafy has developed a revolutionary way for communities to understand – and impact – their visitation. We use these numbers in our marketing efforts to bring visitors to our amazing 52 county region.



Visitor

Days

2,383,997



Total Trips 1,452,103



Avg. Length of Stay

1.6 days



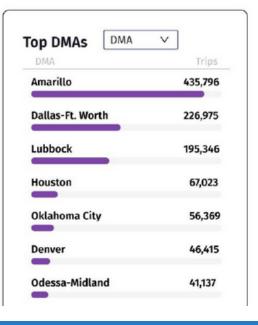
Unique Visitors

889,989



op Cities City City	Trips
Lubbock, TX	101,608
Pampa, TX	61,659
Amarillo, TX	45,798
Dallas, TX	26,945
Fort Worth, TX	26,388
Dalhart, TX	22,509
Plainview, TX	21,208

Top States State	
State	Trips
Texas	957,709
Oklahoma	102,176
New Mexico	70,816
Colorado	67,705
California •	35,144
Kansas	35,024
Florida	25,448





By the Mumbers



The information below has been captured by Datafy for FY23. Datafy has developed a revolutionary way for communities to understand – and impact – their visitation. We use these numbers in our marketing efforts to bring visitors to our amazing 52 county region.

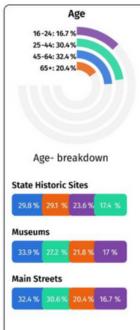
Texas Historical Commission - Texas Plains Trail Region, FY 2023



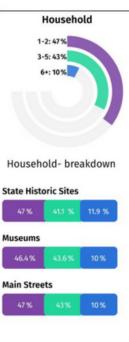
Global Filters In-State Out-of-State Distance: 50 mi - 4,037 mi Dates: 9/1/22 - 8/31/23 Region: Plains Trail Region Included Clusters: All Included Advanced Filters

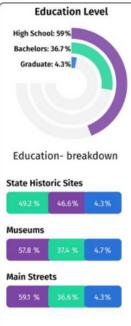
Demographics

Age Income Household Education Level Ethnicity







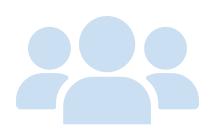












Our Partners



52 Counties

Thank you to all of our 52 counties and 300+ heritage tourism partners in the region. We could not do the work we do without your support.

TPTR also maintains memberships and reciprocal partnerships with national, statewide, and regional organizations whose missions dovetail with our own, and supports the work of many others by sharing news and events.

Photo: Executive Director, Allison Kendrick with Wheeler County Judge, Pat McDowell, at the West Texas County Judges & Commissioners Conference in Lubbock, TX.



We look forward to continuing to partner with our County Judges in our 52 counties. In 2024 we will be making visits to meet with more partners across our wonderful region!

Partners and Affiliations

Texas Historical Commission Caprock Partners Foundation Center for the Study of the American West

Go Texan, Department of Agriculture

High Ground of Texas

Lubbock Chamber of Commerce

Lubbock Heritage Society

National Park Service

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Office of the Governor,

Economic Development & Tourism

Ogallala Commons

Preservation Texas

Southwest Collections

Texas Tech University

Texan by Nature

Texas Association of Convention and

Visitors Bureaus

Texas Association of Museums

Texas Downtown Association

Texas Film Commission

Texas Heritage Trails, LLC

Texas Highways, TXDOT

Texas Living History Association

Texas Main Street

Texas Midwest Community Network

Texas Music Office/ Texas Music

Heritage Trail

Texas Panhandle Heritage Foundation

Texas Parks & Wildlife

Texas State Historical Association

Texas Travel Alliance

Texas Travel Information Centers

TravelHost of West Texas

Visit Amarillo

Visit Big Spring

Visit Lubbock

West Texas Historical Association

West Texas Trails Association

WestTexasTrip.com

Marketing Efforts

The Texas Plains Trail Region undertakes a wide variety of activities and programs to assist regional partners and communities in preserving and interpreting historic resources, through education and training, promotion, networking and special projects. We work on behalf of our partners to serve travelers throughout the region, each year.

We seek to encourage direct participation in heritage experiences and cultural tourism by the traveling public - including residents who are "tourists in their own hometowns."







Medium	Activity / Project	Outcomes	
Email/Newsletter	Total Subscribers: 4,915+ Email Open Rate: 25% Email Click Rate: 2% Industry Average: 1%	 New email design and promotion of special events helped boost email engagement. Launching brand new design with new website in 2022/2023 	
Tradeshows & Info Fairs	Winter Texan - McAllen THC Real Places Fort Worth Home & Garden Expo Texas Travel Alliance Travel Fair West Texas Historical Association Texas Travel Alliance Summit State Fair of Texas Regional expos	 Distributed 4,000+ guides at 10 events. Observed increase in website and social media traffic as well as email subscribers 	
Media & Publications	Authentic Texas Magazine, AuthenticTexas.com, TravelHost Visitor & Museum Guide, Texas Heritage Travel Guide, Texas Almanac, Plains Trail Rack Card, Quanah Parker Trail Rack Card and QuanahParkerTrail.com	 Reached numerous readers and listeners through media mentions and stories in publications 	
Special Events	Board meetings in the region West Texas County Judges Conference Quanah Parker Day State Fair of Texas	 Participation in community events yielded interactions with potential heritage travelers. 	

Editorial Features & Advertising





Authentic Texas 2022 - 2023

We continue to participate with Authentic Texas Magazine as a managing partner. Our region has had several features in FY23 such as: Dinosaur Encounters Across Texas, Dr. Eileen Johnson: Leaving a Legacy, The Voice of Mitchell County, Sounds of Texas with Tumbleweed Smith, and Amarillo National Bank. We've also been featured in the email newsletters, blogs on the website and digital ads.

Visit AuthenticTexas.com/trails/plains-trail for a full list of features and to discover the stories yourself.

We are proud to showcase our region and hand out this magazine as a tool to promote heritage tourism.

<u>Advertising</u> 2022 - 2023

TravelHost West Texas continues to be a great partner for the region by producing their yearly Museum and Visitor Guide. We had several features in their publications, as well as ads.

We participated with the nine other heritage trail regions and placed an ad in the Texas Almanac.

We promoted Quanah Parker Day via TravelHost, Authentic Texas and our social media channels.

We took advantage of the Travel Texas EDA
Grant and signed up for three advertising
opportunities. We participated in Social
Stories, Programmatic Stories and a Culture
Map article.



Social Media

PG



Texasiphainstrail Sergente Verwinning

188 and Lath followers 256 following

Texas Plants Text Regions

Text Re



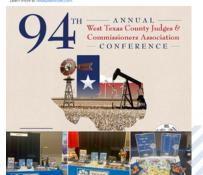












States.



Followers **11,528**

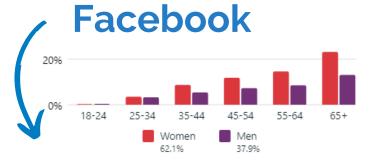
Avg. Reach

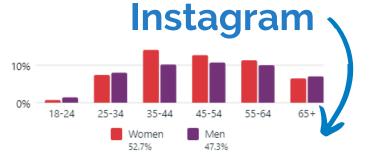
37,396

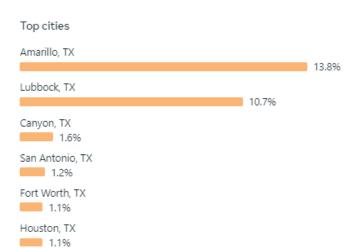
Avg. Engagement 4,485+

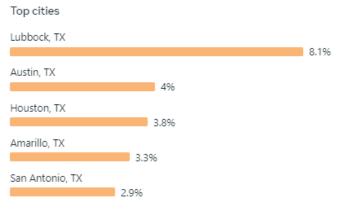
Followers 1,285

Reach Up 10%















The 52-county Texas Plains Trail Region features rich heritage, diverse culture, and unforgettable history including one Texas Historical Commission state historic site.

Travel and tourism are vital to the Texas economy, and the Plains Trail Region is no exception. In 2022, direct travel spending in the Plains Trail Region accounted for roughly \$2.9 billion of the overall \$91.7 billion spent by visitors to the state.

Visiting historic sites, communities, and museums is a significant component of the state's and region's travel industry. A 2015 study by The University of Texas at Austin and Rutgers University determined that more than 10.5 percent of all travel in Texas is heritage-related.

Following devastating declines due to the pandemic, the Texas travel industry continues its rebound in 2022. Travel spending increased an estimated 21% compared to the prior year, and all economic indicators now exceed the pre-pandemic level.

Travel Matters



Travel Means Jobs



\$2.9 billion direct travel spending in 2022



24.7 thousand jobs directly supported by

tourism spending within the region



\$260.2 million state and local taxes generated from travel spending



\$776.2 million travel-generated earnings

Source: Dean Runvan and Associates, Travel Texas, April 2023

For more information, contact the Plains Trail Region at info@texasplainstrail.com. or the Heritage Tourism Program at the Texas Historical Commission at THCheritagetourism@thc.texas.gov.







Lowking, Amend



The work of the region supports the Texas Heritage Trails Program 2020–2025 Strategic Plan and is described using four (4) Strategic Priorities:

- Raise the standards of heritage and cultural attractions around the State
- 2. Foster heritage preservation and education
- 3. Encourage regional cooperation and promotion of heritage and cultural attractions
- 4. Foster effective local tourism leadership and organizational skills.

01. New THC Plains Trail Brochure

The Texas Plains Trail Region is excited to be working with the Texas Historical Commission to reproduce the original brochure that was created as a tool for showcasing our region. We look forward to distributing these in 2024.

02. Showcasing Historic Theatres

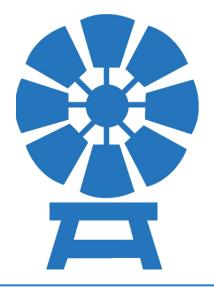
This project was originally inspired by the redesign of our website. Through the process of checking our heritage sites and attractions, we discovered that we had several theaters that were seeing new life or a comeback from being closed during 2020. We will be creating special features on our website and social media to showcase them and hope to get a group together to further assist networking efforts.

03. Quanah Parker Day and the Trail

We are working with the Quanah Parker Trail Steering Committee and invested community members to celebrate Quanah Parker Day in September. We will be reaching out to arrow keepers and communities to push for arrow beautification and events to commemorate the day. We are also in the beginning stages of website updates and updating our digital database.



Locking, Americh





04. Strategic Planning

The Texas Plains Trail Region Board is closing out 2023 by working with an outside strategic planner to continue to elevate the work we do as a board. We are implementing new Task Forces and Committees, seeking additional board members, and honing in on how to best utilize each members skillset.

05. TPTR Out in the Region

We have a BIG region and we want to continue to make a BIG impact. We are working on more visibility in the region so partners like you can keep up with what we are doing! We will be partnering with local newspapers to author articles, reprinting and distributing Plains Trail Partner stickers, and attending community events and meetings.

06. Authentic Texas Magazine

We continue to have a wonderful partnership with Authentic Texas magazine and are looking forward to many exciting things in 2024. Be on the lookout for new opportunities and don't forget to subscribe!



Get Investived

1.Become a Board Member.

If you're interested in volunteering to serve, our nominating committee begins reviewing applications each spring for terms beginning September 1. Visit texasplainstrail.com/partners-and-resources for an application and more information.

2. Subscribe to our newsletter.

Receive *Tales from the Trail* about current happenings and news throughout or 52 county region by visiting texasplainstrail.com to sign up.

3. Send us your brochures.

Send us your brochures or rack cards to be displayed at Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

4. Send us your events to promote.

We're always on the lookout for events and sites to promote on social media. Email us the details!

5.Donate to our program.

Your support helps us provide training and workshops to sites across the Texas Plains Trail Region.

Real places telling Real Stories



Staff

Allison Kendrick **Executive Director**

2022 - 2023

Executive Committee

Austin Allison President

Kayla van Zielst

Treasurer

Cynthia Schneider Vice President

Vicki Hamblen Secretary

Board of Directors

Tom Cole Karli Fields Tamera Julian Tai Kreidler

Hayley Lewis Tania Moody Kristen Moudy Jim Townsend

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Texas Plains Trail Region

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