



## TEXAS RIVER SCHOOL



FRIEND OF THE RIVER  
DONATION DRIVE

*THE CHAUTAUQUA FOUNDATION, INC.  
801 W. GIBSON STREET  
AUSTIN, TX 78704*

# TEXAS RIVER SCHOOL

*“Keeping our kids and rivers healthy”*

## About Texas River School

Texas River School has spent 20 years building relationships with nature for the children of Austin. Texas River School provides fun, safe, engaging, and educational outdoor experiences for grade-school students who may not otherwise have the opportunity.

Texas River School uses the river as a classroom to teach and reinforce important personal growth initiatives such as leadership, self-discipline and civic responsibility; and create a connection to and affection for Texas waterways.

Since 1997, Texas River School has conducted nearly 200 canoe trips and have taken nearly 5,000 area youth on the river, including canoeing, swimming, snorkeling, camping, and much more. Texas River School strives to connect children with nature and abide by our motto: “Keeping our kids and rivers healthy!”

## Mission

Texas River School is organized to promote and provide awareness and education about surface and ground water resources, and their preservation, conservation, and protection. We achieve these goals by:

- Establishing, developing programming for and operation classes, camps and similar educational programs for youth which focus on rivers, aquifers, conservation, and water activities.
- Establishing, developing programming for and operating programs for education, recreation, outreach and related activities for the general public related to water resources.
- Establishing, financing and operating facilities, both free and for fee, for members, youth and the general public in support of this programming.



## History

The Texas River School is a grassroots, non-profit 201 (c) (3) organization founded in 1992 by Joe Kendall with the intention of combining outdoor education, swimming, and canoeing skills with healthy nutritional reinforcement. The Chautauqua Foundation serves as the parent organization to Texas River School.

- **1997** – Texas River School began conducting canoe trips
- **1998** – The first “Discover the Source” Program is implemented
- **1999** – Executive Director, Joe Kendall, acquired land in the Imperial Valley Development on the Colorado River and created the River Camp
- **2004** – Texas River School partners with Texas Rowing Center
- **2008** – First major fundraiser, Paddlefest, is held
- **2009** – The “Down River” program is created
- **2011** – A grant is awarded from LCRA, enabling River Camp improvements.
- **2012** – River Camp becomes an official TPWD river-access point

# TEXAS RIVER SCHOOL

## Joe Kendall

### *Founder, Executive Director, Outfitter*

Joe has been more than instrumental in Texas River School programs – he is the reason for them. Joe began to impact Texas Rivers in 1991 when he founded The Chautauqua Foundation. He created this foundation to protect Texas Rivers and streams and soon after founded Texas River School.

With a passion for experiential learning versus being “taught,” he is the catalyst for the River School’s success – from putting in long hours and days on rivers and in the classroom to providing expertise and gear for a trip, he is involved with every aspect of the organization.



## Texas River School Accomplishments

- Celebrated 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012
- Taken nearly 5,000 children on the river
- Brought Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s “Paddling Trail” to Lady Bird Lake in Austin
- Awarded John Covert Watson “Vision” award from Children in Nature Collaborative
- Highlighted in Margie Crisp’s book “River of Contrast: The Colorado River”

## Partners

Major partnerships include Austin Independent School District (1994), Texas Parks and Wildlife (1998), the Austin YMCA (2009), Save Barton Creek Association (2009), CampFire USA (2009), and the Boys and Girls Club (2009).

## Grants

Major grants Texas River School has received include Lower Colorado River Authority (1992, 1993, 1994, 2009), Texas Parks and Wildlife (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012)

# IN THE NEWS

## **Texas Paddling Trails Offer Great Way To See Nature**

*KEYE TV – We Are Austin*

“TPWD calls it the official Outdoor Activity for July” ... “Joe Kendall, the founder of the Texas River School, finds that the trails are a valuable tool. We have been taking kids on the river for about 15 years and we go to the website and research what to expect on that section of the river we are going on, he says.”



## **Students get their first taste of canoe camping through the Texas River School**

*By Pam LeBlanc – Fit City – June 16, 2012*

“The river school’s camp is situated off of FM 969 in a subdivision initially developed in the 1970s but later abandoned because it was located in the river’s flood plain. The area became an illegal dump site until the Chautauqua Foundation installed a gate and enlisted Travis County officials to help clean it up. Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Lower Colorado River Authority have provided grant money to develop the property and equip the river school with gear. The river school provides the camping program to the Sanchez students for free. Instructors with the Texas River School visited Sanchez four times before the trip, preparing students for the overnight experience. Most of the students participated in a day trip last year, too, paddling down Lady Bird Lake while learning why it’s important to protect natural resources.”

## **Texas River School introduces students to the pleasure of paddling**

*By Pam LeBlanc – Austin American Statesman – April 12, 2010*

“Joe Kendall started the Texas River School in 1992, aiming to share his passion for paddling and the river with the next generation. Since then, more than 4,000 elementary school children have gone through this introductory paddling program, which begins with an hour-long lesson in paddling safety skills on dry land. After today’s trip, a representative will visit the students in their classroom to discuss the experience. ‘We hope to instill a connection with nature, because they’re not getting it,’ says Kendall, now the group’s executive director. ‘There’s a nature deficit.’”



# KEEPING OUR KIDS AND RIVERS HEALTHY



Taken at Barton Springs, these campers enjoyed snorkeling in the natural pool where they “Discovered the Source” of Barton Springs.



Camper snorkeling at Deep Eddy Pool in Austin.



This young camper is the third student in the canoe, therefore he gets to sit in the middle. We like to call this position, “wet butt.”



Robert de Victoria, “Spider,” follows campers up Barton Creek from Lady Bird Lake.



The choir from Eastside Memorial High School participated in an Overnight Canoe Camping Trip.

**“THE BEST PART IS SPENDING  
TIME WITH MY FRIENDS AND  
CAMPING OUT.”  
-MARCO DURAN, 10**

# PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

## Programs

### Discover the Source

The Discover the Source program is a canoeing program for area youth, ages 9 to 18, which emphasizes the importance of the “source” of Barton Springs. This one-day trip includes discussions of the Edward’s Aquifer, Barton Springs pool, Barton Creek, Lady Bird Lake, and more.

### Colorado Downriver Trip

The Colorado Downriver Trip starts at the Montopolis Street Bridge and ends at the Texas River School’s Canoe Camp. This trip emphasizes the importance of a river in a more rural setting.

### Overnight Canoe Camping Trip

The Overnight Canoe Camping Trip is a program for the more experienced students. This trip takes place on the Colorado River, from the Montopolis Street Bridge to the Texas River School’s Canoe Camp. Highlights include four miles of paddling, setting up camp, outdoor meals, campfire sing-a-longs, and more.



## Activities

### Campground & River Access

Texas River School’s River Camp is a wonderful campground and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s river access area. It offers eight campsites and opportunities for day use, fishing, boating, and picnicking. The River Camp is secluded yet has a view of the Austin Downtown skyline.

### Moonlight Bat Float

Guided by the moonlight, this unique and fun water event features live music with Austin musicians. Proceeds from this event help support many programs and activities of Texas River School. The evening begins with check-in on the docks of Texas Rowing Center. After receiving a brief, basic paddling lesson and a few safety tips, you are ready to go kayaking or canoeing. You then push off and paddle down to the Congress Street Bridge where we watch the bats emerge for their night flight.

**“THANK YOU FOR TEACHING ME SO MUCH ABOUT CANOEING. IT WAS THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE!”**

*- 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENT, SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY*



**TEXAS RIVER SCHOOL**  
**The Chautauqua Foundation, Inc.**

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