

Updating and Enhancing the Texas Public Access Inventory: Phase III Final Report

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The first objective of this project was to complete data gathering for sites recorded during Phase II. During Phase II, the data dictionary (list of amenities provided) used to collect features at each site was modified several times to provide more description and detail. Data collected from sites in the early stages of Phase II accordingly had fewer attributes and less information than data collected during the later stages of Phase II. These missing 'data gaps' were therefore the first priority during Phase III. The goal was simply to fill in the missing data through contacts via phone/email or by information provided online (site websites).

The process of filling in missing data gaps first focused on 'Unknown' data fields. This required contacting site managers or employees via phone or email to determine what amenities were provided. Some of the 'Unknown' data fields could be filled simply by cross-referencing website information, such as city, county, and state websites. Several of such websites contained explicit detail on the amenities provided and status of such features, while others were extremely vague. A few of the sites had transferrable data from the old data dictionary used to the updated version we are now working with. During the process of filling data gaps, several sites were identified as private or closed, and recommended for removal. These recommendations can be found under the *Remarks* column within the database. Altogether, filling in the missing 'Unknown' data gaps took approximately 3 weeks and involved nearly all of the approximately 650 sites.

The second objective of this project was to update many of the data fields in the database. The majority of these updates were for 'Observed' and 'Potential' data fields, which were updated to 'Yes' or 'No' after confirming or denying an amenity. This was achieved by again, researching website information and making many contacts via phone and email. Other data fields which required updating include: *Access Type, Boat Ramp Fee, Pier Fee, Camping, Restrooms, Pets, Lifeguard, Entry Fee, Type of Parking, Parking Spaces, Parking Permit, Food, and Equipment*

Rentals. Updates for these data fields were required to correspond to the newest version of the data dictionary, which has more detailed information. Last summer, data entries for camping, restrooms, and food used the old version of the data dictionary, which had 'Yes' or 'No' for the data fields. The updated version of the data dictionary was more specific, providing more detail about each amenity provided. For example, *Camping* was updated to 'Primitive Camping', 'Permanent Facility', 'Primitive & Facility', or 'No'; *Restrooms* was updated to 'Portable Toilet', 'Permanent Facility', 'Facility & Portable', or 'No'; and *Food* was updated to 'Restaurant/Dining', 'Concession', or 'No'.

For the *# of Parking Spaces* data field, Google Maps was used to zoom into the location of the site and physically count each space. This process required estimations for several of the sites which provide off-road or beach parking, as these sites are not marked with spaces. For these unmarked areas, Google Measurement tool was used to estimate the spaces at approximately 10 feet per car. Again, for many sites especially on the beach, these estimations are broad and could vary depending on the condition of the beach at any given time. For *Access Type*, photos and google maps were used to verify 'Trail', 'Dune Walkover', 'Mobi-mat', or 'No'. Further research was conducted to provide rates at sites, such as RV, camping, equipment rental, and various entry rates (per vehicle; senior rates; child rates). This information is provided under the *Remarks* column for sites that provide such amenities. Approximately 3 weeks were spent researching and confirming each of these amenities.

The third objective was to determine which sites needed more field work for new/modified GPS location data, or to capture more photos for enhanced aesthetic value. Some of the location data from Phase II was not accurate with the true location of the access site, due to unknown faults in the GPS device or software. Sites with faulty location data were identified and listed under the spreadsheet 'Travel List' to revisit. There were other sites (approximately 30) which

were not visited during Phase II that needed to be added to the database as well. Most of these sites were identified during the last stage of Phase II, although several were recommended through GLO contacts during review and critique of the database and web application. These additional sites were added to the 'Travel List' spreadsheet to be gathered during field work. Sites that needed additional photos were also added to this spreadsheet, including approximately 140 sites. Almost all the sites that required GPS data also required photos, however most of the sites visited during field work simply needed photos. Once the 'Travel List' spreadsheet was complete, field work began..

Field work started on June 26th in Cameron County, and continued north through the coastal counties until August 5th. In all, 177 sites were visited from 14 coastal counties. As mentioned, most of the field work was collecting photos for the web application, however 42 sites required additional GPS and feature data. Once collected, the photos were uploaded to Dropbox and sorted by TCAPID. The data was also added to Dropbox and sorted by county. Data was then exported to ArcMap as a shapefile, to be added to the final database. The data (shapefile) and photos (compressed folder) were sent to GLO representatives August 12, 2015. Data fine tuning took place in the month of September and last questions on data and data issues were addressed.