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Texas Brigades Seek to Muster New Recruits

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SAN ANGELO – Texas Cooperative Extension's Texas Brigades is seeking to muster new recruits into this year's summer camps.

This year's camps are:

- "South Texas Buckskin Brigade," June 10-14 at La Bandera Ranch near Carrizo Springs.
- "Rolling Plains Bobwhite Brigade," June 16-20 at Krooked River Ranch near Lueders.
- "South Texas Bobwhite Brigade," June 24-28 at 74 Ranch near Pleasanton.
- "North Texas Buckskin Brigade," July 22-26 at Stasney's Cook Ranch near Albany.
- "Feathered Forces Brigade," July 15-19 at Pine Island near Lufkin.

The core curriculum for all the camps stresses leadership development and natural resources conservation, said Dr. Dale Rollins, Extension wildlife specialist at San Angelo, and originator of the camps. He said each camp forges these skills into fun and interesting activities that focus on a particular game species. The game animals form the nucleus for the camps which typically involve 30 youth ages 13 to 17 years old.

"This marks our 15th year and I'm proud to say that the fire still burns brightly among our various volunteers who conduct these camps," Rollins said. "We've been doing these camps long enough now to begin to see the fruits of our labors," he said. "We have young professionals in place who were active in the Brigades ten years or more ago. Some of them are coming 'back home' to dedicate their time and talents to the Brigades. This helps bridge the generation gap between an ever-aging corps of instructors and an ever younger group of cadets."

Rollins said the Texas Brigades has been blessed with substantial support recently from several foundations which has allowed expansion and improvement of the programs. "We're also excited about helping to start a Buckskin Brigade camp in Pennsylvania this summer," Rollins said. "That makes a total of six states that have cloned our Brigades model."

The camps are also sponsored by: the Texas Wildlife Association, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Quail Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Texas Deer Association, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, private businesses, and landowners.

Tuition is \$300 per cadet per camp, but Rollins said cost shouldn't deter applicants. "We don't want financial hardship to stop any potential cadet from participating in these camps," he said. "We have sponsors ready and willing to provide financial aid whenever they are needed."

Applications are available at www.texasbrigades.org and are due by April 1. Mail applications to: Helen Holdsworth, Texas Brigades Executive Director, 2800 NE Loop 410, Suite 105, San Antonio, TX 78218. For further information contact Rollins at 325-653-4576 or e-mail him at d-rollins@tamu.edu or contact Holdsworth, at 800-TEX-WILD or 210-826-2904, or h_holdsworth@texas-wildlife.org .