

# TEXSAR DISPATCH



TEXSAR DISPATCH is dedicated to sharing the mission and passion of TEXSAR, as well as insight into its people.

**August 2025**

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Follow us and stay engaged.

Responding to the July 4th floods was a massive challenge. TEXSAR volunteers showed up and stepped up to support our partners.

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## From the CEO



This is one of those times in life that a choice is to be made: say a little or say a lot.

There is no way to unjumble the range of profound emotions that I have because of the July 4<sup>th</sup> floods, the incredible losses and the inspiring responses by so many. It is all quite humbling while reminding all of us of the uncertainties of life as well as assuring us that when people are in need, others will show up, stand up and step up. There is likely a book's worth of things to say, but I only have this column.

If I can get just one message across here, it is an overwhelming sense of gratitude.

John F. Kennedy said, "We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives." The time that I take here is not sufficient, but it will have to do for now. I am grateful to our members whose courage and commitment never ceases to amaze me, and to their family and friends who support them in ways to make their work possible; I am grateful to the agencies and organizations who entrust TEXSAR with important work in service to our friends, neighbors and strangers; I am grateful for the tremendous outpouring of financial support, thoughts and prayers from people around the world to empower and encourage our work; I am grateful for our small, but mighty, staff that worked tirelessly to assure that our members in the field had whatever they needed to be safe and effective.

As the old expression goes something like this, "If you were there, you don't need an explanation; if you weren't, there is no way to make you understand." I think the same can be said about what it was like to respond to the devastation of the floods. To see the reminders of the human and property loss. To be drained of all energy, but driven to push on. I am proud of our members in the field, those in supporting roles, and of the entire staff.

I wished there was a way to express the level of gratitude that I have for so much and so many. Perhaps there isn't.

- Justin McInnis

# News and Announcements

## Thrivent Matching Your Donation

For every two dollars that you donate to TEXSAR, Thrivent will match one dollar when you use the special donation page that they have set up for TEXSAR. This opportunity goes through September 7<sup>th</sup>. To make a donation to be matched, click [here](#). You do not need to be one of their clients to take advantage of this. Thank you, Thrivent!

## In the news...

KHOU-11 in Houston featured TEXSAR, including an interview with TEXSAR's Director of Missing Persons Unit, Patrick Turck. You can read the article and watch the video [here](#). It ran on many CBS-affiliated channels.

Jonathan McComb is well known to the TEXSAR family and his story of loss, survival and faith from the 2015 Wimberley Floods was on the minds of many. He shares his perspective in light of July 4th floods in a recent [interview](#) on Fox.

ABC's interview of Andrew Tull was shared across the network and on their X channel. You can watch the interview [here](#).

MySA covered TEXSAR early in the response, providing readers an early perspective into the mission that TEXSAR volunteers faced. You can find the article [here](#).

Images that include TEXSAR members appeared in a wide variety of media, including an image that appeared with Associated Press. That image went viral.

## From the heart...

Messages from many donors provided encouragement and support to our dedicated volunteers. TEXSAR received hundreds of such messages. Also, more than 500 people donated to TEXSAR in memory or honor of someone special in their lives. We are humbled by such kindness and generosity.

*"First and foremost, thank you for your team's ongoing efforts to help communities impacted by Central Texas flooding. ...our entire team has been inspired by your commitment and dedication."*

*"Innumerable warm wishes, prayers, blessings, gifts in honor of others, gratitude"*

*"You are my top priority this week. You are our lead nonprofit for this emergency."*

*"Thanks to you and your volunteers for all you are doing. We are proud to support your work."*

*"We're reaching out with deep appreciation for your organization's unwavering commitment and frontline efforts in response to the catastrophic flooding in Texas."*

*"Our foundation is honored to be part of such critical work during this devastating time. With gratitude for your, your team and dedicated volunteers."*

*"So many of us wish we could be there to help, too."*

## Mission Matters

TEXSAR served on a variety of missions in June and July, but what caught everyone's attention was the response to the Guadalupe River floods in Kerr County and surrounding areas. The commitment of TEXSAR volunteers was swift, sustained and significant.



In February, TEXSAR leaders projected the number of missions for 2025. The expectation for 2024 was 100, but the final count was 126; therefore, the goal set for 2025 was 125. As of the end of July, TEXSAR has had 170 missions for 2025.

Visibility tends to attract new members. The July floods attracted a lot of attention to TEXSAR with 1,400 people applying for membership. All prospective members are background checked and moved into the training system. After completing the basics — first aid, CPR, AED and Wilderness Search and Rescue — they can be deployed in search-and-rescue missions.

TEXSAR's membership has been growing and recent events have increased the pace of growth and the breadth of capabilities. Add to this, many new assets acquired during the flood response, and TEXSAR continues its growth as a resource to its partners across Texas.

Never before has TEXSAR had as many members as now, nor as many who are deployable: Texans serving Texans with service above self.

## Development Corner

The level of support that TEXSAR received is staggering. Transformative. TEXSAR will never be the same, growing in capacity and capabilities because of the responses by so many who donated funds, in-kind equipment and resources, and those who applied to become members. There is a word for all this: philanthropy.

The root components of the word mean “love of” and “humankind.” It was philanthropy that led so many people to rally for the devastated community by participating in searches, donating and distributing a multitude of necessities and services, raising funds for the people affected and the organizations that responded, and offering up their thoughts and prayers for all involved.

Philanthropy: Love of human kind. Amidst the pain and sorrow of the Guadalupe River floods came the affirming reminder of the pervasiveness of genuine philanthropy.

## Member Milestones

Thank you TEXSAR volunteers for your incredible commitment.

### TEXSAR MISSION MILESTONES

**300+ MISSIONS**  
JOE H.

**150+ MISSIONS**  
AMY S.  
SHAWN H.

**100+ MISSIONS**  
AUGIE G.  
DIANE M.  
ELLEN H.  
JOSH N.  
MIKI S.  
RUSSELL W.  
MEG H.

**75+ MISSIONS**  
ANDREW T.  
BECKY P.

**50+ MISSIONS**  
CRAIG T.  
MICHELLE O.  
RALPH M.  
ANDREW R.  
JASON K.  
MATT W.  
CHRIS H.  
GEORGE G.  
CARYNE E.

**25+ MISSIONS**  
CHRIS V.  
TOM L.  
ABE S.  
JACOB S.  
JULIE S.  
STEVE S.  
DORIS C.  
HOLLY J.  
TAMMY R.  
BRANDON H.  
CARL P.



## Spotlight on Supporters

Several years ago, a customer came into [Whitestone Fine Jewelry](#) in Cedar Park, TX in need of some repair services. Who knew that the simple contact would lead to a long-standing relationship between the business and TEXSAR?

Haley and George Poe, owners of the popular store, shared that from that first contact came a request from TEXSAR for support and the first engagement – attending Search Party. “Kristina, one of our managers, attended Search Party a few years ago. She was in tears afterward. ‘These are amazing people,’ she told us. She was right,” Haley said.



The couple enjoy supporting and attending TEXSAR's premier fund-raising event, Search Party. “We love the stories of how TEXSAR volunteers serve people, how they help people. It is inspiring. We are excited that our support helps cover expenses since TEXSAR's services are free. We are all in for TEXSAR,” Haley said.



The Whitestone Fine Jewelry team dressed like George for a surprise party on his birthday.

It makes sense that Haley and George would have a special appreciation for TEXSAR's people and mission. It shows in the premise of why George is a jeweler. “There is something about jewelry,” he explained. “People don't need jewelry. They come to us to get something that commemorates something special in their lives, and they want things that will become family artifacts. They want us to create things that are happy. To do that, we need to have empathy for others and their lives. Listening to their stories is a big part of the process,” George said as Haley nodded and smiled in agreement. She added, “Again, the TEXSAR stories and the empathy that its volunteers have for the lives of others are incredible.

We have the blessing of serving others with something they don't **need**, but is important, whereas TEXSAR serves others in times of great need.”

“And Search Party is a perfect way for us to support TEXSAR,” George added. “We love the event and it provides the perfect way for us to get behind the great work of TEXSAR.”

The couple have created a special culture and feel at the store. “We have 24 team members, including another married couple,” Haley said. George added that they have a warm, “un-stuffy” environment that provides a unique experience when it comes to finding fine jewelry. They strive to create and celebrate connections, whether it is a social event held at the store or through their generosity to nonprofits.



“We believe in helping others, like TEXSAR does. It all comes from love. You have to be there for people who need you, whatever that need is,” George said.

Find more information about the September 20, 2025 Search Party [here](#).

# Safety in an Unpredictable World: *Is hiking in your future?*

By Meg Hinkley, TEXSAR Member and North Texas  
Division Leader



Do your love-of-outdoors plans still include exploring the Great Outdoors by foot? Perhaps you are visiting a national park, a state park, or other natural area to get out into nature. Regardless of where your hiking plans take you, you want to make sure you are prepared to handle physical activity in the heat.

Since March 2025, TEXSAR members have been deploying to Guadalupe Mountains National Park in West Texas to assist Park Ranger Ray Drutis with Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) and to be available to assist visitors who may be suffering from a heat-related illness, orthopedic breaks or strains, and other health-related issues which are made worse for those not acclimated to the high temperatures.

PSAR involves educating park visitors on what they will need in order to navigate the trails safely and not end up needing to be rescued. The highest number of hikers needing assistance or a rescue have been suffering from heat exhaustion, or have progressed to heat stroke, a condition which can quickly turn deadly.

The following PSAR advice given to park visitors by the national park employees and TEXSAR will help you be better prepared for your hiking adventures.

## **Hydration**

Physical activity in the heat can quickly lead to dehydration and to heat-related illnesses. If you are heading out on a full day's hike, plan on taking at least one gallon of water per person; however, water alone is not enough to address dehydration. Be sure to include some electrolytes (Gatorade, Liquid IV, etc) that may be added to bottles of water to replace the salts and other minerals you will lose while sweating. Begin hydrating 48 hours before your time outdoors and drink water before you feel thirsty. Avoid high caffeine beverages while on the trail.

## **Nutrition**

Pack lots of easy to digest food for the trail. Salty/sweet snacks like trail mix are great for hiking. It is also recommended that you bring an extra day's worth of food in case you are out longer than anticipated.

## **Protective clothing/sunscreen**

Sunburn can turn a fun hike into misery quickly, and will accelerate dehydration and heat related illnesses. Apply sunscreen before hitting the trail and reapply often. Consider lightweight, long-sleeve shirts or pants to protect you from sunburn if you burn easily. A wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses are highly recommended. Find out about the weather forecast at different elevations where you may be hiking and know that the temperature at a high peak may vary by 30 or more degrees than where you started the hike. The extra layer you pack will be well worth it if needed.

In addition, consider starting your hikes before sunrise



so you are not on the trail during the hottest part of the day. Most parks encourage visitors to avoid the hours of 10 AM to 4 PM during the summer months.

### **Proper Footwear**

Hiking boots or other trail shoes are important to protect you on uneven and rocky surfaces as well

as providing ankle support. The socks you wear are just as important as the boots. Most good hiking socks will be made from merino wool, which is beneficial when hiking in the summer. It is a much more breathable material than synthetics or cotton, which limits the sweating of your feet. Make sure to break in your hiking boots before you hit the trail. A blister can derail an entire trip.

### **Hiking Poles**

Hiking or trekking poles have become quite popular in recent years and it is easy to see why. Proper use of poles can provide additional points of stability while hiking in uneven terrain and are especially helpful when coming downhill if you have bad knees. Poles can also help you if you sprain an ankle or knee and can be the difference between you walking out on your own or needing to be carried.

### **Personal First Aid Kit/Medications**

In addition to any personal medications you may need, pack a basic first aid kit with blister pads, adhesive bandages, antibiotic ointment and an over-the-counter pain reliever such as Ibuprofen.

### **Navigation Tools**

Beneficial navigation tools might include a map and compass, or for overnight trips, or those in the backcountry, a GPS device such as a Garmin inReach



Explorer®, which can be used to notify someone in case of an emergency. If you are going to be in a national park, download the free NPS app for the park you are visiting so you can see where you are even if there is no cell service. All Trails is another great app to provide guidance on the trails but there is a yearly subscription fee if

you want to download maps for out-of-service areas.

### **Illumination**

Always carry a headlamp and/or flashlight with extra batteries in case you are out longer than anticipated.

### **Personal Repair Kit**

A multipurpose tool and mini roll of duct tape can fix a multitude of issues without adding too much extra weight.

### **Personal Toiletries**

Bring a small plastic bag and some toilet paper to handle the call of Mother Nature. Do not leave any human waste or trash associated with it on the trail -- pack it out with you.

Most importantly, if you start to feel nauseated, dizzy, or faint, rest in the shade and head back to the trailhead when you feel able. Many hikers get into trouble pushing on when they are not feeling well. The mountain will still be there for you to hike another day!

For an easy reference to the main three heat illnesses, check this [site](#).

A friend of TEXSAR shared this piece from the Wall Street Journal. We share it in tribute to all the people from various organizations and agencies who search, and search some more.

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## A Song for the Texas Rescuers

By Bob Greene

There are some 1,400 miles between the flooded Texas Hill Country and Washington's National Mall. Over the holiday weekend the exhausted rescue crews in Texas, desperately searching for people they might save in the furious waters, couldn't have known about the woman in the capital who was performing a song in tribute to men and women very much like them.

Her name was Lauren Daigle. Her performance was scheduled months in advance; the timing, at this terrible moment, was unplanned. As all those children in Texas remained unaccounted for, she sang: "I hear you whisper underneath your breath / I hear your SOS, your SOS . . ."

In Texas the searchers understood, as first responders understand every day in every corner of this country, that

they were all that the children and their families had to depend on. So many futures rested on whether the searchers could get there on time, or whether it was already too late.

If they succeeded, a child might begin fourth grade in the fall. If they succeeded, an

**'I will rescue you,'  
Lauren Daigle sang  
1,400 miles away  
from Camp Mystic.**

empty chair at a family's dinner table might soon not be empty at all.

The searchers could have had no idea that at that moment, the singer on the National Mall was well into her song, which was called "Rescue": "I will send out an army to find you / In the middle of

the darkest night . . ."

At times like these, the utter foolishness of the things we allow to divide us are swept aside. To the children who may or may not still have been alive, who may or may not still have been lost and waiting in the dark, and to their families waiting at home, nothing about the searchers mattered except their fortitude, and their guts, and the love in their hearts to keep going.

At such times, the buildings where the searchers might worship, the pigmentation of their skin, where they were born, who they might have voted for in some election, all become meaningless. All that counts is that they are the living embodiment of that one elusive, precious thing: hope.

"I will never stop marching to reach you / In the middle of the hardest fight . . ."

It might as well be the official motto of first respond-

ers across the U.S. The sheriff's deputy who operates a heat-seeking drone over a dense forest where a toddler has wandered and can't be found; the mountain ranger who, with time running out, works to locate a Boy Scout who has set off on a remote trail and has not been heard from for days; the highway patrol officers who have the description and license plate of an auto that has been carjacked with an infant inside—suddenly their devotion means everything.

And the rest of us almost never know their names. In Texas, the searchers searched on.

"I will rescue you / Oh, I will rescue you . . ."

They had to believe it. No matter what, they had to make themselves believe it.

*Mr. Greene's books include "Once Upon a Town: The Miracle of the North Platte Canteen."*



**If a picture is worth a thousand words, images from the July 4th flood response comprise a library.**





## Gallery of the Month



**“The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others.”**

**— Albert Schweitzer**









## Important Links: Stay in Touch!

[Become a Member](#)

[Donate today!](#)

[Service Above Self Monthly Donor program](#)

Social Media: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#)

[20 Years, 20 stories: TEXSAR's 20th Anniversary Celebrated Through Stories of Its Members](#)

["TEXSAR Never Stops" video](#)

**[www.TEXSAR.org](http://www.TEXSAR.org)**

**The party of the year! We're expecting a full house, so purchase early!**

**SAVE THE DATE**

*10<sup>th</sup> Annual Search Party*

**09.20.25**

**THE RENAISSANCE HOTEL - AUSTIN, TX**

[www.texasar.org/searchparty](http://www.texasar.org/searchparty)

