

Outstanding Volunteer Award presented

Article by Robin Gelston, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

The Texans for State Parks (TFSP) was incorporated in November 1997 and was the first statewide not for profit organization formed to work exclusively in support of preservation and enhancement of State Parks, State Historical Sites, State Nature Areas of Texas. TFSP developed an award program to positively recognize persons for their exemplary service to our state parks. The service groups are for the outstanding park supervisor, staff, volunteer and partner group. For 2022, Region 2 Outstanding Volunteers winners were our very own Alicia Cavazos and Susan Upton.

Kelly Ann Malkowski, Resaca de la Palma State Park Supervisor and Lauren Acevedo, Resaca de La Palma State Park staff, nominated Alicia and Susan for their volunteers service. The staff indicated that Alicia and Susan are always in a good mood, very knowledgeable about birds, flora and fauna of the state park, and are outstanding spokespersons for the park even when the park does not have water or there are not many birds around the day they are volunteering. Alicia and Susan have served as the Wednesday morning tram guides at Resaca de la Palma for over a year and are always available to help with school groups or other special events, such as night walks. So, let me tell you a little bit about both of them!



Alicia & Susan operating the tram—photo by Margarita Guevara

Alicia, is an avid birder from San Benito, she joined Texas Master Naturalist as part of the 2012 class, she also received her 100 hours milestone in 2012. In 2013 she received her 250- and 500-hour milestone pins. In 2014 she became President and earned her 1000-hour milestone pin. She continued as President in 2015 and served from 2015 to 2016 on the Education Committee. She earned her 2500-hour milestone pin in 2017, was a member of the New Class Committee in 2018 to 2019, was Historian and earned her 4000-hour milestone pin in 2019. In 2020 she earned her 5000-hour milestone pin and was AT/VMS Director. Alicia also won the 2022 Outdoor & Wildlife Preservation Award at this year's Winter Outdoor Wildlife Expo (WOWE).

Susan is an avid birder from Los Fresnos and joined Texas Master Naturalist as part of the 2021 class, she was her New Class Representative and earned her 100-, 250- and 500 hours milestone pins in 2021. In 2022 she earned her 1000-hour milestone. Both are members of the Arroyo Colorado Audubon Society and help with their Annual RGV Birding Festival. They are great friends and I personally have learned a lot from them.

We are very proud of you both. Congratulations on the Region 2 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year award - it was well deserved!



Rodney Franklin, Texas State Parks Division Director presented the 2022 Region 2 Outstanding Volunteers Award to Alicia Cavazos and Susan Upton – photo by Amy Rangel

Kevin Good, President of Friends of State Parks, was on hand to congratulate Alicia and Susan -photo by Amy Rangel



Congratulations, Susan and Alicia!! – photo by Amy Rangel