

**THE STAR DAY FOUNDATION
FIRST PIONEERS AND LEADERS
OF THE STATE OF TEXAS
HALL OF HONOR**



C. L. HAWKINS

Chester Losey Hawkins was born August 19, 1966 to W.E. and Shirley Hawkins in Plainview, Texas. He is the third of four children with two sisters and one brother. C.L. grew up in Quitaque, Texas and graduated from Valley High School.

After graduating from high school, he began farming and ranching on the family farm. C.L. learned early on how to take care of livestock from his Dad and his ranching background. Later, he began working at Caprock Canyons State Park with the force account on July 1, 1993 reconstructing the bridges along the Caprock Canyons Trailway as a park ranger. After working out at the park for a few years, he acquired another title, the bison herdsman in 1998.

C.L. was on the "capture team" during the relocation of the Goodnight Herd off of the JA Ranch in 1997. Soon, this herd would come to be known as the Texas State Bison Herd, the official bison herd of the state of Texas. C.L. was transferred to the Wildlife Division of Texas Parks and Wildlife in order to stay with the herd as their caretaker in all the components needed to ensure their protection and preservation. In 2011, the Texas State Bison Herd was transferred over to be managed by the Parks division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and C.L. followed with them now titled as a Park Ranger V.

Today, C.L. carefully watches over the herd and continues to maintain his oath of protection for these animals. The bison know him as their overseer and will follow his pickup if they hear the tink of the hopper, signaling a meal of cattle cake. C.L. diligently watches the herd for any signs of distress

among them and oversees their annual well check.

As part of the Caprock Canyons State Park staff, C.L. works with many different organizations and experts in managing other aspects of the park as they relate to the bison herd as well. The current project being undertaken by park staff is the Caprock Canyons Restoration Project. The first phase of the project was to bring the bison herd back into their native habitat on the prairies of Caprock Canyons State Park and C.L. played a major role in their return to the prairie areas of the park. C.L. ensures that fencing for the bison herd is well maintained and his input on the availability of forage for the bison is always acknowledged.

C.L. wears many hats in Caprock Canyons State Park. He not only maintains the fencing for the bison herd, but also the facilities, signs, and equipment in the park. He also helps in the restorations efforts by keeping a handle on the invasive species that encroach on the prairie ecosystem within the park. C.L. knows many of the wildlife and plant species that live in Caprock Canyons State Park and is frequently the ranger asked if there is a question on wildlife or plant species identity.

C.L. hopes that his 20 + years of service with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has instilled an appreciation for the Texas State Bison Herd and Caprock Canyons State Park in Texas children so that they can go forth to continue to preserve the cultural and natural resources of Texas.

NOTE: The photograph was contributed by Caprock Canyons State Park Interpretive Ranger Le'Ann Pigg who also serves as the Advisor of The Texas Bison Student Study Group (The Group) sponsored by The STAR DAY Foundation. The Group was initially organized by The STAR DAY Foundation on September 12, 2010. The Group is composed of Texas teachers, librarians, students (5th-9th grade), community volunteers including parents and advisors. The Group has pioneered and led various student study group research initiatives including "The Founding and Founders of Caprock Canyons State Park Project", various Texas legislative initiatives to enhance the story of Texas for the people of Texas and has proposed the establishment of "The Official State Bison Herd of Texas Fund" as an "Endowment Fund" whose annual interest would support conservation, preservation and restoration initiatives at the park. The Group nominated C. L. Hawkings to be inducted into The First Pioneers and Leaders of the State (PALS) of Texas Hall of Honor as the "First Bison Herdsman" of Caprock Canyons State Park which is just a few miles north of the Briscoe County City of Quitaque, now known by state law as "The Official State Bison Capital of Texas" as proposed by The Group.

THE STAR DAY FOUNDATION

<http://www.thestardayfoundation.org>