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(Please email or call for photos, videos, advance interviews, etc.)

February 2019

**For Immediate Release (Calendar listing at end of release):**

**Sundown Social to feature Texas music legends Kelly Willis & Bruce Robison**

***Texas-Sized Event honors Jim Ellison and Benefits Washington on the Brazos***

The [Washington on the Brazos State Park Association](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/about/park-association/) will celebrate 183 years of Texas—where roots run deep—at its annual Sundown Social at 6 p.m., Saturday, April 27, 2019, at [Rockin’ Star Ranch](https://www.rockinstarbrenham.com/), Brenham, Texas.

The event includes a gourmet steak dinner by a team of chuck wagon cookers led by Jimmy Detro, cocktails, Kelly Willis & Bruce Robison concert and auctions filled with Texian treasures, all proceeds from this Texas-size party will benefit the Washington on the Brazos State Park Association and its educational programming and enhancement of the 293-acre park encompassing [Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/).

Featured entertainment will be Kelly Willis & Bruce Robison, the married singer-songwriter duo out of Austin. Bruce is a sought-after songwriter who has written three No. 1 Billboard Country hits, and Ms. Willis has recorded a half-dozen albums, establishing herself as a key player in the Americana music movement, according to the New York Times who refers them as “Texas Country’s First Couple.” Their joint albums

“Cheater’s Game” and “Our Year” achieved high acclaim.

Chaired by Joel and Denise Romo, the 2019 theme will be “When Roots Run Deep” in honor of Jim Ellison and his vast contribution to Washington on the Brazos. Jim is a past President of the Park Association and a longtime advisory Board member. Jim was the owner of Ellison’s Greenhouses which operated in Washington County for 27 years and has been involved with A&M University in a variety of capacities including the TAMU College of Ag. Development Council and the TAMU Research Foundation Council. In 2013, he received “Man of the Year” from the Washington County Chamber of Commerce. In 2010, he brought Ellison Greenhouses, Texas A&M Horticulture Dept., USDA, Texas A&M Forest Service, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative together on a project to preserve the history of the La Bahia Pecan Tree, verified to be at least 203 years old and a witness to the historic events that took place at Washington on the Brazos. Nuts were harvested from the tree and used to grow seedlings that have since continued to be sold to raise money for the Washington on the Brazos State Park Association.

“The Park Association is launching a renewal project in 2019 to greatly improve the experience for visitors with enhanced visuals, landscaping and signage that this venerable landmark deserves,” says Park Association President Cyndee Smith. “It is important for people to know that every dollar raised at the Sundown Social directly benefits Washington on the Brazos and that the money stays here: ‘Where Texas Became Texas.’” Washington on the Brazos is where 59 delegates bravely met in 1836 to formally declare independence from Mexico.

Tickets are limited; the event has sold out the last two years. Contact Ginger Moreland, Park Association Administrator, at 979-830-1824 or [office@wheretexasbecametexas.org](mailto:office@wheretexasbecametexas.org) for tickets and sponsorship information. Deadline to RSVP is Friday, April 19, 2019. Overnight accommodations are available at the Sundown Social venue: [Rockin’ Star Ranch](https://rockinstarbrenham.com/).

Dedicated to supporting the site’s preservation projects, celebrations and educational opportunities, the Park Association has played an integral part in the creation, expansion or reconstruction of the Star of the Republic Museum. the Visitor Center and its displays, Independence Hall, and Barrington Living History Farm, home of Dr. Anson Jones. The Park Association funds the genealogical research which traces the lineage of the 59 signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence, and continually supports the Descendants of the Signers by assisting with planning, organization and outreach of this integral group. Additionally, the volunteer organization has purchased a mobile phone app; a new website for the complex; playground equipment; animals for the farm; bluebonnet and other wildflower seeds; and an important collection of historical papers and documents for the museum. Chartered in 1955, the Washington on the Brazos State Park Association is the oldest non-profit 501(c)(3) support group for the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. (TPWD).

[Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org) is found on the Brazos River at the original townsite of Washington, Texas, a major political and commercial center in early Texas. It is located at 23400 Park Road 12, Washington, TX, 77880—approximately halfway between Brenham and Navasota, off of State Hwy. 105. From Hwy. 105, follow either FM 912 or FM 1155 to Park Road 12. For additional information about this historic site, the Park Association or The Sundown Social, call 979-830-1824 or visit the site’s website at [www.wheretexasbecametexas.org](http://www.wheretexasbecametexas.org) and <https://www.facebook.com/washingtononthebrazos/>.

**CALENDAR LISTING:**

The [Washington on the Brazos State Park Association](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/about/park-association/) will celebrate 183 years of Texas—where the stars are big and bright—at its annual Sundown Social at 6 p.m., Saturday, April 27, 2019, at [Rockin’ Star Ranch](https://rockinstarbrenham.com/), Brenham, Texas. This fundraiser, honoring Jim Ellison, features gourmet steak dinner by a team of chuck wagon cookers led by Jimmy Detro, cocktails, entertainment by Kelly Willis & Bruce Robison, and auctions filled with Texian treasures. Tickets are limited; contact Ginger Moreland at 979-830-1824 or [office@wheretexasbecametexas.org](mailto:office@wheretexasbecametexas.org) for tickets. Deadline to RSVP is April 19, 2019. All proceeds will benefit the Washington on the Brazos Park Association and its educational programming and expansion of the 293-acre [Washington on the Brazos State Historic Site](http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/).