

## TEXAS LIONS CAMP



Photo courtesy Texas Lions Camp official website

Located on land once owned by Kerrville founder Joshua Brown, this has been the site of rehabilitative facilities since the 1920s, when the American Legion established a sanatorium here, followed by a United States Veterans Administration hospital in 1925. In 1948, as a nationwide polio epidemic raged, local Lion Jack Roe, working with the Kerrville Lions Club, promoted the concept of a special camp for children afflicted with the disease. A social worker with the Texas Department of Public Welfare, Roe had seen handicapped children turned away from other summer camps, and in response he made it his mission to create a place where they could experience the joys of nature at a camp designed for their unique needs. Roe and the local Lions Club members worked with other clubs around Texas to promote establishment of the camp, and in 1949 they received endorsement from the Lions International Convention. A statewide fundraising effort and the assistance of then-U.S. Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson led to the purchase of 504 acres of land at this site from the federal government in 1950. The camp officially opened on June 8, 1953, with 40 campers who participated in the formal dedication celebration on July 3, 1953. The camp also provided training facilities for clients of the Texas Commission for the Blind from 1958 to 1984, and since 1971 has included special programs for children with diabetes. It celebrated a milestone in 2003, marking service to a total of 50,000 children since its opening. The Texas Lions Camp has served as a place of education and respite for children with special needs for more than half a century. Its programs, still supported by Lions clubs throughout the state, reflect the Lions motto "We Serve" by providing campers with education, entertainment and memories to last their lifetimes. (2005)

Location: 4100 San Antonio Hwy (TX 27) east of Kerrville

GPS Coordinates: 30°00.379N & 99°06.383W

UTM Easting: 489704 / UTM Northing: 3319467