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# PASSPORT

# Journal

Vol. 11, No. 2 • April – June 2002

## Fish Texas

Lose yourself on a lake this spring enjoying the purely relaxing, and some say mindless, pastime of chunking lures out for largemouth bass. The bite for bass is best in April and May when you can fish all day because the sun still isn't too tough on you or on the water temperature.

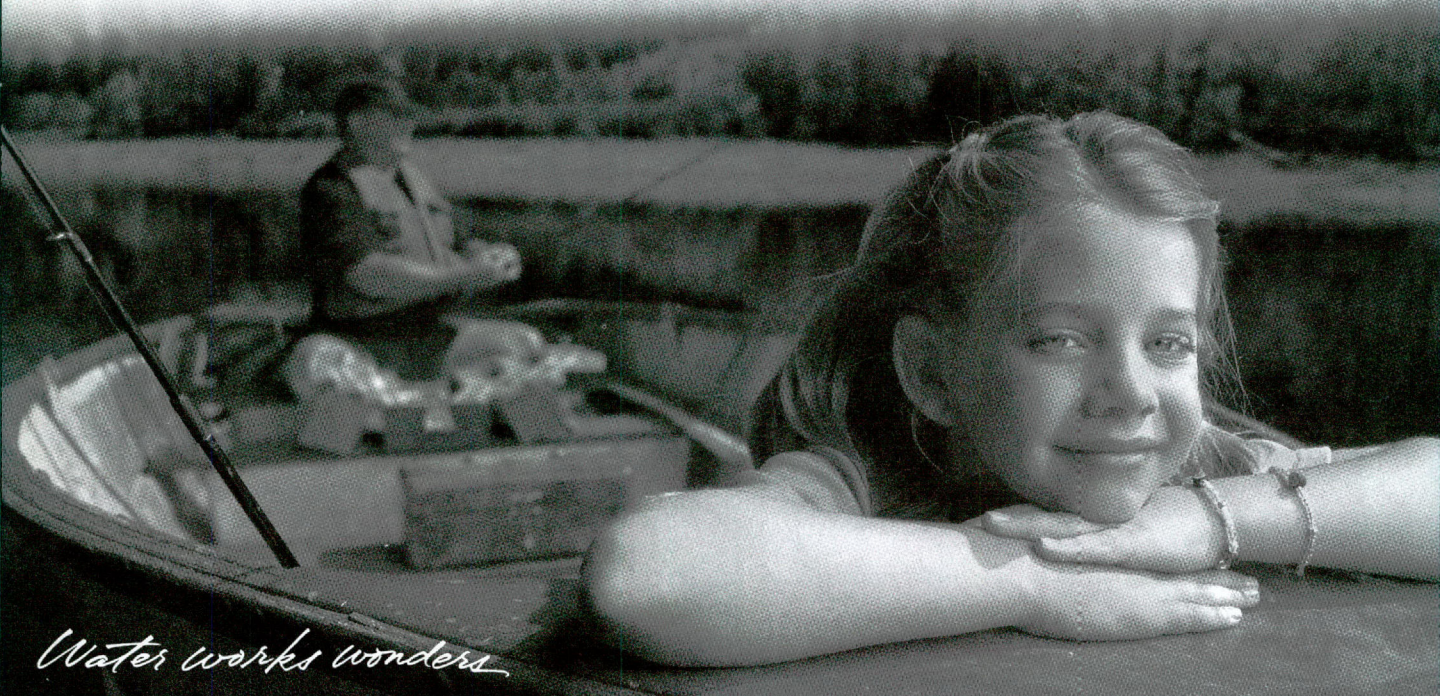
Other than Caddo Lake, Texas lakes are all man-made. Flooded timber and submerged aquatic plants (commonly called "grass") provide good habitat for largemouth bass – they will hang around where they have access to cover and can feed on smaller fish. These fish eat everything – small fish, snakes, frogs, crayfish and plastic lures! Some of the best lures are soft plastic worms, Texas or Carolina rigged, as well as flukes – an oblong piece of plastic. When it's on the end of your line, just under the surface, it resembles (according to fishing lore) a wounded minnow.

Where to go? Not far, with all of our lakes, Texas actually has more surface acres of water than Minnesota. Many of the state parks on lakes provide fishing piers and jetties but they all have boat ramps.

See page 13 for Free Fishing Day events.



*Free Fishing Day gives everyone an opportunity to dip a pole in the lake to see what happens without buying a fishing license first...because fishing licenses are not required for sport fishing in public waters on Free Fishing Day – June 1.*



*Water works wonders*



TEXAS  
CONSERVATION  
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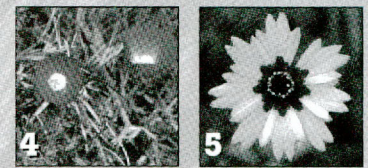
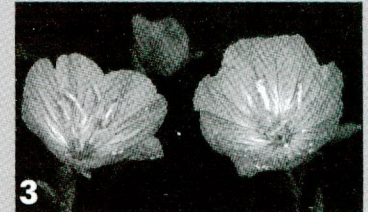
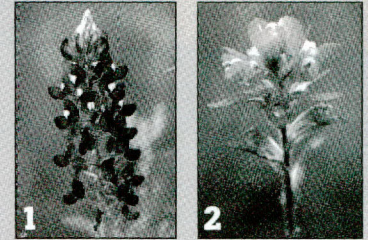
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# Scenic Road Trip

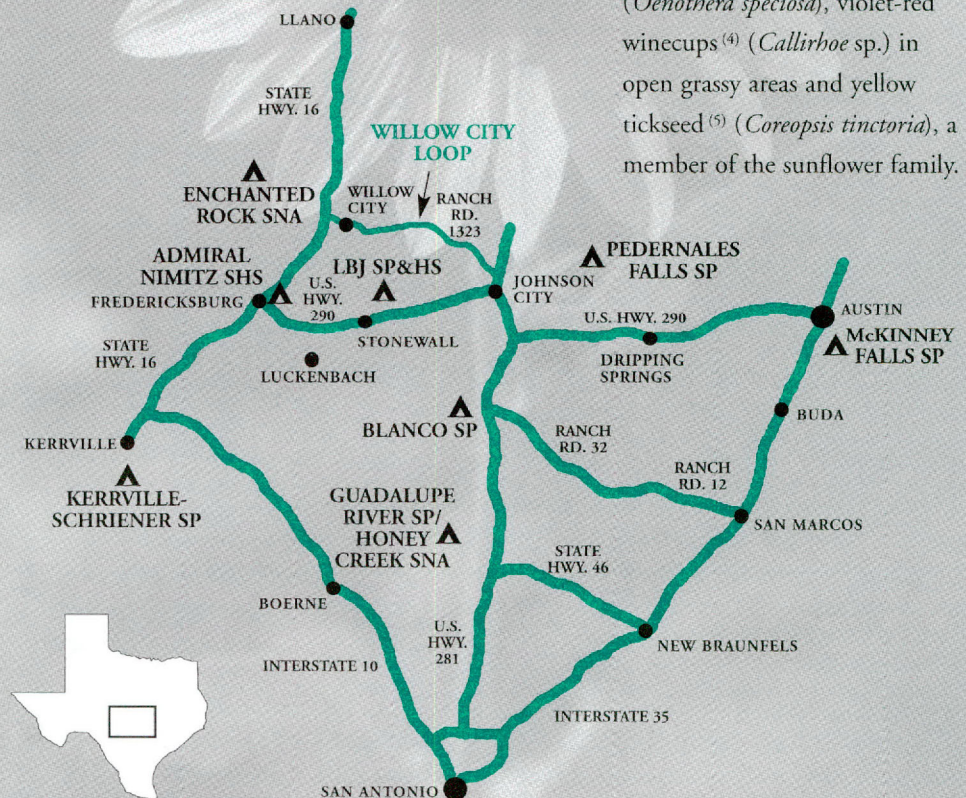
## The Willow City Loop

A Hill Country drive on E.M. 1323 northeast of Fredericksburg

Each spring, the wildflowers drupe our hills and meadows with amazing colors so all our country drives turn into scenic excursions. The Willow City Loop is a glorious 14-mile drive on back roads in an undeveloped Hill Country setting. It passes through fields of bluebonnets during April, and although the property along the drive is in private ownership, there are several state parks in the area – perfect places to stop for picnics.



While bluebonnets<sup>(1)</sup> seem to get all the attention, they are just one of blooms we love. Others are red Indian paintbrush<sup>(2)</sup> (*Castilleja indivisa*) in the Llano country, pink evening primrose<sup>(3)</sup> (*Oenothera speciosa*), violet-red winecups<sup>(4)</sup> (*Callirhoe* sp.) in open grassy areas and yellow tickseed<sup>(5)</sup> (*Coreopsis tinctoria*), a member of the sunflower family.





# Traveler's Tales

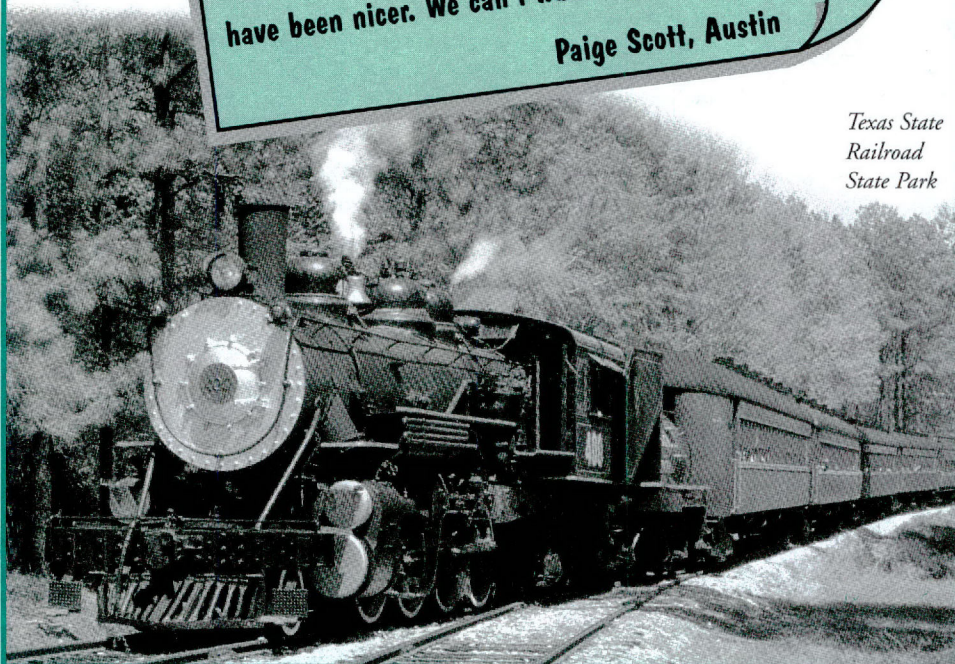
*letters from tcp members*

Dear Editor,

Thanks to the Texas State Railroad for a memorable trip into the past! It was fun to sit back and think about the fact that trains used to be the way everyone traveled from place to place in Texas. The steam train was wonderful, the East Texas scenery was beautiful, and the people on both ends of the line – in Rusk and Palestine – as well as those aboard the train couldn't have been nicer. We can't wait to go back.

Paige Scott, Austin

*Texas State Railroad State Park*



## TELL YOUR TRAVEL TALES!

The *Passport Journal* welcomes news of fun stops, food stops and pit stops you have discovered in your Texas Travels. Are you traveling on the technology frontier? Share your travel tips and tricks with other TCP members right here in Traveler's Tales. Include your name, address and where you purchased your TCP. Write: *Texas Conservation Passport Journal*, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744; FAX: 512-389-8029; E-mail: [passport@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:passport@tpwd.state.tx.us)

## SEASONAL TRIPS

### April

Camp under the stately cedar elms at **Stephen F. Austin SP** (979) 885-3613. Kick back and fish in the Brazos River, hike through the cottonwood bottoms where you are likely to spot deer and squirrels during the day. You can even get in a round of golf while you're there. Go on-line for golf course information: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/activities/golf/>

### May

Celebrate *Cinco de Mayo* May 4-5 at **Goliad SP** (361) 645-3405. The park preserves the birthplace of General Ignacio Zaragoza whose May 5, 1862, victory over the French secured Mexican independence. Now, Goliad has been designated as the site of the official Texas festivity. But May also brings wildflowers and birds to the park's campgrounds on the San Antonio River. Hike the self-guided nature trail and visit the museum at the old mission.

### June

Camp under a full moon **Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway** (806) 455-1492. Set up on the loop above the canyon or go down to the canyon sites far away from artificial lights. Full moons for this quarter are April 27, May 26 and June 24. Hike, ride horseback, go mountain biking, see bison and maybe even a golden eagle.

**Park reservations, page 15**



## DAY TRIPS

### Big Spring SP Events

(915) 263-4931

- Discover century-old rock carvings on Scenic Mountain during a guided nature walk. Learn about local flora and fauna and then watch the sunset from atop the Big Spring bluff. June 1, 8, 15, 22 from 8 to 9 p.m.; fees free to TCP members, \$2 for non-members, \$1 for senior citizens, and free for children 12 and under.
- Spend a June night on Scenic Mountain stargazing. Call for the date and more information.
- Chase up Scenic Mountain in the 5th Annual "Master The Mountain Fun Run and Walk." Go your own distance either 5k or 10k and choose your sport: running or walking – it's just for the challenge of taking on the steep terrain along the edge of a 200-foot bluff! April 20 from 9 to 10:40 a.m.

### Texas State Railroad SP Events

Call for fees, reservation and event details: (800) 442-8951 or (903) 683-2561 outside Texas.

- Listen to the long lonesome cry of an old steam engine as you look out the window of this massive steam train and see the glorious flowering in the Pineywoods: dogwood, redbud, jasmine and plum. Dogwood Excursions, April 5 to 7 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Go to war on the train with the soldier boys. WWII military history reenactors and a free Swing Band Concert conjure up Texas in the 1940s. May 11.
- Cuddled with your sweetheart to the rhythmic sounds of the ol' steam engine. Sunset fades, stars begin to glitter through the forest canopy and your thoughts drifts to a slower, romantic age. Starlight Run, May 25.

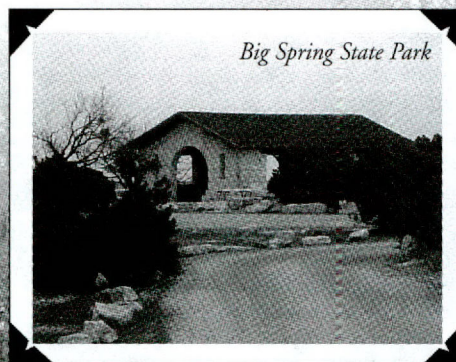


# Picnic Places

*take a day trip to the country*

## Big Spring State Park

You can bet that a permanent natural spring on the northern edge of the Edwards Plateau has attracted people through the ages. Comanches made camp here, cattle drovers and immigrants moving west carved graffiti into the stone. Today, a three-mile drive follows the ledge of limestone rimrock around the 200-foot bluff called Scenic Mountain. Picnickers will find rustic picnic tables offering dramatic views of the Southern High Plains as well as a group pavilion for up to 50 people. A handicapped accessible trail on the top is great for sunset views.



*Big Spring State Park*

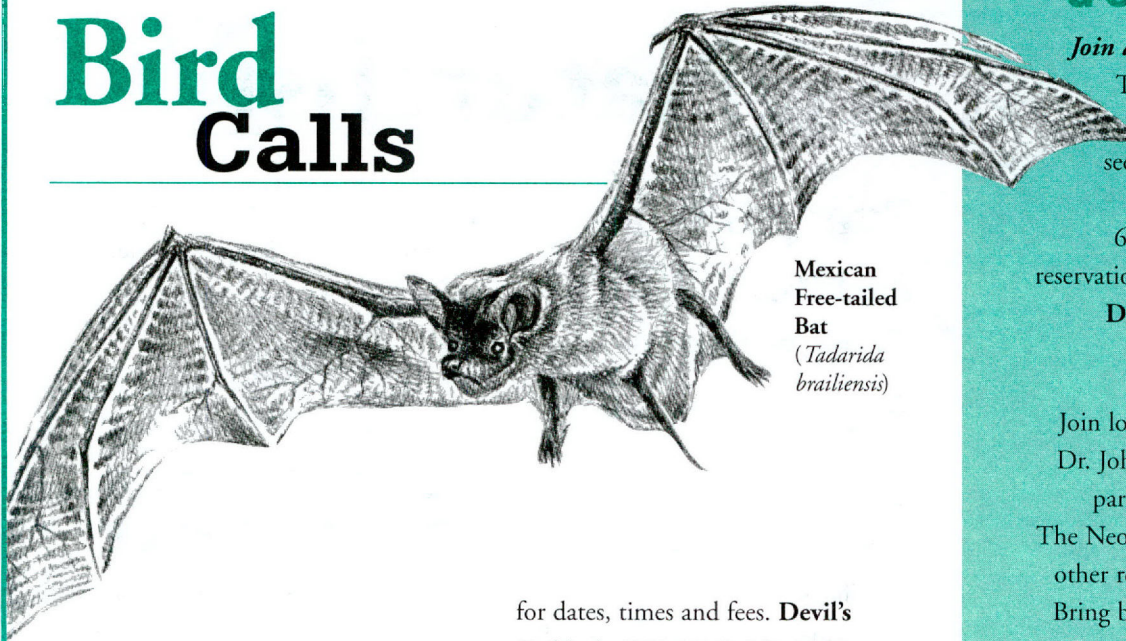
## Rusk and Palestine State Parks

Picnic in a nice little wooded area at one of the Rusk and Palestine parks in the Pineywoods towns of the same names. Groups will find an open-air, gazebo-style picnic pavilion with a fireplace at Rusk and two open-air group picnic pavilions with tables and cooking grills at Palestine. Both parks have nature trails, playgrounds and campsites. Picnickers can also plan to ride the historic steam train, the Texas State Railroad, which links these two parks – round-trip train ride takes 4 hours.

*Rusk State Park has a small lake with canoes and pedal boats for rent.*



# Bird Calls



**Mexican  
Free-tailed  
Bat**  
(*Tadarida  
brailliensis*)

## Mexican Free-tailed Bats

Each spring colonies of Mexican free-tailed bats leave Mexico and points down south to become summer residents in Texas. On warm evenings, millions can be seen streaming out of caves, tunnels, some highway bridge-spans and even the occasional porch overhang on an adobe building (ramadas). They are going out to feed on night-flying insects such as mosquitoes, the cutworm moth, as well as other crop-depredating insects.

### BAT FLIGHTS

Peer into the depths of Devil's Sinkhole if you dare. Then watch a spectacular bat flight just after sunset and plan to attend a short program about the cavern and the bats. Call

for dates, times and fees. **Devil's Sinkhole SNA** (830) 563-2342.

Watch about a half-million bats spiral out of Stuart Bat Cave beginning sometime in mid-April when they have returned. Join other bat watchers for the evening interpretive talk. April, May & June. Reservations are required, call for dates and fees **Kickapoo Cavern SP** (830) 563-2342.

Travel by tour bus along the Caprock Canyons SP Trailway. An abandoned rail line, converted to a 64-mile hiking, biking and equestrian trail, included an old train tunnel, too. Now you can ride through the Quitaque Valley to Clairity Tunnel and keep vigil for the evening bat emergence under a full moon. May 25 from 7 p.m. Fees: \$15 adults, \$10 children 12 and under; reservations required, deadline noon, **Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway** (806) 455-1492.

## GO BIRDING!

**Join a TCP Birding Workshop** – Tour woodlands and marshes with a TPW biologist and see how songbirds get identification bands. April 28 from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. TCP and reservations are required, **Guadalupe Delta WMA** (361) 576-0022.

**Birding in the Morning** – Join local Audubon Society expert, Dr. John Whittle, for a walk in the park and surrounding hotspots. The Neotropical migrants, shore and other resident birds will be around. Bring binoculars and bug repellent, meet at the headquarters. April 20 from 7:30 a.m. to noon, **Sea Rim SP** (409) 971-2559.

**Birding Basics** – A lecture with slides and equipment demonstrations followed by a walk to birding sites. Lecture is on April 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Bring binoculars, field guide, water, insect repellent, and sack lunch to birding walk on April 27 from 9 a.m. to noon. Fee \$5; reservations required, **Village Creek SP** (409) 755-7322.

**Bird the Brazos** – Hike the upland hardwoods, slog through wetlands, explore the bottomland riparian zones or watch the shores of the Brazos. We have binoculars and birding guides for those who have never been birding and want to see what it's all about. Every Saturday in April at 2 p.m. **Stephen F. Austin SP** (979) 885-3613.

## GREAT TEXAS BIRDING CLASSIC

A tournament birding event April 20-28. To learn more, phone toll-free 888-TX-BIRDS or visit the TPW Web site [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/gtbc](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/gtbc)



# Naturalist



## WATERBIRDS, ALLIGATORS AND SWAMPS

Take *A Boat Trip in The Swamp* along the cypress-lined Sabine River and into the Blue Elbow Swamp. See the wildlife in a mosaic of forest habitats; bring mosquito repellent, binoculars and sunscreen April 6, from 9 a.m. to noon, **Tony Houseman SP & WMA** (409) 886-4742. TCP and reservations required.

### *Spotlight Alligators at Night!*

Take nighttime trips with a biologist to get an alligator census in some of the best alligator habitat in Texas. On June 1, from 8 to 10:30 p.m., in Big Hill Bayou. On June 15, from 8 to 10:30 p.m., at Lost Lake in the Salt Bayou Unit, **J.D. Murphree WMA** (409) 736-2551. TCP and reservations required.

See *Colonial Waterbirds and Alligators Living Together*, at the Lost Lake rookery in the Salt Bayou Unit. On this daytime tour, you'll pass a rookery full of breeding roseate spoonbills, egrets and other colonial waterbirds of the Texas coast. On May 3, from 1:30 to 3 p.m., **J. D. Murphree WMA** (409) 736-2551. TCP and reservations required.

## Every Day is Earth Day in Texas State Parks

When science caught up to need in the 1970s, Texas State Parks started installing self-composting, waterless and odorless privies along trails and at primitive camping areas in ecologically sensitive and remote places. Disturbing Mother Nature by laying utility lines and establishing sewage disposal systems wasn't a good idea out there in the boonies.

Beginning in the 1980s, solar heated water became practical so hot showers at some parks are courtesy of the sun (check out Enchanted Rock, Blanco, Cedar Hill and Cooper Lake).

The technology for converting sun energy to electricity had been too expensive until the 1990s. But, today there are sun-powered voice recordings at a remote trail head in

Ray Roberts Lake SP and for night-lights on the fishing pier at Tyler SP. Remember those remote privies? Now they have fancy solar-powered lights and fans, too!

## EARTH DAY FESTIVITIES

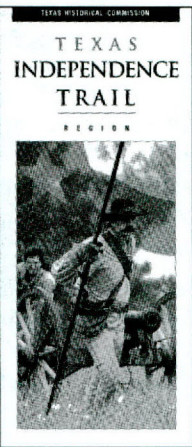
Guided hikes, exhibits, hands-on games and activities. April 20, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., **Brazos Bend SP** (979) 553-5101, [www.bbspvo.org](http://www.bbspvo.org).

Walks to the wild caves and Gorman Falls; flint knapping and rope climbing demonstrations. April 20, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., cave tours \$10, Earth Day activity fees \$2 for everyone 13 and older; call for reservations for cave tours, **Colorado Bend SP** (915) 628-3240.

Native American Tools exhibits and a program on hunting and warfare throughout the day. April 20, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., **Lake Texana SP** (361) 782-5718.



On the first Earth Day in 1970, the American bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was an endangered species. But, with citizen watch groups keeping count and the outlawing of the pesticide DDT, the eagle population has rebounded. In 1995, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service upgraded its status to threatened.



TEXAS  
INDEPENDENCE  
TRAIL  
REGION

*The Texas Independence Trail brochure provides a map and a driving guide to the shrines of Texas Independence, request brochure at (512) 463-6255*

# State Park Historian

## Magoffin Home

When Josephine Magoffin married William Jefferson Glasgow in 1896, the El Paso newspapers called it “the wedding of the century.” And surely it was just that for the small, dusty town on the Rio Grande. The Magoffin family represented the height of El Paso society. Joseph Magoffin owned land in what is now central El Paso where his father had established a community called Magoffinville. He was both a pioneer and an educated man who helped incorporate the City of El Paso in 1873, built his family home in 1875 and served four times as mayor of El Paso.

The Magoffin home was constructed in the Territorial style of architecture – a combination of locally available materials and

Victorian era fashions. Adobe walls, plastered and scored on the exterior, gave the appearance of a masonry structure. The interiors were finished with very fashionable mid-Victorian wood trims, carpets, wallpaper and painted or papered ceilings. Many of the family’s original furnishings are displayed in the home including a formal parlor suite that was probably customized in El Paso. The detailing includes Mexican eagles flanking a horseshoe.



*The wedding of the century, 1896.*

## SAN JACINTO DAY

### San Jacinto Battleground SHS

(281) 479-2431

On April 21, 1836, the Republic of Texas became a reality when the Texians were victorious at the Battle of San Jacinto. It was an era of soldiers on foot with muskets, a few horses and some scattered cannon shot.

Celebrate with us on Saturday, April 20; 10:30 a.m. – Ceremony at the Monument;

3 p.m. – A reenactment of the famous battle on the actual battleground; 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. – access to the new nature boardwalk in the historic San Jacinto Marsh.

## A TEXAS STAGECOACH INN

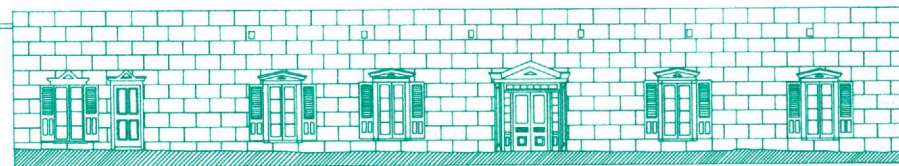
### Fanthorp Inn SHS

(936) 873-2633

What kind of reception did weary travelers get in the 1850s as they traveled across Texas? Come find out at Fanthorp Inn State Historic Site. See what early “hotel” life was like, how people lived and what they ate. Take a short ride in a replica stagecoach pulled by a Percheron draft horse team, Willie and Waylon.

Tours of the Inn on weekends from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; closed during the stagecoach rides (see below). Fees free to

TCP members, \$3 non-members, \$1.50 children 12 and under. Coach rides are available on April 13; May 11; June 8, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; fees \$4 adults, \$2 children 12 and under.



*Magoffin Home – front.*

## VICTORIAN HIGH TEA

Join a spring tea party on the grounds of the Magoffin Home, and tour the house. There will be two seatings on May 5, the first at 1 p.m. and the second at 3:30 p.m.; pre-paid reservations are required, fee \$12 per person, **Magoffin Home SHS (915) 533-5147.**



## **Admiral Nimitz SHS/National Museum of the Pacific War**

In Gillespie County, in the city of Fredericksburg at the corner of East Main and Washington Streets, (830) 997-4379.

**Big Bend Ranch SP** In Brewster and Presidio counties, 4 miles southeast of Presidio on F.M. 170; entrance at Fort Leaton SHS, (915) 229-3416.

**Big Spring SP** In Howard County, 36 miles east of Midland or 100 miles west of Abilene. From Midland take I.H. 20, go east to Big Spring, take Business 20 exit eastbound, turn right onto F.M. 700, park is located on the right, (915) 263-4931.

**Blanco SP** In Blanco County, about 14 miles south of Johnson City on the west side of U.S. Highway 281 to entrance, (830) 833-4333.

**Brazos Bend SP** In Fort Bend County, 10 miles west of Rosharon on F.M. 1462, then 1 mile north on F.M. 762 to entrance, (979) 553-5101.

**Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway** In Briscoe County, 3 miles north of Quitaque. Take State Highway 86 to Quitaque, then take F.M. 1065 to the park, (806) 455-1492.

**Cedar Hill SP** In Dallas County, approximately 15 miles southwest of Dallas on Joe Pool Lake and 2 miles northwest of Cedar Hill on F.M. 1382, go south to park entrance, (972) 291-3900.

**Colorado Bend SP** In Lampasas and San Saba counties, on the Colorado River about 10 miles above Lake Buchanan, near the community of Bend. Bend is north of Llano via State Highway 16 or west of Lampasas via U.S. Highway 183/190. Paved access to Bend via Ranch Roads 501, 580 or 581. From Bend there are approximately 4 miles of unpaved road to the park entrance, (915) 628-3240.

**Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit** In Hopkins County, 12 miles north of Sulphur Springs on State Highway 154/19; turn west onto F.M. 71 for 5 miles, then north on F.M. 3505 to entrance, (903) 945-5256.

**Copper Breaks SP** In Hardeman County, 12 miles south of Quanah or 11 miles north of Crowell on State Highway 6 to park entrance, (940) 839-4331.

**Devil's Sinkhole SNA** In Edwards County, about 135 miles northwest of San Antonio; contact Kickapoo Cavern SP for directions at (830) 563-2342.

**Enchanted Rock SNA** In Gillespie County, 18 miles north of Fredericksburg on Ranch Road 965, to entrance, (915) 247-3903.

**Fanthorp Inn SHS** In Grimes County, 10 miles east of Navasota on State Highway 90 in the town of Anderson, (936) 873-2633.

**Fennessey Ranch** In Refugio County, between Refugio and Bayside off F.M. 2678. For detailed directions call (361) 529-6600.

**Fort Parker SP** In Limestone County, between Mexia and Groesbeck, off State Highway 14 to entrance, (254) 562-5751.

**Goliad SP** In Goliad County, 1/4 mile south of Goliad on U.S. Highway 183/77A, to park entrance, (361) 645-3405.

**Guadalupe Delta WMA** In Calhoun County, approximately 15 miles southwest of Port Lavaca on south side of State Highway 35 to entrance, (409) 244-7697.

**Guadalupe River SP/Honey Creek SNA** In Kendall and Comal counties, 30 miles north of San Antonio on State Highway 46 between Boerne and U.S. Highway 281 to entrance, (830) 438-2656.

**Huntsville SP** In Walker County, 6 miles south of Huntsville off I.H. 45; take exit 109 to Park Road 40 to entrance, (936) 295-5644.

**J. D. Murphree WMA** In Jefferson County, on the southwestern city limits of Port Arthur, off State Highway 73 near the Taylor Bayou Bridge. Look for brown highway sign, (409) 736-2551.

**Kerrville-Schreiner SP** In Kerr County, 3 miles southeast of Kerrville on State Highway 173 to entrance, (830) 257-5392.

**Kickapoo Cavern SP** In Edwards and Kinney counties, 40 miles west of Uvalde on U.S. Highway 90, then 22.5 miles due north of Brackettville on Ranch Road 674; park entrance is on west side of road, (830) 563-2342.

**Lake Arrowhead SP** In Clay County, about 20 miles southeast of Wichita Falls on U.S. Highway 281, to F.M. 1954 for 8 miles to entrance, (940) 528-2211.

**Lake Mineral Wells SP** In Parker County, 4 miles east of Mineral Wells on U.S. Highway 180 to entrance, (940) 328-1171.

**Lake Somerville Trailway System** In Lee and Burleson Counties, connects Birch Creek SP with Nails Creek SP via 13 miles of trails. Lake Somerville SP/Birch Creek Unit In Burleson County, approximately 25 miles northwest of Brenham on State Highway 36 to F.M. 60, go west to Park Road 57 to entrance. Lake Somerville SP/Nails Creek Unit In Lee County, 20 miles northwest of Brenham off U.S. Highway 290 to F.M. 1697, go north to F.M. 180 to entrance, (979) 289-2392.

**Lake Texana SP** In Jackson County, approximately 4 miles from Ganado, between U.S. Highway 59 and F.M. 1593, to entrance, (361) 782-5718.

**Lake Whitney SP** In Hill County, 3 miles west of Whitney on F.M. 1244 to park entrance, (254) 694-3793.

**Lyndon B. Johnson SP & HS** In Gillespie County, 16 miles east of Fredericksburg on U.S. Highway 290 to park entrance, (830) 644-2252.

**Magoffin Home SHS** In El Paso County, in the city of El Paso, east on I.H. 10, exit on Cotton Street; turn right on Myrtle Street, left on Octavia Street, left on Magoffin Street, home is on the right, (915) 533-5147.

**Martin Dies, Jr. SP** In Jasper County, 17 miles east of Woodville on U.S. Highway 190 to entrance, (409) 384-5231.

**McKinney Falls SP** In Travis County, 13 miles southeast of the State Capitol. Take U.S. Highway 183 south to McKinney Falls Parkway, turn onto McKinney Falls Parkway and go 2 miles to park entrance, (512) 243-1643.

**Palo Duro Canyon SP** In Armstrong and Randall counties, 12 miles east of Canyon on State Highway 217. From Amarillo, south on Ranch Road 1541, to State Highway 217, go east for 8 miles, to park entrance, (806) 488-2227.

**Pedernales Falls SP** In Blanco County, 9 miles east of Johnson City on F.M. 2766 to entrance, (830) 868-7304.

**Ray Roberts Lake SP/Isle Du Bois Unit** In Denton County, 25 miles northeast of Denton on I.H. 35 to Pilot Point exit, then east on F.M. 455 to entrance, (940) 686-2148.

**Ray Roberts Lake SP/Johnson Branch Unit** In Denton County and Cook counties, 25 miles northeast of Denton on I.H. 35 to Lone Oak Road exit, then east on F.M. 3002 for 7 miles to entrance, (940) 637-2294.

**Rusk/Palestine SP** In Anderson County, 4 miles east of Palestine on U.S. Highway 84 to entrance. In Cherokee County, 3 miles west of Rusk on U.S. Highway 84 to entrance, (903) 683-5126.

**San Jacinto Battleground SHS** In Harris County, 22 miles east of downtown Houston off State Highway 225 east, then north on State Highway 134 to park entrance, (281) 479-2431.

**Sea Center Texas** In Brazoria County, in the city of Lake Jackson at 300 Medical Drive, (979) 292-0100.

**Sea Rim SP** In Jefferson County, 10 miles west of Sabine Pass on State Highway 87 to entrance, (409) 971-2559.

**Stephen F. Austin SP** In Austin County, 3 miles east of Sealy off I.H. 10, take exit F.M. 1458, go north 2 miles, turn left on Park Road 38 to entrance, (979) 885-3613.



**Texas State Railroad SP** In Anderson County, in the city of Palestine 2 miles east of Loop 256 on U.S. Highway 84 to Palestine train station. In Cherokee County, 2 miles west of Rusk via U.S. Highway 84 to Rusk train station, (903) 683-2561.

**Tony Houseman SP & WMA** In Orange County, in the city of Orange on Interstate 10 at the Sabine River, (409) 736-2551.

**Tyler SP** In Smith County, 2 miles north of I.H. 20 on Farm Road 14, (903) 597-5338

**Varner-Hogg Plantation SHS** In Brazoria County, 2 miles north of West Columbia off F.M. 2852 to entrance, (979) 345-4656.

**Village Creek SP** In Hardin County, 10 miles north of Beaumont in the city of Lumberton. From U.S. Highway 69 North, take Mitchell Road exit to Village Creek Parkway and go approximately 2 miles, turn east onto Alma Drive to park entrance, (409) 755-7322.

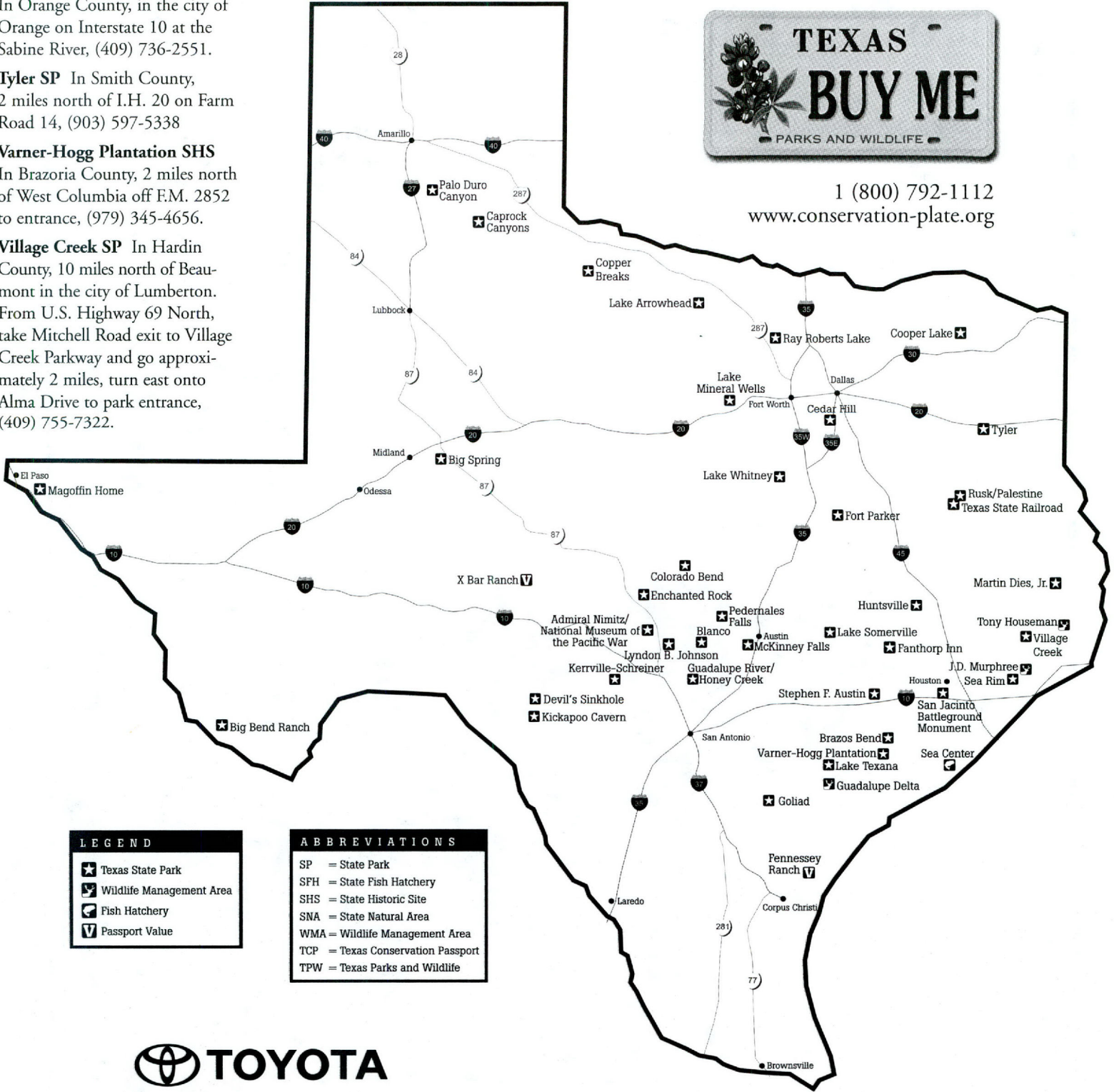
**X Bar Ranch** In Schleicher County, 20 miles southwest of Eldorado on F.M. 2129. Office is in Eldorado across from the courthouse on U.S. Highway 277, (915) 853-2688.

**Support Texas State Parks!**

Purchase a Bluebonnet license plate for \$25 (an addition to your regular vehicle registration) and a whole \$20 goes to support state parks. Get your application at a state park or a county tax office.



1 (800) 792-1112  
www.conservation-plate.org



**LEGEND**

- ★ Texas State Park
- 🦋 Wildlife Management Area
- 🐟 Fish Hatchery
- 📄 Passport Value

**ABBREVIATIONS**

- SP = State Park
- SFH = State Fish Hatchery
- SHS = State Historic Site
- SNA = State Natural Area
- WMA = Wildlife Management Area
- TCP = Texas Conservation Passport
- TPW = Texas Parks and Wildlife



Official Truck of Texas Parks and Wildlife

Consult a Texas highway map and the directions on pages 8-9 for secondary roads and other details.

# Ellen Buchanan

Park Manager, Martin Dies, Jr. State Park

"I studied in the Recreation and Parks Department at Texas A&M University," Ellen said. As a student, Ellen played and coached tennis at A&M. "I had always been involved in recreation programs and was headed for a career in recreation programming."

"But, while traveling around Texas a bit, I was attracted to the challenge of working with cultural and natural resources," she said. In 1981, Ellen became the manager at the Monument Hill/Kreische Brewery SHS. "The site was still being developed, so I had a chance to learn research and restoration techniques from the archeologists and architects."

She accepted the park manager position at Martin Dies, Jr. State Park in 1994. "This is a large recreation park preserving a beautiful resource in the Pineywoods. We protect an old growth pine-hardwood forest teeming with birds and wildlife like Swainson's warblers, squirrels and deer. Hardwood bottomland is one of the fastest disappearing ecosystems in the country so we take every opportunity to tell folks about it. We lead a hike called Walk on the Wild Side just to show off this magnificent place."

## 12th Annual Kids Fish Flop Fishing Tournament

Open to kids 16 years and under. Prizes in three age categories: 6 and under, 7-11 and 12-16. Tournament desk located at the Walnut Ridge boat ramp. June 1 from 8 a.m. to noon.



*Ellen leads a park tour.*

See page 12 for Martin Dies, Jr. State Park events.



*Martin Dies, Jr. SP*



# Trail blazer

*trek across texas*

## Pedaling Across Texas

Looking for a place to go biking? Check out the biking trails in state parks – there are 48 of them and new ones are being developed all the time. Bicyclists, in organizations like the Texas Bicycle Coalition, have volunteered over the years to help build and inventory bike trails in state parks.

Now, TPW has published a new booklet, *Bike Texas: A Complete Guide to the Best Trails of Texas State Parks*, which makes it easy for you to find the trails.

With photos and color, *Bike Texas* lists 48 state park trails, and highlights the 14 best ones. The featured

trails are described in terms of what to expect on the ride: trail length and difficulty as well as type of terrain. Many of the trails have both easy and difficult loops so an outing with a family or a group can include beginners as well as expert riders.

Grab your bike and get in motion on a state park bike trail – before you know it – miles will have passed and you'll be far away from crowds. It's a great way to explore the outdoors!



*Cyclists can pick up Bike Texas for 99 cents at select sporting goods shops and bicycle shops statewide or at any of the 48 state parks that have bike trails.*

*Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway*

A friendly reminder: Wear a helmet and be sure to carry a patch kit or a spare tube. Popping a tire on a rock or a cactus means fixing the flat on the trail – or walking back!



## TRAILWAY CHALLENGE

**The Challenge** – the first 100 people to hike, bike or ride their horse along the entire 64-mile Caprock Canyon Trailway will receive an exclusive patch. Call to let us know your plans and we will send you a detailed guidebook and map to the Trailway.

**The kickoff** – Ride your bike the whole 64-miles. Refreshments along the way, a sag wagon, dinner at the end, a shuttle back to the start and an exclusive patch waits for those who complete the 64-mile ride. You can join anywhere along the way. April 27, starting at 8 a.m., \$25 per person. Discount for early registration by April 20. **Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway** (806) 455-1492.

## RATTLESNAKE ADVENTURE RACING

Adventure Racing can be a strenuous team sport combining the disciplines of topographic map reading and compass skills, mountain biking and kayaking on designated routes through the parks.

To register contact Leiza Morales, Rattlesnake Racing, 514 N. 1st, Haskell, TX 79521, (940) 256-0769 or check the web site: [www.rattlesnakeracing.com](http://www.rattlesnakeracing.com). Check in at 6 a.m. June 8, at **Copper Breaks SP** (940) 839-4331. April 6, at **Fort Parker SP** (254) 562-5751.

## HOG'S HUNT RUN

Test your endurance in this 28-mile run through forested trails. Contact Mickey Rollins to register (830) 535-6492. April 6, all day at **Huntsville SP** (936) 295-5644.



# Field Trips



## MARTIN DIES, JR. SP EVENTS

(409) 384-5231

**Walk on the Wildside** – A guided nature hike along the shores of Steinhagen Lake, April 7, 14, 28 from 9 to 10 a.m.

**Henhouse Ridge Nature Hike** – A springtime hike with a park ranger to see large oaks and pines of the Big Thicket, May 5, 12, 26; June 2, 9, 23, 30, from 9 to 10 a.m.

**Floating the Forks** – A guided half-day canoe trip on the Angelina and Neches Rivers, April 20; May 18; June 15, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; fees \$30 per two person canoe if we provide the canoe, \$25 per two person canoe if you bring your own, \$5 for third person in canoe; reservations and \$20 per canoe deposit required.

**Birding Boat Tours** – View waterfowl, wading birds and other birds of the bottomland hardwood normally found in the East Texas Big Thicket, May 4 from 8 to 9:45 a.m., 10 to 11:45 a.m. and 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.; reservations and \$5 deposit required.

## CATTLE DRIVES AND TRAIL RIDES

Round up Texas Longhorns in a real-life, horseback, experience of a working ranch. Horse rental, meals and lodging at the bunkhouse included in the price. April 5-7, fees \$641 TCP members, \$650 non-members; reservations required, **Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway** (806) 622-2982 or (806) 655-2286.

Explore remote areas by horseback and view scenic overlooks that are generally inaccessible. April 19-21, 22-24, 26-28; call for times; fees \$515 per person; reservations required, **Big Bend Ranch SP** (281) 486-8070.

Join the Panhandle Trail Riders for a weekend of entertainment, food and adventure on the Caprock Canyons Trailway. Bring your own horse or mule or rent one in Quitaque. May 25-26; fee \$125 per person; reservations required, **Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway** (806) 622-2982 or (806) 655-2286.

Join a three-hour, 10-mile guided equestrian trial ride benefiting our Lone Star Legacy endowment. June 8 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; fee \$35 per person, ride and lunch included; reservations required, **Cedar Hill SP** (972) 291-6505.





## CAVING

Explore Gorman Cave – a 3-mile round-trip hike over Hill Country terrain takes you to and from the cave. Good flashlight and walking shoes needed. April; May & June, every Saturday & Sunday, weather permitting, from 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.; fees \$10 per person, no children under 6; reservations recommended, **Colorado Bend SP** (915) 628-3240.

Explore two relatively small and progressively more difficult caves with tight crawl spaces for up to 75-feet. Gloves, elbow and knee pads recommended; good hiking shoes and flashlight required; helmets provided. April 6; May 4; June 1 from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.; fees \$20 per person, no children under 6, **Colorado Bend SP** (915) 628-3240.

Hike across fields of loose boulders into the heart of the Great Kickapoo Cave where you pass the 80-foot-tall twin columns, the largest known cave formations in Texas. Participants must be in good physical condition and must bring two light sources per person. Also wear good hiking shoes or boots. Liability release required. April; May & June from 2 to 4:30 p.m.; call for fees; reservations required, **Kickapoo Cavern SP** (830) 563-2342.

## STARGAZING

After a naked-eye orientation to the night sky, get up close and personal with a view through high-powered telescopes. Members of the Texas Amateur Astronomical Society will provide binoculars and telescopes. April 6; May 4; June 1; event starts

at sunset, weather permitting; fees \$2 adult, \$1 senior citizens, **Copper Breaks SP** (940) 839-4331.

View the Panhandle night sky at the Lone Star Interpretive Theater with telescopes and binoculars provided by volunteers. Hear some Native American star legends too. June 12 from 10 to 11 p.m., **Palo Duro Canyon SP** (806) 488-2227, Ext. 49.

Get familiar with summer constellations and stars. The program starts with a slide presentation, followed by telescope observation. Bring telescopes or binoculars, if you have them, as well as blankets and lawn chairs. June 15 from 8:30 to 10 p.m., **Lake Mineral Wells SP & Trailway** (940) 328-1171.

Join the 3rd Annual Astronomy Celebration and Star Parties – with classes in celestial observation, telescope making and mirror grinding followed by star watching at dark. Bring your own telescope or use ours at the star parties. April 12-13, from 5 p.m.-till on April 12, from 4 p.m.-till on April 13; star parties May 11 and June 8 from dark-thirty till we're finished, **Lake Whitney SP** (254) 694-3793.



**A \$5 entry fee gives you a chance to win one of two guided fishing trips and a new Toyota Tundra Access Cab truck!**

**100% of the proceeds benefit public fishing in Texas!**

**[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/reeltexas](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/reeltexas)**

## FREE FISHING DAY

On Saturday, June 1, you can fish anywhere in Texas without a fishing license. But, you might enjoy the company at these state park events. While the fishing's free, the parks still charge an entry fee.

*Meet us down at the lake* – Bring your gear, or use our cane poles, hooks and bait. From 10 a.m. to noon, **Lake Texana SP** (361) 782-5718.

*Youth fishing* – Open to kids 12 and younger, with drawings for prizes. Bring your fishing gear for the youngsters and join the fun. From 9 to 11 a.m., **Cooper Lake SP/South Sulphur Unit** (903) 395-3100.

Kids and teens, 16 and younger, can fish at the marine fish hatchery using the catch and release technique. Volunteers will be on hand to help first-time anglers. Don't forget the sun screen, a hat and your own fishing gear. From 8 to 10 a.m., **Sea Center Texas** (979) 292-0100.

*Fish Lake Theo* – Enjoy all-day fishing at this small Panhandle lake in canyon country. From 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., **Caprock Canyons SP & Trailway** (806) 455-1492.

*Catch bass, crappie or catfish* – Try your luck fishing in Lake Raven and later give yourself a fish fry. From 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.; park entry fee required, **Huntsville SP** (936) 295-5644.

*Fishing tournament* – Kids compete for prizes by age group, adults (17 and older) compete for the biggest fish prizes. Bait is available and a few kid fishing poles too, but it's better to bring your own. Sign up at the Group Dining Hall. Adults tournament from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; kids from 2 to 4 p.m. Fee \$2 to benefit our Lone Star Legacy Endowment. **Lake Arrowhead SP** (940) 528-2211.

**PASSPORT**

*Values*



## RANCH LANDS RECREATION

### X Bar Ranch

(888) 853-2688

www.XBarRanch.com



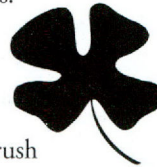
Experience Texas like you've seen it in the movies. As the Meador family approaches 100 years of ranching, they invite you to spend a weekend or longer at their place.

- Start the summer with a getaway weekend. Read a book in the shade, spend time at the wildlife observation area or hit the trails on a guided nature hike. Private accommodations, camping and some meals available. May 24-27; call for fees and reservations.
- Spend the morning of National Trails Day volunteering to develop and maintain the ranch recreation trails. Enjoy the afternoon hiking or biking. June 1, land access and camping fees waived for volunteers; call for reservations.
- Give dad the big outdoors and an adventurous getaway. Family hikes on the 15-plus miles of nature trails make the pool feel great later. Private accommodations with cooking facilities and camping available. Father's Day Weekend, June 14-16; call for fees and reservations.
- Laugh and cry at the X Bar Dinner Show as Jim Runge, a performance historian, recounts Texas history from the Comanche era through the westward expansion into

Schleicher County. June 29 at 6:30 p.m.; call for fees and reservations.

### The Fennessey Ranch

(361) 529-6600



Located in the Gulf Coast brush country, the ranch has endured since Tom O'Connor laid out his 750,000 acre land grant in 1834. During the 168 years since, regardless of booms and busts in cattle ranching and oil, the O'Connor family endured. Today, along with traditional ranching operations, Brien O'Connor Dunn manages 4,000 acres to encourage wildlife diversity and has opened the ranch to nature tourism.

- Three-day photo shoot led by award-winning photographer Sean Fitzgerald. Capture waterfowl from a bird-blind in the rookery. \$395 per person fee includes meals and lodging. Event begins at 5:30 p.m. on Fridays and ends at noon on Sundays. May 10-12 and May 24-26; reservations required.
- Spring Bird Count – this annual event racks up 100 or more species including Henslow sparrows, warblers, buntings and marsh birds like ibis, least and American bittern, anhinga and rails. Guided by experienced birder. April 13 and 27 from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; fees include lunch; \$43 TCP members, \$46 non-members; reservations required.

### Passport Journal

April 2002 – June 2002

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*To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*

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## GETTING IN TOUCH

- 1 (800) 792-1112, press extension for Texas Conservation Passport
- [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)
- [passport@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:passport@tpwd.state.tx.us)

## PARK RESERVATIONS

- (512) 389-8900 (also cancellations)
- TDD/TDY line (512) 389-8915
- State parks accept Discover, MasterCard and Visa for payment and reservation deposits. Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. - 8 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Best days to call are Wednesday - Friday. Closed on major holidays. Voice mail – 24 hours a day.
- Indian Lodge (915) 426-3254
- Texas State Railroad (800) 442-8951

## RESERVATIONS BY FAX, INTERNET OR E-MAIL

- Must be made four days in advance of requested date of arrival at the park. If you choose this option, include a phone number for contact.
- FAX: (512) 389-8959
- E-mail: [reservations@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:reservations@tpwd.state.tx.us)
- Internet: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)
- Reservations accepted 24 hours a day.

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Call individual areas on a weekday, 8-9 a.m. and 12-1 p.m., to make sure you can have access. TCP member get free entry, non-members pay a \$10 limited use permit. Event listings include phone numbers.

Everyone in a member's vehicle gets in free at wildlife management areas when the WMA is open to the general public. WMAs may be closed for research and will be closed during hunting season.

## FINDING CAMP SITES ONLINE!

OK – you're planning a camping trip and you're on the World Wide Web. What can you do right now to get those plans firmed up? How about going through web pages to a place that gives you a list of parks AND camp sites WHICH are currently open on the VERY day you want to be out there? Here's how to do it, step by step:

1. Go to this web page: <http://maps1.reserveamerica.com/static/tx4.html>
2. Scroll down the page to find a clickable list of Texas State Parks.
3. Click on a park name and automatically go to that park's info page.
4. At the top of the page, click on the hot link: [Sites](#)
5. That takes you to a table listing overnight and day use facilities.
6. Find the kind of camp site you want on the left of the page and on the right of the page click the hot link: [What's Available](#)
7. You will link to a page that asks:  
 Check what is available starting  for  nights.  
 [at this point use the drop down menus to choose a month, a day and some number of nights]. Here's a tip: ask for 31 nights so you can see the whole month.
6. You will be linked to a page with a calendar for the entire month.
7. There are small numbers beneath the calendar dates to tell you how many campsites are available that day.
8. At the top of the calendar page you can click on the hot link: [Make a Reservation](#)

If you experience difficulties with this process, try starting on the Texas Parks and Wildlife home page: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us). But, ya know, sometimes the web gets fussy so you can always call us. See "Park Reservations" on the left of this page.



**Go to our Web site for a complete listing of state park events**

**[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)**



# Weekend Escapes

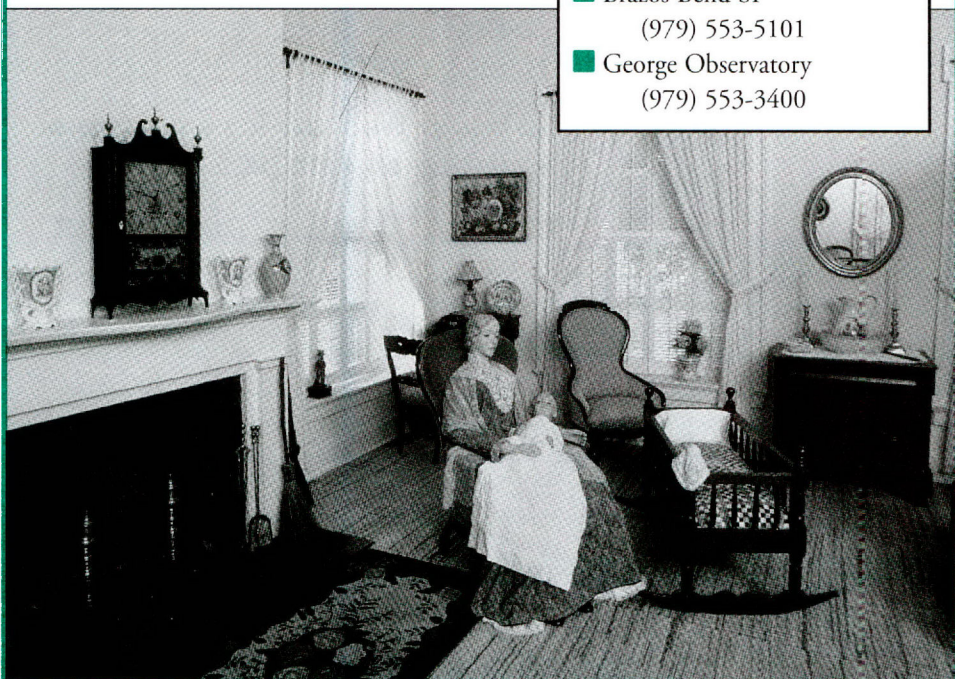
## An Easy Drive from Houston

Sometimes in spring, on the lawns of Varner-Hogg Plantation SHS, you can catch the scent of magnolia blossoms in the air. While it's just an hour southwest of Houston near West Columbia, it seems ages away in time and history. The first farm here was established in 1824 by Martin Varner, a member of Stephen F. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" colony. He put in crops, including sugarcane, and by all accounts produced the "first ardent spirits (rum) of any kind...made in..." Austin's colony. The property went through the transitions of a colonial home to a plantation house and finally became the retirement home of Gov. James S. Hogg, the first native Texan to hold the state's highest office. His daughter, Ima Hogg, donated the land with the furnished house to the State of Texas.

Just up the road a-piece, you can picnic or camp among huge moss-draped live oaks at Brazos Bend State Park (28 miles south of Houston). Hike and bike through bottomland hardwood forest and fish in one of the six lakes. The George Observatory, located in the park, is open on the weekends and helps round out the parks activities.

### TRIP PLANNER

- Park Reservations, see page 15.
- Varner-Hogg Plantation SHS  
(979) 345-4656
- Brazos Bend SP  
(979) 553-5101
- George Observatory  
(979) 553-3400



## DRIVE TEXAS WILD FOR BASS FISHING!



Order your \$25 conservation license plate at 1 (800) 792-1112.

### TCP MEMBERSHIPS

The \$50 Texas Conservation Passport membership is good for entrance to state parks and wildlife management areas for 12 months and it comes with a windshield decal. Members also receive a subscription to this quarterly *Passport Journal*.

