

Weekend Camping for Scouts in Central Texas

A Guide to Local Scout Properties
and Public Camping Locations for Scouts

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

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Capitol Area Council Camps

Griffith League Scout Ranch

Near Bastrop, Texas

Used by: Boy Scout troops and Venturing crews

Griffith League Scout Ranch sits on one of the few remaining, completely intact, land grants from the creation of the Republic of Texas. The property covers nearly 4,850 acres. Miles of casual and “extreme” hiking trails are being constructed, with an educational program that memorializes the Texas’ founders. Griffith League Scout Ranch is home to the Capitol Area Council’s Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience (C.O.P.E.) program.

The camp is also in an area designated by the federal government as habitat for the Houston Toad, an endangered species. As such, units must use Leave No Trace camping guidelines during their stay. Future plans include the construction of a training and conference center for nearly 200 people.

Camping

Water is available at the base camp parking lot. Camping is low impact, Leave No Trace. [Click here](#) for more details and the form you'll need to camp at Griffith.

December 1-May 31- Open for weekend camping, but with strict camping and hiking requirements because of mating season for the Houston Toad

June 1-November 28 - Open for weekend camping

Program areas (all fees must be prepaid with Council office)

C.O.P.E. - \$170 minimum group fee for one day, low elements or high elements program (\$40 per participant)

- \$290 minimum group fee for weekend program (\$55 per participant)

- registration forms and payment must be complete at least 30 days before use

- Units in a weekend program will need to submit a [short term camping permit](#) to the Capitol Area Council office

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Wolf Mountain Scout Ranch

Near Llano, Texas

Used by: Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Venture crews

[Map/Directions](#)

More than 640 acres of beautiful hill country with granite outcroppings await units that are looking a special High Adventure backpacking and camping experience. If you're looking for a final "shakedown" before Philmont, but staying close to home, this is the place.

Only two units at a time are allowed to reserve the property during weekend camping, to help preserve its special experience. The lucky units that make it out here will enjoy an eight acre private stocked fishing pond, which is also suitable for swimming or boating. There is also a rifle range. While its primary use is weekend camping, Wolf Mountain Scout Ranch has also hosted district camporees, Cub Scout day activities and Webelos Woods programs.



Camping

Packs are advised to camp in the front portion of the property because of convenience and less challenging terrain. Troops will likely enjoy the middle portion of the property because of its steeper elevation, the pond and seclusion from Highway 71. Crews will probably be most attracted to the northwest part of the property because of rock formations that are perfect for climbing activities.

Water is available. There is one toilet facility and six porta-potties. There is an enclosed building with power, and an open-air pavilion.

February-September - Open for weekend camping except on major holidays

- May not be available during certain periods of the year because of district camporees

October-January- Closed during deer season

Program areas

Fishing - No Council fee; adults should have current state fishing license

- Stocked ponds: Largemouth Bass, Catfish, Sunfish, Crappie

Climbing - No Council fee; units should have minimum 2 climbing instructors, but must have 1 instructor for every 6 participants

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Camp Alma McHenry

Near Giddings, Texas

Used by: Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Venture crews

[Map/Directions](#)

This multi-use camp is located on 250 acres and contains a rich mixture of pastureland, oak trees and several private stocked fishing ponds. It can be an excellent location for Cub Scout day activities on weekends, and weekend overnight camping for Boy Scout troops and Venture crews. Camp Alma McHenry is about an hour and a half drive from Austin.

Camping

Camping is primitive-style, and there are no defined campsites. There is drinking water available at the camp, but there are no bathroom facilities.

January 1-December 31- Open for weekend camping

- May not be available during certain periods of the year because of district camporees

Program areas

Fishing - No Council fee; adults should have current state fishing license

- Stocked ponds: Largemouth Bass, Catfish, Sunfish, Crappie

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Camp Green Dickson

Near Gonzales, Texas (between Gonzales and Shiner)

Used by: Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Venture crews

Map it: [Hand-drawn map](#) | [Yahoo](#)

Mesquite trees blanket this beautiful 335 acre property that is surrounded by areas that are central to Texas history (The Texas History Trail is located in the nearby town of Gonzales). Campgrounds sit next to a six acre private stocked pond, offering excellent fishing. Camp Green Dickson is a terrific place to learn the basics of wilderness camping, backpacking and prepare for a future high adventure trek. The property is the home of the Capitol Area Council's summer and winter Silver Pines National Youth Leadership Training courses, and has hosted several district camporees. Camp Green Dickson is roughly a two hour drive from Austin. It is also a convenient camping alternative for units in Alamo Area and Sam Houston Area Councils.

Camping

There are 15 campsites, 6 latrines and one central shower facility/shelter with power. Drinking water is available.

January 1-December 31- Open for weekend camping except on major holidays

- Not available during a week in June and December because of Silver Pines training
- May not be available certain periods of the year because of district camporees

Program areas

Fishing – No Council fee; adults should have current state fishing license - Stocked pond: Largemouth Bass, Catfish, Sunfish, Crappie

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Roy D. Rivers Wilderness Camp

Near Smithville, Texas (close to Rosanky, Texas)

Used by: Boy Scout troops and Venture crews

[Map/Directions](#)

Roy D. Rivers Wilderness Camp is nearly 400 acres of heavily forested beauty. The terrain is rugged and is the perfect setting for low impact wilderness camping and backpacking. It is approximately a one hour drive from Austin and a little less than two hours drive for northwest Sam Houston Area Council and Alamo Area Council units.

Camping

Camping is primitive-style and there are no defined campsites. Water is not available and there are no structures on the property.

January-December- Open for weekend camping



Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Sam Houston Area Council

El Rancho Cima Camps

Horseshoe Bend

Background

This 2,680 acre property is located in the Texas Hill Country just twelve miles from Wimberley on the Blanco River. Two major camps are in operation: Cockrell River Camp and Horseshoe Bend Camp. Horseshoe Bend Camp has 12 troop sites. Each summer Horseshoe Bend operates 6 weekly sessions. In addition to the Summer Camping Sessions, El Rancho Cima is open year-round for weekend camping.

33 Years of Summer Camp

This year marks the 33rd summer for Horseshoe Bend. Come join us for summer fun this summer. Nestled in the shadow of Sentinel Peak, Horseshoe band is the hub of the western program at El Rancho Cima. At the crack of dawn the sound of wranglers and their herd of horses can be heard across the "Bend".

Opportunities

Horseshoe Bend is ideal for Scouts to work on all of their outdoor merit badges from Geology and Nature to Pioneering and Horsemanship.

Horseshoe Bend has great outpost camps and a "rodeo" that completes your Scout troop's exciting week.

Directions

Here's a MapQuest link to a map of Camp El Rancho Cima's location.

El Rancho Cima's address is 5800 Ranch Road 32, Fischer, Texas 78623.

El Rancho Cima is located approximately 180 miles west of Houston. Take I-10 to Luling and Highway 80 to San Marcos. From San Marcos, take Ranch Road 12 ten miles West to the intersection of Ranch Road 12 and 32. Continue west on Ranch Road 32 for five miles. You will come to El Rancho Cima's gate on your right at the bottom of the hill just past the Devil's Backbone rest area. Continue on the entrance road and go left at the Ranger's house. Turn left at the Horseshoe Bend sign.

General Camp Information

Weekend, Etc.

Reservations for Weekend, District/Council Use Request, Unit Service Opportunities, Conservation Programs, Camp Policies, From Your Ranger Staff

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Cockrell River Camp

Background

This 2,680 acre property is located in the Texas Hill Country just twelve miles from Wimberley on the Blanco River. Two major camps are in operation: Cockrell River Camp and Horseshoe Bend Camp. Cockrell River Camp has 15 troop sites. Each summer Cockrell River Camp operates 8 weekly sessions. In addition to the Summer Camping Sessions, El Rancho Cima is open year-round for weekend camping.

53 Years of Camping

This year marks the 53rd summer for Cockrell River Camp. Come join us for summer fun this summer. Cockrell River Camp is located on the banks for the Blanco River in the shade of Pecan and Cypress Trees. Come to the river and experience what every one in Texas looks forward to... River Camp is the place to be.

Opportunities at Camp

Cockrell River Camp Offers a full schedule of merit badges as well as many outpost camps. Places like Coons Ledge, Rocky Gulch, Homestead Meadow, Fish Camp and Frio Springs offer opportunities to learn and test scouting skills

Directions

[Click here for a map to El Rancho Cima](#)

El Rancho Cima is located approximately 180 miles west of Houston. Take I-10 to Luling and Highway 80 to San Marcos. From San Marcos, take Ranch Road 12 ten miles West to the intersection of Ranch Road 12 and 32. Continue west on Ranch Road 32 for five miles. You will come to El Rancho Cima's gate on your right at the bottom of the hill just past the Devil's Backbone rest area. Continue on the entrance road and go left at the Ranger's house. Stay on the entrance road - you will pass Horseshoe Bend entrance on the left. The entrance road will lead you to Cockrell River Camp.

General Camp Information

Weekend, Etc. Reservations for Weekend, District/Council Use Request, Unit Service Opportunities, Conservation Programs, Camp Policies

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Hamman Scout Camp

Background

This 965 acre property is located 8 miles southwest of Bandera in the Texas Hill Country. This property is rugged terrain that offers wilderness "low impact" hiking and camping opportunities.

The only Scout High Adventure Program like it within 500 Miles. Hamman Scout Camp is located in one of the most beautiful areas of Texas. Here older Scouts and Venture and Varsity Scouts, Venturers, and Philmont Crews will experience a truly amazing adventure.

Hamman Scout Camp adjoins to Hill Country State Nature Area which offers an additional 6,000 acres to explore.

Opportunities

- Mini-Philmont
- High Adventure Bivouac
- Summer Trek
- Pack and Paddle
- Topping Out

Directions

Here's a MapQuest link to a map of the Hamman Scout Camp's location.

The address for the Hamman Scout Camp is 7195 FM 470, Bandera Texas 78003.

The best route from Houston is I-10 to San Antonio, and then the 410 Loop to Highway 16. Take Highway 16 (Bandera Highway) North to FM 470, following FM 470 for 6.5 miles through Tarpley Pass. The camp is the first gate on the left.

[Map of Hamman Scout Camp](#)

General Camp Information

Weekend, Etc.

Reservations for Weekend, District/Council Use Request, Unit Service Opportunities, Conservation Programs, Camp Policies,

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Longhorn Area Council Camp

Camp Tahuaya

Camp Tahuaya is a 147 acre camp with the largest spring in Texas, located 1 mile west of the Tahuaya Road Exit at mile marker 289a on I-35, just south of Belton and Temple. Tahuaya is 47 miles south of Waco, 135 miles south of downtown Fort Worth, and approximately 150 miles from DFW Airport.

This information is provided to help units make weekend camping reservations when the new online reservation system starts. Under **current LHC Camping Policy**, units can request particular campsites on their weekend camping reservations but all final campsite assignments are made by the Camp Ranger. When the online weekend reservation system is opened, units will then be able to make specific campsite reservations for available sites within the guidelines of the system.

[Tahuaya Map - less color \(gif\)](#), [Tahuaya Printable Map \(PDF file\)](#)

[Campsite Maps Main Page](#), [High Adventure Programs](#)

Camp Tahuaya weekend camping campsite capacities and information

Camp Site:	Weekend Capacity:	Water:	Shelter:	Latrine:	NOTES:
Crockett	80	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	Very large campsite. Small units may have to share.
Comanche	40	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Alamo	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Huaco	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
General Clark	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	Closest site for Rifle and Shotgun shooting sports programs
Kiowa	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Alcoa Freedom	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Kit Carson	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Tonkawa	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Pioneer	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Lion's Den	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Fox Hollow	20	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	
Explorer	36	Apr 1-Oct. 30	Y	Y	

Water: Campsite water is on from April 1 - Oct. 31; water is available during the winter only from a central source from Nov. 1 - March 31.
 Campsite Capacities based on average 2 per tent.
NOTE: These capacities are WEEKEND CAMPING capacities. Campsite capacities for Summer Camp are different because we use larger tent and platform sets for summer camp.

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State Parks

Rules and Regulations For State Parks

Complete rules and regulations are available at all state park headquarters. Below are some of the most common that a troop will need to know.

- Fires are to be built only in grills and fire rings.
- Firewood is not to be gathered unless authorized by the park.
- Fireworks and explosives are not permitted.
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted (BSA rule).
- Pets must be on a leash and attended at all times.
- During posted closing hours, unauthorized persons may not enter or remain in the park.
- Public nudity or disrobing is prohibited.
- Use of metal detectors is not allowed.
- Minors must be supervised. An adult must accompany each 15 person group under age 17. Remember the BSA rule on 2-deep leadership.
- Depositing waste water or sewage into the surface of the ground is prohibited.
- Water fountains, pools and sprinklers may not be used to wash oneself, clothing, or other personal belongings.
- Do not remove or disturb plants or animals.
- Do not disturb historic sites or markers on park lands.

Making Reservations

When your reservation is booked, you will be expected to pay a deposit which consists of the first night's camping fee. Payment for subsequent nights are made when you check in at the park. With the exception of Parrie Haynes Youth Ranch, reservations should be made through the Central Reservations Center in Austin which is staffed from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number is 512-389-8900.

Reservations may also be made through the TPWD web page at:

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>

If you use State Parks frequently, you may want to request a client identification number when you make your first reservation. Unless you use a credit card to hold your reservation, you will need to send a deposit within 5 days to:

TPWD Reservations Center

PO Box 17488

Austin TX 78760-7488

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Bastrop State Park

P O Box 518

Bastrop TX 78602-0518

512/321-2101

Bastrop State Park is 3503.7 total acres (land acreage, 3493; water acreage, 10); approximately 30 miles southeast of Austin in Bastrop County. The park was acquired by deeds from the city of Bastrop and private owners from 1933 to 1935; the park opened in 1937. Additional acreage was acquired in 1979.

The Park's History:

Original improvements were made by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The park opened in 1937. It is the site of the famous "Lost Pines," an isolated timbered region of loblolly pine and hardwoods.

Park Activities:

The park provides opportunities for backpacking, camping, picnicking, fishing, canoeing, swimming, golfing, bicycling, wildlife viewing, hiking, and special tours.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with showers; picnic sites; backpack areas along an 8.5-mile hiking trail; 3.5 additional miles of hiking trails; campsites with water; campsites with water and electricity; cabins; lodges; group barracks; and a dining hall (accommodates 90); a swimming pool; an outdoor sports area; a trail area; a day-use dining hall (refectory) with a kitchen area, tables and chairs for 90, a patio area, air-conditioning, and two fireplaces; and a sponsored youth group area. Special rates are available.

Flora/Fauna:

The beautiful Lost Pines of Texas bring visitors back to the park year after year. The loblolly pine woodland is isolated from the main body of East Texas Pines by approximately 100 miles of rolling, post oak woodlands. This pine-oak woodland covers approximately seventy square miles and is part of most westerly stand of loblolly pines in the state. A quiet woodland and rugged hills make this park one of the most beautiful in Texas. Many species of wildlife such as white-tail deer, rabbits, squirrels, opossums and armadillos scurry through the woods. A checklist of the bird life of Bastrop and Buescher State Parks is available at the park headquarters.

Directions:

The park is one mile east of Bastrop on Texas 21, also accessible from the east on Texas 71 or by way of Buescher State Park along Park Road 1. Open: 7 days a week year-round. There is no gate.

Buescher State Park

P O Box 75

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Smithville TX 78957-0075

512/237-2241

Buescher State Park, a scenic area, is 1016.7 acres just north of Smithville in Bastrop County.

The Park's History:

El Camino Real (King's/Royal Highway) once ran near the park, connecting San Antonio de Bexar with Spanish missions in East Texas and generally followed present-day Texas State Highway 21 and Old San Antonio Road. A scenic park road connects Buescher State Park with Bastrop State Park and travels through a part of the lovely lost pines, a remnant of what is thought to have once been an extensive pine-oak forest covering much of Central Texas, during the time Ice Age glaciers reigned to the north.

Park Activities:

Activities are biking; boating; fishing in a stocked lake; lake swimming; nature study; and hiking. The scenic, 13-mile-long, winding, and hilly, paved road between Buescher and Bastrop State Parks is ideal for biking, but should be used only by experienced cyclists. Approximately 6 miles between the parks is private land; no camping between parks or trespassing on private land.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with and without showers; campsites with water; campsites with water and electricity; screened shelters; picnic sites; 7.5 miles of hiking trails; a dump station; a playground and group picnic pavilion (for day use only, capacity 75) with a fireplace, picnic tables, and a restroom with showers in the area. A recreational hall (for day and night use - capacity 150) with a full kitchen, heat, fans, a patio, a fireplace, and a restroom.

Flora/Fauna:

The beautiful wooded setting, that includes a tranquil lake, makes an excellent area from which to observe the seasonal distribution of some 250 species of birds. Mammals include white-tailed deer, raccoons, opossums, bobcats and armadillos along with rabbits, squirrels and small rodents. Enjoy fishing for catfish, bass, crappie, perch and also rainbow trout in the winter.

Directions:

The park is located 2 miles northwest of Smithville on State Highway 71 to FM 153, then north on 153 for .5 mile to enter Park Road 1. Open: 7 days a week year-round. Gate: Locked at 10 p.m.; late arrivals should call the park for the combination.

Choke Canyon State Park

Calliham Unit South Shore Unit

P O Box 2 P O Box 1548

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Calliham TX 78007 Three Rivers TX 78071

512/786-3868 512/786-3538

Choke Canyon State Park, consisting of two units, South Shore and Calliham, is located on 26,000-acre Choke Canyon Reservoir, a water supply for Corpus Christi. The Calliham Unit contains 1100 acres while the South Shore Unit contains 385 acres.

The Park's History:

From scant evidence available, we know that Paleo Indians crossed the Frio River Valley more than 10,000 years ago following game such as bison and mammoth. After the disappearance of large game, more than 8000 years ago, nomadic hunters and gatherers associated with the archaic culture camped near the river making tools, building fires, processing, and gathering food. Numerous Archaic sites in the Choke Canyon area have been recorded.

Park Activities:

Both Calliham and South Shore offer camping, picnicking, boating, hiking, wildlife viewing, birding, fishing, lake beach and pool (during summer months) swimming, and softball and volleyball areas. Park programs are conducted on scheduled days and per request in advance.

The Park's Facilities:

Calliham Unit: Facilities include screened shelters; campsites with water and electricity (50-amp hook-ups); restrooms with showers; a trailer dump station; walk-in water campsites, which have tables, grills, fire rings, and lantern posts; 4 primitive campsite areas at the out-lying boat ramps (no reservations taken); group picnic pavilions; a sponsored youth group area, which has picnic tables, fire rings, lamp posts, and access to a boat ramp (no drinking water or toilets); a group dining hall (capacity 100) with outdoor grills and restrooms; a group recreation hall (capacity 40), with a kitchen, and a barbecue pit; an amphitheater; a sports complex with a gymnasium (with stage, folding chairs, and air-conditioning and heating - capacity 300); a swimming pool with a bathhouse; shuffleboard, tennis, volleyball, and full basketball courts; and a wildlife viewing blind. There is also a man-made, 90-Acre Lake adjacent to the tent camping area; 2 miles of hiking trails; a mile-long bird trail with feeders; and a wildlife educational center that offers educational programs.

Special Alert: Campers who will be arriving after 10 p.m. should call the park before 5 p.m. to get the gate combination. Park gates open at 5 a.m. and close at 10 p.m.

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South Shore Unit:

Facilities include shaded picnic sites on the lake; outside rinse-off showers in the day-use area; restrooms with showers; campsites with water and electricity; walk-in campsites with water in the area; group picnic pavilions; a group picnic pavilion with overnight campground; a concession stand (seasonal); a .25-mile hiking trail; a .25 birding trail; a trailer dump station; baseball and volleyball areas; a 6-lane boat ramp and an auxiliary 2-lane boat ramp; a canoe/boat launch; a fishing platform; lighted fish cleaning tables; overlook shelters; playgrounds; and North Shore Area, 1725 acres with 4 hike-in, developed group campsites with tables, lamp posts, and fire rings, but no water or toilets. (During the periods of low rainfall, the ramp is not available. Check at headquarters concerning availability.)

Special Alert: Campers who will be arriving after 10 p.m. should call the park before 5 p.m. to get the gate combination. Park gates open at 5 a.m. and close at 10 p.m.

Flora/Fauna:

The reservoir and surrounding terrain are characterized by eroded, gently-rolling brush land crossed by silted stream valleys. The land was formed during the Cenozoic Era (the period following extinction of the dinosaur) by accumulating sediments from seas that once covered south Texas. Ancient rivers flowing to the southeast dumped their sediments into what was then part of the Gulf of Mexico, producing new land. Seas intermittently covered the newly-formed land by river-carried sediments which eventually dominated. These sediments are generally composed of volcanic ash, claystone, siltstone, tuff, shale, and shaley limestone. The present location of Choke Canyon Dam is near the ancient Gulf shoreline of about 30 million years ago. Erosion of these sediments and subsequent deposits of river silt eventually produced the present terrain.

Both Calliham and South Shore have a wide variety of wildlife that inhabits dense thickets of mesquite and blackbush acacia. Choke Canyon is the western-most common occurrence of the American alligator. Rio Grande turkey, whitetail deer, javelina, coyote, opossum, fox squirrel, raccoon, and various skunks are among the most common animals.

The crested caracara (Mexican eagle) can also be seen in the area. The following fish are in the reservoir: largemouth bass, white bass, striped bass, white crappie, bluegill, longear sunfish, green sunfish, flathead, channel and blue catfish, carp, freshwater drum, and gar.

Directions:

South Shore Unit is located 3.5 miles west of Three Rivers on State Highway 72. Calliham Unit is located 12 miles west of Three Rivers on State Highway 72 to Tilden.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Colorado Bend State Park

Box 118

Bend TX 76824

915/628-3240

Colorado Bend State Park, a 5328.3-acre facility, is located west of Lampasas in San Saba and Lampasas counties.

The Park's History:

The park is located at the former sites of the Gorman and Lemons Ranches above Lake Buchanan.

Park Activities:

The park currently offers access to primitive camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, mountain biking, birding, and nature watching, and guided tours. When Lake Buchanan is near normal levels, the river is navigable from the park's boat ramp all the way to the lake, approximately 10 miles. This is a trip on slow moving water through the beautiful canyon lands of the Colorado. Other day activities include guided tours to Gorman Falls and guided, wild cave tours, both walking and crawling. Reservations are highly recommended for the cave tours. Substantial footwear is recommended for all tours.

The Park's Facilities:

The main camping area offers park-at-site developed sites (with picnic tables, fire rings with cooking grills, a lantern post, potable water in the area); walk-in developed sites (with picnic tables, fire rings with cooking grills, a lantern post, and potable water in the area); chemical toilets, a fish-cleaning table, and a boat ramp. There are also 2 back pack areas where you must carry everything you need and pack out everything you don't use.

(Bring containerized fuel to cook; nearest gas station is 35 miles away.) The River Back Pack Area is about 2 miles from a chemical toilet and water faucet. The Windmill Back Pack Area is about 2.5 miles from a chemical toilet and water faucet. Ground fires are also prohibited everywhere in the park except in designated fire rings in the main camping area.

Flora/Fauna:

Birders can enjoy viewing some of 155 species of birds found in the park, including specialties such as golden-cheeked warblers, black-capped vireos, and bald eagles.

Directions:

The park is west of Lampasas, southeast of San Saba. From the intersection of US Highways 281 and 183 in Lampasas, take FM 580 west 24 miles to Bend and follow the signs 4 miles to the park entrance. From San Saba, take US Highway 190 about 4 miles to FM 580 and follow the signs 13 miles to Bend; follow the signs 4 miles to the park entrance. The headquarters and main camping are 6 miles past the entrance on the gravel road (unmarked County Road 442.)

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Confederate Reunion Grounds

c/o Fort Parker State Park

RR 3, Box 95

Mexia TX 76667

254/562-5751

Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historical Park, in Limestone County on the Navasota River, is 77.1 acres in size. The park was acquired in September, 1983 by deed from the Joseph E. Johnston Camp No. 94 C.S.A.

Park's History:

In 1889, twenty-four years after the end of the Civil War, veterans of the confederacy in Limestone and Freestone counties assembled as an encampment and formed the Joe Johnston Camp No. 94 - United confederate Veterans. In 1890, a committee recommended that the site where Jack's Creek enters the Navasota River be acquired as a permanent location for the encampment, and in 1892, the first tract of 20 acres was purchased. In this same year, the encampment obtained a 30-year charter, which was renewed for another 25 years and then allowed to lapse in 1946. In 1965, the Joseph E. Johnston Camp No. 94, C.S.A. was permanently chartered as a non-profit corporation; and in September, 1983, the corporation donated the confederate Reunion Grounds to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Park's Activities:

Attractions include historic buildings such as the 1872 Heritage House, an 1893 dance pavilion, as well as a Civil War, vintage, steel-barreled Val Verde cannon, two scenic footbridges that span Jock's Creek, a hiking trail, fishing, and boating/canoeing. The canoe trip from Confederate Reunion Grounds to Fort Parker is a 3-mile trip on the Navasota River. Fort Parker State Park offers shuttle service when prearranged.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include picnic sites, restrooms, pavilion, playground, two historic structures, and 1/2-mile hiking trail with footbridges. The group pavilion may be reserved through the Central Reservation System. If a group wishes to reserve it for an overnight activity, overnight camping is allowed by making arrangements with Fort Parker.

Flora/Fauna:

Large burr oak trees shade the park, and a variety of hardwood trees surround the Navasota River.

Directions:

The park entrance is 6 miles south of Mexia on State Highway 14, then 2.5 miles west on FM 2705.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Dinosaur Valley State Park

P O Box 396

Glen Rose TX 76043

254/897-4588

Dinosaur Valley State Park, located just northwest of Glen Rose in Somervell County, is a 1524.72-acre, scenic park set astride the Paluxy River.

The Park's History:

Eastward-dipping limestone sandstone, and mudstone, deposited from approximately 113 million years ago along the shorelines of an ancient sea, form the geological setting for the park area.

Park Activities:

Dinosaur Valley State Park contains some of the best preserved dinosaur tracks in the world. The dinosaur tracks are located in the riverbed, so please call ahead to check on river conditions. Other activities include camping, picnicking, hiking, mountain biking, river swimming and fishing, and wildlife observation.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include campsites with water and electricity; restrooms with showers; and walk-in water sites, which have tables, grills, and water in area. South Primitive, a 100-acre site 1/4 mile in, is for equestrian and primitive camping. The area has ground fire rings; no water or restrooms at campsites; no tables. Backpack campsites are from 1 to 5.5 miles in to the North Primitive area; no restrooms in the area; water is available at the trail head. There are 7 miles of trails for hiking and backpacking and 5.5 for mountain biking.

Flora/Fauna:

The Paluxy River runs through the area, and the terrain is wooded, hilly, and semi-rocky. Plants in the Paluxy River drainage are characteristic of the Cross Timbers and Prairie vegetation areas. The uplands show similarities with the plants of the Edwards Plateau to the south and west. The area hosts many species of both resident and migrant birds including the endangered Golden-Cheek Warbler and the Black-Capped Vireo along with wild turkeys. Mammals known to live in this environment include white-tailed deer, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, beaver, skunk, opossum, armadillo, fox squirrel, rabbit, and small rodents. There are also several kinds of lizards and snakes, and a variety of fish live in suitable portions of the river. A bird checklist is available at park headquarters.

Directions:

The park is located 4 miles west of Glen Rose. Take US Highway 67 to FM 205 for 4 miles to Park Road 59; then go one mile to the headquarters. There is an honor box located at headquarters for collecting fees after office hours.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Enchanted Rock State Natural Area

16710 Ranch Rd 965

Fredericksburg TX 78624

915/247-3903

Enchanted Rock State Natural Area consists of 1643.5 acres on Big Sandy Creek, north of Fredericksburg, on the border between Gillespie and Llano Counties. Enchanted Rock was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1970 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The Rock is a huge, pink granite boulder that rises 425 feet above ground, 1825 feet above sea level, and covers 640 acres. It is the second largest batholith (underground rock formation uncovered by erosion) in the U. S.

The Park's History:

Tonkawa Indians believed ghost fires flickered at the top, and they heard weird creaking and groaning, which geologists now say resulted from the rock's heating by day and contracting in the cool night. The first well-documented explorations of this area did not begin until 1723 when the Spanish intensified their efforts to colonize Texas. During the mid-1700s, the Spaniards made several trips to the north and northwest of San Antonio, establishing a mission and presidio on the San Saba River and carrying out limited mining on Honey Creek near the Llano River.

Park Activities:

Visitors can enjoy primitive backpacking, camping, hiking, technical and rock climbing, picnicking, geological study, bird watching, and star gazing (minimal light pollution). Park resources are protected by law! Bring your own firewood. Rock climbers must check in at headquarters; route maps and climbing rules available.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with showers; walk-in water sites (25 to 100 yards) with tent pads, picnic tables, fire rings, and water and restrooms with showers nearby; hike-in primitive sites, located in three unique areas with composting toilets (backpack camping in designated areas only); picnic sites for day-use with tables and grills; a group picnic area with a pavilion and restrooms; a 4-mile trail for backpacking/day hiking that winds around the granite formations; a short, steep trail leading up to the top of Enchanted Rock (foot traffic only).

Flora/Fauna:

The four major plant communities of Enchanted Rock are open oak woodland, mesquite grassland, floodplain, and granite rock community. Live oak, post oak, and blackjack oak dominate the oak woodland, with black hickory in moister areas. Common shrubs are Texas persimmon, agarita, white brush, and prickly pear. Bluestem, three-awn, and grama grass often are found in the shade of the oaks, while American tripogon is more common on gravelly slopes which are seasonally wet. The mesquite grassland, once an area of bluestem, is now covered with three-awn, grama, Texas winter grass, panicum, and sand bur, along with invading mesquite. Elm, pecan, hackberry, black hickory,

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

soapberry, and oak characterize the floodplains. Common shrubs are white buckeye, agarita, Texas persimmon, Roosevelt weed, and buttonbush. Grasses and sedges, as well as annual and perennial herbs, form the ground cover. Some of these are water bentgrass, late eupatorium, Indian grass, bushybeard bluestem, frost weed, and switchgrass. In the spring bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, yellow coreopsis, bladderpod, and basin bellflower bloom.

Both rock and fox squirrels are common, as are armadillos, rabbits, and other small animals. Lizards and turkey vultures are conspicuous on and above the rock year-round. White-tailed deer are frequently observed, and the park's bird life is varied and abundant. A bird checklist for the park is available upon request.

Directions:

The park is 18 miles north of Fredericksburg on Ranch Road 965, or from Llano, take State Highway 16 for 14 miles south and then go west on Ranch Road 965.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Fairfield Lake State Park

RR 2 Box 912

Fairfield TX 75840

903/389-4514

Fairfield Lake State Park is 1460 acres northeast of the City of Fairfield in Freestone County.

The Park's History:

The history of the area around Fairfield Lake State Park resembles that of much of rural eastern Texas. Long occupied by Native Americans who exploited its waterways, the land was first broken in the mid-nineteenth century and planted in cotton and corn by Anglo farmers and, about a third of the time, their African-American slaves. Following the Civil War, the crop-lien system took root. Since that time, cattle ranching has prevailed throughout the region.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping, backpacking, hiking, nature study, bird watching, boating on this 2400-acre lake, water skiing, fishing, and lake swimming in a large, buoyed, sandy area. FAIRFIELD BALD EAGLE TOURS: As the winter migrating bald eagles find their way south, Texans will again have the opportunity to view this majestic bird at Fairfield Lake. Participants will board a two-level, 40-foot tour boat and cruise the winter feeding waters of our national symbol. Conducted each Saturday from November 2 through the end of February, this activity has grown in popularity since its inception in 1992.

The Park's Facilities:

There are campsites with water (most on the lakefront); campsites with water and electricity; a hike-in primitive camping area (at the end of a 6-mile, roundtrip hiking trail), a 2-mile nature trail, and 1 mile of bird watching trail, for a total of 9 miles of multi-use trails for both hiking and mountain biking; picnicking; an overflow camping area; restrooms with and without showers.

Flora/Fauna:

Surrounding woods are oak, hickory, cedar, elm, dogwood, and redbud, which offer sanctuary for many species of birds. Wildlife found in the park include osprey (year-round), bald eagles (November through February), white-tailed deer, raccoons, foxes, beavers, squirrels, and armadillos.

Directions:

The park is 6 miles northeast of Fairfield off FM 2570 on FM 3285 adjacent to Fairfield Lake.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Fort Parker State Park

RR3, Box 95

Mexia TX 76667

254/562-5751

Fort Parker State Park includes 1458.8 acres (758.8 land acres and a 700-acre lake); between Mexia and Groesbeck, in Limestone County. It was opened to the public in 1941.

The Park's History:

Fort Parker State Park was created in 1935 on land donated by the City of Mexia and three local landowners. The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed all the recreational facilities in the late 1930s, and built a dam across the Navasota River in 1939, creating Fort Parker Lake.

The park was named for Fort Parker, a nearby historic settlement established in 1833, and the site of the well-known Comanche Indian raid in May 1836, during which Cynthia Ann Parker was captured. During captivity, Cynthia Ann became the mother of the last great Comanche chief, Quanah Parker. The old fort was reconstructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1936. See Old Fort Parker State Historical Park.

Park Activities:

Fort Parker offers camping, picnicking, swimming in an unsupervised swimming area, fishing, bird watching, hiking, biking, canoeing, nature study, and paddle boating. The canoe trip from Confederate Reunion Grounds to Fort Parker is a 3-mile trip on the Navasota River.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with and without showers; picnic sites; a group picnic pavilion; tables grouped in several areas; campsites with water and electricity; a 1-mile, multi-use trail for hiking and mountain bike riding; and fish-cleaning facilities. Canoes and paddle boats are rented year-round from the Texas State Park Store.

Flora/Fauna:

Frequently seen in the park are bluebird, duck, heron, migratory waterfowl, coyote, raccoon, squirrel, and bobcat. Popular fish include crappie, bass, catfish, and trout in season.

Directions:

The park is located, 7 miles south of Mexia or 6 miles north of Groesbeck on State Highway 14; entrance is on Park Road 28.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Garner State Park

HCR #70 Box 599

Concan TX 78838

830/232-6132

Garner State Park is 1419.8 acres (10 water acres of the Frio River) of recreational facilities in northern Uvalde County.

The Park's History:

Garner State Park is one of the true beauty spots of Texas found in the northern part of Uvalde County. Located thirty miles north of Uvalde and seven miles north of Con Can, Garner State Park has ten acres of riverfront. The park was acquired in 1934-36 and was named for John Nance Garner (Cactus Jack) of Uvalde, who served as Vice-President of the United States from 1933-41.

Park Activities:

The park offers camping, hiking, nature study, picnicking, canoeing, fishing, swimming in the Frio River (unsupervised), seasonal miniature golf, and paddle boat rentals (mid-March through November), bike riding (surfaced).

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include campsites with water; campsites with water and electricity; screened shelters; an overflow camping area; a picnic shelter with a kitchen; a dining hall; restrooms with showers; picnic sites; a group camp with screened shelters adjacent to a dining hall; .6 miles of surfaced road area for bike riding and day hiking; 5.5 miles of unpaved trails for hiking.

Flora/Fauna:

The park is in abundance with Whitetail deer, Rio Grande turkey, Morning dove, Eastern bluebirds, Golden-cheeked Warblers, Black Rocks squirrels, Fox squirrels, Raccoons, and many other animal species. There is also an abundance of trees such as Texas Red Bud, Bald Cypress, Western Ash Juniper, Spanish Oak, Lacey Oak, Texas Madrone, Cedar Elm, and Pecan, as well as Mountain Laurel and Agarita shrubs.

Directions:

The park is located in Uvalde County, 31 miles north of the town of Uvalde, 9 miles south of Leakey, or 8 miles north of Concan on the Frio River. From US Highway 83, turn east on FM 1050 for .5 miles to Park Road 29 to the new entrance.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Goliad State Historical Park

108 Park Rd 6

Goliad TX 77963-3206

512/645-3405

Goliad State Historical Park is 188.3 acres, located by Goliad in Goliad County. In 1931, acreage was accepted by the State Legislature from the City and County of Goliad and transferred to the State Parks Board in 1949.

The Park's History:

The park, located on the San Antonio River, contains a refurbished replica of Mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga, reconstructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. The park also contains General Ignacio Zaragoza's Birthplace, Plaza, and Amphitheater, which are located near Presidio La Bahia.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating (no ramps provided for river access), swimming, nature study, petting zoo, and historical study. There is historical study through guided interpretive tours; tour fees apply. Museum hours are 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include a museum; the reconstructed, refurbished replica of Mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga; a workshop; an interpretive center; screened shelters; campsites with water and electricity; campsites with water, electricity, and sewer; walk-in primitive campsites with fire rings, lantern posts; and nearby water faucets (500'+ in; no motorized vehicles; parking provided at the trail head); (Special rates are available on all campsites); a trailer dump station; a junior olympic swimming pool (operated by the City of Goliad); picnic sites; a group picnic area with tables; a group picnic area with barbecue facilities; a group dining hall (capacity 80); restrooms with and without showers; a playground; a nature trail .3 mile long; and a river trail of 1.5 miles.

Flora/Fauna:

A nature trail heads from the mission buildings and picnic grounds and traverses typical south Texas brush land or chaparral. The brush land contrasts sharply with the luxuriant gallery woodlands of the San Antonio River floodplain. Birdlife along the trail is especially varied, due to proximity of diverse habitats and to the mild regional climate. There is a designated wildlife viewing area.

Directions:

To get to the park, travel 1/4 mile south of Goliad on US Highway 183 and 77A.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Goose Island State Park

HC04, Box 105

Rockport TX 78382

512/729-2858

Goose Island State Park, 321.4 acres, surrounded by the St. Charles and Aransas Bays, is located north of Rockport in Aransas County. The park was acquired in 1931-1935 by deeds from private owners and Legislative Act setting aside the state-owned Goose Island as a state park. The earliest park facilities were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the early 1930s.

The Park's History:

The "Big Tree," named State Champion Coastal Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*) in 1969, is thought to be one of the largest in the nation. Estimated to be over 1000 years old, the "Big Tree" has a circumference of 35 feet, is 44 feet in height and has a crown spread of 90 feet.

Park Activities:

The activities at the park include picnicking, camping, fishing, boating (motors allowed), nature study, wildlife observation and photography, and excellent birding. Spring migration guided bird tours are held in April each year.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include shaded campsites ("open cabanas") with water and electricity, located on the island near the bay; campsites with water and electricity in a heavily, tree-shaded area; campsites with water in the shady area; a group area; picnic sites (some with shade shelters); restrooms with and without showers; a snack bar within two miles; a fish cleaning shade shelter; a double-lane boat ramp; a 1620-foot, lighted fishing pier with 2 fish-cleaning tables; a group recreation hall with tables and chairs (no kitchen, day or overnight rentals - capacity 50); playground areas; and a Texas State Park Store.

Directions:

The park is located 10 miles northeast of Rockport on State Highway 35 to Park Road 13, then 2miles east to park entrance.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Guadalupe River State Park

3350 Park Rd 31

Spring Branch TX 78070

830/438-2656

Guadalupe River State Park is located along the boundary of Comal and Kendall Counties. It was acquired by deed from private owners in 1974 and was opened to the public in 1983. The park is bisected by the clear-flowing waters of the Guadalupe River. The park is comprised of a 1938.7-acre segment of the Texas Hill Country noted for its ruggedness and scenic beauty.

Park Activities:

The park has 4 miles of river frontage and is located in the middle of a 9-mile stretch of the Guadalupe River. Park visitors may enjoy a variety of outdoor activities including canoeing, fishing, swimming, tubing, picnicking, hiking, and camping. Opportunities also exist for bird watching and nature study.

The Park's Facilities:

Convenient access to the Guadalupe River is available. Campsites with water and electricity are available; another area has campsites with water for tent campers, and a separate area with walk-in tent campsites with water in the area. Drinking water and sanitary facilities are provided at the picnic and camping areas, and the restrooms at the water or water and electricity campsite areas have showers. The park also has 3 miles of hiking trails.

Flora/Fauna:

The Guadalupe River, with banks lined by huge bald cypress trees, is the park's most outstanding natural feature. The river courses over four natural rapids; and two steep limestone bluffs reflect its awesome erosive power. Trees in lower elevations and bottom lands include sycamore, elm, basswood, pecan, walnut, persimmon, willow, and hackberry. In the uplands away from the river, the limestone terrain is typical of the Edwards Plateau and has oak and juniper woodlands, with interspersed grasslands. One area of virgin Ashe juniper woodland provides the proper nesting habitat for the rare golden-cheeked warbler. In addition to numerous species of birds, the park supports a wide variety of wild animals including white-tailed deer, coyote, gray fox, skunk, raccoon, opossum, bobcat, and armadillo. Other small species abound.

Directions:

The park is located 30 miles north of San Antonio at the north end of Park Road 31. It may be reached by traveling west on State Highway 46, 8 miles west of the intersection of State Highway 46 and US Highway 281 or by traveling eastward on State Highway 46, 13 miles east of Boerne.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Hill Country State Natural Area

RR 1 Box 601

Bandera TX 78003

830/796-4413

Hill Country State Natural Area is located in Bandera and Medina Counties, 45 miles northwest of San Antonio. The 5369.8-acre site was opened to the public in 1984.

Park Activities:

Recreational activity centers around 36 miles of 23 designated, multi-use trails open to backpacking, horseback riding, and mountain bicycling. Four miles are reserved strictly for horses and hikers. The park offers a backcountry setting for activities such as primitive camping, backpacking, limited swimming, fishing, mountain bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, equestrian camping, and flora and fauna observation.

The following facilities are on the Central Reservation System (CRS):

Three Walk-in, Developed (tent) Areas, are located along the creek. West Verde Creek Area (maximum 50 yards in), has 3 sites; 2 have a capacity of 6, and one is capacity 25. Comanche Bluff Area (maximum 25 yards in), has 3 sites; one site has a capacity of 12, 2 sites have a capacity of 6. Chaquita Falls Area (maximum 75 yards in), has 4 sites with a capacity of 6 each. Sites have fire rings, picnic tables, and West Verde Creek which offers swimming and moderate fishing opportunities; there are chemical toilets nearby. Bring your own drinking water.

The following camping area is not on the CRS:

Four Backpack (Primitive, designated) Camping Areas have fire rings and are located 1.5 to 3.5 miles from the trail head parking - Spring Falls (capacity 6, Butterfly Springs (capacity 6), Wilderness Camp (capacity 40, and Hermit's Shack (capacity 40). Call the park for availability. Bring your own drinking water.

Flora/Fauna:

The Hill Country State Natural Area is a scenic mosaic of rocky hills, flowing springs, oak groves, grasslands, and canyons. The West Verde Creek has several spring-fed streams, and tanks in the park provide several swimming holes with limited fishing for catfish, perch, and large-mouth bass. Large numbers of birds, deer and other small animals live in the park.

Directions:

From Bandera, travel south on State Highway 173, go across the Medina River and continue for approximately 1/4 mile to State Highway 1077, turn right and go 10 miles on State Highway 1077 to end of the black top. Continue on the caliche road and follow the park signs to the park headquarters.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Huntsville State Park

P O Box 508

Huntsville TX 77342-0508

409/295-5644

Huntsville State Park is a 2083.2-acre recreational area, six miles southwest of Huntsville, in Walker County

The Park's History:

The Huntsville-Walker County Chamber of Commerce dedicated and opened Huntsville State Park to the public on Friday, May 18, 1956.

Park Activities:

The heavily-wooded park adjoins the Sam Houston National Forest and encloses the 210- acre Lake Raven. The park offers camping, hiking, biking, boating, miniature golf, horseback riding, fishing, swimming in unsupervised swimming area, boat rentals, and nature study.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include picnic sites; tent campsites with water; campsites with water and electricity; screened shelters; a screened, group picnic pavilion (capacity 75); a group recreation hall (capacity 200); a trailer dump station; restrooms with and without showers; a bathhouse; a Texas State Park Store; fishing piers; fish-cleaning tables; boat rental (seasonal, including paddle boats, canoes and flat-bottoms without motors); boat launching ramps; boat docks; a playground; a 1.3-mile nature trail; 3.2 miles of surfaced bicycle trails; 15.5 miles of hiking trails; and 11 miles of mountain bike trails. Water skiing is prohibited due to the lake's size.

Flora/Fauna:

This park lies in the piney woods of the Sam Houston National Forest, near the western edge of the Southern Pine Belt. These woodlands, dominated by loblolly and shortleaf pines typical of the East Texas Pine Belt, provide attractive camping and picnic areas and surround scenic Lake Raven, a 210-acre impoundment. Lake Raven, fed by three major creeks, offers fishing for crappie, perch, catfish, and bass. Hiking trails have been constructed so that wildlife and birds can be observed in a natural setting.

White-tailed deer, raccoon, opossum, armadillo, migratory waterfowl, and fox squirrel are just a few of the creatures that may be discovered in their natural environment. Occasionally, alligators may be observed in the lake.

Directions:

The park is 6 miles southwest of Huntsville off Interstate 45 on Park Road 40.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Inks Lake State Park

RR 2 Box 31

Burnet TX 78611

512/793-2223

Inks Lake State Park is 1201 acres of recreational facilities adjacent to Inks Lake on the Colorado River in Burnet County. The park was acquired by deeds from the Lower Colorado River Authority and private owners in 1940 and was opened to the public in 1950. Inks Lake is a constant level lake located in the Highland Lakes chain (7 lakes).

The Park's History:

The park area has been used for cattle ranching since the mid-1800s. It remained a part of various ranches until the state acquired the land in 1940. Culverts and roads in the park were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps from the camp at Longhorn Caverns in the 1930s.

Park Activities:

Visitors enjoy camping, backpacking, hiking, and golf. Since Inks is a constant level lake, droughts do not affect water-related activities such as lake swimming (unsupervised beach), boating, water skiing, scuba diving, and fishing. Activities such as nature walks, geology hikes, fish seining, lakeshore ecology, and Junior Ranger programs are conducted on Saturdays in the summer (Memorial Day through Labor Day), and by special request through the park office.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with showers; picnic sites; screened shelters; campsites with water and electricity; campsites with water; backpack sites (1.5 miles in, ground fires prohibited, no drinking water, primitive toilet on trail); a sponsored youth group area (primitive); a group picnic pavilion with tables (capacity 25); an amphitheater; lighted fishing piers; a boat ramp; a playground; 7.5 miles of hiking trails, including 1.5 miles of backpacking trails; a 9-hole golf course, with golf carts and clubs available to rent; and a Texas State Park Store that rents canoes and paddle boats year-round.

Flora/Fauna:

The park is a panorama of cedar and oak woodlands, wildflowers, and pink granite outcroppings in the Central Texas Hill Country. Deer, turkey, quail, numerous songbirds, and other species of wildlife are abundant in the park. The most commonly caught fish are bass, crappie, and catfish.

Directions:

The park is located 9 miles west of Burnet on State Highway 29 to Park Road 4. Go south 3 miles to the park headquarters.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Kerrville-Schreiner State Park

2385 Bandera Highway

Kerrville TX 78028

830/257-5392 or 830/257-CAMP

Kerrville-Schreiner State Park is a 517.2-acre area along the Guadalupe River, three miles southeast of Kerrville in Kerr County. The park was acquired in 1934, by deed from the City of Kerrville. Original park construction was done by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

The Park's History:

The Kerrville area offers much for those interested in the history of the Hill Country and the several cultures which took part in its development. A notable attraction is Camp Verde, on Verde Creek. It was a base for the U.S. Army's experiment using camels for transportation in the desert southwest. It was active from 1855 to 1869 and had about 75 camels stationed there.

Park Activities:

Activities to be enjoyed include boating, fishing, camping, picnicking, unsupervised swimming in the river, bird watching, hiking, walking, and cycling. The park rents tubes and canoes year-round.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with showers; picnic sites with and without shade shelters; hike-in primitive campsites (no fire ring; water within one mile); campsites with water nearby; campsites with water and electricity (back-in and pull-through); two group picnic areas (large fire pit, drinking water); a group dining hall (with a full kitchen) which can be used as a group shelter area; recreation hall, tables, chairs, a restroom without showers, and a kitchen); 8 miles of hiking trails; 6 miles of mountain bike trails; a lighted fishing pier; a playground; and a convenience store within .5 mile.

Flora/Fauna:

The park offers a representative sampling of Hill Country landscape, with acres of juniper, live oak, and Spanish oak populating the hills and arroyos. Other plants include redbud, sumac, buckeye, pecan, mesquite, and several varieties of flowers. The park also has deer, squirrels, armadillos, turkeys, jackrabbits, mallard ducks, and several species of birds. Fish in the Guadalupe River to catch crappie, perch, catfish, and bass.

Directions:

The park can be reached by traveling 3 miles southeast of Kerrville on State Highway 16 to State Highway 173 for 3 miles. The park headquarters building is on the left.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Lake Brownwood State Park

RR 5, Box 160

Lake Brownwood TX 76801

915/784-5223

Lake Brownwood State Park, in Brown County, is 537.5 acres acquired by deed from the Brown County Water Improvement District No. 1 in 1934 that was opened in 1938.

The Park's History:

Near the geographical center of Texas, the park is situated on Lake Brownwood, a 7300-surface-acre reservoir created by damming Pecan Bayou, which is a tributary of the Colorado River. Many structures in use today were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the early 1930s, from timber and native rock found in the park.

Park Activities:

Activities are picnicking; camping; hiking; boating (motors allowed); water skiing (jet skis allowed); fishing; nature study; swimming (in an unsupervised swimming area); and bird watching.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with and without showers; picnic sites; campsites with water in the area; campsites (back-in) with water and electricity; campsites (back-in) with water, electricity; and sewer; screened shelters (picnic table, electrical outlet, water, interior light; no pets; tents only; fish-cleaning facility; a fishing pier with lights; launching ramps; a floating boat dock with boat slip rental and courtesy fuel dock; 2.5 miles of hiking trails; and a .5-mile nature trail. Bring your own firewood.

Flora/Fauna:

The park offers an atmosphere of rustic beauty and tranquility, with miles of shoreline where wildflowers, white-tailed deer, ducks, raccoons, armadillos, squirrels, and birds can be observed in a natural setting. Popular fish include crappie, perch, catfish, and bass.

Directions:

The park is located 16 miles northwest of Brownwood on State Highway 279 to Park Road 15, then east on Park Road 15 for 6 miles.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Lake Somerville State Park & Trailway

Lake Somerville - Birch Creek Unit Lake Somerville - Nails Creek Unit

Rt. 1, Box 499 RR 1, Box 61C

Somerville, TX 77879-9713 Ledbetter, TX 78946-9512

409/535-7763 409/289-2392

Lake Somerville State Park Complex, consisting of the Birch Creek Unit and the Nails Creek Unit, is northwest of Brenham in Lee and Burleson Counties. Birch Creek Unit is 2365 acres in Burleson County on the north shore, and Nails Creek Unit consists of 3155 acres in Lee County on the south shore near the west end of the reservoir. The two units are connected by a 14-mile trail system.

The Park's History:

The Somerville Reservoir was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Work was started in June 1962, and impoundment of water was begun in January of 1967.

Park Activities:

Both units offer a multitude of recreational opportunities such as camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, hiking and biking, volleyball, backpacking, and horseback riding. More than 20 miles of trail are open to hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians affording visitors the opportunity to exercise and enjoy the beauty of the parks. Water lovers can enjoy boating, fishing, swimming, and skiing on Lake Somerville.

The Park's Facilities:

The Birch Creek Unit's facilities include restrooms with and without showers; group picnic pavilions; primitive campsites; campsites with water and electricity. The Nails Creek Unit's facilities include restrooms with and without showers; group picnic pavilions; primitive campsites; campsites with water and electricity; and multi-use trails.

Flora/Fauna:

The terrain is gently rolling. Between the two parks, at the western edge of Lake Somerville, is Flag Pond and numerous other duck ponds, marshes and bogs. The Somerville Trailway passes through dense stands of yaupon, post oak, hickory, blackjack oak, and water oak forests, past scenic overlooks and water crossings. The trail has one of the best spring wildflower displays in the Texas State Park System. Many species of birds and wildlife may be observed and photographed including white-tailed deer, fox, coyote, raccoon, rabbit, waterfowl, and quail.

Directions:

To reach Birch Creek from Somerville, take State Highway 36 north 4 miles to Lyons; go west on State Highway 60 for 8 miles to Park Road 57; then 4 miles to the park entrance. To reach Nails Creek from Giddings, take State Highway 290 east to FM 180. The park is located on FM 180, 15 miles off US Highway 290.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Lake Texana State Park

P O Box 760

Edna TX 77957-0760

512/782-5718

Lake Texana State Park is 575 acres, east of Edna, in central Jackson County, half-way between Houston and Corpus Christi. The park was acquired by a 50-year lease agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation/Lavaca-Navidad River Authority in 1977 and was opened in September 1981. The park is located on Lake Texana, a reservoir on the Navidad River, which covers 11,000 surface acres, with approximately 125 miles of shoreline.

The Park's History:

Lake Texana was named for the historic town of Texana, founded in 1832, near the junction of the Navidad and Lavaca rivers downstream from the present dam site.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping; boating; water skiing; jet skiing; sailing on the main lake; canoeing; picnicking (tree-shaded tables and grills); swimming (undesignated swimming area; no lifeguard on duty); hiking; good birding; and fishing. Interpretive programs are available for groups by special arrangements. Summer interpretive programs are held on Friday and Saturday nights and during the day on Saturdays. Topics vary; contact the park for details.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with and without showers; a 1.5-mile hiking/nature trail (including a .3-mile granite gravel surface meeting ADA requirements); picnic sites (tables, grills, and water faucet nearby); campsites with water hookup; campsites with water and electricity hookup (special rates are available during the off season); a Nature Center and Interpretive Area for special programs; a group picnic area with a pavilion; an amphitheater; lighted fishing piers; a fishing jetty; a double boat ramp; playgrounds; and fish-cleaning facilities on piers and near boat ramp.

Flora/Fauna:

The park is located in the flat Gulf Coast Vegetational Region, but the majority of the park land consists of mixed oak and pecan woodlands associated with the Navidad River.

White-tailed deer, squirrels, rabbits, armadillos, and raccoons are numerous. Alligators are found in the park coves and should not be approached or fed. Popular fish include crappie, catfish, and white bass.

Directions:

The park is located 6.5 miles east of Edna on State Highway 111.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Lake Whitney State Park

Box 1175

Whitney TX 76692

254/694-3793

The 1280.7-acre Lake Whitney State Park was acquired in 1954 by a Department of the Army lease and opened in May 1965; the state has control until 2003. The park is along the east shore of Lake Whitney west of Hillsboro in Hill County, and after the changing of the lake level, totals 955 acres.

The Park's History:

The park is located on Lake Whitney near ruins of Towash, an early Texas settlement inundated by Lake Whitney. Towash Village was named for the chief of Hainai Indians, who moved into the area in 1835.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping; hiking; mountain biking; picnicking; boating; fishing; swimming (buoyed area - no life guard on duty); scuba diving; water skiing; nature study; and excellent birding.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include restrooms with and without showers; picnic sites with and without shade shelters; campsites with water, with and without shade shelters; a group recreation hall with a kitchen, attic fans, central heating, but no air-conditioning; a group camp with a dining hall and 8 screened shelters; a youth group area with a large fire ring and picnic tables - no drinking water or restrooms near; a fish-cleaning facility; a launching ramp; a playground; and a 1-mile multi-use trail for hikers and bicyclists.

Flora/Fauna:

The park is located in the Grand Prairie sub region of the Black land Prairie natural region. It has open disturbed tallgrass prairie remnants with scattered groves of live oak and a small area of post oak/blackjack oak woodland. In the spring, bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes, and over 40 species of wildflowers cover the roadside and landscape.

Common animals include white-tailed deer, raccoons, and squirrels with fox, coyote, and bobcat occasionally being spotted. 194 species of birds have been spotted, including wild turkeys and bald eagles.

Directions:

To reach the park from Interstate 35, take the Hillsboro exit. In Hillsboro take State Highway 22 west to Whitney; then follow the signs to Lake Whitney State Park. The park is located 3 miles west of Whitney on FM 1244 on the shore of Lake Whitney.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Lost Maples State Natural Area

HCR 1, Box 156

Vanderpool TX 78885

830/966-3413

Lost Maples State Natural Area covers 2174.2 scenic acres in Bandera and Real Counties, north of Vanderpool on the Sabinal River. The annual visitation is 200,000 visitors.

The Park's History:

Archaeological evidence shows that this area was used by prehistoric peoples at various times. In historic times, which began with Spanish exploration and colonization efforts in the late 17th century, the Apache, Lipan Apache, and Comanche Indians ranged over the land and posed a threat to settlement well into the 19th century.

Park Activities:

Visitors enjoy picnicking, camping, backpacking, sightseeing, hiking, photography, bird watching, fishing, swimming, and nature study. People should stay on designated trails, because maples have a shallow root system, and soil compaction from walking can damage the trees. Do not hike or climb on rocks or hillsides.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities provided include restrooms with showers, picnic sites, primitive camping areas, a comfort station, campsites with water and electricity, approximately 1/2-mile of nature trails, and 11 miles of hiking trails. Accessibility for the disabled: restrooms and picnic tables; can drive approximately 1 mile into park to view foliage.

Flora/Fauna:

The park is an outstanding example of Edwards Plateau flora and fauna. It features a large, isolated stand of uncommon Uvalde Bigtooth Maple, whose fall foliage can be spectacular. Generally, the foliage changes the last two weeks of October through the first two weeks of November. The park is extremely popular during the fall and is often crowded. Parking is limited to 250 cars, so for maximum enjoyment and serenity, we suggest visitors schedule trips during the weekdays, if possible. To obtain information before planning a visit in October or November, call 1-800-792-1112 and select 3 and then 1 for weekly, foliage updates during those two months. Rare species of birds, such as the Green Kingfisher, can be seen year-round. The endangered Black-capped vireo and Golden-cheeked warbler nest and feed in the park in spring and early summer. Wild animals include gray fox, white-tailed deer, armadillo, raccoon, bobcat, rock squirrel, and javelina.

Directions:

The park is located 5 miles north of Vanderpool on Ranch Road 187.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Matagorda Island State Park and Wildlife Management Area

P O Box 117, 16th Street and I/C Canal

Port O'Connor TX 77982

512/983-2215

Matagorda Island State Park and Wildlife Management Area is one of the barrier islands that borders the Gulf to protect the mainland from the great tides and strong wave action of the open ocean. The park and wildlife management area occupy about 43,893 total acres; the park area is approximately 7,325 acres.

The Park's History:

Prehistoric and the much later Karankawa Indians used the island until they were driven off by European settlers. Often six feet tall, carrying giant bows, and covered with dirt and alligator grease to repel mosquitoes, the Karankawas appeared fierce and imposing to the Europeans. Historical highlights include visits by Cabeza de Vaca, Rene Robert Sueil de La Salle, and Jean Lafitte. The island featured prominently in the growth of Texas.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping, hiking, bicycling, surfing, swimming, beach combing, bird watching, nature study, fishing, a passenger ferry, on-island shuttle, and scheduled tours.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include primitive camping on the Beach Campground, which is a two-mile stretch of Gulf beach, 3.5 miles from the boat dock, is serviced by the island shuttle and has covered picnic tables; the Army Hole Campground, on the bay a few yards from the boat dock, has shaded picnic tables, fire rings, pit toilets, and an outdoor, cold-water shower. There are 38 miles of beach front and 32 miles of paved, shell roadway for hiking, mountain biking, and bicycling. There is no electricity, drinking water, telephone, or concession on the island.

Flora/Fauna:

Nineteen species listed by federal or state government as threatened or endangered are found here, including whooping crane, peregrine falcon, brown pelican, Ridley sea turtle, and horned lizard. Very few amphibians are found on Matagorda Island. Over 30 species of reptiles occur on the island. The largest is the American alligator. Of the 19 species of snakes, the most frequently encountered include western diamondback rattlesnake, speckled king snake, and western coachwhip.

Directions:

The headquarters is in Port O'Connor at the intersection of 16th Street and Intercoastal Canal. The only access is by boat; the Matagorda Ferry that operates on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. There is a fee.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

McKinney Falls State Park

5808 McKinney Falls Parkway

Austin, TX 78744

512/243-1643

McKinney Falls State Park in Travis County, in south Austin, is a 744.4-acre park acquired in 1970 from private donation and opened to the public in 1976.

The Park's History:

The park is named for Thomas F. McKinney, who came to Texas in the early 1820s as one of Stephen F. Austin's first 300 colonists. Sometime between 1850 and 1852, McKinney moved to Travis County and his property on Onion Creek, where he became a prominent breeder of race horses with his own stable and private track. He built his large two-story home, stone fences, and the first flour mill in the area with slave labor.

Park Activities:

Preserved in the park are the ruins of his trainer's cabin and the stabilized ruins of his own homestead. Information on Thomas F. McKinney and the history of the park's land use is interpreted in the Smith Visitor Center. Camping, hiking, mountain biking, road biking, picnicking, fishing, and wildlife observation are other activities. Swimming is now allowed in Onion Creek; call 512/243-1643 for current creek conditions. There are various types of interpretive tours with a fee charged per person; contact the park for specific information/reservations.

The Park's Facilities:

Park facilities include screened shelters with bunk beds (no mattresses); campsites with water; campsites with water and electricity; walk-in water sites (200 yards in with a picnic table, a fire ring, a grill, and water in area); picnic sites; an interpretive hiking trail, approximately 3/4 mile long; 3.5 miles of paved trails; 4 miles of multi-use trails for hiking and mountain biking; an interpretive center with an exhibit room and audiovisual room; a sponsored youth group area; and a group camp which includes the screened shelters located next to the dining hall; the dining hall (capacity 80) may be rented separately for day use. There is also an amphitheater that seats 50 people

Flora/Fauna:

Wildlife to be observed and photographed includes white-tailed deer, raccoons, armadillos, squirrels, and numerous birds (checklist available).

Directions:

The park is located 13 miles southeast of the State Capitol in Austin off US Highway 183. Take McKinney Falls Parkway south, off US Highway 183, straight to the park entrance.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Meridian State Park

Rt 1, Box 2465

Meridian TX 76665

254/435-2536

Meridian State Park, near Meridian in Bosque County, is a 505.4-acre park. A rock and earthen dam was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) on Bee Creek to form the park's 72-acre lake. The park was opened to the public in 1935.

The Park's History:

Tonkawa Indians lived in the surrounding area before the coming of white man; Tawakoni Indians also occupied the area prior to 1841. The Texas-Santa Fe expedition of 1841 passed through Bosque County near the present site of park in Bosque Valley.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping, picnicking, hiking, lake swimming (unsupervised), boating, bird watching, fishing, and bicycling.

The Park's Facilities:

Available facilities are screened shelters; premium sites with water and electricity (pullthrough); regular campsites with water and electricity (back-in for under 20' in length); campsites with water; developed sites with a table and a fire ring (no potable water in the area - restrooms 200 yards to 1 mile away); a group dining hall with a kitchen (capacity 56); a youth group area; a picnic area; restrooms with showers; a playground; 5 miles of hiking and nature trails (250 yards are paved and accessible to the disabled, with benches along the trail); 5 miles of scenic paved road for vehicles and biking; a boat dock; and a boat ramp.

Flora/Fauna:

This park is very wooded with predominantly Ashe juniper and oak, as well as abundant plants and wildflowers. A variety of wildlife and birds includes the endangered Golden cheeeked warbler in the spring. The lake is very popular for bream, crappie, catfish, and bass.

Directions:

Take State Highway 174 from Cleburne, State Highway 144 from Glen Rose or State Highway 6 from Waco. Join State Highway 22 and proceed to the park. Take State Highway 22 from Hillsboro or Hamilton. The park is located about 3 miles southwest of Meridian off State Highway 22.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Mother Neff State Park

1680 Texas 236 Hwy

Moody TX 76557-3317

254/853-2389

Mother Neff State Park, opened to the public in 1937, is the first official state park in Texas. It is named for Mrs. Isabella Eleanor (Mother) Neff who donated six acres of land along the Leon River in 1916 which became the first park site. Her son was Texas Governor Pat M. Neff, who served as Governor from 1921 to 1925. After the death of his mother in 1921, Governor Neff created the Mother Neff Memorial Park which later became the nucleus of the Texas State Park System.

History:

In the 1930's, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) restored the park to its historical setting. An excavation in 1935 unearthed three Indian graves and many artifacts. During prehistoric times this area was occupied by several groups of Indians, including some groups probably related to the Tonkawas. Heavily wooded, the park is ideal for camping, hiking, picnicking, and fishing.

Activities:

The main activities are camping, hiking, picnicking, fishing from the river bank, and wildlife observation. Cultural and natural resource programs and activities and special events are held on weekends.

Facilities:

Facilities include campsites with water and electricity; campsites with water nearby; primitive campsites; a group primitive area; picnic sites; a group (wooden) picnic pavilions and a group (rock) picnic pavilion that are often used for reunions, church group gatherings, and weddings; and a heated and air-conditioned recreation hall with kitchen facilities; restrooms with and without showers; a playground; and an outdoor sports area.

Flora/Fauna:

The terrain consists of prairie land and rugged limestone hills overlooking the rich bottom lands of the Leon River. The bottom lands contain huge pecan, cottonwood, sycamore, and several species of oak trees. The hills are covered with dense thickets of cedar and oak with ravines, where rock cliffs, varied vegetation, and wildlife such as white-tailed deer, raccoons, roadrunners, armadillos, and squirrels may be observed.

Directions:

To reach the park from Interstate 35, take exit 315 to State Highway 107 west to Moody; continue 6 miles west on FM 107, then take State Highway 236 for 2 miles to the park (16 miles from Interstate 35.)

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Mustang Island State Park

P O Box 326

Port Aransas TX 78373

512/749-5246

Mustang Island State Park is 3954 acres with about 5 miles of beach on the Gulf of Mexico in Nueces County, south of Port Aransas. It was acquired from private owners in 1972 and opened to the public in 1979.

The Park's History:

The earliest known inhabitants of Mustang Island were Karankawa Indians, known for their fierceness and cannibalism. The island was first named "Wild Horse Island," then "Mustang," because of the wild horses, called "Mestenos," brought to the island.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping, picnicking, fishing, swimming, hiking and mountain biking on 5 miles of open beach, sunbathing, hiking, and excellent birding, especially during spring and fall migrations.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities near the park headquarters include campsites with water, electricity; shade shelters; and restrooms with showers. Facilities south of the main swimming area include open-beach; primitive campsites (undesignated); widely spaced convenience stations with portable toilets, rinsing showers, and bulk water supply. The first-come, first-served area accommodates about 300 camping units. The 5-mile open beach allows hiking and mountain biking.

Flora and Fauna:

Mustang Island is a coastal barrier island with a unique and complicated ecosystem, dependent upon sand dunes. Coastal dunes are the product of wind-deposited sand anchored by sparse mats of vegetation. The height of well-vegetated dunes may reach 35 feet, though 15-20 feet is average. The dunes are capable of reducing the destructive might of hurricane-driven waves and protecting bay and mainland areas. The island animal community is dominated by rodents such as pocket gophers, spotted ground squirrels, grasshopper mice, rice rats and cotton rats. Large numbers of waterfowl and shorebirds are common. An estimated 600 species of saltwater fish inhabit the waters along the coast.

Directions:

To reach the park, travel southeast from Corpus Christi on State Highway 358 to Padre Island; cross the JFK Causeway; continue one mile to traffic light; turn left onto State Highway 361 (used to be Park Road 53), and go 5 miles north to park headquarters for a total distance of about 22 miles.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Old Fort Parker State Historical Park

Operated by the City of Groesbeck

RR 3 Box 746

Groesbeck TX 76642

254/729-5253

Old Fort Parker State Historical Park, a 37.5-acre park between Groesbeck and Mexia in Limestone County, was deeded by private owners in 1936 and was opened to the public in 1967. It is now managed by the City of Groesbeck.

The Park's History:

Old Fort Parker State Historical Park is a reconstructed fort that pays tribute to the Parker family and other pioneers who paid a high price to settle in Texas. The Parkers and other members of their church came to Texas from Crawford County, Illinois in 1833 Daniel and the majority of his followers settled near the present City of Elkhart, where a replica of their Pilgrim Baptist Church still stands in their memory. Other members of the group preferred to settle farther west, near the Navasota River. Elder John Parker and three of his sons (Silas, James, and Benjamin) began in December 1833 to clear land and to construct "Parker's Fort."

On May 19, 1836, Comanche Indians attacked the fort; 5 were killed, 5 were captured, and the 21 survivors made their way to where Palestine is today. The most famous of the captives was Cynthia Ann Parker. She adapted to Indian ways and later married Chief Peta Nocona. Quanah Parker, the last great Comanche chief, who was involved in the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon, was the most famous of their three children. Springfield was the first county seat of Limestone County. The Springfield Cemetery, located in the park, bears a historical marker. It is where two survivors of the Battle of San Jacinto are buried.

It is not an active cemetery; the oldest tombstone is dated 1849.

Park Activities:

Activities include historical study and picnicking. Visitors can explore cabins, climb the blockhouse, and recapture the atmosphere of that fateful spring day in 1836. Special Activity by appointment: Primitive Skills classes/campout. Call or write the park for information; groups welcome.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include the replica of the stockade fort and restrooms without showers. Water, restrooms, and fire pit with irons furnished. Primitive camping fee.

Directions:

To reach the park, take State Highway 14 out of Groesbeck four miles north to Park Road 35 to park headquarters.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Palmetto State Park

RR 5 Box 201

Gonzales TX 78629

830/672-3266

Palmetto State Park, 270.3 acres, named for the tropical Dwarf Palmetto plant found there, is located in Gonzales County, northwest of Gonzales and southeast of Luling. The park abuts the San Marcos River and also has a 4-acre oxbow lake. The land was acquired by deeds from private owners and the City of Gonzales and was opened in 1936.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping, picnicking, hiking, fishing, birding, nature study, pedal boating, swimming and tubing.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include campsites with water and electricity; a campsite with water, electricity, and sewage; campsites with water; a premium campsite with water (special weekly rates are available on all campsites); a group picnic shelter with kitchen; restrooms with showers; playgrounds; a snack bar within one mile; a trailer dump station; picnic tables; 2 interpretive trails (1 mile); and 3 miles of interpretive and hiking trails. Note: It is recommended that Scouts bring their own drinking water.

Flora/Fauna:

This is an unusual botanical area that resembles the tropics more than Central Texas. The ranges of eastern and western species merge; diverse plant and animal life abound. Artesian wells produce a distinctive, sulphur-laden water. Wildlife in the park includes white-tailed deer, raccoons, armadillos, squirrels, and numerous birds. Over 240 species of birds have been observed within the park's boundaries.

The San Marcos River runs through the park. Boaters can put in at Luling City Park and travel 14 miles to Palmetto, portaging around one dam along the way; or put in at Palmetto and take out at Slayden bridge, 7.5 miles down river. It is a two-day trip from Luling City Park to Slayden bridge, overnighing in Palmetto along the way. We strongly recommend that boaters wishing to overnight call the Central Reservation Center. Take-in and take-out points are limited, mostly bordered by private land. There are no rapids, but almost always a steady current. Check river conditions at the park. Bring your own canoe and arrange your shuttles.

Directions:

To reach the park, travel 10 miles northwest of Gonzales on US 183 to FM 1586, then west on FM 1586 for two miles to Ottine, then south on Park Road 11; or go six miles southeast of Luling on US 183, then southwest on Park Road 11 for two miles.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Pedernales Falls State Park

RR 1 Box 450

Johnson City TX 78636

830/868-7304

Pedernales Falls State Park, 5211.7 acres, in Blanco County east of Johnson City, was acquired from private owners in 1970 and was opened to the public in 1971. It is located along the banks of scenic Pedernales River. **WARNING** - The Pedernales River running through the park can flash flood with little or no warning. The water in the river can rise from a placid stream to a raging torrent in a few minutes. If you are in the river area and notice the water beginning to rise, you should leave the river area **IMMEDIATELY**. Flash flooding is a common phenomenon in the Texas Hill Country, and park visitors are encouraged to be alert to weather conditions.

The Park's History:

This area, formerly the Circle Bar Ranch, typifies the Edwards Plateau terrain.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping; picnicking; hiking; river swimming; tubing; wading; mountain biking; fishing; bird watching (checklist available); and horseback riding.

Park Facilities:

Facilities include campsites with water and electricity (special rates are available); a sponsored youth group area, which may be used by any youth group with an adult sponsor; hike-in primitive campsites (2 mile minimum; no pets allowed; no ground fires); picnic sites; restrooms with and without showers; a trailer dump station; 19.8 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails; 10 miles of equestrian trails; and 14 miles of backpacking trails.

Flora/Fauna:

Well-marked trails pass through hills dotted with oak and juniper woodlands and provide access to more-heavily-wooded areas of pecan, elm, sycamore, walnut, and hackberry in the major drainages. Ash, buttonbush, and cypress grow on the terrace adjacent to the river. The park is not really known as a "fishing" park, but cat fishing is good after a river rise. Wildlife includes white-tailed deer, coyotes, rabbits, armadillos, skunks, opossums, and raccoons. Over 150 species of birds have been seen in the park, and about one-third of these are permanent residents. Pedernales Falls is the park's main attraction and may be viewed from a scenic overlook at the north end of the park.

Directions:

The park may be reached by traveling 9 miles east of Johnson City on FM 2766 or by traveling west of Austin for 32 miles on US Highway 290, then north on FM 3232 for 6 miles.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

South Llano River State Park

HC 15 Box 224

Junction TX 76849

915/446-3994

South Llano River State Park adjoins Walter Buck State Wildlife Management Area, south of Junction in Kimble County. The 2656.9-acre site, adjacent to the South Llano River, was donated to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1977 and was opened to the public in 1990.

The Park's History:

Because of his love and respect for the land, Mr. Walter Buck donated his ranch to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Park Activities:

Activities include camping, picnicking, canoeing, tubing, swimming, fishing, hiking, mountain bike riding, and bird and nature study.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include multi-use campsites with water and electricity at each site and a dump station and restrooms with showers in the area (special rates are available October through February); walk-in campsites with picnic tables and fire rings (30 - 70-yard walk from where the car is parked - drinking water is available to every 4 sites), composting toilets in the area; a picnic and day-use area near the river with picnic tables, waist-high grills, and composting toilets; oxbow lakes; 4 miles of hiking/mountain biking/nature study trails in the Turkey Roost area, which are closed from October through March when Rio Grande Turkey roosts; and hunting blinds available for wildlife photography

Flora/Fauna:

The park has two miles of river frontage, a large pecan bottom, and typical Hill Country areas. The 523-acre, wooded bottom land is home to white-tailed deer and the Rio Grande Turkey. The bottomland represents one of the most substantial and oldest winter turkey roosts in the central portion of the state. The roosting area is closed to park visitors from October through March. Observation blinds are provided to offer visitors a glimpse of the Turkey moving to and from the roost. Other animals include wood duck, white-tailed deer, squirrel, jackrabbit, javelina, fox, beaver, bobcat, cottontail, and armadillo. Several exotic species such as Axis Deer, Black Buck Antelope, and Fallow Deer are often spotted in the park.

Directions:

To reach the park, travel Interstate 10 to Junction, then go south on US Highway 377 for 5 miles to Park Road 73.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Stephen F. Austin State Historical Park

P O Box 125

San Felipe TX 77473-0125

409/885-3613

Stephen F. Austin State Historical Park, 663.3 acres in Austin County, was deeded by the San Felipe de Austin Corporation in 1940, and opened to the public the same year.

The Park's History:

Twelve acres of the park are set aside in honor of the area's past. Located on the Brazos

River, adjoining the old ferry site and a part of the Comercio Plaza de San Felipe, this is the site of the township of San Felipe, the seat of government of the Anglo-American colonies in Texas. It was here Stephen F. Austin, the "Father of Texas," brought the first 297 families to colonize Texas under a contract with the Mexican Government. From 1824 to 1836, San Felipe de Austin was the social, economic, and political center, as well as the capital of the American colonies in Texas. Due to the many historic events that occurred here, the community acquired the reputation "Cradle of the Texas Liberty."

Park Activities:

Activities include picnicking, camping, fishing, hiking, golf, and nature and historical tours.

The Park's Facilities:

Facilities include picnic sites; campsites with water; campsites with water, electricity, and sewer; screened shelters; restrooms with showers; a museum; laundry tubs; a group, screened dining hall for overnight-use, which has a grill, a fire ring, restrooms without showers, 10 picnic tables, a kitchen with a refrigerator and cook stove, and hot and cold running water. (Sleeping in the building is allowed, plus tent camping is allowed outside with no electrical connections.) There is also a group dining hall for day-use (equipped with a kitchen including a cook stove, a refrigerator, a sink, 10 tables, restrooms, and air-conditioning); a group picnic pavilion; a playground; a 5-mile hiking trail; and a .25-mile nature/interpretive trail.

Flora/Fauna:

This forested park is bordered to the north and east by the Brazos River. It provides a natural habitat for deer, squirrels, raccoons, foxes, and opossums. A variety of birds is present year-round. The undeveloped areas of the park permit hiking and river fishing.

Directions:

From Houston, travel west on Interstate 10 to FM 1458 (just before Sealy). Turn right (north) on FM 1458 and then left on Park Road 38.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Parrie Haynes Youth Ranch

Rt 3 Box 209

Killeen TX 76542

254/554-8710

Although Parrie Haynes is owned by a private foundation, it is operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The property consists of over 4,000 acres and can accommodate very large groups of Scouts. The second oldest Live Oak tree in Texas is found on the property.

Camping

All camping is primitive. The normal fee is \$5 per person but will be waived if the group does a service project. Call the phone number listed above to make a reservation.

Directions

From I-35, take Exit #266 and go west on Hwy 195 through Florence. Approximately 11 miles past Florence, near the community of Ding Dong, turn left on CR 2670. Travel approximately 4 miles and turn left on Gann Branch Road. Travel 2.5 miles and enter the Ranch.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Corps of Engineers Parks

Rules and Regulations for Corps of Engineers Parks

Complete rules and regulations are posted at each park. Below are some of the most common that a troop will need to know.

- Camping is permitted only at designated sites.
- Aquatics activities are in designated areas and at one's own risk
- Fishing is permitted in designated areas.
- Campers should keep sites free of trash and litter during the visit. All trash must be deposited in a trash receptacle or hauled out.
- Gasoline and fuels must be in proper containers.
- Fires are permitted in designated areas and must be contained in grills or fire rings.
- Pets must be penned, caged or on a leash.
- Hours of use are posted at each park.
- Firearms, explosives and other weapons are prohibited unless authorized.
- Destruction or defacement of property is prohibited.
- Cutting trees is prohibited.
- Gathering of dead wood is allowed for fires in designated areas.

Reservations

Are made by contacting the individual parks. Phone numbers are listed on the pages that follow.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Belton Lake

3740 FM 1670

Belton TX 76513

254/939-2461

The Belton/Stillhouse Lake Office is located 1 mile south of US 190 on FM 1670 in Belton, TX. Belton Lake is located on the Leon River 16.7 miles upstream of the confluence of the Leon and the Little Rivers, and is in the Northern part of Bell County about three miles north of Belton, TX, and about eight miles west of Temple, TX. The Lake area lies within Bell and Coryell Counties. Belton Lake offers a wide variety of recreation including camping, water recreation, picnic facilities, pavilions for large groups, nature trails, hunting and much more.

Fee Schedule

Primitive campsites at Westcliff Park \$10.00 per night plus \$1.00 per person up to a maximum of \$3.00 per vehicle. Winkler Park \$6.00 per night plus \$1.00 per person up to a maximum of \$3.00 per vehicle

Live Oak Ridge Park –

This park offers both R.V. and tent camping with water and electric available at all sites, and is staffed with full-time gate attendants. This park is well shaded with large oak trees, and campers have access to restroom facilities with showers, a 1-lane boat ramp and a dump station. This park has 48 sites, none of which are pull-through sites or double sites, and all sites are setup for tent, R.V., or trailer.

Cedar Ridge Park –

This Park offers both R.V. and tent camping with water and electric at all 68 sites, and is staffed with full-time gate attendants. This park has two parts to it, but is connected by one entrance, and both are very well shaded. Cedar Ridge Park Camping area has restroom facilities with showers, a 2-lane boat ramp, a fishing dock, a swim beach, a playground and basketball court, and a dump station. Cedar Ridge Park West has restroom facilities with showers, a 2-lane boat ramp, Sunset and Coveside Pavilion, and Pier 36 Marina.

Westcliff Park –

This park has 38 campsites, 27 of which have water and electric, and the other 11 are primitive sites with no water or electric. On the 27 sites with water and electric you may use R.V., tent, or trailer, but on the 11 primitive sites we ask that you use tent only. This park is staffed with full-time gate attendants year round. Campers have access to restrooms with showers, a 2-lane boat ramp, swim beach, and playground. There are very few trees in this park at this time, so there is not much shade; However, most of the sites are near the water and allow you to easily pull a boat up to shore.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Winkler Park –

This park has 15 sites with water, but no electric. There is a camp host that stays in the park year round to watch over things, and campers have access to restrooms with showers. There is some shade in this park, but not on all of the sites.

Owl Creek –

This park has 10 picnic sites with excellent shade at all sites; However, these sites are not close to the water. There is no water or electric available in this park. There is access to restrooms, and a 2-lane boat ramp. Camping is also allowed in this park. There is no fee to use this facility.

Miller Springs –

This area has 5 picnic sites with excellent shade and good water access to the discharge area below Belton Dam. No water and electric is available. This is a great area for fishing, but swimming is not advised below the dam area. Vault restrooms are also available. Camping is also allowed in this area. There is no fee to use this area.

McGregor Park –

This park has 7 picnic sites with excellent water access, but no water or electric is available at the sites. Vault restrooms and a 1-lane boat ramp is available. Camping is also allowed in this park. There is no fee to use this area.

White Flint Park –

This park has 14 sites with no water or electric. This park also has a 2-lane boat ramp and vault restrooms. Camping is also allowed in this park. There is no fee to use this area.

Iron Bridge Park –

This park has 5 sites with no water or electric. This park has a 2-lane boat ramp and vault restrooms also. Camping is allowed in this park. There is no fee to use this area.

Sparta Valley –

This park has 2 picnic sites, a 2-lane boat ramp and vault restrooms. Camping is allowed in this park also. There is no fee to use this area.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Canyon Lake

HC 4 Box 400

Canyon Lake, Texas 78133-4112

830/964-3341

Canyon Lake offers five parks with camping. Fees vary by park. Contact the park headquarters for additional information.

Jacobs Creek Park

This park has drinking water, restrooms, showers, picnic facilities and a boat ramp.

Canyon Park

This park has drinking water, restrooms, picnic facilities, boat ramp and a group picnic shelter.

Potters Creek Park

This park has drinking water, restrooms, showers, picnic facilities and a boat ramp.

Cranes Mills Park

This park has drinking water, restrooms, showers, picnic facilities and a boat ramp.

Comal Park

This park has drinking water, restrooms, picnic facilities and a boat ramp.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Lake Georgetown

500 Cedar Breaks Road

Georgetown, Texas 78628

512/930-LAKE (5253)

Lake Georgetown is located about 3 miles west of Georgetown. The lake was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District to control flooding. The project functions as a water supply for the city of Round Rock and Georgetown. Lake Georgetown has a variety of recreation areas. Activities available include, but are not limited to; camping, picnicking, swimming, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, mountain biking and hiking.

Fee Schedule

Cedar Breaks Park

Campground: Single campsite \$18.00 a day.

Jim Hogg Park

Campground: Single site \$18.00 a day; Double site \$26.00 a day.

Tejas Park:

Single tent site \$6.00 a day.

Cedar Hollow, Sawyer and Walnut Springs Camps are free.

Cedar Breaks and Jim Hogg Park

Are known for their family atmosphere and abundant wildlife. Park Attendants and Park Hosts reside in the parks. Single sites accommodate up to 8 people per site with two pieces of camping equipment. Check out time is 2:00 pm.

Cedar Breaks Park

Has 64 campsites with water and electric hookups. Each site has a back in parking pad, covered picnic table and grill. A dump station is provided for the disposal of wastewater and the restrooms have hot showers and flush toilets.

Jim Hogg Park

Has 148 sites with water and electric hookups. Each site has a 55' back in parking pad, covered table and grill. Sites 1 - 109 also have a ground fire ring. A dump station is provided for the disposal of waste water and the restrooms have hot showers and flush toilets.

Tejas Park

Offers primitive camping that is accessible by vehicle. The park has 12 tent only sites with a picnic table, tent pad and ground fire ring. Potable water is available at a central location within the park. Restrooms that serve this are all vault type. Each site will accommodate up to 8 people and one tent. There are 3 additional camps that are only

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

accessible by hiking or boat. All of these camps have a vault restroom. Each site has a tent pad, ground fire ring and lantern stand.

Potable water is not available. **Cedar Hollow Camp** is located between milepost 4 and 5 on The Good Water Hiking Trail. **Sawyer Camp** is located between milepost 6 and 7.

Walnut Springs Camp

Located between milepost 14 and 15. Careful trip planning is encouraged when using these facilities.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Granger Lake

3100 Granger Dam Road

Granger, TX 76530-5067

512/859-2668

Three parks allow overnight camping. All three parks have electrical outlets, sanitary facilities, drinking water, showers and boat launching ramps. Good fishing opportunities are available at these parks.

Wilson H. Fox Park

Open Year Round. 58 Sites (currently all sites are on a first-come first-served basis). Fees range from \$14 (single site) to \$26 (double site). Has a group shelter (\$40).

Taylor Park

Open March 1-September 30. 48 Sites. Fees range from \$10 (single site) to \$14 (double site). The park has a 3-mile hiking trail.

Willis Creek Park

Open Year Round. 27 Sites (currently all sites are on a first-come first-served basis). Fees range from \$14 (single site) to \$18.00 (single site with sewer hookup). Has a group shelter (\$35).

Friendship Park

Day use only.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Navarro Mills Lake

45

Rt 1, Box 330

Purdon, Texas 76679-9998

254/578-1431

Navarro Mills Lake offers four parks with camping. Fees vary by park.

Oak Park

This park has drinking water, restrooms, showers, picnic facilities, boat ramp and a group picnic shelter.

Wolf Creek Park I & II

This park has drinking water, restrooms, picnic facilities and a boat ramp.

Liberty Hill Park

This park has drinking water, restrooms, showers, picnic facilities, boat ramp and a group picnic shelter.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Proctor Lake

Route 1, Box 71A

Comanche, Texas 76442

(254)879-2424

Proctor Lake has 4 parks with some being exclusively for camping or day use while others have a combination of both. Proctor Lake is located in Comanche County. The lake offers various types of recreation. Some of these are camping, fishing, boating, swimming, hunting, constructed wetlands and much more. Contact the number above for fees.

Sowell Creek Park

Charges a fee for camping. Has showers and sanitary facilities, drinking water, picnic facilities and a boat ramp. Has electrical outlets and a group shelter.

High Point Park

No camping fee. Has sanitary facilities, drinking water, picnic facilities and a boat ramp.

Promontory Park

Charges a fee for camping. Has showers and sanitary facilities, drinking water, picnic facilities and a boat ramp. Has electrical outlets and a group shelter. Has a fishing dock.

Copperas Creek Park

Charges a fee for camping. Has showers and sanitary facilities, drinking water, picnic facilities and a boat ramp. Has electrical outlets and a group shelter. Has a fishing dock.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Somerville Lake

PO Box 549

Somerville, Texas 77879

(409) 596-1622

Somerville Lake is located in Burleson, Lee, and Washington Counties. It is located near Somerville, Texas. The lake offers various types of recreation. Some of these are camping, fishing, boating, swimming, hunting, nature trails, and much more. At times, there are special opportunities for Scouting groups.

Rocky Creek Park

Open year round. 74 campsites with electric service and water hookups; 75 non-electric campsites with water available; 46 primitive campsites with water available. Other facilities include restrooms, showers, playground and boat ramps. Fees range from \$8 (primitive) to \$18 (electric and water). Directions from Austin: Take US 290E to Brenham. Follow Highway 36N approximately 11.5 miles to FM 1948. Turn left. Follow FM 1948 approximately 5 miles. Turn right into park complex.

Yegua Creek Park

Open year round. 47 campsites with electric service and water hookups; 35 non-electric campsites with water available. Other facilities include restrooms, showers, playground, a nature trail and a boat ramp. Fees are seasonal and range from \$10 (non-electric sites) in the fall and winter months to \$16 (electric and water) in spring and summer months.

Directions from Austin: Take US 290E to Brenham. Follow Highway 36N approximately 11.5 miles to FM 1948. Turn left. Follow FM 1948 approximately 2.5 miles. Turn right into park complex.

Overlook Park

Open year round. 25 campsites with electric service and water hookups; non-electric campsites with water available. Other facilities include restrooms, showers, playground, a group shelter and a boat ramp. Fees are seasonal and range from \$12 (non-electric sites) in the fall and winter months to \$16 (electric and water) in spring and summer months.

Directions from Austin: Take US 290E to Brenham. Follow Highway 36N approximately 11.5 miles to FM 1948. Turn left. Cross railroad tracks. Turn right. Follow road for approximately .5 mile. Turn left into park complex.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Stillhouse Hollow Lake

3740 FM 1670

Belton TX 76513

254/939-2461

The Belton/Stillhouse Hollow Lake project office is located 1 mile South of U.S. 190 on FM 1670 in Belton. The Lake itself is located 16 miles upstream of the confluence of the Lampasas and Leon Rivers, these two rivers then form the Little River. Stillhouse Hollow Lake is located entirely within Bell County. Stillhouse Hollow Lake offers a wide variety of recreation including: camping, water recreation, nature trails, hike/bike/equestrian trail, picnic facilities, pavilions for large groups, hunting, fishing and much more.

Fees

Sites with 30 amp breakers \$14.00 per night. Double sites \$26.00 per night. Mini-shelters at Dana Peak \$22.00 per night.

Union Grove Park

This park offers both R.V... and tent camping with water and electric available at all sites, and is staffed with full-time gate attendants year round. Union Grove has a total of 37 campsites. Of these 37 campsites, 7 are tent only sites, 4 are pull through sites, 2 are double sites and the rest of the sites are for tent, trailer or R.V.. use. Union Grove contains restroom facilities with showers, a swim beach and a 4 lane boat ramp. Most of these sites have excellent water access so you can pull your boat up to shore.

Dana Peak Park

This Park offers both R.V. and tent camping with water and electric available at all sites, and is staffed with full-time gate attendants year round. Dana Peak has a total of 25 campsites. Of these 25 campsites, 5 sites are tent only, 2 sites are pull through sites, 3 sites are double sites, 2 sites are mini group shelters and the rest of the sites are available for tent, trailer or R.V. use. Dana Peak contains restroom facilities with showers, a swim beach with change shelter, and a 4-lane boat ramp. most of these sites are close to the water so you can pull your boat up to shore.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Waco Lake

7921 Zoo Park Rd.
Route 10, Box 173G
Waco, Texas 76708
(254)756-5359

Airport Park

Airport Park is located on the North Shore of the lake 1/4 mile west of the dam. From IH 35 take Lake Shore Dr., exit west to Steinbeck Bend Rd., right to Airport Rd. then turn right, go 2 miles - park on the left. The park is currently open year round from 6:00am to 10:00pm. The park has 20 camping units with water and electric hookups and 43 tent camping sites (no electric or water). The campsites with water and electric hookups rent for \$15.00 per night while the tent camping sites rent for \$10.00 per night.

Midway Park

Midway Park is located on the east shore of the South Bosque River. From IH 35 take Hwy 6 for about 5 miles, exit right at Midway Park exit, circle under bridge; park is 1/2 mile down service road. The park is currently open year round from 6:00am to 10:00pm. The park has 27 camping sites with water & electric hookups (\$15.00/night), 4 double sites (\$25.00/night) and 6 sites with 50 amp breakers (\$17.00/night).

Speegleville I Park

Speegleville I Park is located on the west shore of the lake. From IH 35 take Hwy 6 north for about 7 miles to Speegleville Rd., exit right, go 1 mile to stop sign, go straight and curve left, go 1 mile to entrance of park on right. The park is currently open year round from 6:00am to 10:00pm. The park has 6 tent camping sites (no electric or water; \$13.00/night) and 94 campsites with water and electric hookups (\$15.00/night). During the winter months (Oct 1st - March 31st) the 6 tent camping sites and 43 of the sites with water & electric hookups are closed. The park also has a large group shelter, the Bosque Bend Clubhouse, which may be rented by individuals with a large camping group.

Speegleville III Park

Speegleville III Park is located on the west shore of the lake. From IH 35 take Hwy 6 north for about 6 miles, take Speegleville III Park exit to the right, continue straight 1/2 mile to park entrance. The park is currently open year round from 6:00am to 10:00pm. The park has 10 camping sites with water & electric hookups which rent for \$15.00 per night.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Whitney Lake

P.O. Box 5038

Laguna Park, TX 76634 Ph.

254/622-3332

Whitney Lake is located in Central Texas on the main stem of the Brazos River. The Whitney Lake Dam and Powerhouse are located approximately 5.5 miles southwest of Whitney, Texas, 30 miles north of Waco, Texas, and 65 miles southwest of Fort Worth. Camping fees vary by park and type of site.

Cedar Creek Park

Cedar Creek Park is located on the east side of Whitney Lake off of FM 2604. Cedar Creek Park has 20 camp/picnic sites with a ground cooker/fire ring. Water faucets are located throughout the park. There is one restroom (with toilet facilities only) and one, double lane boat ramp in the park. There is also one group pavilion available in the park.

Cedron Creek Park

Cedron Creek Park is located on the west side, approximately halfway up the lake on FM 1713. One side of the park (sites 1-35 or 36-57) is usually closed from October 1 to March 31 each year. There are 57 sites in Cedron Creek Park. All sites have water and 30 amp electrical hookups. All sites also have an upright BBQ cooker and a ground cooker/fire ring. The park also has two restrooms with showers, one small restroom with toilet facilities only, horseshoe pits, a trailer dump station, and a double lane boat ramp. A group camp area that contains eight campsites with water and 30 amp electrical hookups and a group pavilion may be reserved.

Kimball Bend Park

Kimball Bend Park is located on the north end of the lake off of State Highway 174. Kimball Bend Park has 11 camp/picnic sites and one restroom (with toilet facilities only). There is a boat ramp located across State Highway 174 from the camping park. All facilities are free.

Lofers Bend Park

The main entrance to Lofers Bend Park is located on the east end of the Whitney Dam on State Highway 22. After turning into the main entrance, follow the signs to East Lofers Bend Park. There are 66 campsites in East Lofers Bend Park. Six of these sites are water only sites and the rest of the sites have water and 30 amp electrical hookups. All sites have an upright BBQ cooker and a ground cooker/fire ring. The park has three restrooms with showers, a trailer dump station, and two boat ramps. One boat ramp is a double lane boat ramp with adequate parking and the other boat ramp is a shallow, single lane ramp. A group camp area with eight electric campsites and a group pavilion may be reserved.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

West Lofers Bend Park

The main entrance to Lofers Bend Park is located on the east end of the Whitney Dam on State Highway 22. After turning into the main entrance, follow the signs to West Lofers Bend Park. West Lofers Bend Park is usually closed from October 1 to March 31 for the winter season. There are 68 campsites in West Lofers Bend Park. All sites have an upright BBQ cooker and a ground cooker/fire ring. The park has three restrooms with showers, a trailer dump station, and a boat ramp.

McCown Valley Park

McCown Valley Park is located on the east side, approximately halfway up the lake off of FM 1713 Spur. There are 54 campsites in McCown Valley Park. Thirty-one of these sites have water and 30 amp electrical hookups. Fourteen sites have water and 50 amp electrical hookups. Seven sites have water hookups only. All sites have upright BBQ grills and a ground cooker/fire ring. The park has two restrooms with showers, horseshoe pits, a trailer dump station, and a large, three lane boat ramp. McCown Valley Park also contains one of the two swimming beaches on the lake.

Plowman Creek Park

Plowman Creek Park is located on the west side of the lake on FM 56 approximately 1 mile south of Kopperl, Texas. There are 34 campsites in Plowman Creek Park. Twenty-two of these sites have water and 30 amp electrical hookups. Twelve sites have water hookups only. All sites have upright BBQ cookers and a ground cooker/fire ring. The park also has a restroom with showers, a restroom with toilet facilities only, and a trailer dump station.

Riverside Park

Riverside Park is located downstream of the Whitney Dam (State Highway 22) on both sides of the river. On the west side of the river, Riverside Park has five camp/picnic sites, one restroom (with toilet facilities only), and a fishing platform. On the east side of the river, there is one restroom and a gravel access road to the river. (The access road is closed when floodwater is being released.)

Soldiers Bluff Park

Soldiers Bluff Park is located on the west end of the Whitney Dam on State Highway 22. There are 14 camp/picnic sites in Soldiers Bluff Park. There is one restroom (with toilet facilities only) and a day use group pavilion. Camping is free.

Steele Creek Park

Steele Creek Park is located on the west side of the lake off of FM 56 near Lakeside Village, Texas. Steele Creek Park has 21 camp/picnic sites with ground cookers. Water faucets are located throughout the park. There are two restrooms (with toilet facilities only) and two boat ramps in the park. Camping is free.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Walling Bend Park

Walling Bend Park is located on the west side of Whitney Lake off of FM 2841. Walling Bend Park has 10 camp/picnic sites, one group pavilion, two restrooms (with toilet facilities only), and two, double lane boat ramps. Camping is free.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

LCRA Parks

Rules and Regulations For LCRA Parks

- Swimming is prohibited within 50 feet of any public boat ramp.
- Camping is allowed only in those public areas so designated.
- Littering is prohibited. Garbage and waste may be disposed of in trash barrels provided by the LCRA. In areas where there are no trash barrels, campers shall haul trash away.
- Campfires are permitted only in established fire rings or in contained camp stoves.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Destroying timber, shrubs or any other substance, material or geologic feature is prohibited.
- Consumption or display of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- Glass containers are prohibited.
- Quiet time is between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Reservations

Reservations are made by contacting the individual parks. Phone numbers are listed on the pages that follow.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Black Rock Park

Located on Lake Buchanan

(512) 473-4083

Contact the park for fee information.

American bald eagles are known to migrate to Lake Buchanan between November and March. There is a good chance of spotting eagles by boat on the northeast side of Lake Buchanan and farther up the Colorado River canyon. Thousands of visitors flock to the area yearly to see the eagles. The sight of an eagle perched on a high limb is something visitors don't soon forget.

Nature lovers also can catch a glimpse of other wildlife such as great blue herons, kingfishers, double-crested cormorants, road runners and the once-endangered osprey. Often, red-breasted mergansers and many other species of ducks, common loons, horned grebes, Bonaparte's gulls and other marine birds, white-tailed deer and small mammals can be spotted.

Camping

Visitors can camp at one of 30 designated campsites equipped with a table and grill. Water for personal use is available at six potable water outlets located throughout the park. Two restrooms and an outdoor wash-off cold shower are provided at the park. Campers should plan to set up early during busy seasons since camping is on a first-come, first-served basis. Some of the larger campsites can accommodate family reunions.

Fishing

Many anglers choose Black Rock Park as a favorite "hot" spot for bank fishing. Others enjoy casting from a boat in the early morning. Lake Buchanan boasts a variety of fish, including hybrid bass, white bass, black bass, catfish, crappie and perch. Black Rock Park is well known as a great location for striper fishing.

Directions

From Burnet, travel west on Hwy 29 and turn right on Hwy 261. Drive about 4 miles to the park.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Camp Chautauqua

Camp Chautauqua

Route 1, Box 30

Spicewood, Texas 78669

1-512-264-1752

Camp Chautauqua is a 115-acre site owned by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and operated by the Chautauqua Foundation. The camp is in LCRA's Pace Bend Park, about 30 miles northwest of Austin. The camp is designed for overnight use. Reservations are required. Call the park for fee information.

The name Chautauqua refers to the popular turn-of-the-century tent shows that provided education and entertainment to the public in the form of lectures, concerts and plays. Camp Chautauqua features its own modern-day brand of recreation, entertainment and education.

Activities

Camp Chautauqua has a fishing pier, boat ramp and two coves to choose from for fishing, boating and swimming. There is a playground, volleyball courts and a ball field.

Camping

Visitors can select from the following: 4 covered pavilions for picnics, 8 screened shelters, sleeping six persons each, 30 sites equipped with water and electricity for recreational vehicles and 30 campsites. The camp has hot showers and restroom facilities.

Operation schedule

Camp Chautauqua is open year-round. Visitors should check in during gate hours. Summer office hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Summer season is April 1 to Sept. 30.) Winter office hours: 10 a.m. to 12 noon (Winter season is Oct. 1 to Mar. 31.) Special arrangements can be made for late arrival by calling 512-264-1752

Directions

Take State Highway 71 west from Austin to RR2322. Go north 4.6 miles to Pace Bend Park. At the gate entrance indicate you have a reservation and ask for directions to Camp Chautauqua.

Camp Creek Recreation Area

Call (512) 473-4083, or toll free (800) 776-5272, Ext. 4083 for camping information. Covering about 500 acres, Camp Creek Area is located on the upper north side of Lake Travis. It has outstanding natural resources and recreational opportunities with large pecan stands and unique creek bottoms. Diverse vegetation and wildlife can be seen from the loop-shaped hiking trail.

The shoreline at Camp Creek is shorter and steeper than at many of the other properties included in LCRA's Recreation System. Because the 65-mile long Lake

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Travis is the primary flood-control reservoir on the lower Colorado River, the level of the lake can change, sometimes very quickly. Visitors should be aware of fluctuating lake and creek elevations, especially during rains.

Camping

Burnet County operates and maintains a five-acre park (Burnet County Park) along the waterfront of the Camp Creek. Overnight camping is permitted. Facilities include tables, grills, trash cans and a boat ramp. Boaters should avoid using the boat ramp during low water conditions; the end of the boat ramp drops sharply. A wind warning light system is in place at the ramp. When wind speeds reach 18 mph, lights will begin flashing. Organized groups numbering more than 20 persons must have a land-use permit.

Directions

Camp Creek is located on the north side of Lake Travis about 18 miles west of Lago Vista or eight miles east of Marble Falls near the Smithwick community. Take FM 1431 to County Road 343 and continue about one-half mile on this road to the site entrance. The gravel access road to Camp Creek is steep and has two low-water crossing areas. During rainstorms, these may be impassable. This location may not always be barricaded during unpredictable weather events. Visitors should use extreme caution or avoid the area during those times.

Cedar Point Recreation Area

For more information, call (512) 473-4083, or toll free (800) 776-5272, Ext. 4083. Cedar Point, on Lake Buchanan, is open year-round. Please help keep it clean for everyone by depositing litter in the site dumpster or by carrying it out with you.

Organized groups numbering more than 20 persons must have a land use permit. Covering almost 350 acres, Cedar Point Recreation Area is one of the largest public tracts on Lake Buchanan. A long and linear property, it has nearly four miles of shoreline. FM 3014 bisects the property, offering several access points to the lakeshore. Cedar Point has been left relatively unimproved to retain its natural appeal. There are access roads, parking areas, a boat ramp, fire rings, dumpster and a composting toilet. However, no running water or picnic tables are available. Boaters should be cautious when using the boat ramp during low-water conditions. A wind warning light system is in place at the ramp. When wind speeds reach 18 mph, lights will begin flashing.

Camping

Cedar Point is ideal for those who prefer a “natural experience”. Camping is primitive with no running water or picnic tables. Vegetation is very diverse. The site is a favorite spot for viewing wildflowers in the spring. Wildlife is abundant. American Bald eagles winter on Lake Buchanan between November and March. Bird watchers also can catch a glimpse of many other wildlife common to the area. Included are blue herons, white pelicans, double-crested cormorants, roadrunners and the once-endangered osprey.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Directions

Cedar Point is located 25 miles northeast of Llano near the community of Tow. From Llano to the east, take FM 2241 and turn north at Bluffton. Travel approximately 4 miles and turn right on FM 3014, then go 3/10 of a mile to the main site entrance. From Buchanan Dam, to the south, take Highway 261 to Bluffton and follow the same directions.

Grelle Recreation Area

For more information, call (512) 473-4083, or toll free (800) 776-5272, Ext. 4083.

Located on Lake Travis, at more than 400 acres, Grelle Recreation Area is one of the most popular sites in the LCRA Recreation System. It is well-known for its high scenic value and beautiful shoreline on a protected cove. One of the unique features of Grelle is a Hill Country hiking trail that provides foot access to otherwise inaccessible areas of the property. The approximately two mile trail includes a variety of landscape features. Starting with views of Lake Travis, it follows a small creek drainage and finally climbs to an upland plateau, and then loops back to the trailhead.

While not a difficult hike, portions of the trail are fairly steep. The shoreline at Grelle leads to a gently sloping cove. During periods of low water levels on Lake Travis, hundreds of feet of grassy shoreline may be exposed. Because the 65-mile long Lake Travis is a flood-control reservoir, the level of the lake can change, sometimes very quickly. Be aware of fluctuating lake levels, especially during rains.

Fee Schedule

Grelle is open year-round. A \$3 vehicle-entry permit fee is collected at the entrance. The permit is valid for 24 hours. Annual permits are available for the LCRA Recreation System for \$30. Organized groups numbering more than twenty persons are required to have a land-use permit.

Camping

Grelle has only minor improvements, such as vehicle control barriers, signs, a small parking area and a composting toilet. No potable water or trash collection facilities are available. Metal fire rings indicate prime camping locations.

Directions

The Grelle Resource Area is located on the upper south side of Lake Travis near the community of Spicewood. From Austin, to the southeast, take State Highway 71 and turn north on Spur 191 and proceed approximately one mile to Spicewood. Take a right on Burnet County Road 404 and travel approximately one mile to the intersection of Burnet County Road 412, which is a gravel road. Carefully turn left and travel approximately 6/10 of a mile to the entrance for the Grelle Resource Area.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Lake Bastrop North Shore Park

Campers are encouraged to make reservations by contacting the park at (512) 321-3307.

Reservations can be made up to 90 days in advance. Twenty-four hour notice of cancellation is required.

There's always something to do at the Lower Colorado River Authority's Lake Bastrop North Shore Park. Camp in a tent among a thick cover of trees...hook up your recreational vehicle...picnic with the family along the shoreline...swim, fish, canoe, windsurf, sail or skim across the lake on skis.

Camping

Visitors can camp at one of 66 campsites nestled among thick post oak trees. Campers can choose between pitching a tent beneath the stars or parking a recreational vehicle. There are 44 campsites with electricity and potable water, 14 sites with water only, and 8 screened-shelter sites. Guests may use the hot showers in the park restroom. There are also barbecue pits and picnic tables at each site. A sanitary dump station is available at the park.

Activities

Sportsmen and women tell fish stories about Florida large-mouth, black bass, Guadalupe bass, yellow catfish, blue catfish, channel catfish, and a variety of perch found in Lake Bastrop. The unofficial Lake Bastrop record for black bass is 12 pounds and two ounces! And there are lots of ways to fish--cast from the bank or an enclosed lighted fishing dock, or hook a lunker from your own boat. There's also a fish-cleaning table available at the park to filet your catch. Visitors may swim within designated areas on Lake Bastrop. The swimming area prohibits the use of all watercraft. There are no lifeguards provided.

Directions

LCRA's Lake Bastrop North Shore Park is in Bastrop County, northeast of the City of Bastrop. From Bastrop, take Highway 95 north and turn right on FM 1441. Drive 2 1/2 miles to the park entrance and turn right.

Muleshoe Bend Recreation Area

For more information, call (512) 473-4083, or toll free (800) 776-5272, Ext. 4083.

With approximately 1,000 acres, Muleshoe Bend is the largest property in the LCRA Recreation System. Located on the south side of Lake Travis, the property features several miles of shallow, gently sloping, beautiful coves and some steep bluff areas overlooking Lake Travis. Visitors should be aware of fluctuating lake levels, especially during rains.

A 2-mile looped trail is located on the upland area of the property. The trail-head is located directly behind the entrance information sign. Designed for non-motorized traffic only, the trail is suitable for horseback riding as well as hiking. There are excellent views of Lake Travis along this trail.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Fees

A \$3 vehicle-entry permit fee is collected at the entrance. The permit is valid for 24 hours. Annual permits are available for the LCRA Primitive Recreation System for \$30. Organized groups numbering more than twenty persons are required to have a land-use permit.

Camping

Muleshoe has only minor improvements, vehicle control barriers, signs, a small parking area and composting toilets. Metal fire rings indicate prime camping locations. While roads have been improved, they can be very slippery during wet weather.

Directions

The Muleshoe Resource Area is on the upper south side of Lake Travis near the Ridge Harbor subdivision. From Austin, to the southeast, take State Highway 71. Turn right on Burnet County Road 404 and proceed about 4.5 miles to Burnet County Road 414. Turn right and travel about 1.5 miles then take another right just before the entrance to Ridge Harbor. After almost a mile, the pavement will end. Continue for .3 miles on the gravel road to the entrance.

Shaffer Bend Recreation Area

For more information, call (512) 473-4083, or toll free (800) 776-5272, Ext. 4083. Shaffer Bend Recreation Area is located on the upper north side of Lake Travis. The property is distinguished with extensive waterfront, impressive vistas, diverse vegetation and abundant wildlife.

The northern portion of the property is extremely hilly with extensive exposed limestone outcrops and dense cedar stands. Several locations along this uplands area provide excellent views of Lake Travis and the surrounding area. Viewpoints are marked along the park road.

The southern portion of the tract consists of gently sloping bottom land with large oaks and several pecan tree stands. Also, guayacan, a plant not usually seen east of Del Rio, can be found. Shaffer Bend has more than a mile of gently sloping shoreline. Because the 65-mile long Lake Travis is a flood control reservoir, the level of the lake can change, sometimes very quickly. Visitors should be aware of fluctuating lake levels, especially during rains.

Camping

As with many of LCRA's recreation areas, only minor improvements, such as vehicle control barriers, signs and vehicle turn-outs have been added to the property. There are no restrooms, potable water or trash collection facilities. Metal fire rings indicate prime camping locations. While road conditions have been improved on the property, interior roads can be slippery during wet weather and upon occasion have water running across them after heavy rains. Organized groups numbering more than 20 persons must have a land use permit.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Directions

Shaffer Bend is located on the north side of Lake Travis about 17 miles west of Lago Vista or 9 miles east of Marble Falls near the Smithwick community. Take FM 1431 to County Road 343A and continue about one mile to the site entrance.

Turkey Bend Recreation Area

For more information, call (512) 473-4083, or toll free (800) 776-5272, Ext. 4083. Covering about 400 acres, Turkey Bend Recreation Area contains one of the most picturesque coves along Lake Travis and has nearly 2 miles of shoreline. The property is long and narrow in shape, with varied topography ranging from steep shoreline slopes to gentle flats.

Turkey Bend captures a feel for the wilderness because no major development has occurred in the area. While hunting is prohibited at Turkey Bend, it is allowed on the private lands adjacent to the property. Visitors should be cautious during hunting season. Please respect private landowner rights by not crossing any fences. A looped trail along the upper plateau portion of Turkey Bend has been designated for non-motorized use only. Popular with horseback riders and hikers, the trail has spectacular views of Lake Travis and the surrounding area. A trail-head parking area, large enough to accommodate horse trailers, is provided.

Camping

Turkey Bend has had only minor improvements. No restrooms, potable water or trash collection facilities are available. Metal fire rings indicate prime camping locations.

Organized groups numbering more than 20 persons must have a land use permit. Visitors should be aware of fluctuating lake levels, especially during rains.

Directions

Turkey Bend is located on the north side of Lake Travis approximately 9.5 miles west of Lago Vista. Take FM 1431 to Shaw Drive and continue 1.8 miles to the site entrance.

Weekend Camping in Central Texas

Sources for Information in this Booklet

Scout Camps Local to the capitol Area

Capitol Area Council Camps

<http://www.bsacac.org>

Sam Huston Area Council Camps

<http://samhoustonbsa.org>

Longhorn Area Council Camps

<http://www.longhorncouncil.org>

Public Camps local to the capitol Area

Web page of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at:

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>

Web page of the US Army Corps of Engineers - Central Texas Parks at:

<http://swf67.swf-wc.usace.army.mil/>

Web page of the LCRA Parks at: <http://www.lcra.org/lands/parks.html>

Texas State Parks Facility and Fee Guide, Spring 1997, published by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Information packet furnished by the US Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, PO Box 17300, Fort Worth, TX 76102-0300, phone # 817-978-2150.

“Cruising the Colorado” by Paris Permenter and John Bigley. Published on page J6 in the July 19, 1998, issue of the *Austin American-Statesman*.