



## Big Thicket National Preserve



Credit: Dr. Richard Bothel

### A Message from the Superintendent



Dear Friends,

I am inviting you to help us with the next step of developing a new general management plan for Big Thicket National Preserve. With your help, we will create a realistic long-term vision for the future of the preserve that will guide management decisions for the next 20 years. Your continued participation and input are a very important part of the planning process.

The purposes of this newsletter are to

- report on the activities and products we have developed
- familiarize you with the draft alternatives for managing the national preserve
- invite you to attend one of our open houses
- receive your comments regarding the alternatives, activities accomplished, and next steps

Last year, the planning team, in consultation with our partners, prepared a “foundation statement” for the preserve—a statement of its fundamental purpose and significance. The purpose and significance statements are central to the planning process. For this reason, they are included in this newsletter. They were also included in Newsletter 1, which also contained general information about the preserve and information about general management plans. To see that newsletter, visit <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bithgmp>.

Last summer, we invited you to help us imagine the future of the Big Thicket National Preserve as part of our work to develop a new general management plan. Many of you participated in one of four open houses that were held in the towns of Woodville, Silsbee, Beaumont, and Houston, submitted comments on our website, or returned a comment card with your thoughts and suggestions. Many people expressed very specific ideas and concerns about the preserve and its future.

We have taken those comments and used them to help develop three draft alternatives for Big Thicket National Preserve. Each alternative represents a different approach to how the National Park Service (NPS) would manage the preserve. We also will be considering an alternative in which current management practices at the preserve would continue.

I hope that you can join us at one of our four open houses, where my staff and I will be available to talk about the draft alternatives, answer your questions and, of course, record your comments. Your input will again help us as we continue to refine the alternatives.

Aside from attending one of the open houses, the best way for you to share your comments is through the National Park Service planning website. You can write and post your comments at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bithgmp>. Or, you can fill out the enclosed comment card and mail it to us or drop it off at park headquarters north of Kountze. If you have not already joined our mailing list, we hope you will do so now. For details, see the comment card or planning website.

Todd W. Brindle  
Superintendent  
Big Thicket National Preserve

### YOU'RE INVITED TO AN OPEN HOUSE WHERE YOU CAN:

- learn about the park draft alternatives
- talk with the planning team
- discuss your ideas, thoughts, and concerns

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**November 15, 2010, Monday**      5:30 pm – 7:30 pm\*  
Silsbee Community Center  
835 Highway 96 S / Silsbee, TX 77656

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**November 16, 2010, Tuesday**      4:30 pm – 7:30 pm\*\*  
Community Resource Center, Meeting Room C, D  
United Way of Greater Houston  
50 Waugh Drive / Houston, TX 77007

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**November 17, 2010, Wednesday**      5:30 pm – 7:30 pm\*  
Wheat Elementary Cafeteria  
505 N. Charlton / Woodville, TX 75979

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**November 18, 2010, Thursday**      4:30 pm – 7:30 pm\*\*  
Rogers Community Center  
6540 Gladys / Beaumont, TX 77706

\* A brief presentation will be given at 5:45 pm

\*\* A brief presentation will be given at 4:45 pm

## Review of Where We Are in the Planning Process

In the summer of 2009, we asked the public to share their concerns, expectations, and values related to Big Thicket National Preserve. After careful review and analysis of the comments, the planning team developed a list of issues that should be addressed in the general management plan and a range of alternatives for future management of the preserve.

### Public Comments: What We Heard

We have learned a great deal from your thoughtful comments. These comments will be incorporated into development of draft management alternatives for the preserve. A summary of the written and verbal comments follows. If you are interested, the full record of the comments, along with more information about the planning process, is available online at the NPS planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bithgmp>.

### What do people particularly value about Big Thicket National Preserve?

Many people value the biodiversity, natural resources, and wildlife in the preserve, and the fact that the preserve provides for the preservation and protection of wildlife, their habitat, and other natural resources. They also value the scenery, quiet, and solitude of the preserve, as well as the recreation activities and opportunities allowed within the preserve. A few commenters also expressed value in the preserve's cultural resources.

### What concerns should be addressed as part of the general management plan?

The most frequently mentioned topic of concern included incompatible uses or development on lands adjacent to the preserve, urban sprawl and encroachment, prior land uses including logging, as well as the impacts of oil and gas exploration and extraction activities on preserve resources. Concern over habitat fragmentation and lack of connectivity, the presence of and impacts from invasive species, and the loss of species and their habitats were also mentioned. Respondents expressed concerns about trash, litter, graffiti, and vandalism, along with poaching and the presence of houseboats within the preserve. Incompatible recreational uses and impacts to visitor safety were also mentioned along with the lack of support from local communities. Other concerns included possible impacts from additional dams on the Neches River, the proximity of major roads, auto traffic (in relation to visitor safety and experiences), underfunding, and understaffing.

### Input about facilities within the preserve.

Many respondents stated the need to accommodate different user groups and recreational uses as well as to provide greater public access, while others want the preserve to be kept as wild and natural as possible. Some supported development of additional facilities such as boating facilities, picnic areas, and campgrounds (primitive and with hookups). Some also stated their desire for the preserve to provide a canopy walk, overlooks at various locations, and a birding center. Some would like to see the preserve provide alternative transportation to various units within the preserve and potentially from local communities.



### People value many recreational opportunities within the preserve.

There was substantial support for the development of more hiking trails, canoe trails, and bike trails or trails that connect with existing bike trails. Horseback riding, GPS-based recreation activities, and other family-friendly activities were suggested. Others supported the idea of ecotourism and preservation before recreation, and that the preserve should provide preservation compatible with nonconsumptive uses such as, but not limited to, hiking, canoeing, birding, wildlife viewing and photography. There were also comments both supporting and opposing hunting and trapping within the preserve.

### The relationship between the preserve and the community is important.

Respondents would like to have more educational and interpretive opportunities within the preserve and would also like to see continued restoration and preservation of natural and cultural resources within the preserve. Respondents expressed the need to increase outreach to schools, urban areas, communities, and minority populations to generate more public support, promote environmental awareness, and promote understanding of the Native American culture in the preserve.

### Protection of preserve natural resources is a priority for many respondents.

Respondents supported the preservation, conservation, and restoration of natural resources and biodiversity and supported keeping the preserve as natural as possible. Interest in expanding scientific research was also expressed. Respondents stated the need to control or remove invasive species, eliminate impacts from or halt oil and gas operations, acquire mineral rights, prevent the damming of the waterways, and increase water resource management.

### Potential boundary adjustments and designations were suggested to be reviewed as part of the general management plan.

While some did not support land acquisition or boundary expansion, of those who commented, the majority were in support of significant increase in the size of the preserve in order to decrease habitat fragmentation, increase connectivity and public access, and provide buffering of sensitive areas. Some also supported the use of conservation easements. Others shared the desire for the Neches River to be designated as a wild and scenic river, or for the preserve to obtain formal wilderness designation, or for the preserve to be designated a national park. Most boundary changes cannot be completed without congressional action.



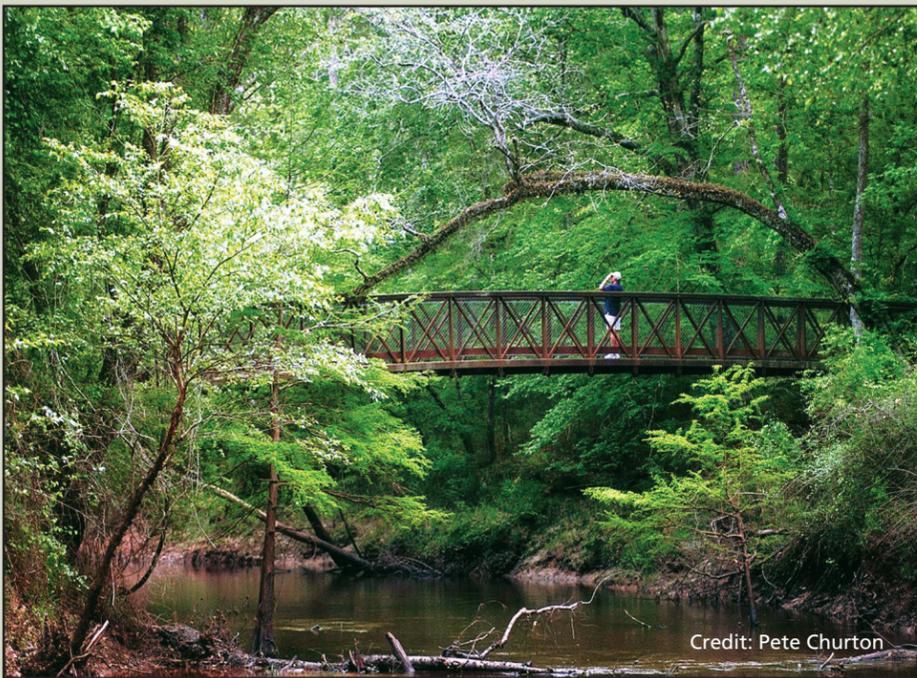
## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding General Management Plan Alternatives

### What is a general management plan alternative?

Each general management plan alternative represents a different approach to managing Big Thicket National Preserve.

To develop the draft alternatives, the general management plan team considered the following:

- Why did Congress establish the national preserve, and what is the purpose of the preserve? What makes it significant? Why is it important in the context of the national park system?
- What are the interests, hopes, and concerns for the future of Big Thicket National Preserve that citizens shared during public meetings and through written comments?
- How can the preserve be operated efficiently and effectively?
- How can the National Park Service best manage the preserve to provide for visitor enjoyment while still meeting all requirements of laws and NPS policy? For example, how can the Park Service continue to provide opportunities for recreation while still protecting the biological diversity of the preserve?

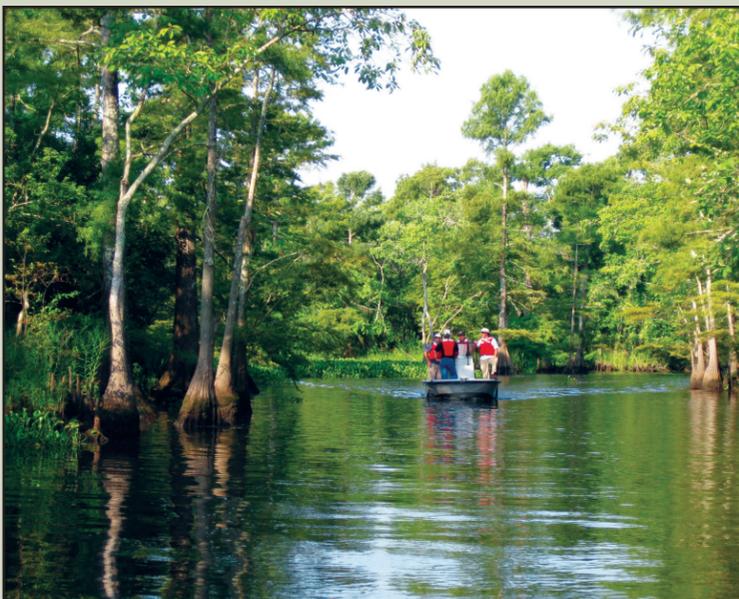


### What is the continuation of current management alternative?

This alternative would continue current management approaches. The 1980 general management plan, previous practices, and approved actions would provide the management direction for the preserve. Substantial new or expanded uses would not be anticipated; new actions would include only those that are already funded or are expected to be funded.

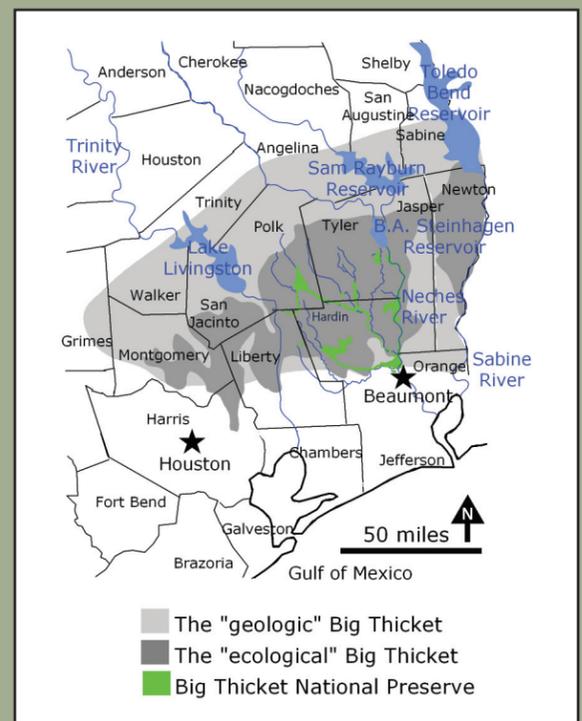
### What are management zones?

Management zones define the types of visitor experiences the National Park Service would be managing for in specified areas of the preserve, and the types of facilities that would be appropriate to support those visitor experiences. The zones also define the conditions of the natural and cultural resources that the National Park Service would be trying to maintain in those specific areas.



### THE VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF BIG THICKET

- Big Thicket National Preserve is comprised of 15 separate units, many of which are narrow corridor units. This results in an unusual ratio of land mass to boundary - 170 square miles of land encompassed by over 600 linear miles of boundary
- The preserve contains more than 250 miles of waterways
- Roughly 50% of the preserve consists of floodplains
- Big Thicket National Preserve was authorized by Congress in 1974, comprising 12 separate units totalling 84,550 acres. In 1993 Congress authorized 3 additional units with 10,766 acres. With land donations, the Preserve now exceeds 105,000 acres.
- Big Thicket was the first preserve in the National Park System. National preserves differ from national parks insofar as preserves allow authorized consumptive uses, like hunting, trapping, and mineral extraction but Parks typically do not.



## Draft Management Zones

Six management zones were developed to describe desired conditions in Big Thicket National Preserve. Each was defined in terms of desired resource conditions, expected visitor experiences, and appropriate activities and facilities.

In the action alternative maps on pages enclosed, these management zones are applied to different park areas in each alternative—these different arrangements of the zones define the differences between the alternatives; they reflect different resource management and visitor experience options.



**Developed/Administrative Zone.** A majority of visitor center and administrative facilities would be in this zone. Administrative uses would be the dominant goals for this zone. The primary visitor orientation and education facilities would also be in this zone. The natural environment could be modified for essential visitor and operational needs. Visitor facilities would be convenient and easily accessible. New facilities would be designed and managed to be environmentally friendly and sustainable and to ensure resource protection and public safety. Visitors should expect frequent encounters with other visitors and NPS staff. Personal and nonpersonal interpretive services would be provided, and orientation would inform visitors about other areas of the Preserve and the opportunities available to them. Administrative facilities such as buildings, parking lots, and utility and storage areas would support park operations and management. This zone would be closed to hunting and trapping.



**Frontcountry Zone.** Visitor orientation, recreation and access would be the dominant goals for this zone. This zone would include day use areas, boardwalks, trails, boat ramps, trailheads, and parking. Most transportation routes and access points (roads, trails, parking, launching) would be in this zone. Visitors would experience high levels of interaction with other visitors and NPS staff. Personal and nonpersonal interpretive services would be provided, and orientation would inform visitors about other areas of the preserve and opportunities available to them. Facilities would include, but not be limited to, campgrounds, picnic areas, sanitation facilities, and water access points. Some trailheads and walkways would be designed to provide access for people with impaired mobility. New facilities would be designed and managed to be environmentally friendly and sustainable and to ensure resource protection and public safety. Developed use areas would be easily accessible via paved and unpaved roads and parking areas. This zone would be closed to hunting and trapping. Commercial visitor services (e.g., outfitter/guide services) that are consistent with NPS goals for visitor opportunities and activities would be permitted.



**Backcountry Zone.** Preservation of natural and cultural resources, restoration of degraded resources, and continuation of natural processes would be the dominant goals in this zone. Visitors would experience a natural landscape through a variety of recreational opportunities supported by a network of roads and designated trails for land access and boat docks, launches and ramps for water access. Activities could include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, camping, bird watching, bicycling, fishing, and other water-based activities. Trails and routes to support these visitor activities may be designated. Backcountry camping would be allowed in designated areas by permit. A variety of visitor experiences would be available – from NPS led to self-discovery. The number of encounters with other visitors could be low to moderate, with increasing encounters at high use times and near key access points. Hunting and trapping would be allowed in designated areas and seasons. Commercial visitor services (e.g., outfitter/guide services) that are consistent with NPS goals for visitor opportunities and activities would be permitted.



**Primitive Zone.** Preservation of natural and cultural resources, restoration of degraded resources, and continuation of natural processes would be the dominant goals in this zone. Visitors would experience a natural landscape with opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation directly dependent on ability, knowledge, and self-reliance. Opportunities would be available for challenge, adventure, and solitude. Visitor facilities would be limited or non-existent; trails or routes would be primitive with minimal maintenance. Backcountry dispersed camping would be allowed by permit. Activities could include hiking, backpacking, hunting, trapping, camping, bird watching, fishing, and other water-based activities. Hunting and trapping would be allowed in designated areas and seasons. Commercial visitor services (e.g., outfitter/guide services) that are consistent with NPS goals for visitor opportunities and activities would be permitted.



**Mixed-use Waterway Zone.** Portions of rivers, creeks, and wetlands would be managed to support a mix of motorized and nonmotorized boating opportunities. All waterways would be mixed use unless otherwise designated. The natural setting would predominate, but sights and sounds of human activity would be evident during peak use and near access points. Interaction and encounters with other visitors and NPS staff would be low to moderate with a possibility of moderate to high during periods of peak use and near water access points. Activities could include picnicking, scenic viewing, nature observation, bird watching, hunting, trapping, fishing, boating, canoeing, kayaking, and rafting. Development could be provided to accommodate launching and retrieving motorized and nonmotorized boats. Water-based facilities would include boat ramps, maintained canoe and kayak trails, camping platforms and possible sanitation facilities (e.g. composting toilets). Commercial visitor services (e.g., outfitter/guide services) that are consistent with NPS goals for visitor opportunities and activities would be permitted.



**Nonmotorized Waterway Zone.** Portions of rivers, creeks, and wetlands would be managed to support nonmotorized boating opportunities. Electric trolling motors would be allowed at speeds limited to no wake. Visitors would experience natural sights and sounds, except during peak use when recreational activity would be more apparent. A relatively high degree of self-reliance would be required to safely navigate waterways in this zone. Activities would include the use of kayaks, canoes, and other nonmotorized watercraft. Visitors could also participate in activities such as swimming, fishing, nature observation, and hunting in season. Water-based facilities would include maintained canoe and kayak trails, camping platforms and possible sanitation facilities (e.g. composting toilets). Commercial visitor services (e.g., outfitter/guide services) that are consistent with NPS goals for visitor opportunities and activities would be permitted.

## Big Thicket National Preserve - Purpose and Significance

The purpose is a clear statement of why Congress established an area as a unit of the national park system. Statements of significance define what is most important about the park's resources and values; they are based on the park's purpose. The purpose and significance statements help guide planning and management decisions.

### Big Thicket National Preserve Purpose Statement

Big Thicket National Preserve represents a portion of “the Big Thicket” in southeast Texas, known for its extensive biological diversity; it is dedicated to preserving, conserving, protecting, and enhancing the natural and ecological integrity [thereof]. The preserve contains scientific and recreational values and provides for public enjoyment.

### Big Thicket National Preserve Significance Statements

#### *Extraordinary Combination of Habitats and Species and their Scientific Value*

Big Thicket National Preserve—the first national preserve—was set aside for its biodiversity. The preserve contains remnants of the Big Thicket of Texas and its diverse units are representative of the larger biogeographic region. The preserve serves as a refuge for a combination of plants, animals, and natural communities that includes elements from the southeast swamps, eastern forests, central plains, and southwest deserts. The preserve is the only NPS unit with this combination of resources. The opportunities for scientific research at the preserve include the study of biodiversity and disturbance resulting from land uses and natural phenomena (e.g., hurricanes and fires).

#### *Flowing Water and Dependent Systems*

Big Thicket National Preserve has an extensive, dynamic system of hydrologic processes and associated dependent systems important to maintain the diverse yet specific ecological make-up of the Big Thicket. These include contiguous riverine and wetland systems. The preserve provides examples of blackwater systems, which are not typically found outside of the Amazon basin and southeastern United States, and of rare baygall wetlands that exemplify the original and seemingly impenetrable Big Thicket.

#### *National and International Designations*

Big Thicket National Preserve has received both national and international recognition. The Preserve was designated an International Biosphere Reserve in 1981 by the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to promote cooperation with neighboring communities, individuals, agencies, and institutions to “ensure the preservation of the biological diversity, provide for research, and promote the use of the Big Thicket National Preserve for environmental education, training, and solutions to common problems.”\*\* The Preserve was also designated a Globally Important Bird Area in 2001 by the American Bird Conservancy because it provides critical cover and forage to migrant neo-tropical birds using the Central and Mississippi Flyways.

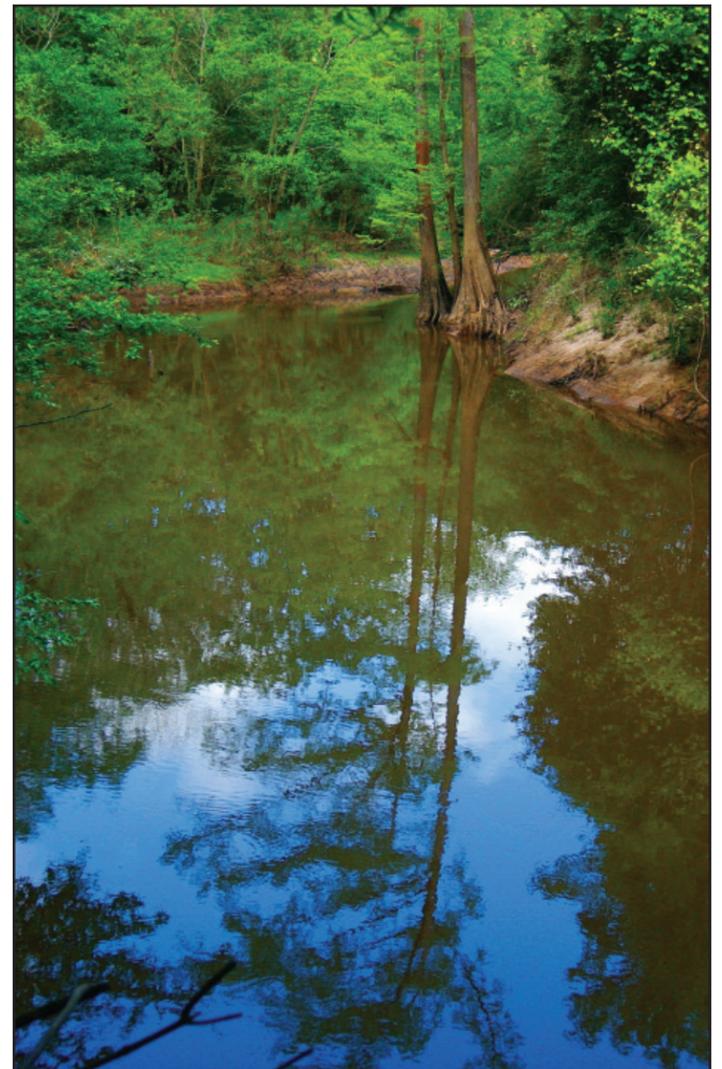
\*\*Statement from Management, Man and the Biosphere, 1991

#### *Visitor Experience*

In a state where public lands are not widely available, Big Thicket National Preserve offers the visitor a wide array of recreational and educational opportunities in a natural setting in close proximity to large urban areas.

#### *Cultural Resources*

Big Thicket National Preserve has a rich cultural history spanning centuries and cultures, including prehistoric to modern American Indians/Native Americans, Spanish explorers, early settlers, and today's modern users. Resources include remnants of historic land use activities and structures, traces of travel corridors, and archeological sites.



### Actions/Approaches Common to All Alternatives at Big Thicket National Preserve:

- Continue to follow law and NPS policy
- Continue to manage legislated uses (oil & gas, hunting and trapping)
- Continue fire management program
- Emphasize environmental management and energy conservation
- Establish a greater staff presence within the preserve
- Increase visibility of the preserve and the National Park Service in the region
- Emphasize protection of biodiversity and encourage sustainable management
- Re-establish a visitor contact facility in Beaumont

## Big Thicket National Preserve Draft Alternative 1: Continue Current Management

### *Description:*

Under this alternative, the management of Big Thicket National Preserve would continue under its current approach. The 1980 general management plan, previous practices, and approved actions would provide the management direction for the preserve, in accordance with law, regulation, and policy.

Lands acquired after the 1980 plan was completed, including the Big Sandy Creek Corridor Unit, Village Creek Corridor Unit, and Canyonlands Unit would be managed to be compatible with existing units. Substantial new or expanded uses would not be anticipated.



### *The Actions:*

- Continue existing visitor recreation activities
- Maintain partnerships with federal, state, local, and nonprofit entities
- Continue emphasis on biodiversity/science (e.g., All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory)
- Continue active education program
- Continue without specific guidance for newly acquired lands or future land protection
- Continue to prohibit off road vehicles and personal watercraft
- Manage houseboats to ensure compliance with local, state and federal laws as NPS resources allow

### *Map Notes:*

- The map for this alternative contains no zoning. It illustrates existing management and activities.

## Big Thicket National Preserve Draft Alternative 2: Enhance Partnerships and Collaboration

### *Description:*

A focus of this alternative concept is the expansion or development of new partnership agreements with communities and public and private organizations having similar overall objectives for natural and cultural resource protection, visitor experience, public education and interpretation, and other operational requirements.

This alternative embraces a regional ecosystem perspective for the protection of substantial portions of the historic “Big Thicket,” the larger geographic area that once extended well beyond the present boundaries of the preserve. From this perspective, the National Park Service would actively engage in regional planning and policy efforts related to resource protection, visitor use, and other issues both within and outside the preserve boundaries.

The preserve would support its status as a globally important biological protection area (Biosphere Reserve and Globally Important Birding Area) by meeting the objectives of each designation. This includes increasing the public’s awareness of the importance of these designations in the Big Thicket through outreach and education, as well as research and management initiatives.

### *The Actions:*

- Use partnerships to:
  - Focus on resources management from a regional or ecosystem-wide perspective
  - Expand visitor access and experiences to new areas of the Preserve
  - Develop educational programs about sustainability and energy conservation
- Emphasize low impact activities and expand access
- Provide some additional recreational opportunities
  - Establish accessible hunting trail
  - Establish low impact campgrounds
- Subject houseboats to existing regulations and policies

### *Map Notes:*

- The management zones used in the alternative 2 map are described in page 4.
- Not all roads are shown on this map. The alignments of trails are approximate.
- Existing facilities remain but are only shown on the Alternative 1 map.

## Big Thicket National Preserve Draft Alternative 3: Leadership in Biodiversity and Sustainability

### *Description:*

This alternative would emphasize resource preservation and research, while providing self-reliant recreational opportunities. This alternative would provide the maximum amount of protection, restoration, and maintenance of native biodiversity in the preserve. Restoration and active management would restore resilient native vegetation communities, species assemblages, and ecological functions. Preserve operations would feature strong environmental protection and sustainable development and practices.

Resource protection efforts would also include actions on the boundary to increase visibility to the public and visitors, connect fragmented landscapes, and provide greater access to improve resource protection by developing a public understanding of the importance of preserve resources. The preserve would increase patrols and improve signage to increase the visibility of preserve-managed lands and waters to the public. The preserve would engage communities in neighborhood partnership programs and citizen science activities with the goals of increasing volunteerism and developing local stakeholder interest in the preserve and its natural resources.

### *The Actions:*

- Emphasize scientific study and research
  - Develop the knowledge and capability to become a center of learning and practical application of biodiversity information
  - Maintain natural hydrological processes
- Implement an extensive program of ecosystem restoration and active management.
- Emphasize low impact recreational activities with some improvements for access
- Prohibit houseboats, off road vehicles, and personal watercraft
- Locate new facilities outside the preserve
- Emphasize citizen science, sustainability, and neighborhood partnership programs

### *Map Notes:*

- The management zones used in the alternative 3 map are described in page 4.
- Not all roads are shown on this map. The alignments of trails are approximate.
- Existing facilities remain but are only shown on the Alternative 1 map.

## Big Thicket National Preserve Draft Alternative 4: Increase Relevancy of the Preserve

### *Description:*

The purpose of this alternative is to increase the relevancy of the preserve and the National Park Service to the people in the communities of southeast Texas and to visitors from all over the world. Nature, history, and recreational opportunities would encourage people to connect to and support the preserve mission. Under this alternative, management would emphasize personal connections to the preserve through family and cultural history, recreational opportunities, and personal experiences. Using new technology such as podcasts and virtual geocaching to enhance the experience of visitors would be considered for onsite as well as virtual visits.

This alternative would recognize that the cultural history of the preserve is also a history of the communities around the preserve and in the region. This includes the history of tribal groups and early settlers, as well as today’s inhabitants. Cultural resources would be preserved, rehabilitated, restored, or reconstructed, as appropriate. Where possible, cultural resources would become a greater part of the visitor experience.

Visitors would continue to have the opportunity to enjoy a range of recreational activities consistent with the purpose of the preserve. There would be improved access in some areas (e.g., Jack Gore Baygall, Lance Rosier, and the Canyonlands units) as well as enhanced recreational and interpretive opportunities.

Resource management efforts would support and maintain the biodiversity of the preserve and appropriate visitor experiences, as well as a landscape that reflects the historic native ecosystems.

### *The Actions:*

- Use the Biosphere Reserve designation as a framework to engage community leaders in conservation
- Provide a greater array of opportunities (activities and facilities) for visitors
  - Consider new types of recreational opportunities
  - Provide more boat ramps and trails - both land and water based
  - Open rights-of-way for recreational use
  - Allow the managed use of houseboats
- Expand interpretive/education programming
- Provide an increased emphasis on cultural and heritage resources

### *Map Notes:*

- The management zones used in the alternative 4 map are described in page 4.
- Not all roads are shown on this map. The alignments of trails are approximate.
- Existing facilities remain but are only shown on the Alternative 1 map.

## Next Steps

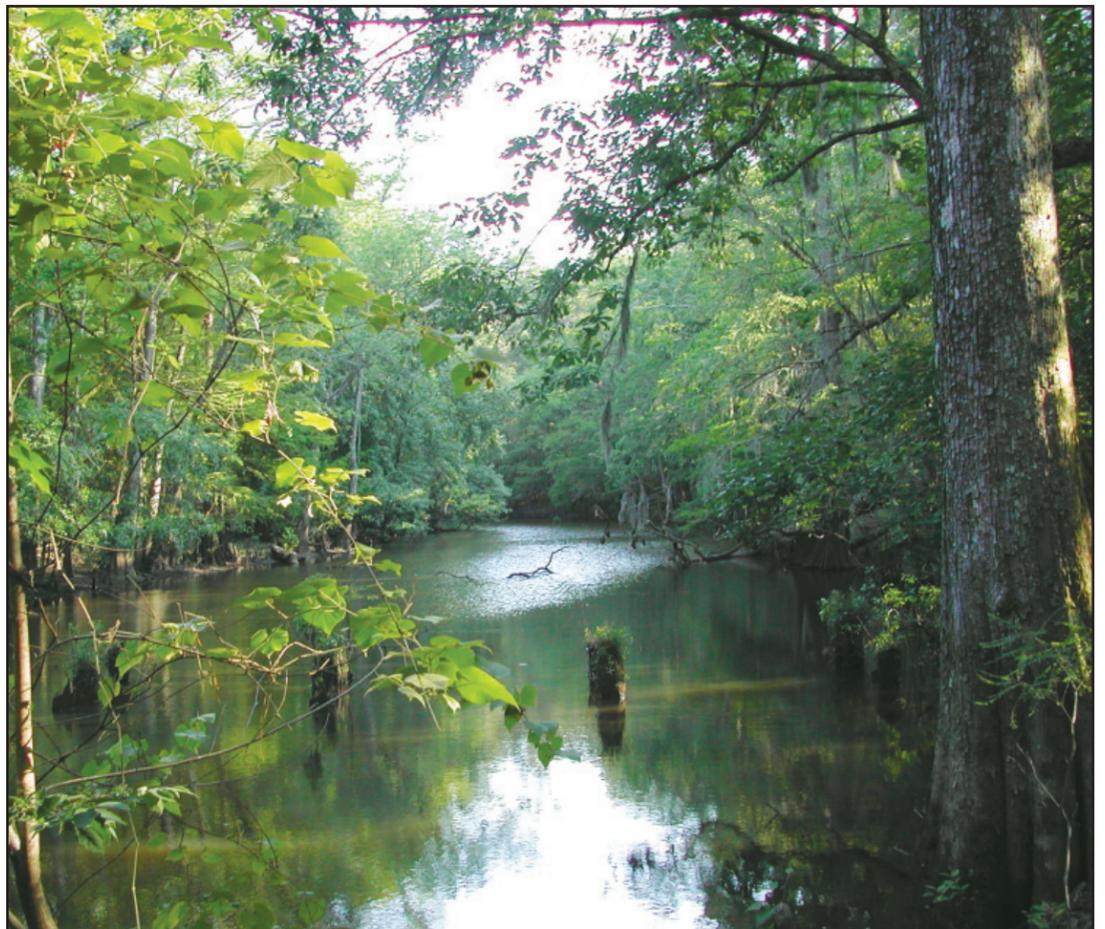
### Friends and Neighbors:

- Attend one of the open houses regarding the draft alternatives. National Park Service staff will answer questions and you will be invited to share your perspectives on the alternatives.
- Before December 30, 2010, fill out and mail in a comment card or send your comments electronically using the NPS planning website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bithgmp>.

### National Park Service:

- Review and analyze the comments received on the draft alternatives.
- Revise draft alternatives as appropriate.
- Develop the NPS preferred alternative.
- Prepare the draft general management plan / environmental impact statement for public review.

	Estimated Time Frame	Planning Activity	Public Involvement Opportunity
	Spring 2009	<b>Scoping</b> – Identify concerns, expectations, and values related to Big Thicket National Preserve with input from the public, park partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders. Consider public comments from scoping; summarize issues to be addressed in the general management plan.	Review Newsletter 1 and send us your ideas, and concerns using the enclosed response card.  Attend public meetings and share your ideas and concerns.
We Are Here	Fall 2010	<b>Develop Draft Alternatives</b> – Outline different possible futures for Big Thicket National Preserve and provide opportunities for review and comment by the public, park partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders.	Review Newsletter 2 and send us your ideas and concerns using the enclosed response card or on the website.  Attend open houses and comment on the draft alternatives.
	Fall 2011	<b>Prepare and Distribute a Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS)</b> – Explain the various alternatives, including the NPS preferred alternative, and the possible environmental impacts of the alternatives. Review and comment by the public, park partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders.	Review the <i>Draft GMP/EIS</i> and provide written comments.  Attend public meetings and share your ideas and concerns or submit written comments.
	Fall 2012	<b>Prepare a Final GMP/EIS</b> – Adjust the management plan after considering public comments on the Draft GMP/EIS.	Review the <i>Final GMP/EIS</i> .
	Early 2013	<b>Implement the Approved Plan</b> – Prepare and issue a “Record of Decision” and implement the general management plan.	Work with the park to implement the plan and provide feedback on plan success and effectiveness.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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## How to Participate in the General Management Plan Process

### Attend an Open House

- The National Park Service will host four open houses in November. The alternatives will be described and participants will be invited to share comments.

### Send Us Your Comments and Sign Up for the General Management Plan Mailing List

- Post your comments directly on our website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bithgmp> (only project team members will be able to view your comments on this website) by December 30th, 2010.
- Return the enclosed response card with your comments and contact information, or
- Send a letter: National Park Service General Management Planning, Attn: Erin Flanagan, DSC-P, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287.

### Visit Our Website

- For regular updates on the process, public meeting announcements, copies of newsletters, and planning documents, please visit <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bithgmp>.

## BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE

**Address:**  
Park Headquarters  
6044 FM 420  
Kountze, TX 77625

**Telephone:**  
409-951-6700

**Planning Website:**  
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/bithgmp>

