

Big Thicket National Preserve General Management Plan Public Scoping Summary Report October 5, 2009

The official public scoping comment period for the Big Thicket National Preserve (BITH) General Management Plan (GMP) opened on June 26, 2009 and closed on August 31, 2009. Comments received through September 14th are included in this summary. Comments were received via either 1) hardcopy form from the newsletter mailing, 2) directly input into the Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) system by the respondent, 3) were received via email, or 4) were recorded during the four public scoping meetings held on July 20th (Woodville, TX), July 21st (Silsbee, TX), July 22nd (Beaumont, TX) and July 23rd (Houston, TX), 2009. All the respondents were from Texas.

During the official comment period we received 32 correspondences to include the four entries for the comments recorded at the four public meetings, overall yielding 384 total comments.

While most of the respondents were “unaffiliated individuals,” we had at least one respondent from each of the following organizations:

- Big Thicket Association
- Sierra Club (the Lone Star Chapter)
- The Nature Conservancy

The following is a brief overview of the comments made by respondents, broken down by topic section, and not in any particular order. During the analysis process, most of these topics were further broken down into several “subtopics.” For a more detailed look at comments in this regard please scroll down to the section titled, “Full Comment Listing Sorted by Assigned Code(s).”

Values:

Those that responded stated that they 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 valued the scenery, quiet and solitude as well as the recreation activities and opportunities allowed within the preserve. A couple comments also expressed value in the preserve’s cultural resources.

Issues and Concerns:

The issues and concerns shared by the respondents included incompatible uses/development on adjacent lands, urban sprawl and encroachment, as well as the impacts of oil and gas activities and logging on preserve resources. Respondents also expressed concern over habitat fragmentation and lack of connectivity, the presence of and impacts from invasive species, and the loss of species and their habitats.

Respondents stated that trash, litter, graffiti, vandalism are issues that need to be addressed along with poaching and the presence of houseboats within in the preserve. Incompatible recreational uses and impacts to visitor safety were mentioned along with the lack of support from local communities.

Other concerns that were shared included possible threats of damming the Neches River, the proximity of major roads, auto traffic (in relation to visitor safety and experiences), underfunding, and understaffing.

Recreation and Visitor Experience:

There was overwhelming support for the development of more hiking and/or canoe trails, and respondents also identified specific areas for trails. Some respondents would like to see bike trails/trails that connect with existing bike trails though they did not specify on- or off-road bike trails. Some respondents explicitly stated that they would like to see off-road bike trails, and others want on-road bike trails. Many comments stated the desire to see trails connecting other, perhaps already existing, trails as well as trails that connect the preserve to various urban areas; they would also like to see rails to trails connections. Along with trails, some respondents stated they would like to see routes and maps provided for scenic drives/auto tours.

Respondents stated they would like to see more areas and opportunities for camping, this included primitive as well as RV camping. Others stated they would support designated camping areas during the hunting season only. With that, a few respondents suggested that certain uses be allowed by permit only. These uses included camping, biking, and boating.

Horseback riding, GPS-based recreation activities, and other family-friendly activities were suggested. Some respondents also shared their desire for a canopy walk and scenic overlooks at various locations. Others supported the idea of ecotourism and preservation before recreation, and that the preserve should provide preservation compatible and non-consumptive uses such as, but not limited to, hiking, canoeing, birding, wildlife viewing and photography. A couple comments stated that they were against hunting in the preserve.

Some comments revolved around motorized use. Respondents were either in support of non-motorized use only, allowing motorized use only in the water, or fully supported motorized use such as motorboats or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) throughout the preserve.

Boundary:

While some comments did not support land acquisition or boundary expansion, the vast majority of comments were in support in order to decrease fragmentation/increase connectivity and to provide buffering. Some also support the use of conservation easements.

Facilities:

Comments supported facilities such as boat ramps/canoe launches/recovery facilities, more/better signage, parking areas, restrooms, picnic tables/areas, trash containers, and campgrounds (primitive and hookups). Some also stated their desire for the preserve to provide a canopy walk, overlooks at Canyonlands and other various locations, and a birding center. Others would like to see the preserve provide alternative transportation such as buses, vans, bicycles, etc.

Natural Resources:

Comments support the preservation/conservation, restoration of natural resources/biodiversity and keeping the preserve as natural as possible. Respondents stated the need to control/remove invasive species, eliminate impacts from/halt oil and gas operations/extraction industries; acquire mineral rights, prevent the damming of the waterways, and increased water resource management. Other comments shared the desire for the Neches River to be designated as a Wild and Scenic River, or the preserve to obtain wilderness designation. Fire management, habitat management for specific species, and addressing climate change (analyze the effects and address) were other topics expressed by respondents for resource protection.

Interpretation and Education:

Respondents would like to see more interpretive signage, brochures, guidebooks, and updated maps provided, as well as more exhibits, books, etc. in the current visitor center. They also want more (general) interpretive and educational opportunities, as well as more guided tours.

Some respondents stated the need for more scientific research and monitoring, and identified research and data needs.

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. They suggested this could be done in creating understanding and awareness through recreational activities, and they also identified some specific programs that could be implemented.

Other:

Other comments received identified some potential partnerships, and stated the need to garner support from local communities/landowners. Some respondents want to see continued and improved access, speeds controlled on the waterways, and increased ranger presence and enforcement in the preserve. They understand and expressed the need for increased funding and the general protection of natural and cultural resources. Some felt that designating the preserve as a national “park” would provide better protection of the resources. Some respondents shared personal stories and/or historical information/facts about the preserve.

Full Comment Listing Sorted by Assigned Code(s):

(Comments received through September 14, 2009 are included in this portion of the report.)

AC1000 Access - General comments regarding access

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109870

Comment Text: I want the Big Thicket to remain natural for the plant and animal life that live there. I also want it to remain open and available for all to use which includes hunters and fishermen as well as nature seekers.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 3 **Comment Id:** 108738

Comment Text: All I want is to keep it open and available to the public.

Correspondence Id: 8 **Comment Id:** 108775

Comment Text: Hiking on the trails and learning about the plants and animals. I'd like to see more accessibility and trails in the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 34 **Comment Id:** 108842

Comment Text: That access will be closed to public.

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109760

Comment Text: Accessibility via bike corridor from large population center (Beaumont, etc.)

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 24 **Comment Id:** 108828

Comment Text: Camping areas, more development of the waterway access, open up preserve areas for both RV and wilderness camping.

Correspondence Id: 24 **Comment Id:** 108827

Comment Text: Maintaining the natural beauty while at the same time expanding access.

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109781

Comment Text: Preserving/improving access to village creek for canoeing; area is representative of other units.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109795

Comment Text: Provide more access/trails; provide bike-friendly trails where appropriate

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109853

Comment Text: Cannot get camping permits after 5:00

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109834

Comment Text: Camping permits/after hour access.
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

BO1000 Boundary - Supports land acquisition/boundary expansion (to decrease fragmentation, increase connectivity)/buffering

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109877
Comment Text: Expanded & a National Park (no oil/gas development).
Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109863
Comment Text: More connected through more land acquisition.
Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108791
Comment Text: I would like to see greater connectivity between the preserve units, particularly along the river corridors. Both the Neches and the Trinity Rivers should be considered as linkages for recreation and habitat.
Organization: Houston Sierra Club
Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 9 **Comment Id:** 108782
Comment Text: Expansion of the national preserve should focus on increasing connectivity of the units via corridors along waterways, etc.

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108734
Comment Text: I would like to see an expanded Preserve with protected stream corridors, and linking corridors between the various units so that wildlife can move with out fear. I would also like a significant part of the Preserve, say 500 acres of the Turkey Creek Unit, made into a national park to allow more extensive use of the area.

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108773
Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats □ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation;

assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.
Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108770

Comment Text: Land acquisition / protection: 1) Acquire additional land to buffer and to protect vulnerable units and to add significant areas that enhance the mission of the Preserve; 2) Add areas of traditional Big Thicket and Neches River bottomlands; promote Upper Neches River conservation initiatives.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108767

Comment Text: I would like to see the Preserve expanded to include the Neches River and Village Creek floodplains, Rush Creek Ravines, Woodpecker Hill, and the Upper Canyonlands.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108762

Comment Text: The Preserve faces threats from fragmentation, urban sprawl, oil exploration, and water projects. The proposed expansion bill to add up to 100,000 acres from willing sellers would alleviate part of the problems.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108757

Comment Text: An expansion bill is pending introduction, and acquisition in fee simple should be considered for at least part of the expansion acreage and/or oil-depleted resources already acquired in order to qualify for a National Park designation, or, minimally, a National Park and Preserve.

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108748

Comment Text: Emphasis should be focused on adding areas of the traditional Big Thicket and the Neches River bottomlands while also promoting Upper Neches River conservation initiatives and the designation of the entire Neches as a Wilde and Scenic River to ensure adequate water supplies for those areas.

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108746

Comment Text: The General Management Plan should include provisions to acquire and manage additional lands to buffer and to protect vulnerable units and to add significant areas that enhance the mission of Big Thicket National Preserve.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109830

Comment Text: Desire to add "upper" Canyonlands area to preserve □ where rarest things are
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109841

Comment Text: Like to see Red Bluff area protected from development (beautiful view_ G. Watson's book)

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109808
Comment Text: Acquire larger areas-landscape scale
Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109807
Comment Text: Connect to useace lands north for wildlife corridor (Midwest shore of L. Steinhagen)
Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108862
Comment Text: I would like to see the preserve expanded by the addition of at least 100,000 acres.

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108858
Comment Text: The preserve should be expanded by the addition of at least 100,000 acres. In addition, conservation easements should be studied for adjacent private lands to provide adequate buffer zones.

Correspondence Id: 36 **Comment Id:** 108849
Comment Text: Silence, other than the sounds of nature - increase BTNP boundaries and increase acquisition funding!

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108880
Comment Text: Include the Trinity R. in the preserve
Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108868
Comment Text: Allow as much land as possible to remain- ecology & mother nature working
Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108867
Comment Text: Acquire land from willing sellers (any land close or adjacent to existing units)
Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109200
Comment Text: Land Acquisition - The GMP should plan for an expansion of BTNP from 100,000 acres to at least 200,000 acres. Presently, U.S. Congressman Kevin Brady is working to reintroduce legislation to expand BTNP. The GMP should acknowledge this and plan for its successful implementation. There are specific land needs. Some of these include explanation of the Loblolly Unit so that it is connected to Little Pine Island Bayou and is not isolated. In addition, acquisition along Little Pine Island Bayou and Pine Island Bayou in the 100 year floodplain would keep unnecessary development out of areas that flood and should never be developed and thus reduce political pressure to destroy these streams with flood control projects. In addition, the Hickory Creek Savannah Unit is also similarly isolated and should be connected to Hickory Creek or others areas in BTNP. All stream or river corridors need to be expanded to provide more buffering from activities that occur outside BTNP but cause environmental impacts

inside BTNP. These broader corridors also allow for more successful reintroductions of species later, like the Louisiana Black Bear, in BTNP. NPS should definitely expand the Menard Creek Corridor Unit and acquire lands in the 100 year floodplain of the Trinity River. The Trinity River offers additional biodiversity and connects with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Trinity National Wildlife Refuge and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wallisville Dam Project which exist either up or downstream. NPS should see if acquisition and expansion of the never opened Davis Hill State Park is feasible. This area contains high biodiversity and would add another important natural element to BTNP. Some of the various natural areas that Temple-Inland, Louisiana-Pacific, and International Paper once had, and that now are owned by timber investment management organizations (TIMOs), should be strongly considered for acquisition along with connecting lands to existing BTNP units.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109222

Comment Text: Boundaries - NPS has expressed concern for the margins of BTNP and how they can be buffered. How will NPS educate neighbors and get their cooperation? There needs to be a specific program to do this. Has NPS done this in the past? If not why not since boundary protection and maintenance is one of the largest issues in BTNP?

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109766

Comment Text: At least double size of preserve

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109790

Comment Text: Canoe launch site-part of Trinity River Corridor Suggest acquiring add'l land along the Trinity R. near Menard Cr.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109782

Comment Text: Need to connect orphan units Beech Creek, Hickory Creek, Loblolly w/ trails or corridors to other units

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108816

Comment Text: To me, the two most important goals are to preserve the ecological diversity and integrity of the preserve as well as possible and to expand the acreage of the preserve. Do whatever is necessary to keep the water running clean, the biodiversity thriving and the soil rich and healthy.

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108810

Comment Text: More land would be great.

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108809

Comment Text: I hope that it does not become too too fragmented to be of any use. I hope that the size of the Big Thicket can be expanded as much as possible. The Sierra Club suggests expanding from 100,000 acres to at least 200,000 acres - that would be excellent!

Correspondence Id: 31 **Comment Id:** 109188

Comment Text: The GMP should plan for an expansion of the Big Thicket National Preserve from the current 100,000 acres to at least 200,000 acres. (an addition of 100,000 acres.)

Organization: Sierra Club

Correspondence Id: 19 **Comment Id:** 109239

Comment Text: But if this advice is taken we must take a hard look at the Preserve's "orphan" units: Loblolly, Hickory Creek, and Beech Creek. These stand isolated, with no protection from the wave of development on the way. At a minimum land and/or stream corridors should be created which tie these units to the rest of the Preserve. This will ensure the flow of birds, reptiles, water, seeds, game from the unit to the preserve and back: supporting the general metabolism without much life cannot flourish. If we think systematically we will also consider stream corridors other than those already protected by the Preserve. I'll give one example. The Big Thicket Natural Heritage Trust has purchased land at the confluence of Beech Creek (not protected by the Preserve) and Village Creek (protected but not purchased by NPS throughout its length). Part of this purchase includes land stretching a third of a mile north along Beech Creek: the start of a protected creek corridor ideally reaching all the way to the (orphaned) Beech Creek Unit. The NPS need not purchase such creek corridors. They could be protected by environmental easements within the purview of local land owners. They could but need not be within the purview of government, state or federal. My only point: We should persist in thinking of area streams as natural adjuncts to the BTNP. The Park Service should constantly propose their addition to the Big Thicket Natural Area, though areas so protected need not be in the Preserve per se.

Organization: University of North Texas

Commenter: Pete A. Y. Gunter

Correspondence Id: 19 **Comment Id:** 109237

Comment Text: The addition of land is called for both because area lumber companies are "divesting" themselves of their adjacent to the preserve, leaving it unprotected and because of the coming of a tsunami of urban development of every kind, particularly along the Preserve's southern borders. Together these pressures can deprive the Preserve of its wilderness values and the sense of wilderness and distance for which it was created. The larger land mass of the Big Thicket National Preserve, the better chance it has of surviving the impact of future development. While this is true especially of its stream corridors, it is true of other areas, especially its "orphan" units, of which I will speak later. But, there is a second reason for enlarging the Preserve. Among these are the magnificent Rush Creek Ravines and the Upper Canyonlands Area. These should be protected for their own value, regardless of corporate divestures and surging development. In the future □ including the long future □ we will be glad to have protected these areas. There is no upper limit to the projected size of the Preserve. Two hundred thousand acres should be minimum.

Organization: University of North Texas

Commenter: Pete A. Y. Gunter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108897

Comment Text: Connectivity of existing and potential lands and water corridors should be addressed as priority for land and water protection goals. Widening and expansion of stream and river corridors should be given high priority with protection of the 100-year floodplain of the Neches and Trinity River basins.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108893

Comment Text: A strategy to identify and prioritize land tracts the Preserve seeks to acquire/protect. This list should rank tracts for conservation priority and evaluate other factors such as opportunity and threats. In particular large land sales by timber investment management organizations and real estate management groups should be considered.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 23 **Comment Id:** 108818

Comment Text: The GMP should plan for an expansion of Big Thicket National Preserve from the current 100,000 acres to at least 200,000 acres (an addition of 100,000 acres).

BO1100 Boundary - Does not support land acquisition/boundary expansion

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108888

Comment Text: Do not want this property w/in any lands proposed by Cong. Brady to add to the preserve.

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108794

Comment Text: As a task force member of the Big Thicket Tyler County Expansion Committee, I do not feel it needs to be enlarged. It is our desire to see what is already in the preserve kept up and made more family friendly. Land removed from a school district should be reimbursed in the amount that would have been generated thru school taxes. [Note on back of comment form states, "Congressman Brady's Bill would remove 28% of Spurger Independent School District's tax rolls. We are not incorporated and do not receive sales tax."]

BO1200 Boundary - Supports use of conservation easements

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108858

Comment Text: The preserve should be expanded by the addition of at least 100,000 acres. In addition, conservation easements should be studied for adjacent private lands to provide adequate buffer zones.

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109774

Comment Text: Plan systematically for streams corridors protected by easements (e.g. Beech Creek; Cypress Creek; Pine Island Bayou)

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

CR100 Cultural Resources - General cultural resources

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108773

Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats □ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation; assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108891

Comment Text: Cultural site □ Voth Mill developed

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108871

Comment Text: Heritage protection

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109218

Comment Text: Cultural Preservation - What is the status of the preservation and interpretation of the Voth Mill, Richardson House site, Williams Cabin, Hooks Bear Camp, Pioneer Homesite, and Old Yellow Bluff Ferry site? Can volunteer help provide interpretation and or archeological surveys for these areas?

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108908

Comment Text: The Conservancy is in support of expanding and highlighting the cultural interpretation and preservation of the region's people and traditions/customs, etc. Protection and restoration of cultural sites to date has been minimal. The Preserve was established to protect the biodiversity while still allowing traditional uses of the land and waters. The impact of human activities (logging, railroad, oil and gas and use/lack of fire) humans have had great impacts on the resource. Recognizing and interpreting this history has been minimal. Including more

exhibits, interpretation, cultural events, signage and developing cultural sites may assist with improving with residents taking ownership and fostering pride in the Preserve.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

FA1000 Facilities - General facilities comment

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108739

Comment Text: The Committee [BTA General Management Plan Committee] recommends that trails suggested in the BTA Strategic Plan for the BTNP (2006), Appendix VI, be included in the new GMP document. The Committee added "Additional Trails" that should have been in the priorities for the Strategic Plan, Appendix VI: Suggested New Facilities for Visitors to BTNP.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109837

Comment Text: Better trail surface

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109225

Comment Text: Roads - NPS needs to carefully appraise which roads it may want to improve. The Sierra Club believes that Cotton Road and Timber Slough Road should not be turned into improved roads (paved). Use of crushed limestone would be appropriate. But right now Cotton Road and Timber Slough Road fit in well with the wilderness-like quality of the Lance Rosier Unit and Jack Gore Baygall Unit.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108801

Comment Text: Cabins with conveniences where people could stay. Tours with guides. Add to your visitor center.

FA1100 Facilities - Parking

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108730

Comment Text: NPS should make canoe and kayaking more convenient with parking, take outs and signage.

FA1200 Facilities - Boat ramps/canoe launches/recovery facilities

Correspondence Id: 10 **Comment Id:** 108783

Comment Text: Big Thicket NP sits on the edge of the large metropolitan community of Beaumont, but by the very placement and management of locations where visitors can interact with the Preserve, holds the community at arms length. The Pine Island Bayou Coordinator unit, the Beaumont unit and the Lower Neches River unit are all partially within the boundaries of the city limits of Beaumont. Yet the places where the public can easily interact include only two paltry day use areas, Cooks Lake Road and Edgewater. No trails, no campgrounds, no picnic areas. Opportunities for cooperation with other agencies exist but are shunned by the Preserve. The

LNVA has a boat ramp, parking area, and restrooms adjacent to the Preserve. One only need walk 60 seconds down a well maintained LNVA administrative road to reach the Preserve, where one will not even find a park boundary sign much less a trailhead or interpretive display, I believe LNVA would be open to cooperation in managing this access to the Preserve, in fact they give considerable time and funding to manage it while Preserve staff barely acknowledge it is there. Likewise the Preserve's enabling legislation directs them to engage in providing recreational opportunities and portions of the Preserve lie within the city limits of Beaumont. Yet strangely, cooperation between the City of Beaumont Parks and Recreation Department and the Preserve appear to be non-existent. I believe the Preserve needs to wake up to the opportunities and mandate to provide for visitor interaction. Trails, picnic areas, campgrounds, interpretive displays, and other Preserve provided amenities accessible to the gateway community of Beaumont would be a good start. Adding a community or park planner to the Preserve staff and fostering the relationships with partners that could help them do what congress has tasked them with doing would also go a long way to meeting that congressional mandate and would be tax money well spent.

Correspondence Id: 2 Comment Id: 108730

Comment Text: NPS should make canoe and kayaking more convenient with parking, take outs and signage.

Correspondence Id: 5 Comment Id: 108751

Comment Text: New and Improved Canoe Facilities: BTNP should establish canoe launch and recovery facilities on Village Creek, the Neches River and Pine Island Bayou appropriate way stations on recommended canoe routes. GPS coordinates should also be documented. BTNP should negotiate with Hardin County for the existing county sites on Village Creek and the Neches. The Preserve should provide automobile access, parking, restrooms, picnic tables and trash containers at the launch/recovery sites. Canoe trail development should include interpretive signage, mileage markers, way stations, and trail notes and maps.

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 108741

Comment Text: Canoe Facilities (corollary of trails above): BTNP should establish canoe launch and recovery facilities on Village Creek, the Neches River and Pine Island Bayou and appropriate way stations on recommended canoe routes. GPS coordinates should also be documented. The Preserve should provide automobile access, parking, restrooms, picnic tables and trash containers at the launch/recovery sites.

Correspondence Id: 34 Comment Id: 108844

Comment Text: Yes, hiking, biking, four wheeler trails, boat ramps. Easier access to the woods, not just a road to the river.

Correspondence Id: 34 Comment Id: 108840

Comment Text: Camping, fishing, boating, swimming. Like to see boat ramp added to Jack Gore Unit.

Correspondence Id: 26 Comment Id: 109819

Comment Text: Canoe/kayak trails along the Neches in the Preserve & in Village Creek w/ take outs as necessary to allow access.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109790

Comment Text: Canoe launch site-part of Trinity River Corridor Suggest acquiring add'l land along the Trinity R. near Menard Cr.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

FA1300 Facilities - Restrooms, picnic tables, trash containers

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108751

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Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108890

Comment Text: Picnic area

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

FA1400 Facilities - Campgrounds (primitive and/or hookups)

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108768

Comment Text: Most national parks offer campgrounds and interpretive programs; the park should either add campgrounds or work closely with existing state parks to improve visitor knowledge and experience.

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108861

Comment Text: I would like to see a public campground in the vicinity of the Turkey Creek Unit. This general location would be centrally located for visitation to the different units of the preserve. This campground could be either a state park facility or one managed by the preserve itself.

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108855

Comment Text: I would like to see a public campground in the vicinity of the Turkey Creek Unit (centrally located to the preserve's units). This campground could be either a facility of the preserve or the Texas state park system.

Correspondence Id: 24 **Comment Id:** 108828

Comment Text: Camping areas, more development of the waterway access, open up preserve areas for both RV and wilderness camping.

FA1500 Facilities - Birding Center

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108772

Comment Text: Visitor Use / Public Awareness: 1) Program for public information / awareness; 2) Offer more organized recreational opportunities; 3) Improve and expand trails, including canoe/kayak trails and scenic drives; 4) Consider implementation of a Birding Center; 5) Evaluate potential for a Canopy Walk.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108753

Comment Text: New Birding Center: Birding Center should be adjacent to the BTNP Visitor Center to enhance support services available to birders at BTNP, and capitalize on the BTNP designation as a Globally Important Birding Area. Managed habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker and the Bachman's sparrow would enable these birds to thrive. These are two of the birds that birders want to see when they come to the Big Thicket.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108744

Comment Text: Birding Center (8): should be adjacent to the BTNP Visitor Center to enhance support services available to birders at BTNP, and capitalize on the BTNP designation as a Globally Important Birding Area.

FA1700 Facilities - Develop overlook at Canyonlands

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109818

Comment Text: River overlook at Canyonlands increase the wow factor

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

FA1800 Facilities - Build canopy walk

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108754

Comment Text: New Canopy Walk: A canopy walk will offer visitors an exciting view of the BTNP while providing the BTNP with a visitor enticement unique to Texas and the South. Signage and brochures should be provided.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108745

Comment Text: Canopy Walk (10): will offer visitors an exciting view of the BTNP while providing the BTNP with a visitor enticement unique to Texas and the South. Signage and brochures should be provided.

Correspondence Id: 26 Comment Id: 109817

Comment Text: Suggest development of a canopy walk □ provide opp. To see the canopy from eyelevel different perspective □ birds, flowers, etc.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

FA1900 Facilities - Transportation (alternative: buses, vans, bicycles, etc.)

Correspondence Id: 7 Comment Id: 108773

Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats □ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation; assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 4 Comment Id: 108742

Comment Text: Shuttles: The 1980 GMP suggested a shuttle system for Lance Rosier Unit's Cotton Road and Jack Gore Baygall's Timber Slough Road. The recommendation should be retained as a possible future service if needed.

Correspondence Id: 20 Comment Id: 109207

Comment Text: Transportation Alternatives - The GMP should analyze transportation alternatives, including buses, vans, and on-road bicycles, to reduce energy use and make visits easier for more diverse numbers of people without exceeding carrying capacities.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 Comment Id: 109771

Comment Text: Non-auto means to get people to Big Thicket

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 21 Comment Id: 108815

Comment Text: The GMP should analyze transportation alternatives, including buses, vans, and on-road bicycles, to reduce energy use and make visits easier for more diverse numbers of people.

Correspondence Id: 31 **Comment Id:** 109193

Comment Text: The GMP should analyze transportation alternatives, including buses, vans and on-road bicycles to reduce energy use and make the visits easier for more diverse numbers of people.

Organization: Sierra Club

Correspondence Id: 18 **Comment Id:** 108802

Comment Text: Here are some comments on particular issues for the GMP: 1) How to control invasive species like feral hogs. 2) Transportation alternatives to make visits easier. 3) Buying and selling mineral rights

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108909

Comment Text: The Preserve should investigate all transportation alternatives for energy efficiency and visitor access to the Preserve. Priority for transportation alternatives that do not negatively impact the Preserve's resources should be given priority. The Preserve should consider utilizing different trails/routes for different types of transportation and visitor experiences.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 23 **Comment Id:** 108823

Comment Text: The GMP should analyze transportation alternatives, including buses, vans, and on-road bicycles, to reduce energy use and make visits easier for more diverse numbers of people.

FA2000 Facilities - Install more/better signage

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108730

Comment Text: NPS should make canoe and kayaking more convenient with parking, take outs and signage.

FN1000 Funding - Need for increased funding

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108771

Comment Text: Preserve Operations: 1) Budgets must keep pace with escalating costs; the Preserve is under-funded and understaffed; 2) Work with NGOs and conservation groups for improved funding; 3) Reschedule OMP.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 36 **Comment Id:** 108849

Comment Text: Silence, other than the sounds of nature - increase BTNP boundaries and increase acquisition funding!

Correspondence Id: 20 Comment Id: 109196

Comment Text: With the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designation as a "Man and Biosphere Reserve;" the strong tradition of research; the implementation of the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI); a boundary line longer than Yellowstone National Park; a large and taxing oil/gas development program; and narrow stream corridors and units surrounded by rapidly fragmenting and developing landscapes, it should be argued that BTNP needs additional personnel in law enforcement, resource protection, and interpretation and additional specialized positions to take care of these diverse missions. A rapid turnover of personnel has persisted in BTNP as people get training and experience in a variety of important and difficult natural resource issues and then leave. NPS should, via pay and other incentives, provide inducements for people to stay and use their expertise in BTNP. The GMP should reflect how these issues will be addressed successfully.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 Comment Id: 109767

Comment Text: Increase funding & staff

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 19 Comment Id: 109241

Comment Text: To conclude, no one who asks the National Park Service to perform persistent, sometimes difficult, always expensive services should say so without making a special plea for the Park Service. For over three decades now the NPS has been systematically starved.

Conservatives have seen fit to it to do its job but not given it the funds with which to do it. I conclude, therefore, and loudly, with insistence. The NPS must be funded to do the job it is supposed to do.

Organization: University of North Texas

Commenter: Pete A. Y. Gunter

Correspondence Id: 32 Comment Id: 108914

Comment Text: The Nature Conservancy recognizes that inadequate funding/staffing and attrition of staff to other park units is negatively impacting the continuity and effectiveness of the Preserve's management. We are in support of increased funding and cooperative efforts to enhance the Preserve's capabilities.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

IC1000 Issues/Concerns - General issues/concerns/threats

Correspondence Id: 10 Comment Id: 108783

Comment Text: Big Thicket NP sits on the edge of the large metropolitan community of Beaumont, but by the very placement and management of locations where visitors can interact with the Preserve, holds the community at arms length. The Pine Island Bayou Coordinor unit, the Beaumont unit and the Lower Neches River unit are all partially within the boundaries of the city limits of Beaumont. Yet the places where the public can easily interact include only two paltry

day use areas, Cooks Lake Road and Edgewater. No trails, no campgrounds, no picnic areas. Opportunities for cooperation with other agencies exist but are shunned by the Preserve. The LNVA has a boat ramp, parking area, and restrooms adjacent to the Preserve. One only need walk 60 seconds down a well maintained LNVA administrative road to reach the Preserve, where one will not even find a park boundary sign much less a trailhead or interpretive display, I believe LNVA would be open to cooperation in managing this access to the Preserve, in fact they give considerable time and funding to manage it while Preserve staff barely acknowledge it is there. Likewise the Preserve's enabling legislation directs them to engage in providing recreational opportunities and portions of the Preserve lie within the city limits of Beaumont. Yet strangely, cooperation between the City of Beaumont Parks and Recreation Department and the Preserve appear to be non-existent. I believe the Preserve needs to wake up to the opportunities and mandate to provide for visitor interaction. Trails, picnic areas, campgrounds, interpretive displays, and other Preserve provided amenities accessible to the gateway community of Beaumont would be a good start. Adding a community or park planner to the Preserve staff and fostering the relationships with partners that could help them do what congress has tasked them with doing would also go a long way to meeting that congressional mandate and would be tax money well spent.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109828

Comment Text: Concern-restoration to "virgin" conditions

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 25 **Comment Id:** 108832

Comment Text: Loss of specimens - not enough staff to oversee the many units, need more prescribed burns in the savannah areas.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108875

Comment Text: Concern that private property has been identified on maps for possible taking by NPS without landowner consent; new map promised by Cong. Office but has not been made available.

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108806

Comment Text: However, I do not understand why people are allowed to trap animals in a nature preserve. Hunting is one thing, but putting out leghold and snare traps for 'fur-bearing' animals? Really? Maybe for problem animals like Nutria, but the rest of the animals that are listed, well most of them seem incredibly elusive, the kinds of animals I would love to encounter ALIVE in a preserve. Maybe that's a bigger issue than this program will address, but I just thought I'd mention it.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109199

Comment Text: The Sierra Club is also very disappointed by the approval of NPS to allow removal or movement of coarse woody debris from Pine Island Bayou due to perceived flood problems from people who live outside BTNP but who have chosen to live within the 100 year floodplain.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108763

Comment Text: Threats also come from chronic underfunding and understaffing, as well as from the Preserve's low visibility within the National Park System.

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108731

Comment Text: During hunting season, park personnel seem to discourage visitors. Likewise, oil and gas activity detract from the quiet beauty of the Thicket.

IC1100 Issues/Concerns - Habitat fragmentation/lack of connectivity

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108788

Comment Text: I have several concerns: (1) the connectivity of the preserve's biological units, which is important to provide wildlife corridors and reduce the threat of fragmentation if surrounding lands are sold, (2) the support of the local community for maintaining the integrity of the preserve and willingness to expand it, which can only be achieved if residents see that their economic well-being is enhanced by a healthy preserve

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 36 **Comment Id:** 108848

Comment Text: Surrounding land fragmentation will encroach on public holdings, causing increased noise, domestic animals, incompatible use and compromised habitats.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108762

Comment Text: The Preserve faces threats from fragmentation, urban sprawl, oil exploration, and water projects. The proposed expansion bill to add up to 100,000 acres from willing sellers would alleviate part of the problems.

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108732

Comment Text: Because of the fragmented nature of the Preserve, urban sprawl, oil and gas exploitation, and highway and pipeline construction constantly threaten the Thicket. Of even greater danger in the long run are the efforts to dam the Neches.

IC1200 Issues/Concerns - Lack of support from local communities

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108788

Comment Text: I have several concerns: (1) the connectivity of the preserve's biological units, which is important to provide wildlife corridors and reduce the threat of fragmentation if surrounding lands are sold, (2) the support of the local community for maintaining the integrity of the preserve and willingness to expand it, which can only be achieved if residents see that their economic well-being is enhanced by a healthy preserve

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 8 Comment Id: 108777

Comment Text: Housing developments encroaching on the Thicket, water being diverted, invasive species, lack of concern from community.

IC1300 Issues/Concerns - Incompatible uses/development on adjacent lands; urban sprawl; encroachment

Correspondence Id: 15 Comment Id: 109865

Comment Text: Be left alone. Keep developers away. Let nature be.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 36 Comment Id: 108848

Comment Text: Surrounding land fragmentation will encroach on public holdings, causing increased noise, domestic animals, incompatible use and compromised habitats.

Correspondence Id: 8 Comment Id: 108777

Comment Text: Housing developments encroaching on the Thicket, water being diverted, invasive species, lack of concern from community.

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 108762

Comment Text: The Preserve faces threats from fragmentation, urban sprawl, oil exploration, and water projects. The proposed expansion bill to add up to 100,000 acres from willing sellers would alleviate part of the problems.

Correspondence Id: 30 Comment Id: 108856

Comment Text: The visitor experience can be impaired by the proximity of major roads, auto traffic, and incompatible uses on adjacent properties.

Correspondence Id: 30 Comment Id: 108857

Comment Text: I am concerned about the impacts of development and highway projects near the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 2 Comment Id: 108732

Comment Text: Because of the fragmented nature of the Preserve, urban sprawl, oil and gas exploitation, and highway and pipeline construction constantly threaten the Thicket. Of even greater danger in the long run are the efforts to dam the Neches.

IC1400 Issues/Concerns - Impacts of invasive species

Correspondence Id: 8 Comment Id: 108777

Comment Text: Housing developments encroaching on the Thicket, water being diverted, invasive species, lack of concern from community.

Correspondence Id: 30 Comment Id: 108859

Comment Text: I am concerned by the impacts of invasive species, particularly Chinese Tallow trees and feral hogs.

IC1500 Issues/Concerns - Impacts of oil and gas activities/extraction industries

Correspondence Id: 3 **Comment Id:** 108736

Comment Text: So many trees are being cut down in the area. Im afraid it wont be the same.

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108731

Comment Text: During hunting season, park personnel seem to discourage visitors. Likewise, oil and gas activity detract from the quiet beauty of the Thicket.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109197

Comment Text: The Sierra Club still has concerns about this issue [oil & gas development inside BTNP] and urges the Washington, D.C. office of NPS to ensure that regionally and at BTNP that the protection of natural resources in BTNP is the number one priority and not exploitation of oil/gas.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109226

Comment Text: Restoration - The Sierra Club is concerned about any so-called "off-site loblolly pine" logging. Where it can be documented that Longleaf Pine or Shortleaf Pine dominated an area some cutting of Loblolly Pine may be appropriate to restore those species. However, we are concerned that this can be abused and allow logging of hardwood and pine trees in BTNP that is not appropriate or protective of BTNP resources. This goal presents a very slippery slope and needs to be implemented very carefully with complete public review, comment, and understanding of any proposals.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108860

Comment Text: I am concerned by the impacts of oil and gas drilling on the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108732

Comment Text: Because of the fragmented nature of the Preserve, urban sprawl, oil and gas exploitation, and highway and pipeline construction constantly threaten the Thicket. Of even greater danger in the long run are the efforts to dam the Neches.

IC1600 Issues/Concerns - Houseboats

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109893

Comment Text: Fewer or no houseboats on the Neches River.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

IC1700 Issues/Concerns - Poaching

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109856

Comment Text: Concern about poaching activity □ spot lighting & deer out of season
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IC1800 Issues/Concerns - Proximity of major roads, auto traffic (in relation to visitor safety and experiences)

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108857

Comment Text: I am concerned about the impacts of development and highway projects near the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109198

Comment Text: NPS could be much more aggressive with regard to protecting BTNP natural resources from proposed projects that local, state, and federal agencies want to implement. In particular, the Sierra Club wants NPS to be much more aggressive when looking at road impacts (like U.S. 69 as an example) on BTNP to ensure that fragmentation and other environmental impacts do not doom the ability of individual species to live in BTNP.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108856

Comment Text: The visitor experience can be impaired by the proximity of major roads, auto traffic, and incompatible uses on adjacent properties.

IC1900 Issues/Concerns - Threats of further damming of the Neches

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108732

Comment Text: Because of the fragmented nature of the Preserve, urban sprawl, oil and gas exploitation, and highway and pipeline construction constantly threaten the Thicket. Of even greater danger in the long run are the efforts to dam the Neches.

IC2000 Issues/Concerns - Underfunding

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108763

Comment Text: Threats also come from chronic underfunding and understaffing, as well as from the Preserve's low visibility within the National Park System.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109194

Comment Text: Underfunding and Lack of Personnel - Several issues loom over and shadow the proposed revision of the GMP and management of BTNP. These issues include overall funding for the BTNP and appropriate levels of staffing for BTNP. For the entire life of BTNP, and this year is the 35th anniversary of its creation, the Sierra Club believes BTNP has been underfunded and inadequately staffed.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108800

Comment Text: Taking care of what is already in the preserve. It appears adequate funding and personnel are lacking to do the job of caring for what is currently in the preserve. What is in the preserve now is representative of how it used to be. The process for doing anything in the thicket is far too complicated and takes too long and uses valuable funds.

IC2100 Issues/Concerns - Understaffing

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108763

Comment Text: Threats also come from chronic underfunding and understaffing, as well as from the Preserve's low visibility within the National Park System.

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108800

Comment Text: Taking care of what is already in the preserve. It appears adequate funding and personnel are lacking to do the job of caring for what is currently in the preserve. What is in the preserve now is representative of how it used to be. The process for doing anything in the thicket is far too complicated and takes too long and uses valuable funds.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109194

Comment Text: Underfunding and Lack of Personnel - Several issues loom over and shadow the proposed revision of the GMP and management of BTNP. These issues include overall funding for the BTNP and appropriate levels of staffing for BTNP. For the entire life of BTNP, and this year is the 35th anniversary of its creation, the Sierra Club believes BTNP has been underfunded and inadequately staffed.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

IC2200 Issues/Concerns - Trash, litter, graffiti, vandalism

Correspondence Id: 8 **Comment Id:** 108776

Comment Text: Trash. People dumping large discarded appliances in Village Creek.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109851

Comment Text: Trash clean up big concern Suggest an enforcement officer now & again to remind people to pick up their trash

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109840

Comment Text: Concerns Trash in creeks impacts on wildlife Same issue at Wildlife Refuge

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108877

Comment Text: Concern that people are doing inappropriate things in the preserve, leaving trash, etc. Need better maintenance and upkeep make it more inviting Fix what you have to make it attractive make it attractive for people

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109861

Comment Text: Who is responsible for trash pickups at the underpasses/water access along Village Creek> GMP should commit to working with & coordinating with other resp. entitles for trash pickups.

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109852

Comment Text: Baby Galvez □ major asset to city & area needs clean up & security suggest partnership between pvt owners & public interests Do not feel safe being there alone

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IC2300 Issues/Concerns - Loss of species and/or habitats

Correspondence Id: 25 **Comment Id:** 108832

Comment Text: Loss of specimens - not enough staff to oversee the many units, need more prescribed burns in the savannah areas.

IC2400 Issues/Concerns - Incompatible uses (recreation); visitor safety

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109839

Comment Text: Neches Canal to Pine Island Bayou Dangerous portage due to sheet piling bank & bluff (near usace pump station)

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108836

Comment Text: Personal watercraft on the river - safety and disturbance of canoeists and wildlife.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108881

Comment Text: Keep trot lines out of the Trinity R. □ dangerous for wildlife & people

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108877

Comment Text: Concern that people are doing inappropriate things in the preserve, leaving trash, etc. Need better maintenance and upkeep □ make it more inviting Fix what you have to make it attractive □ make it attractive for people

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109816

Comment Text: Concerned about PWC □ some riders make canoe/kayak difficult & dangerous (particularly problematic with young canoers)

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109852

Comment Text: Baby Galvez □ major asset to city & area needs clean up & security suggest partnership between pvt owners & public interests Do not feel safe being there alone

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE1000 Interp/Ed - Increase outreach to schools/school groups

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109880

Comment Text: More publicized more information for kids to be drawn to visit from Groves, TX.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109848

Comment Text: Grant programs for public ed; promote environment awareness; Ed outreach in schools

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108835

Comment Text: Science inquiring projects about biodiversity mentoring middle school and high school youth from communities adjacent to each of the units. Expansion of Ranger/Teacher/Ranger program.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108869

Comment Text: More educational outreach to school districts especially urban & inner cities. Children need to experience nature

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE1001 Interp/Ed - Provide more interpretive and educational opportunities (in general)

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109909

Comment Text: A place that continues to be what is already. One improvement would be to allow insect collecting to the public. Just like hunters, amateur entomologists. Preserve the habitat through their study.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109879

Comment Text: You need more "sound" explanations & visuals.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108874

Comment Text: Preserve could better educate public about available resources & NPS presence/management

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108811

Comment Text: More educational opportunities would be nice.

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108908

Comment Text: The Conservancy is in support of expanding and highlighting the cultural interpretation and preservation of the region's people and traditions/customs, etc. Protection and restoration of cultural sites to date has been minimal. The Preserve was established to protect the biodiversity while still allowing traditional uses of the land and waters. The impact of human activities (logging, railroad, oil and gas and use/lack of fire) humans have had great impacts on the resource. Recognizing and interpreting this history has been minimal. Including more exhibits, interpretation, cultural events, signage and developing cultural sites may assist with improving with residents taking ownership and fostering pride in the Preserve.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109221

Comment Text: Citizen's Outreach Program - NPS should place high on its priority list a vigorous citizens' outreach, education, participation, input, and monitoring program. If more citizens can be galvanized to care for BTNP enough to volunteer there will be a huge number of people who will be on the lookout for the Preserve's best interests. How can this be done and what does it require in resources from the NPS? An educated and supportive public will prevent inappropriate uses of BTNP and will supplement NPS manpower and money needs.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109844

Comment Text: Need more education & outreach to help with protection

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE1100 Interp/Ed - Increase outreach to urban areas/communities

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108838

Comment Text: I would like to see a network of guides from the local communities who could provide ecotours for visitors in the units that they know well and love - like at reserves in Costa Rica.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109221

Comment Text: Citizen's Outreach Program - NPS should place high on its priority list a vigorous citizens' outreach, education, participation, input, and monitoring program. If more citizens can be galvanized to care for BTNP enough to volunteer there will be a huge number of people who will be on the lookout for the Preserve's best interests. How can this be done and what does it require in resources from the NPS? An educated and supportive public will prevent inappropriate uses of BTNP and will supplement NPS manpower and money needs.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109775

Comment Text: Educated & outreach in urban areas to draw urban dwellers to park sites, facilities & programs

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE1200 Interp/Ed - Increase outreach to minority populations

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109776

Comment Text: Extra efforts to draw minority populations (esp women) to preserve; outreach throughout neighborhood communities & charges

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE1400 Interp/Ed - Provide more interpretive signage, brochures, and guidebooks; updated maps

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109880

Comment Text: More publicized more information for kids to be drawn to visit from Groves, TX.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108786

Comment Text: I enjoy the interpretive trails that have been installed, but I think that each unit of the preserve should have at least one trail with interpretation that explains why that unit is important.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108727

Comment Text: The park should have more trails, with signage and trail guides for visitors.

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108752

Comment Text: New Scenic Drives: BTNP should provide access to limited areas of the BTNP by automobile. Auto scenic routes, similar to that on Ghost Road, should be established on Cotton Road, Sunflower Road, and Timber Slough Road. Scenic routes should include appropriate signage, and/or brochures or guides.

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108750

Comment Text: New Hiking Trails: Visitor Center Trail: An ADA-approved signed trail originating at the Visitor Center and ending at Village Creek would benefit families with children, elementary school classes who have experienced the exhibits at the Visitor Center, the handicapped and disadvantaged, and those with just a short period of time to visit the BTNP. BTNP should develop a new hiking trail to make accessible the unique features of the upper Big Thicket in the area known as Canyonlands or Rush Creek. This trail should introduce visitors to the diverse flora and the geological and archeological features of the area. Signage, brochures and guidebooks should be provided. Three trails with historical/cultural significance and with flagging maintained for many years by the Big Thicket Association should be opened for public use: 1) the Old Wagon Road in the Jack Gore Baygall Unit, 2) Fulton Battise Trail in the Big Sandy Creek Unit, and 3) Bear Thicket Trail in the Lance Rosier Unit.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108745

Comment Text: Canopy Walk (10): will offer visitors an exciting view of the BTNP while providing the BTNP with a visitor enticement unique to Texas and the South. Signage and brochures should be provided.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108743

Comment Text: Scenic Drives: BTNP should provide access to limited areas of the BTNP by automobile. Auto scenic routes, similar to that on Ghost Road, should be established on Cotton Road, Sunflower Road, and Timber Slough Road; routes should include appropriate signage, and/or brochures or guides Scenic Drive for Elderly/Handicapped (2): BTNP should provide access to limited areas of the BTNP by automobile. A high priority would be to develop a driving tour to accommodate elderly and handicapped visitors (also the indolent:) as well as summer visitors -- not only in the Rosier Unit but other historic sites inside and outside Preserve boundaries. Other scenic drives: Primitively-paved auto scenic routes, similar to that on Ghost Road, should be established on Cotton Road, Sunflower Road, and Timber Slough Road; routes should include appropriate signage, and/or brochures or guides.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108740

Comment Text: New Hiking Trails: Visitor Center Trail (1): An ADA-approved signed trail originating at the Visitor Center and ending at Village Creek would benefit families with children, elementary school classes who have experienced the exhibits at the Visitor Center, the handicapped and disadvantaged, and those with just a short period of time to visit the BTNP. Canyonlands (7): BTNP should develop a new hiking trail to make accessible the unique features of the upper Big Thicket in the area known as Canyonlands. This trail should introduce visitors to the diverse flora and the geological and archeological features of the area. Signage, brochures and guide books should be provided. Additional trails that should have been in the Strategic Plan: Neches Bottom-Jack Gore Baygall Unit (5): Recommend that the GMP gives high priority to the Old Wagon Road Trail extended to Timber Slough Road for public use because of its scenic qualities and historic significance. Lance Rosier Unit (4): Recommend that the "Bear Thicket Trail" be authorized with high priority; the trail should extend from Texas 105 to Texas 326 planned to exhibit both natural and cultural sites (such as Rosier birthplace, Hooks Bear Camp, etc.) Beech Creek Unit (9): Recommend the proposed extended trail in Beech Creek merits favorable consideration. As outlined in the 1980 GMP, much of the trail proposed can utilize existing forest tram roads. Big Sandy Creek Unit (6): Recommend that the GMP include a long trail from north to south crossing FM 1276 and Sunflower Road and terminating on FM 943 be included in the new GMP and that it be named to honor Chief Fulton Battise. This trail was proposed in the 1980 GMP. Canoe trails (3): on the Neches River, Village Creek and Pine Island Bayou should be developed to include interpretive signage, mileage markers, way stations, and trail notes and maps.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109859

Comment Text: Bear Thicket trail from S.H.IOS 0 326 w/ interpretive stops

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109785

Comment Text: Neat places □ provide geographic relief & micro ecology

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108896

Comment Text: An updated map of the acreage to be included in the proposed expansion bill for the preserve to be introduced by U.S. Congressman Kevin Brady.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

IE1500 Interp/Ed - Provide for scientific research/monitoring; identifies research/data needs

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108773

Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats □ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation; assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109804

Comment Text: Add more research monitoring areas

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108835

Comment Text: Science inquiring projects about biodiversity mentoring middle school and high school youth from communities adjacent to each of the units. Expansion of Ranger/Teacher/Ranger program.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109223

Comment Text: Research - What baseline research has been done and what remains to be accomplished? What monitoring is being done, what inventories have been done, and how will reintroduction of vanishing species be accomplished? The GMP needs to have a strong science and research component.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109217

Comment Text: Research Natural Areas - Are there candidates for Research Natural Area designation? With all the beauty and scientific importance of BTNP there are bound to be areas that can be so designated.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108904

Comment Text: The Preserve needs additional sampling/monitoring of water resources to establish total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for bacteria, total suspended solids (TSS), conductivity (salinity), and other water pollutants. Freshwater mussel surveys could also be conducted to assess health of these systems. The Preserve should continue to work with water planning entities the Senate Bill 2 and Senate Bill 3 groups to establish and maintain environmental flow in the Neches River and Trinity River drainages.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108902

Comment Text: Maintaining a comprehensive database of all scientific investigations that have occurred on the Preserve is of great value. Identification of what additional investigations are needed and in what priority is needed. Continued cooperation with external partners on the All-Taxa Biological Inventory (ATBI) is needed. Participation in regional work groups and survey teams is encouraged for specific taxa such as orchids, freshwater mussels and amphibians and reptiles. Continued interest and support for the West Gulf Coastal Plain Science conference is needed. Much of the inventory, research and monitoring of species and communities in the West Gulf Coastal Plain is of interest and significance for the NPS mission for the Preserve.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

IE1600 Interp/Ed - Promote understanding of the Native American culture in the preserve

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109847

Comment Text: Promote understanding of Native American culture in the preserve; story-telling; educate interpreters

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE1700 Interp/Ed - Identifies specific (potential) programs

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109849

Comment Text: Extended canoe/Kayak trips to immerse children in nature; grants

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108835

Comment Text: Science inquiring projects about biodiversity mentoring middle school and high school youth from communities adjacent to each of the units. Expansion of Ranger/Teacher/Ranger program.

Correspondence Id: 28 Comment Id: 109787

Comment Text: Need a trail in Wildwood so facilitate access into Hickory Creek from the community -Begin "Adopt a Trail"

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 Comment Id: 109777

Comment Text: "American women in nature" link to outreach activities

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE1800 Interp/Ed - Promote environmental awareness

Correspondence Id: 15 Comment Id: 109891

Comment Text: I would like for the Big Thicket to be an environmental education learning. Where not only learn about animals but we also learn about the environment.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 7 Comment Id: 108772

Comment Text: Visitor Use / Public Awareness: 1) Program for public information / awareness; 2) Offer more organized recreational opportunities; 3) Improve and expand trails, including canoe/kayak trails and scenic drives; 4) Consider implementation of a Birding Center; 5) Evaluate potential for a Canopy Walk.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 27 Comment Id: 109848

Comment Text: Grant programs for public ed; promote environment awareness; Ed outreach in schools

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE1900 Interp/Ed - Generate more public support (through creating understanding/awareness to include recreational activities)

Correspondence Id: 2 Comment Id: 108733

Comment Text: BITH and NPS must make a greater effort to educate Americans about the value of places like the Thicket. Attracting more visitors with new hiking, auto, and canoe trails could generate more public support.

Correspondence Id: 26 Comment Id: 109798

Comment Text: Regional; draw (bike trials)

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 Comment Id: 109775

Comment Text: Educated & outreach in urban areas to draw urban dwellers to park sites, facilities & programs

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

IE2000 Interp/Ed - Related to current visitor center (more exhibits, books, etc.)

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108801

Comment Text: Cabins with conveniences where people could stay. Tours with guides. Add to your visitor center.

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108796

Comment Text: More exhibits in visitor center.

IE2100 Interp/Ed - Provide more guided tours

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108801

Comment Text: Cabins with conveniences where people could stay. Tours with guides. Add to your visitor center.

MI1000 Misc - General misc comments

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108798

Comment Text: I do understand that Lamar University and some schools use it for educational purposes. Inquire from these entities as to what would enhance their use of the thicket.

MI1100 Misc - Designate the national preserve as a national park

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109908

Comment Text: I want it to be a national (saved) park.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108756

Comment Text: National Park vs. National Preserve: Big Thicket was the first National Preserve largely because of oil exploration and hunting. Unfortunately, the public isn't familiar with the term even after 35 years. The Preserve's "visibility" and stature would be vastly improved by designation as a National Park'attracting more visitors and benefiting the local economy.

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108734

Comment Text: I would like to see an expanded Preserve with protected stream corridors, and linking corridors between the various units so that wildlife can move with out fear. I would also like a significant part of the Preserve, say 500 acres of the Turkey Creek Unit, made into a national park to allow more extensive use of the area.

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109896

Comment Text: A unified national park.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109877

Comment Text: Expanded & a National Park (no oil/gas development).

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

MI1200 Misc - Personal story

Correspondence Id: 3 **Comment Id:** 108737

Comment Text: My grandpa worked at doublelake after he retired and my aunt did also. We went there all summer while I was growing up I went on my honeymoon week to doublelake.

Correspondence Id: 3 **Comment Id:** 108735

Comment Text: They are all special to me because I grew up going to double lake.

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108725

Comment Text: I enjoy the variety of life forms in the Thicket. Every time I walk in the Thicket I find something new. The unique nature of the Thicket should be better known to people.

MI1300 Misc - Provides historical information; facts

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108769

Comment Text: BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE FACTS "Nine land units "Six water corridors "106,684 acres "Located in seven counties "32 employees "First Preserve in National Park System "Established on "October 11, 1974 (PL 93-439) "1993 Addition Act (PL103-46) "Visitor Center dedicated October 6, 2001 "Exhibits opened March 20, 2004 "Intersection of four eco-regions -- eastern hardwood forests, Gulf coastal plains, Midwest prairies, southwest deserts "Designated an International Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program on December 15, 1981 "Recognized as a Globally Important Bird area by American Bird Conservancy on July 26, 2001 "Approximately 80-miles of the Neches River are in the Preserve boundaries □ 160 miles of Neches River frontage "560 miles of exterior boundaries - 15% urban interface, 7% road frontage (changing timber ownerships impact 436 miles) "88 pipelines through Preserve "70 miles of interior roads, dirt and paved "Over 45 miles of trails "Amphibians/reptiles - 93 "Birds-296 "Fish- 98 "Mammals-61 "Butterflies/Moths - over 1500 "Trees- 85 "Shrubs □ 62 "Vines □ 48 "1700+ plants (includes 26 ferns and allies, 20 orchids and 4 of North America's 5 types of insect-eating plants)

Organization: Big Thicket Association

MO1000 Mgmt Opps - Increase ranger presence/enforcement in the preserve

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109851

Comment Text: Trash clean up □ big concern Suggest an enforcement officer now & again to remind people to pick up their trash

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109843

Comment Text: May need more enforcement in village creek/Baby Galvez area (18-20 is too many, but need more ranger presence than current)

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

MO1100 Mgmt Opps - Suggests maintenance and upkeep of specific items/areas

Correspondence Id: 34 **Comment Id:** 108843

Comment Text: Would like to see park areas cleaned up and mowed in Open gap and Tater Patch.

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109820

Comment Text: Coop. Agreement to maintain (e.g. trash removal, maintenance of boat ramps, parking (provided & maintain) in areas along Village Creek.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108886

Comment Text: Sundew trail cleared on loop trails to get rid of (Titi Tree Wax Myrtle) invasive species so that Pegonia orchards can grow (come back)

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108876

Comment Text: NPS should increase clean-up of trash in preserve (Beech Cr. Unit trail).

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108799

Comment Text: Poor maintenance. The Beech Creek Unit was in terrible shape, grills rusted to the ground, unusable picnic tables, toilet door that you could not secure, needles and condoms on the ground. With some persistence and after 1 year, the entry area has been repaired. Rita debris closes off trail.

MO1200 Mgmt Opps - Increase staff

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109829

Comment Text: Need more protection staff to protect resources

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109203

Comment Text: There must be an adequate staff to handle existing and proposed oil/gas activities and restoration. At least four people, and perhaps more, are needed to ensure that environmental analysis are done, appropriate mitigation required (including a database that looks at what the NPS, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, and military are doing about mitigating oil/gas impacts), existing facilities are monitored, new activities are watched, and complete environmental restoration occurs to ensure as little damage occurs to BTNP as possible.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109196

Comment Text: With the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designation as a "Man and Biosphere Reserve;" the strong tradition of research; the

implementation of the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI); a boundary line longer than Yellowstone National Park; a large and taxing oil/gas development program; and narrow stream corridors and units surrounded by rapidly fragmenting and developing landscapes, it should be argued that BTNP needs additional personnel in law enforcement, resource protection, and interpretation and additional specialized positions to take care of these diverse missions. A rapid turnover of personnel has persisted in BTNP as people get training and experience in a variety of important and difficult natural resource issues and then leave. NPS should, via pay and other incentives, provide inducements for people to stay and use their expertise in BTNP. The GMP should reflect how these issues will be addressed successfully.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109767

Comment Text: Increase funding & staff

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108914

Comment Text: The Nature Conservancy recognizes that inadequate funding/staffing and attrition of staff to other park units is negatively impacting the continuity and effectiveness of the Preserve's management. We are in support of increased funding and cooperative efforts to enhance the Preserve's capabilities.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

MO1300 Mgmt Opps - Control speeds on the waterways

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109815

Comment Text: Idle speed buoys/marker in 10-mile Creek and Lake Bayou to control speed

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109216

Comment Text: Motor Boat Limits - The NPS should limit boat motor use and where possible expand this limit. NPS should consider a limit of 5 mph and consider use of electric trolling motors only. This would reduce noise, gas fumes, and water pollution.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

MO1400 Mgmt Opps - Garner support from local communities/landowners

Correspondence Id: 10 **Comment Id:** 108783

Comment Text: Big Thicket NP sits on the edge of the large metropolitan community of Beaumont, but by the very placement and management of locations where visitors can interact with the Preserve, holds the community at arms length. The Pine Island Bayou Coordinator unit, the Beaumont unit and the Lower Neches River unit are all partially within the boundaries of the city limits of Beaumont. Yet the places where the public can easily interact include only two paltry day use areas, Cooks Lake Road and Edgewater. No trails, no campgrounds, no picnic areas.

Opportunities for cooperation with other agencies exist but are shunned by the Preserve. The LNVA has a boat ramp, parking area, and restrooms adjacent to the Preserve. One only need walk 60 seconds down a well maintained LNVA administrative road to reach the Preserve, where one will not even find a park boundary sign much less a trailhead or interpretive display, I believe LNVA would be open to cooperation in managing this access to the Preserve, in fact they give considerable time and funding to manage it while Preserve staff barely acknowledge it is there. Likewise the Preserve's enabling legislation directs them to engage in providing recreational opportunities and portions of the Preserve lie within the city limits of Beaumont. Yet strangely, cooperation between the City of Beaumont Parks and Recreation Department and the Preserve appear to be non-existent. I believe the Preserve needs to wake up to the opportunities and mandate to provide for visitor interaction. Trails, picnic areas, campgrounds, interpretive displays, and other Preserve provided amenities accessible to the gateway community of Beaumont would be a good start. Adding a community or park planner to the Preserve staff and fostering the relationships with partners that could help them do what congress has tasked them with doing would also go a long way to meeting that congressional mandate and would be tax money well spent.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109222

Comment Text: Boundaries - NPS has expressed concern for the margins of BTNP and how they can be buffered. How will NPS educate neighbors and get their cooperation? There needs to be a specific program to do this. Has NPS done this in the past? If not why not since boundary protection and maintenance is one of the largest issues in BTNP?

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

MO1500 Mgmt Opps - General management opportunities

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109892

Comment Text: The visitor center attendees need to be more friendly and better informed.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109842

Comment Text: Village Creek/Baby Galvez □ work at balancing private property/visiting public/sportsmen/hikers/Business interests

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109224

Comment Text: Carrying Capacity - NPS needs to better collect visitor use information so we have a more reliable idea of use.. Carrying capacity limits can be developed from recreational use studies that have been done in the past 20 yrs. These limits can be adjusted as real data from BTNP is collected. The Sierra Club does not believe that NPS should wait until there is a problem before limits are set. After all we are trying to protect the ecosystem in an atmosphere of reduced personnel and money for natural resource protection. Limits will help in regulating so we do not develop a problem.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 Comment Id: 109219

Comment Text: Right-of-Ways - Can present right-of-ways (ROW's) be consolidated? There are a large number of pipeline, power-line, and other corridors in BTNP. There may be an opportunity to consolidate many of them. How can this occur? Consolidation will reduce forest fragmentation and illegal use entry points. This should be a goal of the GMP. Good candidate units include Lance Rosier, Jack Gore Baygall, Turkey Creek, Hickory Creek Savannah, and Little Pine Island Bayou.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 32 Comment Id: 108913

Comment Text: The Preserve has a multitude of right-of-ways for oil and gas and utility operations. The Conservancy is in support of working cooperatively with operators for optimum management activities to protect and restore native vegetation and species that often exist on ROWs.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 Comment Id: 108912

Comment Text: The Conservancy favors yearly evaluation of these consumptive activities to determine if regulations are appropriate for the adequate protection of populations, including endangered, threatened and rare species that may be compromised.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 Comment Id: 108907

Comment Text: Improved coordination between of the administration and implementation of oil and gas work and natural resource management activities on the ground is needed. Prior to restoration of oil and gas sites, the Preserve should have full knowledge of the natural resources that are present and what will be impacted, positively or negatively. Efforts to restore a site should be weighed against if more additional damage or loss of diversity will occur as the result of restoration activities.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

NR1000 Natural Resources - General natural resources

Correspondence Id: 15 Comment Id: 109884

Comment Text: The Big Thicket is a place where time should halt. Let us keep our peaceful places where animals roam undisturbed by development.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 Comment Id: 109882

Comment Text: I think it should be a place where animals and people can interact together. Be one with nature.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108773

Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats □ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation; assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.
Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109217

Comment Text: Research Natural Areas - Are there candidates for Research Natural Area designation? With all the beauty and scientific importance of BTNP there are bound to be areas that can be so designated.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

NR1100 Natural Resources - Supports preservation, conservation, restoration of natural resources/biodiversity (including T&E species reintroduction)

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109886

Comment Text: I want it to be here for those who come after. Respect this beautiful area and protect it as you would your most precious possession. A pristine place of quiet and serenity where one can experience the Creator. A treasure for all people. How poor we would be without the beauty found here.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109885

Comment Text: A beautiful place where people can see amazing creatures. Also, creatures can live in peace and harmony. Forests should be clean & not trashed! Be protected for future generations.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109910

Comment Text: Conservation efforts and regulation of certain species.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109901

Comment Text: Preserved!

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109889

Comment Text: It needs to be preserved so that the future generation can see the way it used to be.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109878

Comment Text: Protected so my grand boys can enjoy it.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109876

Comment Text: Gradually restore more land to "natural" conditions □ keep the trails, but nothing motorized except maybe in the river.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109875

Comment Text: As natural as possible! Would like primitive camping for RVs, no hookups necessary. I am an RV'r whose goal is visiting all 391 areas under the N.P. service. Would rather give you my overnite camping fee. An RV "Host (volunteer)" could maintain the campground for you.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109873

Comment Text: Preserved and protected. It has wonderful nature animals & plants.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109871

Comment Text: As close to its natural state before the settlers came. I would love to see black bear & cougars here.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109870

Comment Text: I want the Big Thicket to remain natural for the plant and animal life that live there. I also want it to remain open and available for all to use which includes hunters and fishermen as well as nature seekers.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109869

Comment Text: More people need to step up to help preserve more of the land and everything that lives in it.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 Comment Id: 109868

Comment Text: To be around for years to come ☐ and maybe have more land and animals to share with our love and memories of such a wonderful place.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 Comment Id: 109866

Comment Text: Left alone, to grow for future generations to see.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 9 Comment Id: 108780

Comment Text: The chief goals of the general management plan should be the preservation of biodiversity, which is the purpose of the national preserve.

Correspondence Id: 7 Comment Id: 108773

Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats ☐ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation; assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 6 Comment Id: 108765

Comment Text: More work also needs to be done on removal of pine plantations within units and restoration to original habitat.

Correspondence Id: 27 Comment Id: 109832

Comment Text: Canyonlands areas ☐ protect areas from disturbances until could be added to preserve

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 Comment Id: 109845

Comment Text: Would like to see restoration of BITH natural conditions as priority

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 25 **Comment Id:** 108833

Comment Text: I hope to see the additional land recovered from being pine farms - cleared areas for the orchids to recover - possibly some campgrounds.

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108863

Comment Text: I would like to see the re-introduction of the black bear.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108868

Comment Text: Allow as much land as possible to remain- ecology & mother nature working

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109198

Comment Text: NPS could be much more aggressive with regard to protecting BTNP natural resources from proposed projects that local, state, and federal agencies want to implement. In particular, the Sierra Club wants NPS to be much more aggressive when looking at road impacts (like U.S. 69 as an example) on BTNP to ensure that fragmentation and other environmental impacts do not doom the ability of individual species to live in BTNP.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109226

Comment Text: Restoration - The Sierra Club is concerned about any so-called "off-site loblolly pine" logging. Where it can be documented that Longleaf Pine or Shortleaf Pine dominated an area some cutting of Loblolly Pine may be appropriate to restore those species. However, we are concerned that this can be abused and allow logging of hardwood and pine trees in BTNP that is not appropriate or protective of BTNP resources. This goal presents a very slippery slope and needs to be implemented very carefully with complete public review, comment, and understanding of any proposals.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108816

Comment Text: To me, the two most important goals are to preserve the ecological diversity and integrity of the preserve as well as possible and to expand the acreage of the preserve. Do whatever is necessary to keep the water running clean, the biodiversity thriving and the soil rich and healthy.

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108808

Comment Text: My greatest concern is that the ecological diversity is maintained in the face of resource extraction interests, encroaching development, climate change and invasive species.

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108901 **Comment Text:** The Preserve would benefit from a restoration and management plan that defines by preserve unit and by terrestrial/aquatic habitat goals and objectives for restoration and management.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108900

Comment Text: Natural Resource Planning-TNC is in support of designing a comprehensive natural resource plan that establishes goal, objectives and action items for the restoration and management on native aquatic and terrestrial systems of the Preserve. This plan would provide continuity for ongoing science and stewardship work regardless of the high turnover rate of park personnel at Big Thicket National Preserve.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108898

Comment Text: Wet longleaf pine savanna habitat is if greatest threat with continued development in the region. Protection of this vegetation community should be given high priority.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

NR1200 Natural Resources - Supports designation of the Neches River as a Wild and Scenic River

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108748

Comment Text: Emphasis should be focused on adding areas of the traditional Big Thicket and the Neches River bottomlands while also promoting Upper Neches River conservation initiatives and the designation of the entire Neches as a Wilde and Scenic River to ensure adequate water supplies for those areas.

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109793

Comment Text: Ensure wild & scenic designation for Neches R.; prevent damming of river; would provide extra preservation in addition to NPS status

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108864

Comment Text: I would like to see the Neches River designated as a Wild & Scenic River.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109201

Comment Text: Neches Wild and Scenic River - The GMP should fully discuss the process and impact of designating the Neches River as a scenic river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Many miles of the Neches River are in BTNP and this designation would recognize and signify the importance of BTNP and attract people to enjoy canoeing and kayaking.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109770

Comment Text: Neches River 0 Wild & scenic design

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109763

Comment Text: Neches Wild & Scenic River to extend preserve concept N. to Lake Palestine (approx. 160 miles) to avoid fragmentation.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108813

Comment Text: The GMP should fully discuss the process and impact of designating the Neches River as a scenic river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Correspondence Id: 31 **Comment Id:** 109189

Comment Text: The GMP should fully discuss the process and impact of designating the Neches River as a scenic river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Organization: Sierra Club

Correspondence Id: 19 **Comment Id:** 109238

Comment Text: In a nutshell: by creating the Neches Wild and Scenic River, one is simply moving the idea of the BTNP north. What is the Big Thicket National Preserve? Essentially it is a system of stream corridors connecting nature sanctuaries. If one looks at a map of the Preserve one sees that it saves and protects the essentials of the lower Neches River Drainage Basin. In attempting the creation of the wild and scenic Neches we are simply moving the basic conception (but not the NPS ownership) north □ all the way to Lake Palestine. Much of this is already in place, with National Forests and national wildlife refuges as analogues to the Preserve's Units.

Organization: University of North Texas

Commenter: Pete A. Y. Gunter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108899

Comment Text: The GMP should include strategies for how the Preserve will benefit from the proposed designation of the Neches River as a Scenic river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It should also include an action plan for how the Preserve and external advocates and partners will work together toward this designation.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 23 **Comment Id:** 108819

Comment Text: The GMP should fully discuss the process and impact of designating the Neches River as a scenic river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

NR1300 Natural Resources - Control/remove invasive species

Correspondence Id: 8 **Comment Id:** 108778

Comment Text: I would like to see less invasive plants and restoration of native species; more trails (hiking and biking) in the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108766

Comment Text: Non-native plant species (exotics) are literally defacing not only the Preserve but Southeast Texas. Efforts to control must be aggressive.

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109809

Comment Text: Get rid of Tallow Trees

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108866

Comment Text: I would like to see invasive species successfully controlled.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108892

Comment Text: Removed exotic plants

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109206

Comment Text: Non-Native Invasive Species - The GMP should address how invasive species (like Chinese Tallow, feral hogs, foreign privet species, etc.) will be comprehensively controlled or eliminated in BTNP. The use of chemicals should be last used alternative and not a first used alternative.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109768

Comment Text: Removal of exotics

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109784

Comment Text: Encourage greater hunting of hogs in the preserve

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109783

Comment Text: Need to get control of exotic (Rosier units but also others) Species □ focus on particular species e.g., Chinese tallow, Piney Woods Rooter Hogs, (Little Pine) Allow longer hunting season in preserve for hogs Get school children & others to pull the tallowsby roots

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 22 **Comment Id:** 108817

Comment Text: I am concerned about invasive species like Chinese tallow trees and feral hogs in the Big Thicket Preserve. There should be ways to remove and control them without using things like toxic herbicides.

Correspondence Id: 31 **Comment Id:** 109192

Comment Text: The GMP should address how invasive species (like Chinese Tallow and feral hogs) will be controlled or eliminated.

Organization: Sierra Club

Correspondence Id: 19 **Comment Id:** 109240

Comment Text: One more point: In the heart of the Big Thicket you will find the Japanese Climbing Fern (*Lygodium Japonicum*). It is an attractive plant and so far as I can see does very little harm. But it is an "exotic" □ a species not native to America, but to Japan. In general the NPS had done little or nothing to extirpate *Lygodium Japonicum*. There must surely be other, better things to do. But there are exotics which are not so benign. I can think of two which are thoroughly malignant and about which nothing whatsoever has been done by the National Park Service. These are the Wild (piney woods "rooter") Hog and the Chinese Tallow tree. Radically different in every other way, the two have destructiveness in common. The depredations of the wild hog can be found in every unit of the Preserve. Well named, the piney woods rooter hogs literally "roots out" native vegetation. In areas (as I have seen) half to whole acres. Mushrooms, ferns, wildflowers, vines, undergrowth of all kinds are decimated along with all the creatures which live in them. I have walked up Little Pine Island Bayou for two miles and found scarred, denuded forest floor through the entire length of the hike. As for the tallow tree, it has been too often discussed to need discussion here. Tallow takes over prairies, marshes, crowds out native vegetation and leaves an endless monoculture. Yet it is possible to eradicate. I give you the Marysee Prairie: once overrun with tallow saplings, now largely free of them. The wild hog can be eliminated by local hunters simply by lengthening the hunting season. Local schools can provide labor to help deal with Chinese Tallow.

Organization: University of North Texas

Commenter: Pete A. Y. Gunter

Correspondence Id: 18 **Comment Id:** 108802

Comment Text: Here are some comments on particular issues for the GMP: 1) How to control invasive species like feral hogs. 2) Transportation alternatives to make visits easier. 3) Buying and selling mineral rights

Correspondence Id: 23 **Comment Id:** 108822

Comment Text: The GMP should address how invasive species (like Chinese Tallow and feral hogs) will be comprehensively controlled or eliminated in BTNP.

NR1400 Natural Resources - Eliminate impacts from/halt oil and gas operations/extraction industries; acquire mineral rights

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109895

Comment Text: Prohibit the activities of the extraction industries & SOON.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108773

Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats □ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with

land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation; assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.
Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108755

Comment Text: Oil and Gas Exploration: According to a document published by the Preserve, the USGS estimated the reserves of oil and gas as follows: The U. S. Geological Survey estimates that the O&G reserves that remain in BTNP include 1.21 million barrels of oil, 1.02 million barrels of natural gas liquids, and 70.11 billion cubic feet of gas. Given the current U. S. domestic consumption rate, the remaining oil reserves in BTNP would be consumed in less than 3 hours and the natural gas would be consumed in 1 day. Unless subsequent data changes these estimates, it would appear that the oil and gas reserves under Preserve lands are virtually depleted. When these reserves are depleted, the National Park Service should consider acquiring the mineral estate.

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108749

Comment Text: Action should be taken toward acquiring the mineral estate beneath BTNP.

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108865

Comment Text: I would like to see impacts of oil and gas drilling eliminated.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109202

Comment Text: Oil/Gas Exploitation - The GMP should comprehensively analyze buying and retiring all oil/gas mineral rights in BTNP. What is the status of mineral estate ownership now? The Sierra Club view is that wherever mineral rights can be bought for reasonable prices, they should. This is the only way to guarantee protection of the biodiversity of BTNP. This should be a goal of the GMP.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109203

Comment Text: There must be an adequate staff to handle existing and proposed oil/gas activities and restoration. At least four people, and perhaps more, are needed to ensure that environmental analysis are done, appropriate mitigation required (including a database that looks at what the NPS, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, and military are doing about mitigating oil/gas impacts), existing facilities are monitored, new activities are watched, and complete environmental restoration occurs to ensure as little damage occurs to BTNP as possible.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109772

Comment Text: Get more oil & gas positions

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108814

Comment Text: The GMP should comprehensively analyze buying and retiring all oil/gas mineral rights in BTNP.

Correspondence Id: 31 **Comment Id:** 109190

Comment Text: The GMP should comprehensively analyze buying and retiring all oil/gas mineral rights in the BTNP.

Organization: Sierra Club

Correspondence Id: 18 **Comment Id:** 108802

Comment Text: Here are some comments on particular issues for the GMP: 1) How to control invasive species like feral hogs. 2) Transportation alternatives to make visits easier. 3) Buying and selling mineral rights

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108907

Comment Text: Improved coordination between of the administration and implementation of oil and gas work and natural resource management activities on the ground is needed. Prior to restoration of oil and gas sites, the Preserve should have full knowledge of the natural resources that are present and what will be impacted, positively or negatively. Efforts to restore a site should be weighed against if more additional damage or loss of diversity will occur as the result of restoration activities.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108906

Comment Text: The Preserve should continue to investigate options for acquiring oil/gas and mineral rights for existing and future land protection project. Protection of the natural resources of the Preserve should be of high priority.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 23 **Comment Id:** 108820

Comment Text: The GMP should comprehensively analyze buying and retiring all oil/gas mineral rights in BTNP.

NR1500 Natural Resources - Keep as natural as possible/leave it alone

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109906

Comment Text: Remain woodsy and as natural as it can.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109887

Comment Text: To stay undeveloped as much as possible. Only for educational purposes. I want my kids to be able to experience it!

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109904

Comment Text: Big Thicket should be a place where our children can experience the true meaning of the wild and phenomenal beauty of nature before it was disturbed. Let Nature take its course. Let the Big Thicket tell you a story of the wild and its history.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109894

Comment Text: Protected and well preserved! Preserved as natural as possible! Just the way it is. As natural as possible and preserved for all future generations.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109898

Comment Text: Natural and unchanged. Should be kept a national park. A sanctuary for families and friends.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 24 **Comment Id:** 108827

Comment Text: Maintaining the natural beauty while at the same time expanding access.

NR1600 Natural Resources - Address climate change (analyze the effects and address the changes)

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109205

Comment Text: NPS should prepare and include in the draft GMP/EIS, a climate change ecological resilience and resistance plan. This plan would assess the biological and ecological elements in BTNP and the effects that climate change has had and will have on them. The plan would also assist plants, animals, and ecosystems in adapting to climate change and would require monitoring of changes and mitigation measure effectiveness. The plan would be based on: 1. Protecting existing functioning ecosystems in BTNP. 2. Reducing stressors on the ecosystems in BTNP. 3. Restoring natural functioning ecological processes in BTNP. 4. Using natural recovery in BTNP, in most instances. 5. Acquiring buffers and corridors to expand and ensure connectivity of ecosystems in BTNP. 6. Intervening to manipulate (manage) ecosystems in BTNP only as a last resort.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109204

Comment Text: Climate Change - The GMP should comprehensively analyze the effects climate will have on BTNP and how these changes will be addressed. Climate change will alter existing ecosystems and make it more difficult for plants and animals to adapt successfully to

these changed ecosystems. NPS must address questions like: 1. How will BTNP be affected by climate change? 2. What can be done to create" more resilient and resistant habitats and ecosystems in BTNP? 3. What can BTNP GMP do to reduce CO2 or other greenhouse gas emissions due to the BTNP? 4. What can be done to assist plants and animals so they can adapt to climate change?

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109769

Comment Text: How to manage climate change impacts?

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 31 **Comment Id:** 109191

Comment Text: The GMP should comprehensively analyze the effects climate change will have on the BTNP, and how these changes can be addressed.

Organization: Sierra Club

Correspondence Id: 23 **Comment Id:** 108821

Comment Text: The GMP should comprehensively analyze the effects climate will have on BTNP and how these changes can be addressed.

NR1700 Natural Resources - Supports habitat management for specific species

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108753

Comment Text: New Birding Center: Birding Center should be adjacent to the BTNP Visitor Center to enhance support services available to birders at BTNP, and capitalize on the BTNP designation as a Globally Important Birding Area. Managed habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker and the Bachman's sparrow would enable these birds to thrive. These are two of the birds that birders want to see when they come to the Big Thicket.

NR1800 Natural Resources - Prevent damming of the waterways

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109793

Comment Text: Ensure wild & scenic designation for Neches R.; prevent damming of river; would provide extra preservation in addition to NPS status

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

NR1900 Natural Resources - Comments in support of fire management

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108773

Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats □ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald

cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation; assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.
Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108764

Comment Text: It is critical that fire management efforts be accelerated to control vegetation in longleaf pinelands. Prescribed burns in some area need to be reinforced by other methods, possibly hand removal or even brush-hog. Hickory Creek Savannah used to be open grasses and carpeted with snowy orchids, terrestrial bladderworts, etc.; populations are now minimal.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109833

Comment Text: Accelerate fire management plan brush growth haps so quickly. Fire needed to preserve ecosystem (Turkey Creek Unit)

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109846

Comment Text: Accelerate fire mngmt program

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 25 **Comment Id:** 108832

Comment Text: Loss of specimens - not enough staff to oversee the many units, need more prescribed burns in the savannah areas.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109213

Comment Text: Fire - There is the need to conduct more prescribed burns in BTNP. It appears that often fire is not used in as many places as it should be. With the new fire building this problem hopefully will be reduced. But personnel are needed to ensure fire can be used positively. The U.S. Forest Service, in Sam Houston National Forest, is able to burn about 30,000 to 40,000 acres each year. BTNP should be able to burn what it needs to burn each year too.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108903

Comment Text: The Nature Conservancy is in full support of continuing and increasing efforts to manage and restore Preserve lands using fire management (prescribed and wildfire where appropriate). With the acquisition of new lands and the possible expansion bill adding even more acres to the Preserve there is a need to increase the number of acres and the effectiveness of burn

operations on the ground. Planning and prioritization of fire operations should be coordinated in a holistic manner with other nature resource treatments such as forest management and non-native/invasive species control and removal and with oil/gas and mineral activities.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

NR2000 Natural Resources – Comments related to water resource management

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109822

Comment Text: NPS should have more involvement in the state & regional water planning on the Upper Neches because it could impact water levels in the lower Neches/Preserve.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109208

Comment Text: Water Resources - Additional sampling/monitoring is needed to establish total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for bacteria, total suspended solids (TSS), conductivity (salinity), and other water pollutants. BTNP must take an aggressive stance against proposed projects that dewater the Neches River and other streams (Pine Island Bayou for instance) and alter the functioning of the natural ecological process of floodplains. Floodplains are the heart of BTNP and their good health ensures the health of BTNP.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

NR2100 Natural Resources - Supports wilderness designation/proposed wilderness

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109214

Comment Text: Wilderness - The question of wilderness needs to be revisited. It has been about 30 years since this issue was considered. Are there areas now, where mineral ownership no longer threatens the area, than can be designated wilderness? As the East Texas Wilderness bill for national forests showed wilderness can have roads and ROW's going through it. Wilderness designation should be a goal of the GMP. Acquisition of mineral rights would allow Wilderness consideration now and in the future.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

PA1000 Partnerships - Generally supports partnerships

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108773

Comment Text: Resource Management: 1) Flora and Fauna: Inventory species distribution and abundance; document species interaction (pollinators, predators, food source, etc.); construct database; monitor resources aggressively; encourage research; 2) Resource protection: support ecosystem management - fire management, reforestation/restoration; control non-native species; reintroduce appropriate native species; interpret cultural resources; 3) Threatened Habitats □ Protect longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly forests, bald cypress-tupelo swamps; 4) Fragmentation: Acquire buffers to protect sensitive areas; work with land trusts and potential donors; 5) U.S. 69: Eliminate some interchanges; minimize impacts on

wildlife and hydrology; encourage TXDOT to plant native wildflowers and other vegetation to enhance the Big Thicket National Preserve Parkway; consider a bike trail from Kountze to the Visitor Center; 6) Oil and Gas Exploration: Administer regulations of the Oil and Gas Management Plan rigorously; reduce number of wells drilled; restore drilling sites; abandon and combine pipelines when feasible; acquire mineral rights when reserves are depleted; 7) Water Resources: Protect the Neches River and its tributaries; support increased water conservation; assess impacts of proposed reservoirs; encourage county commissioners to adopt stringent requirements for new subdivisions in floodplains; prevent further degradation of water resources.
Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108771

Comment Text: Preserve Operations: 1) Budgets must keep pace with escalating costs; the Preserve is under-funded and understaffed; 2) Work with NGOs and conservation groups for improved funding; 3) Reschedule OMP.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108747

Comment Text: The GMP should provide for active contact with conservation partners and landowners to establish conservation easements, landowner agreements, and gifts.

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109820

Comment Text: Coop. Agreement to maintain (e.g. trash removal, maintenance of boat ramps, parking (provided & maintain) in areas along Village Creek.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

PA1100 Partnerships - Identifies specific (potential) partners; partnership/coordination opportunities

Correspondence Id: 10 **Comment Id:** 108783

Comment Text: Big Thicket NP sits on the edge of the large metropolitan community of Beaumont, but by the very placement and management of locations where visitors can interact with the Preserve, holds the community at arms length. The Pine Island Bayou Coordior unit, the Beaumont unit and the Lower Neches River unit are all partially within the boundaries of the city limits of Beaumont. Yet the places where the public can easily interact include only two paltry day use areas, Cooks Lake Road and Edgewater. No trails, no campgrounds, no picnic areas. Opportunities for cooperation with other agencies exist but are shunned by the Preserve. The LNVA has a boat ramp, parking area, and restrooms adjacent to the Preserve. One only need walk 60 seconds down a well maintained LNVA administrative road to reach the Preserve, where one will not even find a park boundary sign much less a trailhead or interpretive display, I believe LNVA would be open to cooperation in managing this access to the Preserve, in fact they give considerable time and funding to manage it while Preserve staff barely acknowledge it is there. Likewise the Preserve's enabling legislation directs them to engage in providing recreational opportunities and portions of the Preserve lie within the city limits of Beaumont. Yet strangely, cooperation between the City of Beaumont Parks and Recreation Department and the Preserve appear to be non-existent. I believe the Preserve needs to wake up to the opportunities and mandate to provide for visitor interaction. Trails, picnic areas, campgrounds, interpretive

displays, and other Preserve provided amenities accessible to the gateway community of Beaumont would be a good start. Adding a community or park planner to the Preserve staff and fostering the relationships with partners that could help them do what congress has tasked them with doing would also go a long way to meeting that congressional mandate and would be tax money well spent.

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108790

Comment Text: The BTNP can't have a visitor center near every unit, but the state parks are close to some of the units.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108789

Comment Text: I would like to see greater cooperation between the Preserve and the nearby state parks (Village Creek, Martin Dies, Jr., and Lake Livingston) in providing camping for Preserve visitors and information about trails in the different Preserve units.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108768

Comment Text: Most national parks offer campgrounds and interpretive programs; the park should either add campgrounds or work closely with existing state parks to improve visitor knowledge and experience.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109861

Comment Text: Who is responsible for trash pickups at the underpasses/water access along Village Creek? GMP should commit to working with & coordinating with other resp. entities for trash pickups.

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109852

Comment Text: Baby Galvez is a major asset to city & area needs clean up & security suggest partnership between pvt owners & public interests Do not feel safe being there alone

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109803

Comment Text: Update mailing list - include Audubon Society

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109794

Comment Text: Work with coastal conservation alliance (CCA) to gain support among fishing community for Neches Preservation

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108873

Comment Text: Keeping fire mgmt facility in Tyler Co was important □ reflects working relationship with NPS.

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108872

Comment Text: Tyler County □ Northern Gateway to Big Thicket □ should help manage units here

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109211

Comment Text: Coordination - NPS needs to coordinate better with the public, academicians, environmental organizations, and resource and development agencies to ensure that BTNP is protected as much as possible from outside threats. This includes development activities and volunteer opportunities for nature and biodiversity and compatible, low impact, recreational service projects. The ATBI is a good example of how to do this.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109791

Comment Text: Partner w/ state parks to improve camping Martin Dies Lake Livingston Village Creek Also A/C reservation Get info about preserve from state parks Use state parks as base

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109779

Comment Text: Work with Texas state parks or private developers for camping facilities; camping currently limited (Vill. Cr. State Pk.)

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108812

Comment Text: The Sierra Club makes some good suggestions.

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108907

Comment Text: Improved coordination between of the administration and implementation of oil and gas work and natural resource management activities on the ground is needed. Prior to restoration of oil and gas sites, the Preserve should have full knowledge of the natural resources that are present and what will be impacted, positively or negatively. Efforts to restore a site should be weighed against if more additional damage or loss of diversity will occur as the result of restoration activities.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108905

Comment Text: The GMP should address how invasive species (like Chinese Tallow, feral hogs, and other exotics, etc.) will be comprehensively controlled or eliminated in BTNP.

Consideration should be given to establishing coops with regional partners to address identification, treatment and control of non-native and invasive species.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108900

Comment Text: Natural Resource Planning-TNC is in support of designing a comprehensive natural resource plan that establishes goal, objectives and action items for the restoration and management on native aquatic and terrestrial systems of the Preserve. This plan would provide continuity for ongoing science and stewardship work regardless of the high turnover rate of park personnel at Big Thicket National Preserve.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108895

Comment Text: Continued interest and support for the West Gulf Coastal Plain Science conference is needed. Much of the inventory, research and monitoring of species and communities in the West Gulf Coastal Plain is of interest and significance for the NPS mission for the Preserve.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108894

Comment Text: The Preserve should coordinate on protection projects with other conservation partners including but not limited to The Big Thicket Natural Heritage Trust, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Texas Land Conservancy and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. Mitigation opportunities, conservation easements and alternate methods of land protection with partners should be considered.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108913

Comment Text: The Preserve has a multitude of right-of-ways for oil and gas and utility operations. The Conservancy is in support of working cooperatively with operators for optimum management activities to protect and restore native vegetation and species that often exist on ROWs.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

RV1000 Rec/VE - General recreation/visitor experiences

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109902

Comment Text: To be a place of relaxation. So people can see God's beautiful creation.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108785

Comment Text: I would to see more attention paid to the river corridors and experiencing the Big Thicket from the perspective of a canoe.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 34 **Comment Id:** 108840

Comment Text: Camping, fishing, boating, swimming. Like to see boat ramp added to Jack Gore Unit.

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109806

Comment Text: Birding: Turkey Creek unit & along creeks & river are most important

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109802

Comment Text: More activity (hiking/biking) could reduce undesirable activities

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109801

Comment Text: Need outdoor/Natural areas for recreation Health/Fitness

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108854

Comment Text: I enjoy hiking, birding, camping, and nature study.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108889

Comment Text: Want more activities in Beaumont

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108882

Comment Text: Good birding spots

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109215

Comment Text: Hunting and Fishing - What is the status of hunting, fishing, and trapping in BTNP? Is there a need for change in regulations or requirements for these activities or in particular areas? Should there be more areas that are off limits to any of these activities? Are any resources being hurt by these activities? If so much time is taken up in managing hunting how can the program be changed to reduce manpower for this activity so that resource protection activities can be given greater emphasis? Alligator Gar are now considered fish of concern by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. What does NPS plan to do about fishing for Alligator Gar in BTNP?

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109781

Comment Text: Preserving/improving access to village creek for canoeing; area is representative of other units.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV1100 Rec/VE – Supports preservation before recreation and/or preservation compatible/non-consumptive uses (hiking, canoeing, birding, wildlife viewing, photography, etc.)

Correspondence Id: 9 **Comment Id:** 108781

Comment Text: Visitor activities should be compatible with the preservation of biodiversity. Hiking, canoeing, wildlife viewing, and other non-consumptive uses of natural resources should be facilitated. Non-motorized recreational use should be favored over motorized activities (motorboats and atvs).

RV1200 Rec/VE - Supports non-motorized use only (no motorboats or ATVs) (only canoeing, hiking, etc.)

Correspondence Id: 9 **Comment Id:** 108781

Comment Text: Visitor activities should be compatible with the preservation of biodiversity. Hiking, canoeing, wildlife viewing, and other non-consumptive uses of natural resources should be facilitated. Non-motorized recreational use should be favored over motorized activities (motorboats and atvs).

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108807

Comment Text: Also - I don't think you allow off-road vehicle use currently and I hope that doesn't change. That would certainly create potential conflicts. I do not want ORVs tearing around the Big Thicket.

RV1300 Rec/VE - Supports motorized use (motorboats and/or ATVs)

Correspondence Id: 34 **Comment Id:** 108844

Comment Text: Yes, hiking, biking, four wheeler trails, boat ramps. Easier access to the woods, not just a road to the river.

RV1400 Rec/VE - Supports motorized use only in the waterways; limited motorboat use

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109876

Comment Text: Gradually restore more land to "natural" conditions keep the trails, but nothing motorized except maybe in the river.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109216

Comment Text: Motor Boat Limits - The NPS should limit boat motor use and where possible expand this limit. NPS should consider a limit of 5 mph and consider use of electric trolling motors only. This would reduce noise, gas fumes, and water pollution.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

RV1500 Rec/VE - Supports ecotourism

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108792

Comment Text: I would like ecotourism to be more important the economies of the towns of the Big Thicket.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109797

Comment Text: Provide eco-tourism

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108838

Comment Text: I would like to see a network of guides from the local communities who could provide ecotours for visitors in the units that they know well and love - like at reserves in Costa Rica.

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109780

Comment Text: Promote ecotourism

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV1600 Rec/VE - Supports the development of more hiking and/or canoe trails/identifies specific areas for trails

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109883

Comment Text: I want it to stay beautiful and peaceful and the only thing I would change is that there would be more trails.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109864

Comment Text: More trails and opportunities for exploring.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108786

Comment Text: I enjoy the interpretive trails that have been installed, but I think that each unit of the preserve should have at least one trail with interpretation that explains why that unit is important.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108727

Comment Text: The park should have more trails, with signage and trail guides for visitors.

Correspondence Id: 8 **Comment Id:** 108778

Comment Text: I would like to see less invasive plants and restoration of native species; more trails (hiking and biking) in the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 8 **Comment Id:** 108775

Comment Text: Hiking on the trails and learning about the plants and animals. I'd like to see more accessibility and trails in the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108772

Comment Text: Visitor Use / Public Awareness: 1) Program for public information / awareness; 2) Offer more organized recreational opportunities; 3) Improve and expand trails, including canoe/kayak trails and scenic drives; 4) Consider implementation of a Birding Center; 5) Evaluate potential for a Canopy Walk.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108760

Comment Text: Additional trails are need for short-term visitors: 1) a trail from the Visitor Center to Village Creek; 2) a driving-tour for elderly and handicapped visitors that would also attract visitors in summer months; 3) canoe trails on Village Creek and the Neches River

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108750

Comment Text: New Hiking Trails: Visitor Center Trail: An ADA-approved signed trail originating at the Visitor Center and ending at Village Creek would benefit families with children, elementary school classes who have experienced the exhibits at the Visitor Center, the handicapped and disadvantaged, and those with just a short period of time to visit the BTNP. BTNP should develop a new hiking trail to make accessible the unique features of the upper Big Thicket in the area known as Canyonlands or Rush Creek. This trail should introduce visitors to the diverse flora and the geological and archeological features of the area. Signage, brochures and guidebooks should be provided. Three trails with historical/cultural significance and with flagging maintained for many years by the Big Thicket Association should be opened for public use: 1) the Old Wagon Road in the Jack Gore Baygall Unit, 2) Fulton Battise Trail in the Big Sandy Creek Unit, and 3) Bear Thicket Trail in the Lance Rosier Unit.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108740

Comment Text: New Hiking Trails: Visitor Center Trail (1): An ADA-approved signed trail originating at the Visitor Center and ending at Village Creek would benefit families with children, elementary school classes who have experienced the exhibits at the Visitor Center, the handicapped and disadvantaged, and those with just a short period of time to visit the BTNP. Canyonlands (7): BTNP should develop a new hiking trail to make accessible the unique features of the upper Big Thicket in the area known as Canyonlands. This trail should introduce visitors to the diverse flora and the geological and archeological features of the area. Signage, brochures and guide books should be provided. Additional trails that should have been in the Strategic Plan: Neches Bottom-Jack Gore Baygall Unit (5): Recommend that the GMP gives high priority to the Old Wagon Road Trail extended to Timber Slough Road for public use because of its scenic qualities and historic significance. Lance Rosier Unit (4): Recommend that the "Bear Thicket Trail" be authorized with high priority; the trail should extend from Texas 105 to Texas 326 planned to exhibit both natural and cultural sites (such as Rosier birthplace, Hooks Bear

Camp, etc.) Beech Creek Unit (9): Recommend the proposed extended trail in Beech Creek merits favorable consideration. As outlined in the 1980 GMP, much of the trail proposed can utilize existing forest tram roads. Big Sandy Creek Unit (6): Recommend that the GMP include a long trail from north to south crossing FM 1276 and Sunflower Road and terminating on FM 943 be included in the new GMP and that it be named to honor Chief Fulton Battise. This trail was proposed in the 1980 GMP. Canoe trails (3): on the Neches River, Village Creek and Pine Island Bayou should be developed to include interpretive signage, mileage markers, way stations, and trail notes and maps.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108739

Comment Text: The Committee [BTA General Management Plan Committee] recommends that trails suggested in the BTA Strategic Plan for the BTNP (2006), Appendix VI, be included in the new GMP document. The Committee added "Additional Trails" that should have been in the priorities for the Strategic Plan, Appendix VI: Suggested New Facilities for Visitors to BTNP.

Correspondence Id: 34 **Comment Id:** 108844

Comment Text: Yes, hiking, biking, four wheeler trails, boat ramps. Easier access to the woods, not just a road to the river.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109836

Comment Text: Hickory Creek & Blue Hold need trails
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109835

Comment Text: More opportunities for hiking & walking
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109859

Comment Text: Bear Thicket trail from S.H.IOS 0 326 w/ interpretive stops
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109858

Comment Text: Loop trail □ from visitor center □ Village Creek
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109857

Comment Text: Suggest an add'l trail @ the old wagon road trail.
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109854

Comment Text: Would like to have hiking trails along Village Creek (near Silsbee)
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109850

Comment Text: Would like a hiking & Biking trail □ Baby Galvez to Highway 96
Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109821

Comment Text: Hiking trail, even a short one, from the VC Interpretive e.g., plant ID

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109819

Comment Text: Canoe/kayak trails along the Neches in the Preserve & in Village Creek w/ take outs as necessary to allow access.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109814

Comment Text: Trail for bikes that allow travel from Big Sandy Unit all the way to the Beaumont unit. Multiuse with a packed surface to allow access to more than mtn bikes

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109813

Comment Text: Open the fire breaks to biking & hiking Throughout the preserve Would be open to needing a permit

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109795

Comment Text: Provide more access/trails; provide bike-friendly trails where appropriate

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109825

Comment Text: Reopen some of the old logging trails along Timber Slough (eg to Black Creek & N & S) to allow for hiking trails & biking Possum Lake.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 36 **Comment Id:** 108846

Comment Text: Canoe trails.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108887

Comment Text: Trail in Lance Rosier unit to "Bridge to Nowhere"

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108883

Comment Text: Need more trails in units in Polk County (birding, paddling, biking, & hiking □ effort to estab in Polk County)

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109212

Comment Text: Foot Trails - The NPS should complete three trails that have long been planned but never completed. These three trails include the Fulton Battise Trail, which links the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation to the Big Sandy Creek Unit; the Old Wagon Road Trail and expansion to Timber Slough Road; and the Bear Thicket Trail that would traverse the length

of the Lance Rosier Unit. The NPS should determine what should be done to reduce any impacts of existing hiking trails.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109792

Comment Text: Need a trail at Canyonlands-close to Martin Dies 1 marked in trail in each unit to highlight difference between units

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109788

Comment Text: Provide a shared use trail/trailhead for commuting at Lumberton Park & Ride

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109787

Comment Text: Need a trail in Wildwood so facilitate access into Hickory Creek from the community -Begin "Adopt a Trail"

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109786

Comment Text: Good location for an elevated trail from mgn to low places □ give different perspective on the preserve & some drama.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109789

Comment Text: Develop connections between the preserve & other public lands with trails.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108910

Comment Text: The Conservancy is in support of maintaining an extensive trail system to provide visitors to the varied preserve units. In addition to maintaining and improving current trails completion of the Fulton Battise Trail, which links the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation to the Big Sandy Creek Unit; the Old Wagon Road Trail and expansion to Timber Slough Road; and the Bear Thicket Trail that would traverse the length of the Lance Rosier Unit is favored.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

RV1700 Rec/VE - Allow certain uses by permit only (camping, biking, boating, etc.)

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109834

Comment Text: Camping permits/after hour access.

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109853

Comment Text: Cannot get camping permits after 5:00

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109800

Comment Text: Ok to require bike permit (annual) or one-time

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV1900 Rec/VE - Provide scenic overlooks at various locations

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108728

Comment Text: A scenic lookout over the Neches River or a canopy walk would give visitors a different perspective.

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109818

Comment Text: River overlook at Canyonlands increase the wow factor

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV2000 Rec/VE - Provide a canopy walk

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108728

Comment Text: A scenic lookout over the Neches River or a canopy walk would give visitors a different perspective.

Correspondence Id: 7 **Comment Id:** 108772

Comment Text: Visitor Use / Public Awareness: 1) Program for public information / awareness; 2) Offer more organized recreational opportunities; 3) Improve and expand trails, including canoe/kayak trails and scenic drives; 4) Consider implementation of a Birding Center; 5) Evaluate potential for a Canopy Walk.

Organization: Big Thicket Association

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108754

Comment Text: New Canopy Walk: A canopy walk will offer visitors an exciting view of the BTNP while providing the BTNP with a visitor enticement unique to Texas and the South. Signage and brochures should be provided.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108745

Comment Text: Canopy Walk (10): will offer visitors an exciting view of the BTNP while providing the BTNP with a visitor enticement unique to Texas and the South. Signage and brochures should be provided.

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109817

Comment Text: Suggest development of a canopy walk provide opp. To see the canopy from eyelevel different perspective birds, flowers, etc.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108797

Comment Text: Bird watchers [want] more canopy's and boardwalks.

RV2100 Rec/VE - Allow horseback riding

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109831

Comment Text: Horseback riding keep on new lands

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109855

Comment Text: Housemen tract like to continue to ride horses in this area

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108885

Comment Text: Horseback riding continue to have access

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108879

Comment Text: Suggest horseback riding in the Beech Creek unit

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109210

Comment Text: Horses - The existing 20 mile horse trail in the Big Sandy Creek Unit is sufficient for horseback use in BTNP. There is a concern that horses will spread non-native invasive plant species more easily than other travel modes. This would not be good for preserving BTNP biodiversity. The NPS should determine what should be done to reduce any impacts of the existing horse trail.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108795

Comment Text: Horseback riding allowed on the trails.

Correspondence Id: 32 **Comment Id:** 108911

Comment Text: The allowance of horseback riding within the Preserve should be evaluated on several factors with the potential for introduction or increase of non-native/invasive species as a high priority. The Preserve should review literature and consult with other professionals on how to manage this recreational use.

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Commenter: Wendy J Ledbetter

RV2200 Rec/VE - Provide for camping

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109905

Comment Text: I want there to be a place for fifth wheels to camp. I don't like camping in tents.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109900

Comment Text: I would like it to be where RVs can camp and enjoy the place without messing the place up.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109875

Comment Text: As natural as possible! Would like primitive camping for RVs, no hookups necessary. I am an RV'r whose goal is visiting all 391 areas under the N.P. service. Would rather give you my overnite camping fee. An RV "Host (volunteer)" could maintain the campground for you.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109872

Comment Text: A few camping spots along the trail would be great! Besides that it's great! Oh and just a little tip, try taking a walk at night after it rains& BEAUTIFUL!

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108789

Comment Text: I would like to see greater cooperation between the Preserve and the nearby state parks (Village Creek, Martin Dies, Jr., and Lake Livingston) in providing camping for Preserve visitors and information about trails in the different Preserve units.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 34 **Comment Id:** 108840

Comment Text: Camping, fishing, boating, swimming. Like to see boat ramp added to Jack Gore Unit.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109838

Comment Text: Cook's Lake disturbed area Allow back country camping, small dock existing-high point (makes for nice full of canoeing)

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 25 **Comment Id:** 108833

Comment Text: I hope to see the additional land recovered from being pine farms - cleared areas for the orchids to recover - possibly some campgrounds.

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108855

Comment Text: I would like to see a public campground in the vicinity of the Turkey Creek Unit (centrally located to the preserve's units). This campground could be either a facility of the preserve or the Texas state park system.

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108854

Comment Text: I enjoy hiking, birding, camping, and nature study.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108884

Comment Text: Camping would be great to have some
Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109791

Comment Text: Partner w/ state parks to improve camping Martin Dies Lake Livingston Village Creek Also A/C reservation Get info about preserve from state parks Use state parks as base

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109779

Comment Text: Work with Texas state parks or private developers for camping facilities; camping currently limited (Vill. Cr. State Pk.)

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109778

Comment Text: Pursue opportunities to provide overnight camping with local economic developments; support local restaurants.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109761

Comment Text: Rails to trails connection & wide shoulders/incorporate into cabins along trails for overnight & more add'l mtn bike trails open during 12 months (perhaps in units designated non-hunting)

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 24 **Comment Id:** 108828

Comment Text: Camping areas, more development of the waterway access, open up preserve areas for both RV and wilderness camping.

RV2300 Rec/VE - Provide designated camping areas during hunting season only

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109824

Comment Text: Same as Y21 in Lance Rosier ☐ perhaps at fork in the road near Saratoga [Y21: Designated campsites during hunting Season ☐ allow people from outside the immediate region to stay overnight Close to Ard Lake before bridge in the preserve ☐ the parking area could accommodate camping/restrict hunting in this area Or area in the Baygall unit that already has hunting restrictions]

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109823

Comment Text: Designated campsites during hunting Season ☐ allow people from outside the immediate region to stay overnight Close to Ard Lake before bridge in the preserve ☐ the parking area could accommodate camping/restrict hunting in this area Or area in the Baygall unit that already has hunting restrictions

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV2400 Rec/VE - Provide rails to trails connections

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109811

Comment Text: Rails to Trails conversion along 69? Great to have it go to VC ☐ also good to have a path near VC

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109761

shoulders/incorporate into cabins along trails for overnight & more add'l mtn bike trails open during 12 months (perhaps in units designated non-hunting)

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV2500 Rec/VE - Provide routes/maps for scenic drives/auto tours

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108729

Comment Text: Auto tours should be developed for the elderly.

Correspondence Id: 5 **Comment Id:** 108752

Comment Text: New Scenic Drives: BTNP should provide access to limited areas of the BTNP by automobile. Auto scenic routes, similar to that on Ghost Road, should be established on Cotton Road, Sunflower Road, and Timber Slough Road. Scenic routes should include appropriate signage, and/or brochures or guides.

Correspondence Id: 4 **Comment Id:** 108743

Comment Text: Scenic Drives: BTNP should provide access to limited areas of the BTNP by automobile. Auto scenic routes, similar to that on Ghost Road, should be established on Cotton Road, Sunflower Road, and Timber Slough Road; routes should include appropriate signage, and/or brochures or guides
Scenic Drive for Elderly/Handicapped (2): BTNP should provide access to limited areas of the BTNP by automobile. A high priority would be to develop a driving tour to accommodate elderly and handicapped visitors (also the indolent:) as well as summer visitors -- not only in the Rosier Unit but other historic sites inside and outside Preserve boundaries. Other scenic drives: Primitively-paved auto scenic routes, similar to that on Ghost Road, should be established on Cotton Road, Sunflower Road, and Timber Slough Road; routes should include appropriate signage, and/or brochures or guides.

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109860

Comment Text: Suggest establish a trail that is accessible for people who are not hiking ☐ driving trail in Rosier Unit & could include sites outside of the preserve

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV2600 Rec/VE - Provide off-road bike trails

Correspondence Id: 8 **Comment Id:** 108778

Comment Text: I would like to see less invasive plants and restoration of native species; more trails (hiking and biking) in the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109814

Comment Text: Trail for bikes that allow travel from Big Sandy Unit all the way to the Beaumont unit. Multiuse with a packed surface to allow access to more than mtn bikes

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109813

Comment Text: Open the fire breaks to biking & hiking Throughout the preserve Would be open to needing a permit

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109796

Comment Text: Off-road bike trails would get people into preserve

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109773

Comment Text: Use pipeline rove/abandoned row for trails to connect units bike/hike

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109761

Comment Text: Rails to trails connection & wide shoulders/incorporate into cabins along trails for overnight & more add'l mtn bike trails open during 12 months (perhaps in units designated non-hunting)

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 24 **Comment Id:** 108825

Comment Text: We would love to see trails in the Big Thicket Preserve opened up for bicycle use. Many of the trails we visit are under utilized because of their length. Bicycle riders would love to make use of those long trails.

RV2601 Rec/VE - Supports on-road bicycle use; do not allow off-road bicycle use/trails

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109209

Comment Text: Bicycles - The Sierra Club does not oppose the use of bicycles to get to units of BTNP. We believe that a road system for bicycles makes sense. However, when someone gets to BTNP bicycles should be left at trailheads and parking areas. Because BTNP has been set aside for biodiversity, the addition of more trails that potentially could cause environmental damage and provide a trail experience that is less oriented to biodiversity, solitude, and slowing down people from the hurly burly of fast-paced urban living, we do not believe mountain bike trails are appropriate for BTNP. Once off-road bikes are allowed it will be very difficult to regulate them. The isolation of the Beech Creek Unit, for instance, would make it hard to patrol for illegal use. Keep mountain bikes on designated roads and not hiking trails. These two recreational activities need to be kept separate because they provide different experiences.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109220

Comment Text: Motorized Use - NPS should not allow any off-road motorized use in BTNP. Not only is this type of use environmentally destructive but it destroys the solitude, quiet, and enjoyment of natural sounds.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

RV2602 Rec/VE - Provide for general bike trails/trails that connect with existing bike trails (comment does not specify on- or off-road bike trails)

Correspondence Id: 27 **Comment Id:** 109850

Comment Text: Would like a hiking & Biking trail □ Baby Galvez to Highway 96

Commenter: Silsbee Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109795

Comment Text: Provide more access/trails; provide bike-friendly trails where appropriate

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109788

Comment Text: Provide a shared use trail/trailhead for commuting at Lumberton Park & Ride

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109760

Comment Text: Accessibility via bike corridor from large population center (Beaumont, etc.)

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109789

Comment Text: Develop connections between the preserve & other public lands with trails.

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 28 **Comment Id:** 109762

Comment Text: Cyclists= tourists NPS should participate with other agencies, NGOS, etc. to increase bike trail connections

Commenter: Houston Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109825

Comment Text: Reopen some of the old logging trails along Timber Slough (eg to Black Creek & N & S) to allow for hiking trails & biking Possum Lake.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109812

Comment Text: Bike trail along Cooks Lake Rd would be good

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109799

Comment Text: Large size of park lends itself to be explored by bike

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV2700 Rec/VE - Provide for GPS-based recreation activities

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109826

Comment Text: Develop GPS Based recreation activities guidelines & policy development for these activities.

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109810

Comment Text: Consider unique/natural features for "Virtual" geocaching

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV2900 Rec/VE - Comments against hunting

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109907

Comment Text: Hunting season! It's disgusting to see animals getting killed! If you still want it, why not kill them with bare hands if you can!

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 26 **Comment Id:** 109805

Comment Text: More areas off limits to hunting

Commenter: Beaumont Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

RV3000 Rec/VE - The preserve should provide family-friendly activities

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109899

Comment Text: A place where me and my family can hunt and fish and have a good time.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109874

Comment Text: A great place for family and friends to gather & create unforgettable memories.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109898

Comment Text: Natural and unchanged. Should be kept a national park. A sanctuary for families and friends.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108878

Comment Text: Need it to be more family friendly

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

VA1000 Values - Generally values the preserve

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109903

Comment Text: A place of natural beauty. Untouched by humans. Wild. Preserved. Left the way it is found.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109897

Comment Text: A wonderful treasure to be preserved from human interference.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109890

Comment Text: A place where one can commune with nature!

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109867

Comment Text: A place where I can bring my children to learn how to take care of the wildlife around them & how to appreciate it.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109862

Comment Text: A peaceful refuge for my grandchildren's grandchildren, and a recognizable part of their Texas heritage.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109881

Comment Text: A place of awe and wonder impenetrable to today's "habit" of growth & development.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 34 **Comment Id:** 108839

Comment Text: Access to Neches River.

Correspondence Id: 29 **Comment Id:** 108870

Comment Text: Big Thicket has value because it's there

Commenter: Woodville Public Meeting Flipchart Comments

Correspondence Id: 17 **Comment Id:** 108793

Comment Text: I have visited the Big Thicket visitor's center and enjoyed the video.

VA1100 Values - Biodiversity/natural resources and wildlife

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109888

Comment Text: A sanctuary, a place of peaceful refuge that reminds us of the nature beauty of East Texas.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108784

Comment Text: The diversity of habitats and the opportunity it presents to preserve wildlife populations are important to me. It is a wonderful place to experience East Texas as it used to be.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 9 **Comment Id:** 108779

Comment Text: The most important characteristic of the big thicket is its biodiversity...

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108725

Comment Text: I enjoy the variety of life forms in the Thicket. Every time I walk in the Thicket I find something new. The unique nature of the Thicket should be better known to people.

Correspondence Id: 8 **Comment Id:** 108774

Comment Text: The biodiversity and abundance of plants.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108758

Comment Text: Its biodiversity and its scenic values.

Correspondence Id: 25 **Comment Id:** 108829

Comment Text: The diversity of the area - the wonderful flowering plants - fungi = nowhere else in Texas is there such an abundance of nature!!

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108850

Comment Text: I value BTNP for habitat preservation, species preservation, and ecosystem restoration.

Correspondence Id: 36 **Comment Id:** 108845

Comment Text: Preservation of representative functioning East TX habitats. Hiking, birding, unusual plants.

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108834

Comment Text: The rivers, the upland and lowland forests - the whole story of how the river breathes with the rainwater runoff - floods that nourish the forest that act as sponges, slowing the freshwater discharge to the bay. The biodiversity and cultural diversity.

Correspondence Id: 20 **Comment Id:** 109195

Comment Text: BTNP is unique due to its abundance of water (about 50% of the BTNP is considered wet in some form or fashion) and its biological diversity.

Organization: Sierra Club - Lone Star Chapter

Commenter: Brandt Mannchen

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108803

Comment Text: The ecological diversity of the Big Thicket is what makes it special to me. It is incredibly unique ecologically and that is why it is so important to preserve as much of it as possible.

Correspondence Id: 24 **Comment Id:** 108824

Comment Text: Our family enjoy the diverse biological makeup of the Big Thicket. We love the wild flowers, wildlife, and opportunity to enjoy nature and exercise.

VA1200 Values - Scenery/Quiet/Solitude

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108852

Comment Text: I value BTNP for the absence of man-made intrusions of all sorts.

Correspondence Id: 36 **Comment Id:** 108849

Comment Text: Silence, other than the sounds of nature - increase BTNP boundaries and increase acquisition funding!

VA1300 Values - Opportunities presented by the preserve (the preservation/protection of wildlife & habitat and other natural resources)

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108784

Comment Text: The diversity of habitats and the opportunity it presents to preserve wildlife populations are important to me. It is a wonderful place to experience East Texas as it used to be.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108853

Comment Text: I value BTNP because the protection of these lands helps to preserve water & air quality in the region.

VA1400 Values - The recreation activities/opportunities allowed within the preserve

Correspondence Id: 2 **Comment Id:** 108726

Comment Text: I enjoy hiking the trails.

Correspondence Id: 8 **Comment Id:** 108775

Comment Text: Hiking on the trails and learning about the plants and animals. I'd like to see more accessibility and trails in the preserve.

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108759

Comment Text: Hiking, canoeing and camping -- singly and with friends.

Correspondence Id: 25 **Comment Id:** 108830

Comment Text: Hiking both across country and strolling along the trails, photography - a trail across the Lance Rosier Unit from Hwy 105.

Correspondence Id: 30 **Comment Id:** 108851

Comment Text: I value BTNP for hiking, birding, and nature study.

Correspondence Id: 36 **Comment Id:** 108845

Comment Text: Preservation of representative functioning East TX habitats. Hiking, birding, unusual plants.

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108804

Comment Text: I enjoy birding and photography.

VA1500 Values - Cultural resources

Correspondence Id: 15 **Comment Id:** 109862

Comment Text: A peaceful refuge for my grandchildren's grandchildren, and a recognizable part of their Texas heritage.

Commenter: Comment Cards BTNP Interpretive Center

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108834

Comment Text: The rivers, the upland and lowland forests - the whole story of how the river breathes with the rainwater runoff - floods that nourish the forest that act as sponges, slowing the freshwater discharge to the bay. The biodiversity and cultural diversity.

VC1000 Visitor Conflicts - Have not experienced conflicts

Correspondence Id: 16 **Comment Id:** 108787

Comment Text: I haven't experienced any conflict.

Organization: Houston Sierra Club

Commenter: John H Berlinghoff

Correspondence Id: 6 **Comment Id:** 108761

Comment Text: Contacts with other visitors are usually pleasant; conflicts are rare.

Occasionally, trails parallel boundaries and home sites, roads, and commercial activity intrude on the nature experience.

Correspondence Id: 34 **Comment Id:** 108841

Comment Text: None

Correspondence Id: 25 **Comment Id:** 108831

Comment Text: No - I have also volunteered with the Preserve since 1989 and have found most visitors very congenial.

Correspondence Id: 36 **Comment Id:** 108847

Comment Text: No.

Correspondence Id: 35 **Comment Id:** 108837

Comment Text: None.

Correspondence Id: 21 **Comment Id:** 108805

Comment Text: I have not encountered any conflicts.

Correspondence Id: 24 **Comment Id:** 108826

Comment Text: Never experienced any conflict and we visit Big Thicket Preserve parks often.