

THE LOST PINES ARE IN YOUR HANDS

The Lost Pines area continues to draw people and has become a major tourist destination. You can help TPWD conserve the resources of Bastrop and Buescher State Parks. Here's how:

Protect the integrity of historic CCC structures, they are part of our heritage, please use them respectfully.

Learn more about both parks with available literature at the park headquarters.

Tread lightly on the natural resources by staying on the trails and not littering.

Take advantage of the interpretive activities including historic tours of the CCC structures, evening presentations and guided nature hikes.

Become an active supporter by joining the Friends of the Lost Pines, or make a donation to the park.



Respecting the resources of the Lost Pines is necessary for your grandchildren to experience the natural beauty you enjoy today. Please join us in this effort.

Bastrop State Park • Box 518, Bastrop, TX 78602-0518
(512) 321-2101 • www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/bastrop/



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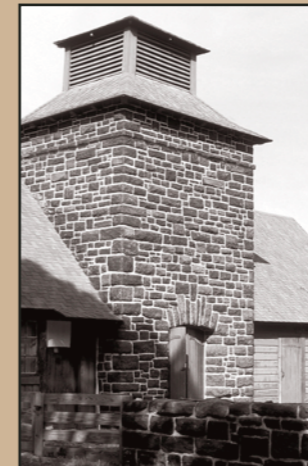
Interpretive Guide to:

BASTROP AND BUESCHER STATE PARKS

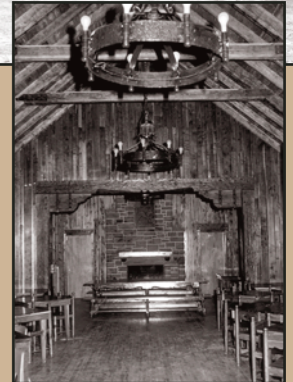


LOST PINE^{THE}S

WELCOME TO THE LOST PINES OF TEXAS, THE HOME OF BASTROP AND BUESCHER STATE PARKS. THE UNIQUE



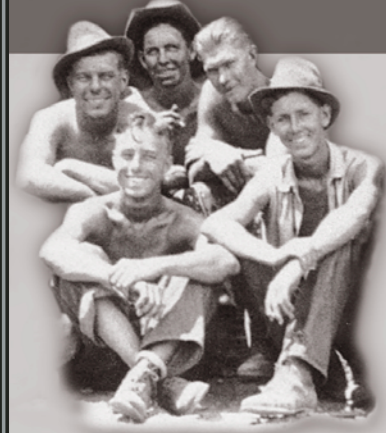
SETTING OF BOTH PARKS EVOKES A SENSE OF MYSTERY, AS THE ISOLATED FOREST OF LOBLOLLY PINES SEEMS TO BE OUT OF PLACE. BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURES BUILT BY THE CCC SEEM TO GROW FROM THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE. STONE CABINS, BRIDGES AND STUNNING CRAFTSMANSHIP MAKE THESE PARKS AN HISTORIC TREASURE.



Bastrop and Buescher State Parks were acquired from the cities of Bastrop and Smithville and from private land donations. In the 1930s the Buescher family gave 636 acres for a state park. Since its dedication in 1937, Bastrop State Park has grown to approximately 5,800 acres of pine laden rolling hills while Buescher compliments this preserve with an additional 1,017 acres.

Through time people have recognized the value of this abundant natural resource. In addition to the presence of critical resources, a convenient river crossing made this a likely place for early settlement. The important Spanish travel route known as El Camino Real traversed through the area and aided in the early colonization of Texas. The town of Bastrop, formerly known as Mina when established in 1832, is believed to be one of the oldest towns in Texas. The natural resources of the area were important to regional development; timber harvest of the loblolly pines fueled construction in nearby Austin and San Antonio. Some of the Bastrop timber was exported as far as northern Mexico. Later, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) came and constructed Bastrop and Buescher State Parks.

ROOSEVELT'S FOREST ARMY



Imagine being 20 years old and without enough money to buy your next meal. This was the case for many young men in the early 1930s during the Great Depression. President Franklin D.

Roosevelt created a public works organization known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in an effort to put young men to work, to conserve the nation's natural resources, create public recreational areas and to help boost the economy.

In 1933 companies #1805 and #1811 arrived at Bastrop and Buescher State Parks to transform the over-cut pine forest into a scenic wonder by seeding, transplanting and clearing the tangle of brush and fallen timber. These recruits enrolled for a six-month period and were paid \$30 per month, with \$25 of the monthly wage being sent back home to the CCC worker's family.



GROWING FROM THE GROUND



In 1933, the National Park Service (NPS), the CCC and the Texas State Parks Board (now the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department) joined hands to design and

construct buildings and facilities in many Texas parks. The architect of Bastrop State Park, Arthur Fehr, followed National Park Service design principles that suggested harmony with the surrounding landscape of rolling hills and pine forests and use of native materials for construction. The stone cabins at Bastrop appear to grow out of the ground like a natural outcrop. The same non-intrusive design elements were followed for dams, culverts, bridges and fences. Similar design concepts can be seen in other parks around the nation. Bastrop's refectory is a show-place of CCC craftsmanship. Cedar, oak, walnut and pine indigenous to the park and red sandstone quarried nearby come together in an attractive stone structure featuring carved mantles, roof beams and handmade furniture.

In 1997, Bastrop State Park was awarded National Historic Landmark status, due largely to the enduring craftsmanship and landscape work done in the park by the CCC. It is one of only five CCC parks in the nation with this recognition.



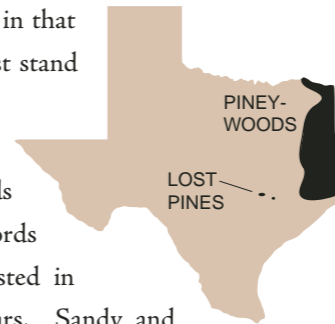
ARE THE LOST PINES REALLY LOST?

People have long wondered why the pines are here. The stark contrast of the deep sandy soils and pine trees, compared with the surrounding oak savanna and grassland prairie, begs the question: Are the Pines really lost?

Legend has it that American Indians traveled here from East Texas and planted seedlings to remind them of the home they left behind. Other myths claim that the pines got "lost" or that they were once part of a continuous stretch of loblolly forest from the east.

The Lost Pines are significant in that they represent the westernmost stand of loblolly pine trees in the United States. Separated from the East Texas Pineywoods by nearly 100 miles, pollen records indicate the pines have persisted in this area for over 18,000 years. Sandy and gravely soils with a sub-surface layer of water preserving clay help to create an environment where loblolly pines can flourish. Over time the climate became drier but the local sandy aquifer-laced soils provided conditions for them to thrive. The pines have become genetically unique, having adapted to 30% less rainfall than loblollies from East Texas and adjacent states.

Over 75,000 acres of loblolly pines, known as the Lost Pines ecosystem, lie scattered across sections of five counties on the Texas Coastal Plain. A portion of this magnificent pine forest is located in Bastrop and Buescher State Parks.



An Island of Diversity

Bastrop and Buescher State Parks lie within the ecological region known as Post Oak Savannah. A mosaic of pine, oaks, shrubs, grassland and mixed flowering plants create a diverse environment important to many species of wildlife including the pileated woodpecker, the largest of the woodpeckers. The seasonally moist sandy soils of the Lost Pines provide critical habitat for the largest remaining population of the endangered Houston toad.

The Houston toad was recognized as an endangered species in 1970. Loss of habitat in its historic range, largely due to urbanization, has caused a marked decline in populations of this species in recent decades.



Protecting the Lost Pines

Over the past 150 years, human activities such as logging, farming and fire suppression have changed the natural environment. In recent years, population growth and economic development have further fragmented the Lost

Pines ecosystem. TPWD has developed new strategies to protect this unique resource. These include land acquisition, public education and prescribed fire.

Prescribed burning is necessary to reduce large fuel loads that can cause wildfires. These purposefully set and monitored fires increase the diversity of native plants and grasses thus improving the overall health and viability of the Lost Pines ecosystem.

