

THE LOST PINES ARE IN YOUR HANDS

While enjoying Bastrop and Buescher State Parks, please remember everything you see in the parks is protected. Artifacts, rocks, animals, and plants (even pine cones) are all part of the region's rich natural and cultural heritage. Help us keep these parks a special place for everyone.

- Preserve the integrity of the historic CCC structures by using them with respect. They are part of our heritage!
- Hike only on designated trails and stay out of closed areas.
- Leave no trace. Keep your parks clean by picking up your trash.
- Preserve the parks for future generations and leave plants, animals, and rocks where you find them.
- Get involved by joining the Friends of the Lost Pines State Parks, a volunteer organization committed to supporting these two parks.

Bastrop State Park + Box 518, Bastrop, TX 78602 (512) 321-2101 + www.tpwd.texas.gov/bastrop

Buescher State Park • PO Box 75, Smithville, TX 78957 (512) 237-2241 • www.tpwd.texas.gov/buescher







Life's better outside.

© 2019 TPWD. PWD BR P4505-043P (7/19) In accordance with Texas State Depository Law, this publication is available at the Texas State Publications Clearinghouse and/or Texas Depository Libraries.

TPMD receives funds from the USPNS. TPMD prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, and gender pursuant to state and federal law. To request an accommodation or obtain information in an alternative to orimat, please contact TPMD on a Text Telepide (TIY) at (512) 399-9915 or by Relay Texas at 7-1-1 or (800) 755-2599 or by remail at accessibility@tpwd.texas.px; if you believe you have been discriminated against by TPMD, please contact TPMD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Diversity and Windforce Management 5775 (aschirer) PML Falls Chinery M.2 2014.



Texas State Parks is a division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.



INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

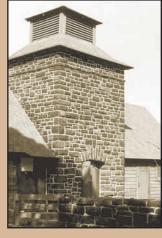
BASTROP AND BUESCHER



WILDLIFE

L OST PINES

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 OUT OF PLACE. WHILE GREATLY IMPACTED BY A 2011 WILDFIRE, BASTROP STATE PARK IS RECOVERING WITH POCKETS OF LOBLOLLY PINES SEEN THROUGHOUT THE PARK. BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURES SUCH AS HISTORIC STONE CABINS AND BRIDGES BUILT BY THE CCC DOT THE LANDSCAPE. STUNNING CRAFTSMANSHIP BRINGS THESE HISTORIC TREASURES TO LIFE.





Citizens of Bastrop and Smithville recognized early on that this land was worth protecting. Even before Bastrop State Park existed, a local hunting and



fishing club laid the foundation for recreation in the Lost Pines. Bastrop and Smithville, plus local landowners, provided the land that became Bastrop and Buescher State Parks. In the 1930s, the Buescher (pronounced "Bisher") family donated 636 acres for the park. Since its dedication in 1937, Bastrop State Park has grown to over 6,600 acres of rolling hills while Buescher complements this preserve with about 1,000 acres.

Long ago, Native American groups passed through here and relied on game animals, plants, stones for tools, and water. A convenient river crossing made Bastrop County a likely place for early European settlement as well. The vital Spanish travel route known as El Camino Real de los Tejas traversed the area and contributed to the colonization of Texas.

The natural resources of the area were important to regional development. Timber harvest of loblolly pines fueled construction in Austin and San Antonio. The town of Bastrop, known as Mina when established in 1832, is one of the oldest towns in Texas. Bastrop timber was exported as far as northern Mexico.

ROOSEVELT'S FOREST ARMY



magine being
20 years old and
without enough
money to buy your
next meal. This was
reality 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 forces 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 showplace 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 seven CCC parks in the nation with this recognition.



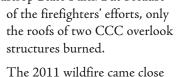
THE "LOST PINES" ARE NOT LOST

Before the 2011 wildfire, loblolly pines covered most of Bastrop State Park. Because this pine pocket was separated from the East Texas Pineywoods by over 100 miles, this area is known as the "Lost Pines." How did they get here? Pollen records show that pines have persisted in this area for over 18,000 years. They were probably once connected to the Pineywoods region. Over time, the climate became drier and the region covered by pines shrank. The local sandy soils provided conditions for these "Lost Pines" to survive. In fact, the pines have become genetically unique, having adapted to 30% less rainfall than loblollies from East Texas and adjacent states. The Lost Pines loblollies represent the westernmost stand of loblolly pine trees in the United States.

Wildfire!

In 2011, Texas had the warmest summer for any U.S. state since 1895 – it was even warmer than the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s! Bastrop had three months of 100°-plus days, drying the area. On September 4, high winds from Tropical Storm Lee knocked brittle, drought-stressed trees into power lines, igniting the most destructive wildfire in Texas history. The fiery monster burned for days, devouring 32,400 acres in Bastrop County, killing two people and destroying 1,696 houses and commercial structures.

Hundreds of defenders, including more than 140 Texas Parks and Wildlife Department employees, commercial partners and firefighters from all over the country, battled the blaze. The wildfire affected over 90% of Bastrop State Park. But because



The 2011 wildfire came close to Buescher State Park but skirted the park boundary. Just a few years later in 2015, the Hidden Pines fire burned the northern section of Buescher State Park, further impacting the Lost Pines ecosystem.

An Uncertain Future

Bastrop and Buescher state parks lie within the ecological region known as the Post Oak Savannah. The seasonally moist, sandy soils provide critical habitat for the endangered



Houston toad. While historic habitat loss due to intensive agriculture severely reduced the Houston toad's range in Texas, the 2011 wildfire dealt a devastating blow by reducing their habitat even more.

Recovery Efforts

You don't have to look far to see that the loblolly pines are making a comeback at Bastrop State Park. Even though the wildfire damaged over 90% of the park, only 30% was heavily burned. Recovery and manage-

ment of the ecosystem will be an active and ongoing

process for years to come. One tool TPWD is using to help the landscape recover is prescribed fire. Low-intensity prescribed fire will clear out the dead fuel, keep the growth of oak trees in check, and allow a new pine forest to flourish.



The Lost Pines Today

While it will take decades for significant stands of loblolly pines to regrow, you will see exciting changes each time you visit. This living laboratory is regularly visited by students and scientists as they study fire's effects on birds, mammals and vegetation. You can make your own discoveries by visiting the park and seeing how the landscape changes over time.

