



# Government Canyon State Natural Area Trails Map

12861 Galm Rd.  
San Antonio, TX 78254  
(210) 688-9055  
www.texasstateparks.org

## LEGEND

- Scenic Overlook
- Restrooms
- Primitive Toilet
- Parking
- Visitor Center
- Fee Station
- Amphitheater
- Picnic Area
- Nature Playscape
- Tent Camping
- Trailhead

### FRONTCOUNTRY

- Hiking/Biking Trails:
  - Lytle's Loop
  - Savannah Loop

### BACKCOUNTRY

- Hiking Only Trails:
  - Discovery Trail
  - Bluff Spurs
  - Overlook Trail
- Hiking/Biking Trails:
  - Caroline's Loop
  - Far Reaches Trail
  - Joe Johnston Route
  - Little Windmill Trail
  - Recharge Trail
  - Sendero Balcones
  - Twin Oaks Trail
  - Wildcat Canyon Trail

### PROTECTED HABITAT AREA

(Open September - February ONLY)

- Hiking Only (Seasonal) Trails:
  - Black Hill Loop
  - Cave Creek Trail
  - La Subida Trail
  - Sendero Travesero

## NOTES:

All trails allow hiking and biking unless otherwise indicated.  
Biking is prohibited in the Protected Habitat Area, on Discovery and Overlook trails, and on Bluff Spurs.  
Pets allowed in Frontcountry only.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

(GPS coordinates shown in decimal degrees)

- 1

**SAVANNAH RESTORATION AREA**  
Here we're using proven land management techniques to give a native grass savannah a fighting chance to re-establish its "home turf."

29.5466° -98.7533°
- 2

**WILDCAT CANYON RANCH BUILDINGS**  
Imagine this land as a working ranch, as evidenced by a pole barn, corral, stock tank and windmill.

29.5593° -98.7629°
- 3

**DINOSAUR TRACKS**  
Created when this area was the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico, these footprints were left by creatures that roamed here 110 million years ago.

29.5825° -98.7655°
- 4

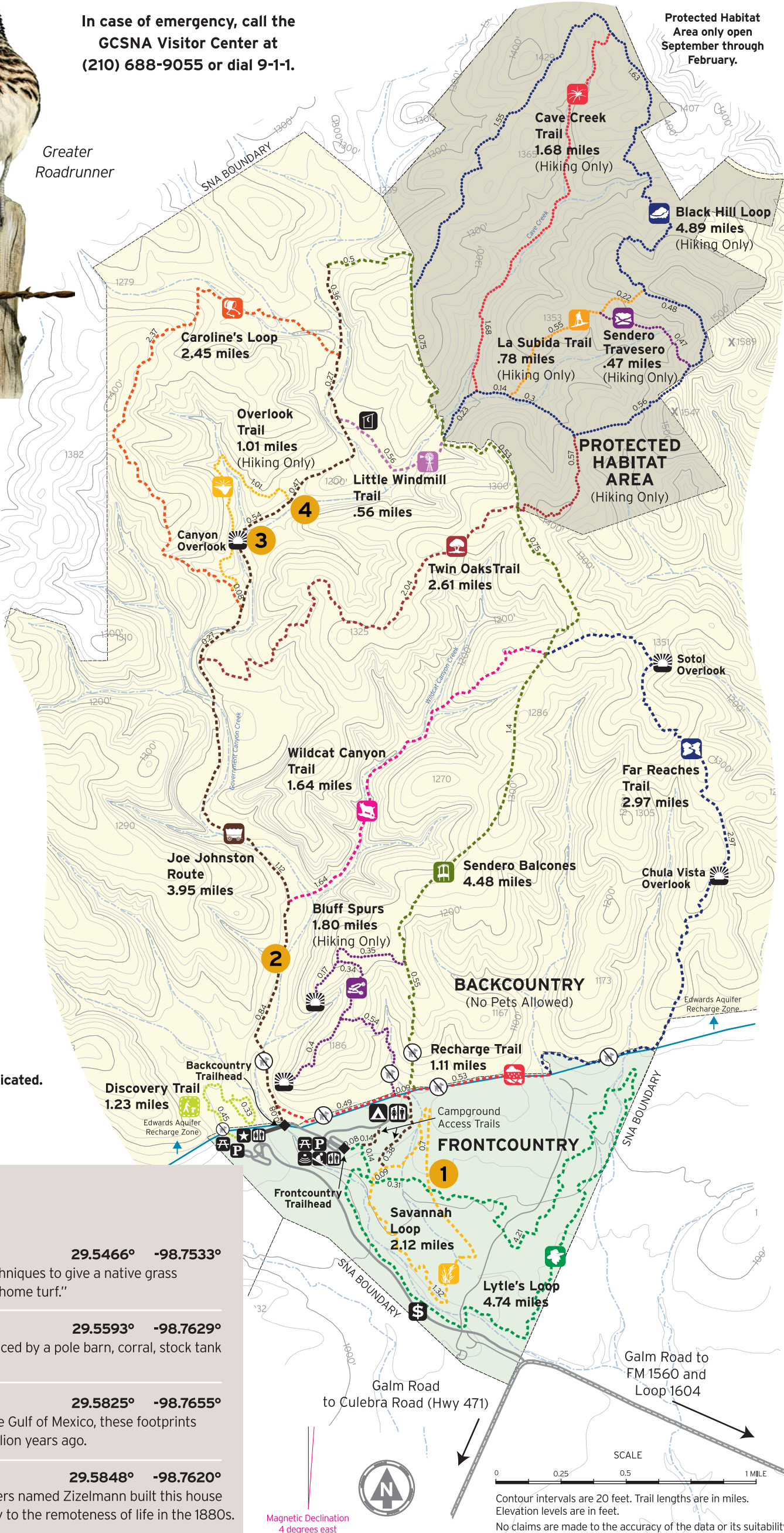
**ZIZELMANN HOUSE**  
Historians believe that a family of German bakers named Zizelmann built this house in 1882. The iconic building stands as testimony to the remoteness of life in the 1880s.

29.5848° -98.7620°

In case of emergency, call the  
GCSNA Visitor Center at  
(210) 688-9055 or dial 9-1-1.

Protected Habitat  
Area only open  
September through  
February.

Greater  
Roadrunner



Magnetic Declination  
4 degrees east



Contour intervals are 20 feet. Trail lengths are in miles.  
Elevation levels are in feet.  
No claims are made to the accuracy of the data or its suitability  
to a particular use. Map compiled by Texas State Parks staff.





# Government Canyon State Natural Area

## Discover a quiet wilderness surprisingly close to San Antonio.

Nearly 40 miles of trails beckon you to explore the canyonlands and grasslands of Government Canyon State Natural Area. Join us in our mission of protecting highly sensitive ecosystems by observing proper trail etiquette as you explore.

### STAYING SAFE

**CHECK FOR TRAIL CLOSURES.** As a State Natural Area, our principal mission is to protect natural and cultural resources. Environmental conditions may result in temporary trail closures.

**KNOW YOUR LIMITS.** Prepare for sun and heat. Wear a hat and take plenty of water, snacks and sunscreen. People average two miles per hour while hiking.

**DRINK PLENTY OF WATER.** Bring a quart (32 oz.) of water per hour of activity, and don't forget your pets need water, too.

**LET OTHERS KNOW YOUR PLANS.** If hiking alone, leave details visible from your vehicle.

**HELMETS ARE RECOMMENDED.** When mountain biking, check with staff to match the trail to your skill level. Wear a helmet to protect yourself.

**GOT BARS?** Take along a cell phone and GPS unit, but don't count on them.

### TRAIL ETIQUETTE

**Preserve your trails.** Staying off wet trails helps prevent rutting, erosion and destruction of trails.

**Trash your trash.** Put the "natural" in natural area. Pack out all of your trash and Leave No Trace.

**Take only memories and pictures.** Please don't disturb or remove any of the natural area's plants, animals or artifacts. Stay on designated trails.

**Leave feeding to nature.** Feeding wild animals can make them sick and harm their ability to survive on their own.

**Leash your pets.** Keeping them on a leash and under control protects your pets, other people and wildlife. Please note that NO pets are allowed in the Backcountry.

**Respect fellow trail users.** Be courteous to all trail users; bikers must yield to hikers.

HIKE	DISTANCE	TIME	DIFFICULTY	DESCRIPTION
SAVANNAH LOOP	2.6 mi. (round trip)	1 - 1.5 hrs.	Easy	Begins and ends at the Frontcountry Trailhead. This is a good choice for walking the dog or taking the kids for a leisurely stroll.
LYTLE'S LOOP	5.0 mi. (round trip)	2.5 - 3.5 hrs.	Easy - Moderate	Begins and ends at the Frontcountry Trailhead. Keep a watchful eye for a chance sighting of the Rio Grande wild turkey, northern bobwhite quail and white-tailed deer that call this savannah home.
NORTH BLUFF SPURS OVERLOOK	3.4 mi. (round trip)	1.5 - 2 hrs.	Moderate	This staff favorite begins at the Backcountry Trailhead. After a short hike up the JJ Route, take the Recharge Trail to Bluff Spurs Trail, to North Bluff Spurs Overlook, to Sendero Balcones, to Recharge Trail, and back to the trailhead. After an easy start, the trail climbs up the Edwards Plateau, leading to a limestone bluff with a majestic view of Government Canyon.
JOE JOHNSTON ROUTE (Zizelmann House and back)	5.7 mi. (round trip)	3 - 5 hrs.	Moderate - Challenging	Begins at the Backcountry Trailhead; leads to Zizelmann House and back. This historic 1850s route has lots to discover. Notice the change in vegetation as you hike northward. This is especially challenging in the summer months. Take plenty of water, wear sun protection, and pace yourself.
WILDCAT CANYON and SENDERO BALCONES LOOP	5.2 mi. (round trip)	2.5 - 3 hrs.	Challenging	Begins at the Backcountry Trailhead; leads to Wildcat Canyon Trail, to Sendero Balcones, to Recharge Trail, to JJ Route, and back. This rugged route takes you through forest canopy, over limestone outcroppings, and down the edge of the Balcones Escarpment.
FAR REACHES and TWIN OAKS LOOP	9.0 mi. (round trip)	4 - 6 hrs.	Challenging	Begins at the Backcountry Trailhead. Start with a short hike up the JJ Route, take the Recharge Trail to Far Reaches Trail, to Sendero Balcones north, to Twin Oaks Trail, to JJ Route, and back. This route showcases many of the features that make the natural area so special: geology, diverse flora, history, and stunning vistas.
THE OUTER LOOP	11.8 mi. (round trip)	5 - 7 hrs.	Challenging	Begins at the Backcountry Trailhead. A short hike up the JJ Route, take the Recharge Trail to Far Reaches Trail, to Sendero Balcones north, to the upper end of JJ Route, around Caroline's Loop back to the JJ Route, and back to the trailhead. This outer loop is rough, rugged and rewarding. Be prepared with plenty of water and snacks; this route can be especially difficult in summer. Keep track of your route with your trail map.

FOR AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES, PLEASE CALL 9-1-1.