A canal flows past the San Solomon Courts.

ARTESIAN SPRING WATER COLLECTED STARTING SOME 40 MILES WEST IN THE APACHE MOUNTAINS BUBBLES UP THROUGH SAN SOLOMON SPRINGS. BEGINNING IN 1935 AND LASTING A FEW YEARS, THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS ENCLOSED THE SPRINGS — CREATING THE 1.3-ACRE POOL — AND DEVELOPED THE SURROUNDING FACILITIES. WHILE A BEAUTIFUL AND RELAXING PLACE FOR A SWIM AND OVERNIGHT STAY, MUCH WILDLIFE CALLS THE PARK THEIR PERMANENT HOME, INCLUDING SEVERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES.

The only remaining population of Comanche Springs Pupfish lives at Balmorhea State Park.

Balmorhea State Park hosts thousands of visitors each year who enjoy swimming, camping and overnight stays in the historic Motor Court. The human history of San Solomon Springs spans several centuries. The park also sustains unique wildlife, some of which are found nowhere else on Earth. We encourage you to tread lightly and help protect this unique and sensitive environment.

- **Keep Wildlife Wild** – Please don't feed or harass wildlife
- **Trash Your Trash** – It's ugly and can make wildlife sick
- **Take Only Memories and Pictures** – Leave all plants, wildlife, rocks and artifacts for future visitors to enjoy
- **Don't Swim Alone** – Accidents happen even for experienced swimmers.
- **Protect Your Pets** – They must be on a leash no more than six feet in length and cleaned up after. Pets not permitted in pool area.
- Be **Kind to Other Visitors** – Please respect others and watch for scuba divers and their equipment.
- **Protect Our Dark Skies** – With McDonald Observatory nearby and some of the darkest skies in Texas overhead, we recommend using the least light needed for safety in your campsite.

Balmorhea State Park
9207 TX-17, Toyahvale, TX 79786
(432) 375-2370 ✦ www.tpwd.texas.gov/balmorhea

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE
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TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

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HELP US CONSERVE
PLEASE TURN IN FOR REUSE

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

TEXAS STATE PARKS

INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

BALMORHEA
STATE PARK

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

LOVED BY HUMANS

The ever-flowing, life-sustaining waters of San Solomon Springs continue to fulfill human needs just as they have for thousands of years.

Big game hunters probably gathered around this system of springs 11,000 years ago. Notes from the 1583 entrada, led by Spanish explorer Antonio de Espejo, described encounters with Jumanos, Native Americans who used water from the springs to irrigate crops such as maize and beans. In the 1850s, Mexican farmers continued this practice for their crops of corn, wheat, beans and potatoes.

By 1854, soldiers stationed at Fort Davis – now a National Historic Site – forced the Mescalero Apaches to abandon the area, which encouraged more Mexican and Anglo settlements. The arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in the 1880s led to the rise of cattle ranching. The 533-acre Balmorhea Lake was constructed in 1914 to capture the spring water to irrigate crops. The heritage and lifeblood of this community are closely tied to the continual flow of clean water.

COURTESY OF ELSA SOCORRO ARROYO

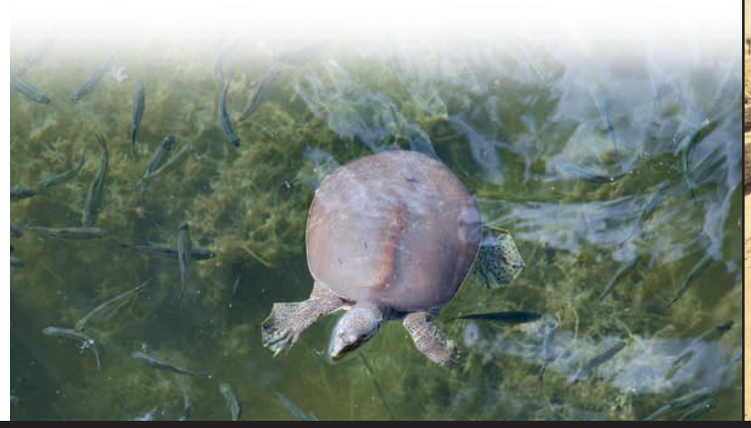
Artist Feather Radha's depiction of a Jumano couple

NICOLAS HAVLIK, TPWD

Restored ciénega at Balmorhea State Park

OURS TO PROTECT

Fifteen-to-twenty million gallons of crystalline water flows from San Solomon Springs each day – enough to provide 10-minute showers for over 500,000 people! In a desert, this invaluable resource sustains unique wildlife and human habitation. Originally a sensitive desert marshland known as a ciénega, human intervention and development have forever changed this landscape. Today it is important to protect the five endangered species, including the last remaining population of Comanche Springs Pupfish. In 1995 and 2009, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and partners built two ciénegas in the park which offer great birdwatching and wildlife viewing opportunities. Please help us keep this park clean and beautiful for both humans and wildlife.



Scientists continually monitor water quality, water quantity, and the species that depend on the spring water.

HISTORIC LEGACY

Between 1935 and 1938, Civilian Conservation Corps Company 1856 constructed the 1.3-acre spring-fed swimming pool – one of the largest in the world – and built the San Solomon Motor Courts using local materials. The CCC was one of many work programs developed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as part of his "New Deal" plan to pull America out of the Great Depression. CCC enrollees received uniforms, lodging, three hot meals a day, training in skills such as masonry and carpentry, and $30 a month ($25 of which would be sent home to their families). The CCC program helped many men and their families get back on their feet. Company 1856 also worked on Davis Mountains State Park, Indian Lodge and other regional projects. Decades later, with many TPWD-directed restoration projects completed, the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps proudly stands.

CCC Company 1856 builds the pool around San Solomon Springs.