



JOHN CHANDLER

WELCOME TO MERIDIAN STATE PARK, A PEACEFUL RETREAT FOR NATURE- AND RECREATION-LOVERS ALIKE. HIKE THROUGH THE SHADED FORESTS AND LISTEN FOR THE SONG OF THE ENDANGERED GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER. CAST A LINE IN THE LAKE OR GO FOR A REFRESHING SWIM. ENJOY THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY WITH A PICNIC AT THE REMARKABLE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS STONE REFECTORY.



INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

MERIDIAN

STATE PARK



This relatively small 505-acre park offers a surprising variety of recreational opportunities. However you enjoy the park, help us care for it by preserving the natural and cultural resources.

- Preserve the integrity of the historic CCC structures by using them with respect.
- Hike on designated trails only and stay out of closed areas.
- Leave no trace! Keep your park and lake clean by not littering.
- Preserve the park for future generations and leave plants, animals, and fossils where you find them. Don't pocket the past.

FURTHER READING

Texas State Parks and the CCC: The Legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps by Cynthia Brandimarte with Angela Reed, Texas A&M University Press, 2013

Parks for Texas by James Wright Steely, University of Texas Press, 1999.

For more information about programs or volunteering, contact the park or visit our website and Facebook page.

173 Park Road #7 • Meridian, Texas 76665
(254) 435-2536 • www.tpwd.texas.gov/meridian
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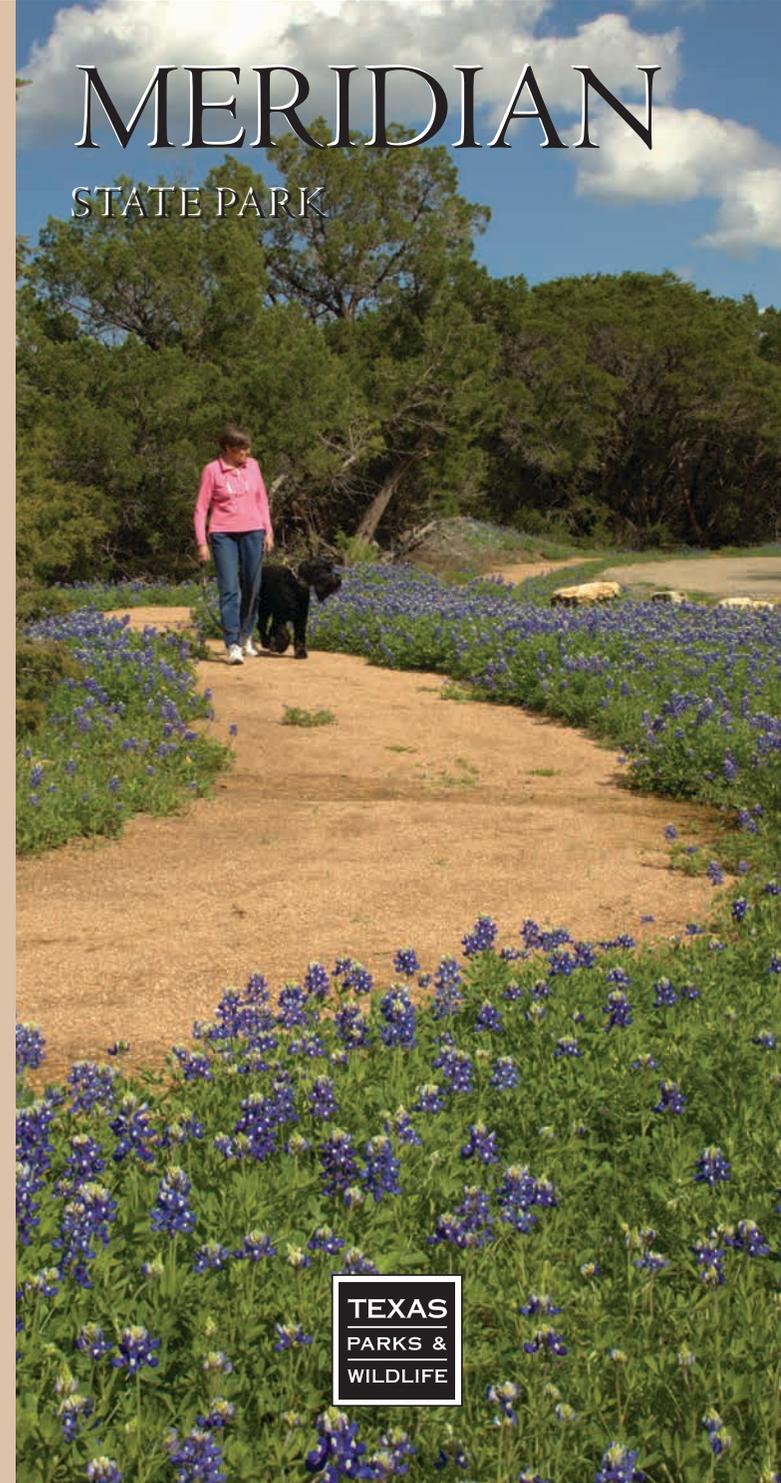
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A PLACE OF BEAUTY AND ABUNDANCE

“The returning soldiers of the war between the United States and Mexico spread the news ... of a beautiful land on the west of the Brazos River, and northwest from Waco; where rich valleys, rank in verdure, lay between hills of Alpine beauty, threaded by clear streams of the purest water, over which ran all the game which the heart of the hunter could long for (...)”

– Cureton and Cureton 1905

The beauty and abundance of the area has attracted humans to this spot for thousands of years. Native Americans from the Tonkawa, Tawakoni, Wichita and Caddo tribes established villages in the region. The presence of Native Americans, plus its isolation, discouraged European settlers from landing here until the mid-19th century.

Water and fire shaped the landscape of this region. Years of erosion cut steep valleys through the Edwards Limestone. Grassland fires, an important part of prairie-ecosystem health, burned across the high plateau. Forests of Ashe juniper, oak and cedar elm thrived in the steep

BRANDI HEASLEY



valleys, protected from the fires above. These regular fires prevented trees from dominating the prairie landscape. In more recent years, humans have prevented burns to protect homes and livestock. In doing so, Ashe juniper and other trees have spread across the plateau, resulting in the loss of prairie habitat.

STEVE MASLOWSKI, USFWS



EVERY GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER IS A NATIVE TEXAN!

Meridian State Park is home to the endangered golden-cheeked warbler. These stunning birds only breed in the mixed Ashe juniper (also known as cedar) and oak woodlands of Central Texas. The warblers arrive on their breeding grounds in March. Males attract a mate and defend their territory by singing a buzzy “tweah-tweah-twee-sy” song. The females build a nest using long strips of bark from the Ashe juniper held together by spider webs. Females lay 3-4 eggs and both parents help raise the young. Parents bring insects and spiders back to the nest to feed the chicks. In July, the birds return to their wintering grounds in southern Mexico and Central America.

The golden-cheeked warbler has suffered from habitat loss. Ashe juniper woodlands, essential for the bird’s survival, have disappeared due to urban sprawl and ranching activities. Help protect Texan songbird species by planting native plant species and encouraging local landowners to conserve woodland habitat.

STORIES IN STONE



The Great Depression of the 1930s brought hardship to the nation. Many people faced desperate times with few jobs, no money, and little hope. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933 to help conserve America’s natural resources, and restore the nation’s hope for the future. The CCC employed young men, ages 18-25, and gave them the opportunity to gain skills and education while building parks and conserving resources. In return, they received housing, three square meals a day, and medical care. Moreover, they received \$30 a month each, of which \$25 was sent home to support their families.

Company 1827 (V), composed of World War I veterans, built the 505-acre park between July 1933 and October 1934. The company built the rock and earthen dam on Bee Creek to form the 72-acre Lake Meridian. The CCC also built culverts, barbecue pits and a beautiful stone bridge that remain in the park today. Perhaps the most impressive legacy of the Company 1827 (V) is the cut-stone refectory and open-air pavilion on the lakeshore. Using limestone and timber from the park, the CCC demonstrated extraordinary craftsmanship.



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