



A CATHEDRAL OF PINE AND BALD CYPRESS TREES SOAR ABOVE THE WATER'S EDGE AT MARTIN DIES, JR. STATE PARK. LUSH MARSH PLANTS GROW ALONG THE EDGES OF THE B.A. STEINHAGEN RESERVOIR. A MAZE OF SLOUGHS AND RIVER CHANNELS BECKONS PADDLERS WITH THE PROMISE OF LIMITLESS ADVENTURE. PARK TRAILS REVEAL THE GOLDEN HUES OF BEECHES AND THE REDS OF BLACK GUMS. CAMPING, BIRDING, MOUNTAIN BIKING, OR PICNICKING IN THIS WONDERLAND OF NATURAL BEAUTY CREATES LIFELONG MEMORIES.



Martin Dies, Jr. State Park is a recreation area and nature preserve. Help us protect the park's resources and ensure your safety by following park rules. Stay on park trails. Keep pets on a leash. If you find artifacts, leave them in place and tell a ranger.

Park interpreters offer a variety of public programs at the nature center. Or, schedule a group program on natural and cultural history by calling the park or by asking the staff at headquarters for more information.

The park is located 10 miles west of Jasper on Highway 190. From U.S. Highway 69, travel 17 miles east from Woodville on U.S. Highway 190 to reach the park. From U.S. Highway 96, travel 12 miles west from Jasper on U.S. Highway 190. Or from Houston, take U.S. Highway 59 north to Livingston, and then travel east on U.S. Highway 190 for 65 miles to the park via Park Road 48.

Martin Dies, Jr. State Park  
634 Park Road 48 South, Jasper, TX 75951  
(409) 384-5231 • [www.tpwd.texas.gov/martindiesjr](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/martindiesjr)



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INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

# MARTIN DIES, JR. STATE PARK



## RICH CULTURAL HISTORY

**N**ative people hunted and foraged on this land for thousands of years, and farmed it for hundreds of years, before the arrival of Europeans. Fur-bearing animals, such as beaver and otter, drew European and American trappers to this area. By the early nineteenth century, merchants founded Bevilport near the present park as a river port to ship furs to distant markets.

Decades later, Anglo settlers transported cotton grown on their plantations down the Neches and Angelina rivers. The construction of railroads after the Civil War ignited a logging boom that transformed the area's economy and profoundly changed the landscape. The economic growth fed new industries, including the petroleum industry. To provide electrical power for them, in 1953 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers impounded the Neches and Angelina rivers creating B.A. Steinhagen Reservoir.

Martin Dies, Jr. saw an opportunity. Wanting to share with others the outdoor experiences he enjoyed as a youth, Dies lobbied to develop the area around the new reservoir as a state park. The son and grandson of U.S. Congressmen, he too, dedicated his life to public service. Dies represented the people of Texas in the state senate, as Texas secretary of state, and as a circuit court judge. His efforts helped create the park that today bears his name. Dies proudly turned a shovel at the groundbreaking on April 16, 1964.

Martin Dies, Jr. when he served as Texas Secretary of State. Courtesy of Martin W. Dies.



The park offers rare natural beauty to paddlers.

## RECREATION ABOUNDS

The waters surrounding the park offer a paddlers' paradise. Buoys mark paddling trails that guide you through calm waters and dazzling scenery. No boat? No problem! The park rents canoes and kayaks. Promises of spotted bass, crappie, and catfish entice anglers young and old. You can fish from a boat or from the park fishing pier.

Bring your binoculars or spotting scope to view some of the hundreds of different birds seen at Martin Dies. Park headquarters provides an up-to-date bird checklist to help.

Hike or bike seven miles of trails through a whispering pine and hardwood forest. There's so much to see and do—stay the night in one of the park's many campsites!

## A COMPLEX NATURAL HISTORY

When army engineers built the B.A. Steinhagen reservoir they set in motion a transformation of the landscape. Their work created a wildlife refuge but also displaced large areas of native mixed forest.

The new reservoir attracted wildlife species supported by the Neches and Angelina rivers: white-tailed deer, bobcat, otters, American beaver, coyotes, and foxes. Wading birds and raptors found new habitat, while the remaining forest supported woodpeckers, warblers, and other tree-dwelling birds.

Park wetlands continue to slowly transform the land. River flow adds sediment to the reservoir. As a result, the wetlands encourage new life to emerge.

The golden orb-weaver spider is part of the park's interconnected web of life.



The boardwalk provides an amazing view across the reservoir and through the lush landscape.

