



LAKE SOMERVILLE STATE PARK LIES IN TWO UNITS JOINED BY A GREAT PATH THAT WEAVES LAZILY AROUND THE SHORES OF AN 11,630-ACRE LAKE. THE PARK'S BIRCH CREEK AND NAILS CREEK UNITS OFFER BOATING, FISHING, AND SPECTACULAR BIRDING OPPORTUNITIES. YOU CAN HIKE, BIKE, OR RIDE YOUR HORSE ALONG MORE THAN 40 MILES OF TRAILS. CAMP FROM AN RV OR PITCH A TENT UNDER THE STARS IN A PRIMITIVE CAMPSITE ALONG THE GREAT LAKE SOMERVILLE TRAILWAY. IN A GENTLY ROLLING LANDSCAPE OF SMALL TOWNS AND RANCHES LIES A WELCOMING, NATURAL REFUGE BUSTLING WITH LIFE AND ADVENTURE.



THANK YOU FOR VISITING!

Lake Somerville State Park is a recreation area but also a nature preserve. Please help us protect the park's resources and your safety by following park rules. Call the park to schedule your group for programs on natural and cultural history. Park interpreters offer a variety of programs. Check with park headquarters for more information.

Birch Creek Unit
14222 Park Road 57
Somerville, TX 77879-9713
(979) 535-7763

Nails Creek Unit
6280 FM 180
Ledbetter, TX 78946-7036
(979) 289-2392

www.tpwd.texas.gov/lakesomerville

<https://m.facebook.com/BirchCreekStatePark/>

www.facebook.com/Lake-Somerville-Nails-Creek-State-Park-Texas-Parks-and-Wildlife-208183102533811

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INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

LAKE SOMERVILLE STATE PARK



RECREATION ABOUNDS

The Lake Somerville Trailway snakes its way between the Birch Creek and Nails Creek units of the park. Prairie and woodlands of yaupon, post oak, blackjack oak, and water oak shadow its 13-mile route. You can hike, bike, or ride your horse along the trailway and stay the night at one of our individual or group primitive campsites. The trailway and the park's other 19 miles of multi-use trails offer a rich assortment of terrain types, nature viewing opportunities, and camping options. Whether you seek an adventure trek or a quiet walk through fields of wildflowers, you'll find a journey at Lake Somerville. And when night falls, low levels of light pollution make the park an eager steed for night sky exploration.

The lake draws many anglers on the hunt for crappie, white bass, and catfish. You can fish along the shore of the lake, at the Nails Creek unit fishing pond, or from a boat. Kayakers and canoers wind their boats along a tree-lined lakeshore and take time to observe some of the hundreds of species of birds found at the park.



Roseate spoonbills at Flag Pond

NATURAL DIVERSITY

At Lake Somerville, post oak savannah and Fayette prairie collide in the Yegua watershed to forge great wildlife diversity. Scattered clumps of post oak, blackjack oak, and eastern red cedar mingle with native bunch grasses, hackberry, and little bluestem in the post oak savannah. Sandy loam soil nurtures the grasslands and scattered trees of the Fayette prairie. Little bluestem, big bluestem, and indiagrass surround scattered live oak and cedar elm trees. Rainbows of color splash across the Lake Somerville prairie with each spring's wildflower season. Once the home of black bears, mountain lions, and red wolves, the woods and prairies surrounding Lake Somerville still host many smaller mammals, birds, and insects. Where land meets water, you may see signs of the bald eagles, river otters, and American beaver that live here as they have for millennia.

Within these wetlands works a great engine of life. In 1926, a private hunting club impounded 350 acres of Yegua Creek to create Flag Pond. Today it continues to provide hunting opportunities while Texas State Parks also manages it for wildlife conservation. It feeds, shelters, and nurses hundreds of different migratory and non-migratory bird species. White pelicans, reddish egrets, and roseate spoonbills join many others to the delight of Flag Pond birders.

LIFE AT YEGUA CREEK

The Yegua Creek drew people to its shores for millennia. It provided a reliable water supply and abundant game. Many native people including the Tonkawa and Tawakoni lived and worked here. They made the Yegua Basin into a hub for trade networks with other native people as far away as the Caddo in East Texas. French and Spanish explorers first arrived in the area during the late seventeenth century. Colonists from the United States, led by Stephen F. Austin, followed beginning in 1821. The settlers grew corn, vegetables, and cotton. Later in the nineteenth century, the arrival of railroads ignited an economic explosion that accelerated population growth.

The growing community saw the Yegua Basin's frequent floods as an endless plague. Between 1912 and 1958, 43 floods inundated homes, farms, and businesses in the Somerville area. This ruin bought support for a momentous transformation of the land. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Yegua Creek Basin to create Lake Somerville, completing construction in 1967. The new lake gave people more control over flooding and new outdoor recreation opportunities while preserving much of the natural world. But it also buried many homes, farms, forests, and hunting grounds under a great watery plane. Texas Parks and Wildlife opened Lake Somerville State Park on the shores of the new lake in 1970.

