



WELCOME TO BIG SPRING STATE PARK! THE PARK IS SITUATED ON A BLUFF OVER 200 FEET ABOVE THE TOWN OF BIG SPRING. IT'S NO WONDER IT WAS NAMED SCENIC MOUNTAIN. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN VISITING THIS AREA LONG BEFORE MODERN DAY TO TAKE IN THE EXTENSIVE VIEW OF THE LANDSCAPE AND REFUEL AT THE ABUNDANT SPRINGS. WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO HIKE OR BIKE, VIEW THE WILDLIFE OF THE PARK, OR PONDER OVER THE MANY LIMESTONE CARVINGS, WE HOPE YOU FEEL CONNECTED TO THE MANY WHO CAME BEFORE YOU.



One of the many carvings on Scenic Mountain

Big Spring State Park remains a keystone in the surrounding community. Each day, you can find locals taking advantage of the free natural space and stunning views. During your visit, you may choose to:

- ✦ Walk or bike the scenic road
- ✦ Hike the nature trail
- ✦ Hike or bike the 5-mile trail around Scenic Mountain
- ✦ Have a picnic in the historic CCC pavilion (also available for reservation)
- ✦ Bring the kids to enjoy the playground
- ✦ Take a self-guided tour of the historic limestone carvings
- ✦ Enjoy the stunning views, including sunrises and sunsets
- ✦ Attend a ranger-led program!

Please help us manage park property by placing trash in proper receptacles, staying on designated trails, and refraining from vandalism.

Big Spring State Park
No. 1 Scenic Drive, Big Spring, Texas 79720
(432) 263-4931 • www.tpwd.texas.gov/bigspring



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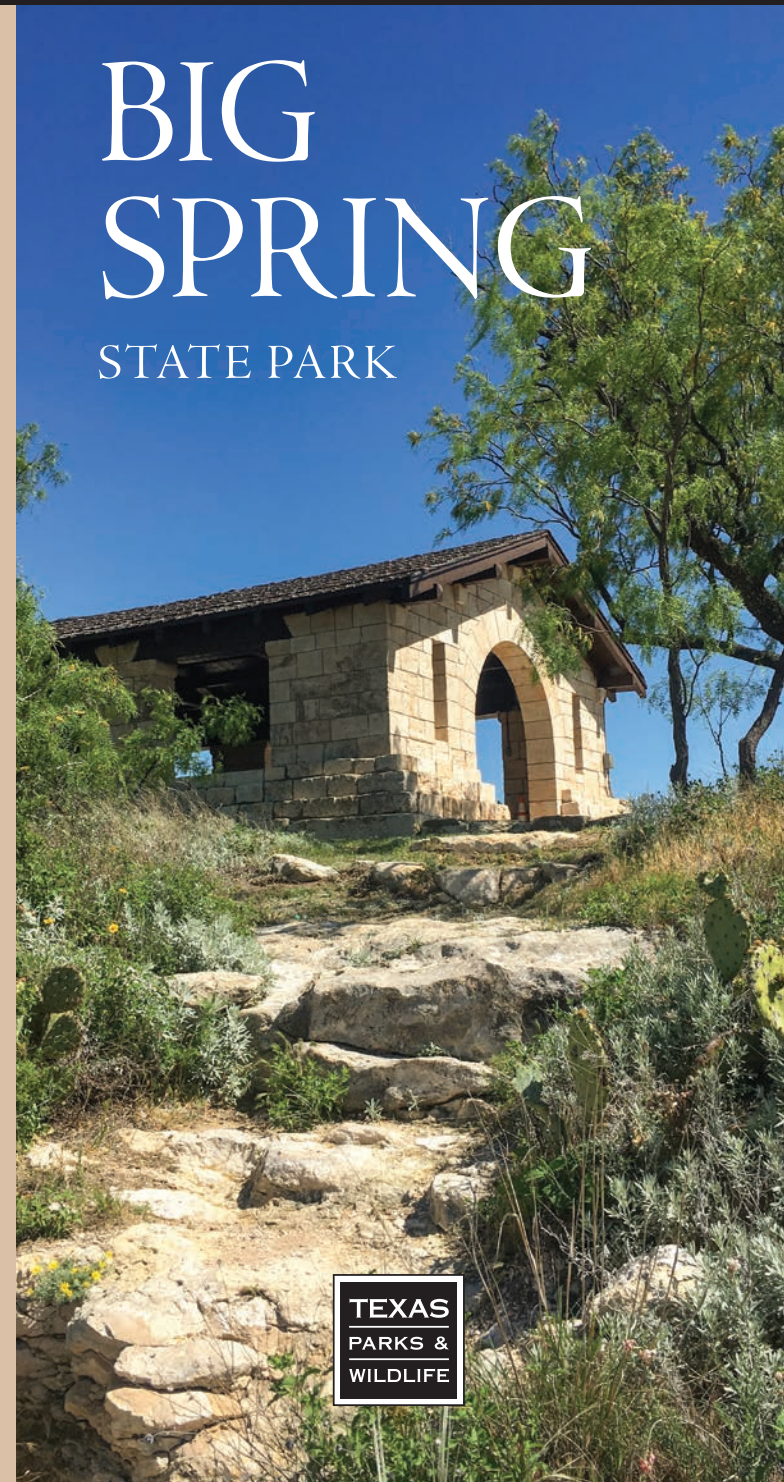
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INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

BIG SPRING

STATE PARK



A BLEND OF NATURE

From the top of Scenic Mountain in Big Spring State Park, take a moment to look in all directions. You stand in an area where three ecoregions meet. To the south is the Edwards Plateau, a thick deposit of limestone gifted by the ocean that used to cover this land. Over time, wind, water, and gravity have carved the canyons and cliffs of hill country, including Scenic Mountain.

To the north and east stretches the great expanse of the rolling plains. Imagine massive herds of bison and antelope making their way across the grasslands to drink from the springs. Perhaps Comanche hunters on horseback follow in pursuit. To the west and stretching north, the Llano Estacado creates the high plains, raised thousands of feet above the rolling plains, where great canyons like Palo Duro and Caprock slice through the wind-blown grasses.

Elements of each ecoregion can be found in the park, including juniper, mesquite, shin oaks, cacti, yucca, and plenty of wildflowers and grasses. Evidence of wildlife is strewn about. Butterfly and bird watching are particularly enjoyable here.

Sleepy Orange
Butterfly



White-tailed Deer



Common Spotted Whiptail Lizard

THE ONLY WATER FOR 60 MILES!

The town of Big Spring is named for the spring in nearby Sulphur Draw, which, according to some reports, used to gush up to 100,000 gallons of water a day. Fossils of animals long extinct, such as woolly mammoths and saber-toothed tigers, have been found in the area, along with more modern animal remains. This suggests a long history of animals traveling to the springs for water and vegetation during dry times.

Many Indigenous groups, from the Jumanos of Far West Texas to the Apache and Comanche of the plains, also sought the life-giving force of the springs. In fact, access to the water was a point of contention between the Comanche and Shawnee.

It's been hypothesized that Spanish expeditions took advantage of the "big spring," including, perhaps, Cabeza de Vaca during his adventures with Native groups. Anglo settlement brought outlaws and buffalo hunters seeking their future on the frontier. In the mid- to late-1800s, amongst the ranchers seeking good grazing came the Texas and Pacific Railway. The population boomed through the discovery of great oil deposits, which remains important to the local economy today.

Unfortunately, with the increasing water demands, the spring has long-since dried up. The city of Big Spring maintains the location in Comanche Trail Park with water from the nearby lake. However, the history of Big Spring remains stamped with the footprints of big names like Quanah Parker, Robert E. Lee, and the Buffalo Soldiers.

LEAVING THEIR MARK

Big Spring State Park is one of 28 Texas State Parks that were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. Established by Franklin D. Roosevelt as a program of the New Deal, the CCC provided men with work during the Great Depression. Enrollees not only gained skills and earned wages but had a lasting impact on recreational landscape of America. Over 50,000 men served the CCC in Texas, giving a boost to the fledgling State Park system.

From 1934 to 1935, CCC Company 1857 conducted work on the over 300 acres that would become Big Spring State Park. Men used the limestone of Scenic Mountain to construct the pavilion, headquarters, restrooms, and stone picnic tables. Perhaps the most stunning component of their work is the three-mile Park Road 8 scenic loop, which winds up the bluff on hand carved limestone blocks. Some of the dry-stacked blocks weigh two tons.

Stop by headquarters to pick up a "Guide to Historic Rock Carvings on Scenic Mountain," which will guide you through some of the many historic markings carved into the limestone before the park opened in 1936. Many of these are from the CCC boys, but with over 300, the history of the bluff can be traced to 1888 and perhaps earlier. Where your feet rest to admire the view, others have long come for the same purpose.

