



WATER TIES ALL PARTS OF COLORADO BEND STATE PARK TOGETHER. FROM CAVES BELOW TO WATERFALLS ABOVE, MARVEL AT THE LANDSCAPE THAT WATER CREATED HERE. YOU CAN IMMERSE YOURSELF IN NATURE AND RELISH ADVENTURE. EXPLORE THE RIVER, HIT THE TRAILS ON A MOUNTAIN BIKE, TAKE A REJUVENATING HIKE, OR FISH FOR YOUR DINNER. NO MATTER WHAT PART OF THE OUTDOORS YOU LOVE, YOU CAN FIND IT AT COLORADO BEND.



LEAVE NO TRACE

While enjoying this pristine and wild place, please remember that everything you see in the park is protected. Waterfalls, artifacts, rocks, animals, and plants are all part of the area's rich heritage. Help us keep Colorado Bend State Park a special place for everyone.

- ✦ Hike and bike only on designated trails and stay out of closed areas.
- ✦ Leave no trace. Keep your park clean by picking up your trash.
- ✦ If you packed it in, pack it out!
- ✦ Preserve the park for future generations and leave plants, animals, artifacts, and fossils where you find them.
- ✦ Get involved by joining the Friends of Colorado Bend State Park, a nonprofit volunteer organization that supports the park through work projects and fundraising.

Colorado Bend State Park
 PO Box 118, Bend, TX 76824 • (325) 628-3240
www.tpwd.texas.gov/coloradobend



Life's better outside.®



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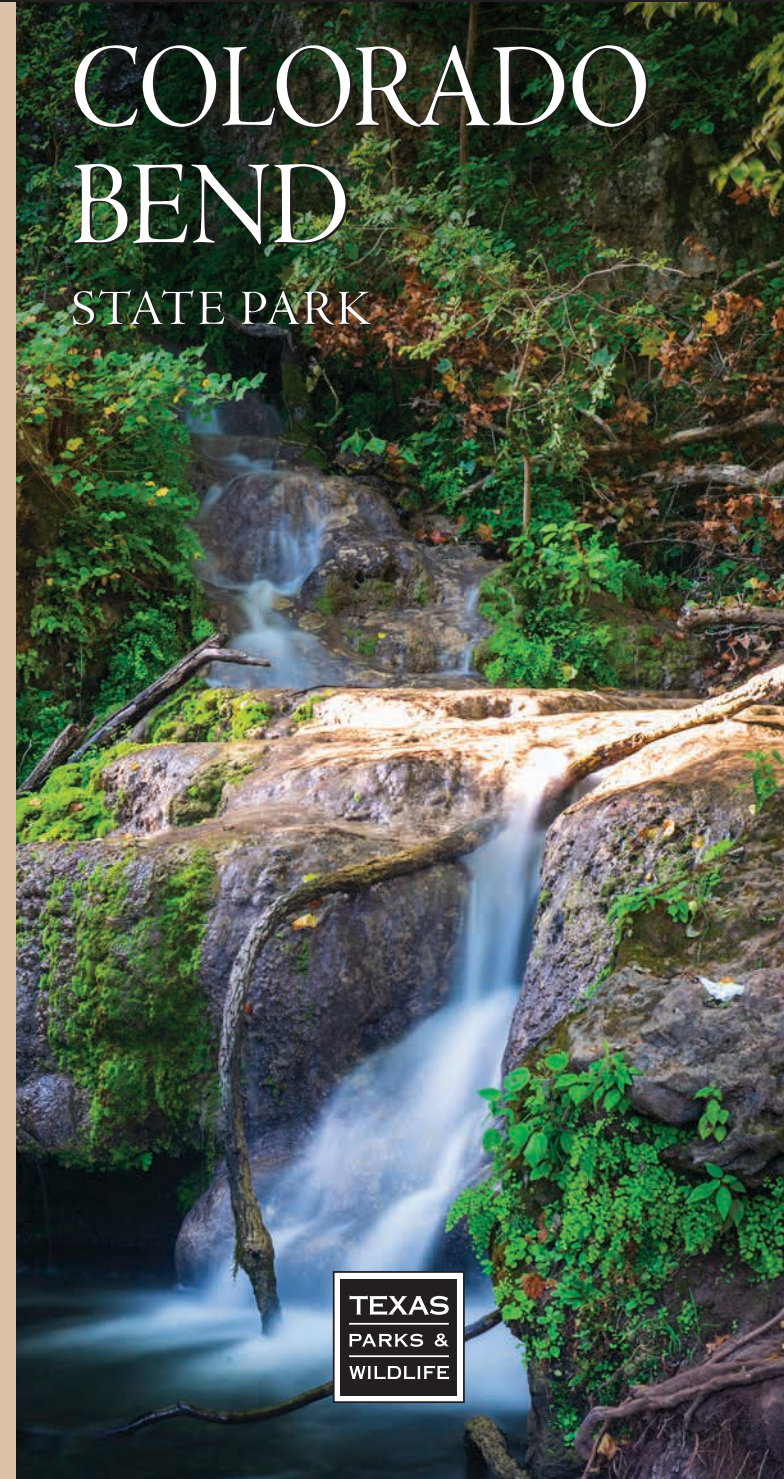


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INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

COLORADO BEND STATE PARK



A COMMUNITY OF CEDAR

The Ashe juniper trees (also known as cedar) that dot the Hill Country provide a home for animals and a place for people to recreate today, but they once provided a livelihood. In the early 1900s, rugged “cedar choppers” moved here to harvest Ashe juniper trees for lumber. The Scholten Brothers Cedar Company was successful enough to support a community of about 300 people in what is now the park. This temporary town featured a school, general store, and a cemetery. The company even built a rail line—the Cedar Tap Railroad loaded logs onto six cars and transported it to nearby Lometa. However, the railroad was short lived, hauling cedar for only three years.

Ashe juniper trees are now prized more for the habitat they create for animals than the building materials they once supplied. The endangered golden-cheeked warbler relies on old growth Ashe junipers for nest-building materials, so they can nurture the next generation of songbirds.

LINKED BY WATER

A pockmarked limestone landscape is the foundation of Colorado Bend. Formed from the remains of ancient sea creatures, this limestone is almost 500 million years old! Underground, you’ll find crevices, cracks, and caves, all formed from water slowly dissolving the limestone. This network, known as karst, stores and transports water below the ground, and also provides a home for animals.



USGS

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: CAVE MYOTIS

Cave myotis bats thrive in darkness. They prefer to roost in caves during the day and emerge at dusk to feast on insects all night. You probably won’t see a cave myotis bat, but you might spot their favored habitats—caves, bridges, and anywhere that resembles a crevice. They usually live together in groups of a few thousand, yet these bats don’t need a lot of space. Their wingspan is about one foot long (30 cm) and they can weigh around half an ounce (15g). That’s about the weight of five pennies! Even though they’re tiny, these bats are a vital part of the ecosystem here.

Among the park’s limestone hills, there are nearly 500 caves. Some of these caves are large enough to fit a group of people, like Gorman Cave. Others are better suited for just bats like the cave myotis species. No matter what size the cave is, they are all closed to the public except by guided tour.

Water bubbles up from below at several springs in the park.

Spicewood Springs, near the Colorado River, has created a special oasis for animals and tranquil swimming hole for people. Upstream, Gorman Springs feeds Gorman Creek, which eventually tumbles over the side of a 70-foot-tall bluff to become the renowned Gorman Falls. Just like water creates caves and other features underground, it also builds new landforms above ground. Gorman Falls is lined with travertine, a delicate rock made from minerals in the water. Travertine is so fragile that even touching it can interfere with its growth, changing the look of the falls forever. The travertine here is 60 feet thick—that’s almost as tall as the falls themselves!



Gorman Falls

FISHING FOR A LEGACY

In late winter, the river water hides a mass migration. Beneath the surface, scores of white bass exit Lake Buchanan downstream and make their way upstream, toward the park. This stretch of the Colorado River is known for one of the best white bass runs in Central Texas. These medium-sized bass swim to shallow and slow-moving water in late winter, preparing to spawn. All these fish in one place are a boon for anglers who have been fishing these waters for generations.

The legacy of fishing here dates back to before this land was a state park.

Native people first moved through this area around 13,000 years ago. Just like people do today, they relied on the river for water and fish. More recently, this land was the home of Lemon’s Fish



Camp and other tourist spots. The good fishing on the river built the area’s economy and continues to serve both residents and visitors alike.

