

# PARKS TO PADDLE

Our June cover story spotlights Galveston Island, one of eight state parks that feature Texas Paddling Trails. These trails offer people of all skill levels an opportunity to experience our state from a unique perspective: cruising quietly down creeks, rivers, sloughs, bayous and lakes. Grab your life jacket and canoe, kayak or board, and let's take a look at those other seven parks with official trails, as well as others with excellent paddling opportunities.



By Dale Blasingame

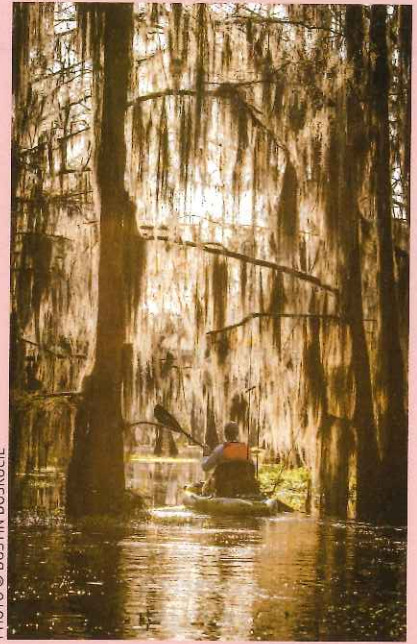


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## A CADDO LAKE STATE PARK →

Ten different Texas Paddling Trails can be accessed from here, offering more than 50 miles of paddling through a maze of mysterious sloughs, swamps and bayous. No equipment? No problem. Rentals are available from park headquarters and nearby outfitters.

## B MARTIN DIES JR. STATE PARK

There's a paddling trail for everyone here — from a short trip to an extreme backcountry tour. Park rangers offer a couple of different guided paddling trips. A two-hour version keeps you close to the park, while the four-hour option sends you deeper into the backcountry.

## C FORT PARKER STATE PARK

The Limestone Bluffs Paddling Trail is about a 5-mile trip, featuring deep water and bird watching along the namesake bluffs. Trips start at the nearby Confederate Reunion Grounds State Historic Site and end at the park, lasting about three hours, or longer if you intend to fish.

## D MUSTANG ISLAND STATE PARK

Mustang Island features three paddling trails with 20 combined miles along the western shoreline, with great shallow-water fishing opportunities for sight-casting. The island is home to wading birds and shorebirds, mottled ducks and small mammals.

## E DEVILS RIVER STATE NATURAL AREA ↓

Remote and breathtakingly beautiful, the Devils River (outside the boundaries of the natural areas) requires a Devils River Access Permit. Don't attempt this trip unless you're an experienced paddler ready to spend multiple days on the river. Be sure to plan carefully, visiting the TPWD Devils River Web page to find additional information and to locate river outfitters. One perk: You can reserve use of the state's only official, yet primitive paddle-up campsites at the two state natural area units.



PHOTO BY CHASE FOUNTAIN / TPWD





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### ← 6 VILLAGE CREEK STATE PARK

Village Creek offers access to 21 miles of flat-water paddling trails through smaller streams, oxbow lakes and sloughs in the Big Thicket. Fishing is great, as is wildlife watching for belted kingfishers, wood ducks, herons, freshwater mussels, turtles and rare sightings of otters and beavers.

### 6 GOLIAD STATE PARK

Goliad is the end point for a 6.6-mile paddling trail down the San Antonio River. The trip takes about three to four hours, depending on the flow. Fish for sunfish, bass and catfish. Don't be surprised to find deer and other wildlife stopping for a sip of river water.



PHOTO BY CHASE FOUNTAIN / TWPD



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### 7 SEA RIM STATE PARK ↑

Choose from varied marsh trails, ranging from the 1.8-mile easy trail to the 10-mile advanced trail. Experience coastal duck hunting and fishing, or enjoy observing alligators, roseate spoonbills, egrets, herons and more.

### ← 8 GUADALUPE RIVER STATE PARK

Guadalupe River State Park will soon be joining the list of state parks that feature Texas Paddling Trails. The trail will be ready sometime this year, weather permitting. Until then, you can still enjoy the current paddling opportunities along the four miles of river frontage.

### 9 PALMETTO STATE PARK

Palmetto offers paddling along the San Marcos River and in the park's lake. The park rents out pedal boats, canoes, kayaks and paddleboards for lake use. Experienced paddlers can get in at Luling and spend six to seven hours reaching the park.

### 10 SOUTH LLANO RIVER STATE PARK →

The paddling trail here in the beautiful Hill Country is 6 miles long; be sure to bring fishing gear and binoculars. It takes two to four hours to paddle it to Junction, depending on the flow of the crystal-clear, spring-fed river.

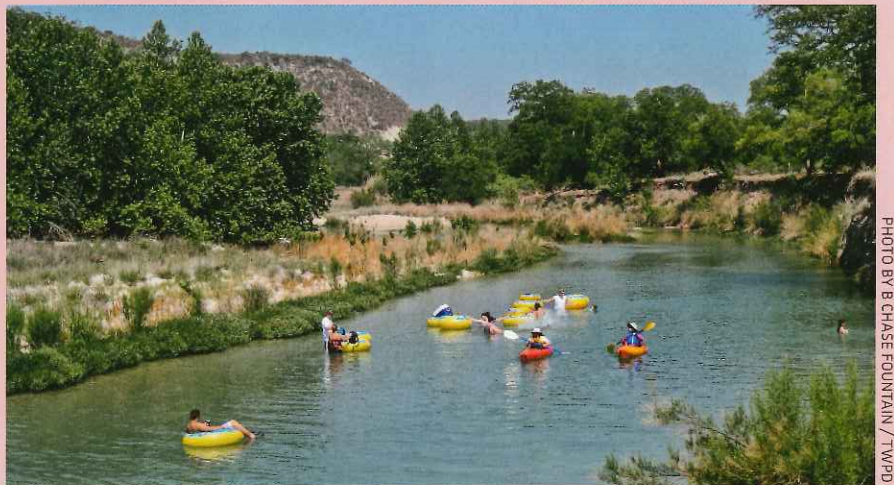


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