



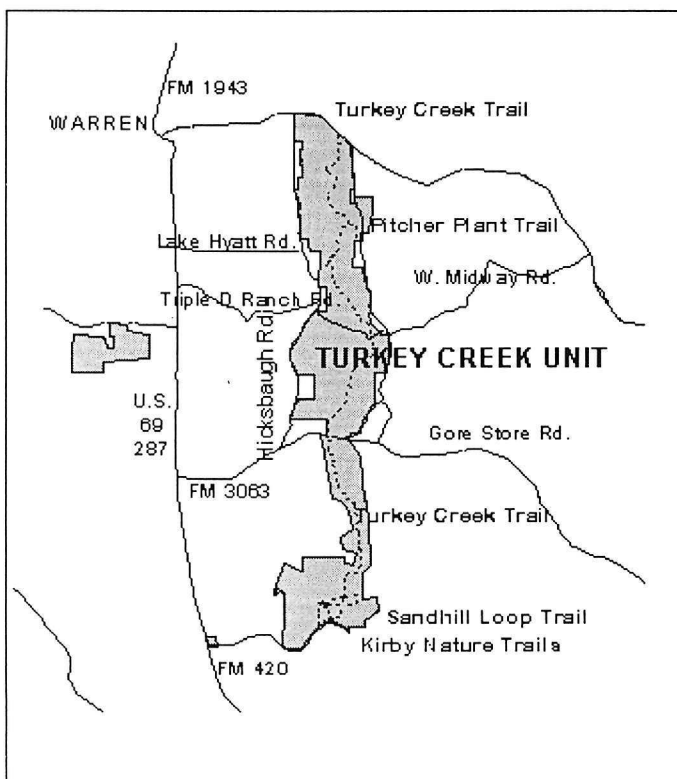
Hiking Trails



Hiking is one of the best ways to experience the Big Thicket. Walking is an excellent source of exercise, education, and recreation. Trails provide access to scenic areas of the Big Thicket not typically seen from a vehicle. Additionally, hiking provides opportunities for bird watching, nature study, photography, and access to fishing spots. The different trails traverse a variety of forest communities, providing glimpses of the diversity for which Big Thicket is known.

There are presently hiking or nature trails in four preserve units. Visitors may select from nine trails ranging from 0.5 to 18 miles in length. Hikers should allow 1 mile per hour for strolling and 3 miles per hour for hiking. The trails are open at all times; however, keep in mind that flooding occurs after heavy rains. Permits are not required for day hikes, but hikers should register at the trailhead where detailed maps are available.

Parking is available at the trailheads. For your comfort, bring drinking water and insect repellent and wear comfortable shoes that you don't mind getting muddy. All the trails are on relatively flat terrain and are easy to walk. Pets, vehicles, and firearms are not permitted on hiking trails. Horses are allowed only on the designated horse trail in the Big Sandy Creek Unit. Fishing is allowed in all Preserve waters with a valid state license. Additional trails are planned for other units. Enjoy yourself, be safe, and happy hiking!



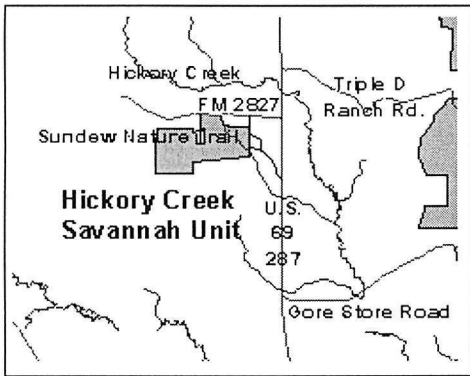
The **Turkey Creek Trail**, a 15 mile (24 km) linear trail which roughly parallels Turkey Creek, provides opportunities for backcountry camping and extended hiking. There are four main trailheads. The northern trailhead (milepost) is 3.5 miles (5.6 km) east of Warren on FM 1943. The Pitcher Plant Trail intersects the Turkey Creek Trail at milepost 3. A third trailhead is reached by following Triple D Ranch Road until it crosses Turkey Creek (milepost 6). Another trailhead (milepost 9) is located 4 miles (6.2 km) east of Hwy. 69 on Gore Store Road. On the south end the trail connects to the Kirby Nature Trail's Sandhill Loop.

The **Pitcher Plant Trail** loop, located on the NE side of the Turkey Creek Unit, is a 0.5 mile loop that leads through a mixed pine forest and across the corner of a wetland savannah. To reach the trailhead follow FM 1943 east from Warren 4.3 miles (6.9 km), turn south and continue 1.9 miles (3 km) along the east boundary of the Turkey Creek Unit. The first 0.25 mile is fully accessible and allows close-up views of several kinds of carnivorous plant, including pitcher plants.

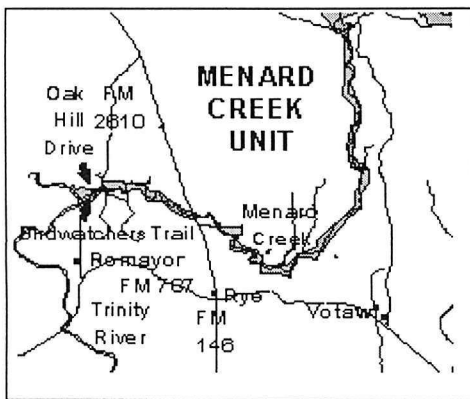


The **Kirby Nature Trail** loops – located at the southern tip of the Turkey Creek Unit on FM 420, 2.5 miles (4 km) east of the junction of US 69 and FM 420 – are excellent introductory hikes for first-time visitors. The trails begin behind the Information Station where a ranger is on duty daily (usually from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). This is a triple loop trail. The inner loop has a self-guiding booklet and is 1.7 miles (2.7 km) long. An outer loop is 2.4 miles (3.9 km) long. The Sandhill Loop is a 5-mile hike. The trails wind through forested slopes, acidic baygalls, floodplains, cypress sloughs, and even arid sand hills.

Big Thicket Trails



The **Big Sandy Trail**, in the SE corner of the Big Sandy Unit, can be reached by turning left from FM 1276, 0.5 mile (0.4 km) north of Dallardsville and proceeding 3 miles (4.8 km) on Sunflower Road to the trailhead located on the left. This 18-mile (28.8 km) roundtrip trail is designed for horseback riding, hiking, and all-terrain bicycling. The Trail meanders through upland pine forests and beech-magnolia-loblolly pine slopes before crossing Simmons Branch to a floodplain forest of basket oak, sweetgum, hornbeam, and holly.

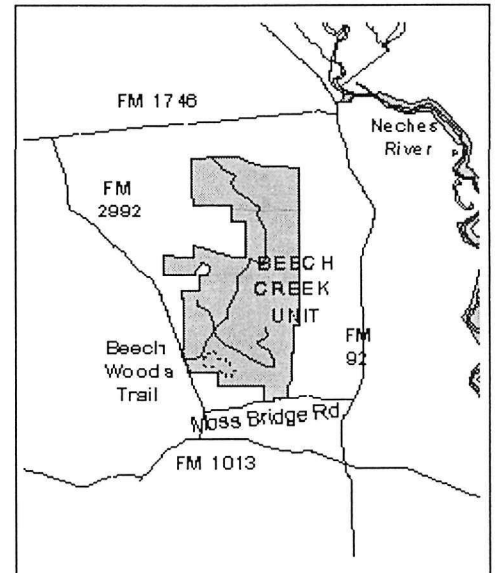


The **Birdwatchers's Trail**, located at the confluence of the Menard Creek Unit and the Trinity River, is 3.1 miles (5.0 km) north of Romayor off of FM 2610 on Oak Hill Drive. The 0.5 mile long trail offers a panoramic view of expansive sandbars on the Trinity River from high bluffs on the east bank. The trail offers good birding opportunities for shorebirds, raptors, and migrant songbirds.

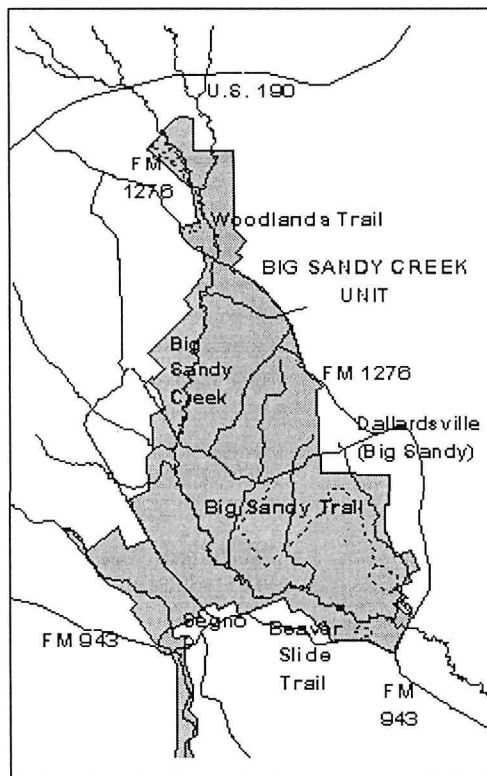
The **Sundew Trail**. At the eastern edge of the Hickory Creek Savannah Unit, is located 0.5 mile (0.8 km) south of FM 2827. The dirt road leading to the trailhead intersects FM 2827 0.5 mile west of US 69. A booklet that cost 50 cents guides you around a 1-mile (1.6 km) loop through an open longleaf pine/wetland savannah. The Sundew Trail is a premier area for wildflowers from late spring through summer. A short, 0.5 mile (0.8 km) long inner loop is fully accessible.



The **Beech Woods Trail**, near the SW corner of the Beech Creek Unit, is accessible from FM 2992, 1.5 miles (2.4 km) north of its junction with FM 1013. The 1-mile loop trail is reached via a short walk on an old dirt road. The trail meanders through a magnificent mature stand of beech and magnolias. After walking the loop, hikers may want to continue north on the dirt road to view the various stages of forest development that have occurred following logging and insect attacks.



The **Woodlands Trail**, at the NW tip of the Big Sandy Creek Unit, provides options for hikes of varying lengths. The outer loop of the trail is 5.4 miles (8.6 km) long, with two shorter loops of 4.5 and 3.3 miles (7.2 and 5.3 km). The trailhead is located on FM 1276, 3.3 miles (5.3 km) south of US 190, or 5.9 miles (9.4 km) north of Dallardsville. The trail traverses a great variety of habitats including the Big sandy Creek flood-plain and dense stands of huge hardwood trees with sparse ground cover. Portions of the trail cut through upland pine stands and old pastures being reclaimed by nature. These, plus the mature forest, provide a rich diversity of plant and animal life.



The **Beaver Slide Trail**, in the SE corner of the Big Sandy Creek Unit, is located on FM 943 approximately 0.25 mile west of the FM 1276/FM 943 intersection. This 1.5 mile (2.4 km) loop trail winds around a series of ponds formed by old beaver dams. The trail provides access to Big Sandy Creek and several excellent fishing spots.

For detailed maps, and information about other activities, visit the Information Station located at the south end of the Turkey Creek Unit on FM 420, or write:

Superintendent
Big Thicket National Preserve
3785 Milam
Beaumont, Texas 77701

Phone (409) 246-2337

PLEASE REMEMBER...

- ◇ Lock your vehicle and do not leave valuables unattended.
- ◇ Register at the trailhead before beginning a hike.
- ◇ Stay on the trail to avoid becoming lost.
- ◇ Do not attempt to follow a submerged trail.
- ◇ Do not attempt a cross country hike without a map and compass and knowledge of their use.
- ◇ Do not take pets on the trail.
- ◇ Carry drinking water. The water in area creeks and ponds is not potable.
- ◇ Watch your step to avoid tripping hazards.
- ◇ Avoid resting under dead trees which can drop limbs.
- ◇ Be aware fire ants, wasps and hornets, ticks, mosquitoes, venomous snakes, and poison ivy are found in the Preserve.
- ◇ Be alert to local weather conditions.