

# lake meredith

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Recreation Area • Texas

Lake Meredith lies on the dry, windswept High Plains of the Texas Panhandle, part of a larger geographic region covering 24,000 square miles known as the Llano Estacado. This is the land of cowboys and natural gas refineries. But cowboys of yesterday never dreamed of anything like this sparkling oasis of recreation called Lake Meredith.

Across the Llano, a plain that has been called as flat as any surface in the world, the Canadian River developed its course, cutting and recutting the 200-foot-deep canyons or "breaks" now being filled in by Lake Meredith. The canyon walls are crowned with white limestone caprock, and scenic buttes, pinnacles, and wind-eroded coves of red-brown surround the blue waters of the Panhandle's largest lake. Its sloping shoreline is littered with loose rocks in slide areas left by the wear of water, time, and the cutting action of wind-blown grains of rock that continually work away at the soft sides of the bluffs.

The region is a picture of unusual contrasts and abrupt changes. Brief but violent windstorms or thunderstorms can disrupt a balmy weekend. On the arid plains, mesquite, prickly pear, yucca, and grasses give little hint of the tall cottonwoods, soapberry, and sandbar willows that flourish in the sheltered creek beds below the caprock. Golden eagles, bald eagles, and a variety of hawks share the skies with ducks, geese and other water and shore birds.

Let us have  
the fun  
of booming  
winds  
on long  
waters.

Carl Sandburg



Pronghorn antelope often browse the grasslands along with herds of cattle. In a land of deep water wells operated by windmills, the 20-mile strip of blue water that is Lake Meredith is perhaps the most spectacular contrast of all.

Man has lived on the Llano Estacado, attempting to come to terms with its harsh environment, for about 12,000 years. Archeological traces of prehistoric Indians—their homes, workshops, and campsites—dot the entire Canadian River system. Reflected in the name Llano Estacado (Staked Plains) is the Spanish heritage of the old Southwest. But there was no Anglo-American settlement until 1875. The McBride House at McBride Canyon on Lake Meredith is an example of that early period. By 1877 a railroad served the growing cattle ranches, and in the 20th century the Panhandle boomed with the discovery of oil and natural gas fields. Today's economy is tied directly to natural resources of water, grassland, oil, and gas.

With few exceptions most of the water resources in the Panhandle are underground. By constructing Sanford Dam, named after the nearby town of Sanford, the Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of the Interior, was able to tap one of the few above-ground water supplies—the Canadian River. Impounded in Lake Meredith reservoir, the waters of the Canadian River are used by eleven member cities of the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority.

Lake Meredith is named for the chief proponent of the water project, A. A. Meredith. Construction of the dam began June 30, 1962. The reservoir has been administered since 1965 by the National Park Service. In 1972, Sanford Recreation Area, as it had been known, was renamed Lake Meredith Recreation Area.

**Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument**  
For thousands of years the bluffs and ridges of the Canadian River breaks were quarried for raw materials to make stone tools and weapons. Stone-age craftsmen seemed to have preferred flint that was red, blue, white, or banded, but nearly every color of the rainbow is found in Alibates flint, and no two pieces are alike.

Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument can be seen only on guided tours. Each tour is limited to 20 persons. Tours are free and are conducted daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day. At other times tours are provided upon request. Requests should be made at least five days in advance by writing: Superintendent, Lake Meredith Recreation Area, P.O. Box 1438, Fritch, TX 79036; or calling (806) 857-3151.

Please remember that rock collecting is strictly prohibited at Alibates. Natural features and archeological and historical objects are protected by federal law. We all must preserve the landscape and cultural heritage of this area for other visitors.

Quotation from GOOD MORNING, AMERICA by Carl Sandburg, reprinted by permission Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

## Administration

Lake Meredith Recreation Area, under a National Park Service-Bureau of Reclamation Cooperative Agreement, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, with headquarters in Fritch, Texas. A superintendent, whose address is Lake Meredith Recreation Area, P.O. Box 1438, Fritch, TX 79036, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation.



## Federal and State Boating Regulations

- Boats must be numbered according to State requirements.
- Lights are required from sunset to sunrise.
- Life preservers, one for each person on board, must conform to U.S. Coast Guard requirements. Children under 13 years of age must always wear a life preserver when the vessel is under way.
- Riding on the bow, transom, or gunwales of a boat is prohibited.
- Reckless and negligent boat operation is prohibited, as is operation of a vessel while under the influence of intoxicants or narcotics.
- Waterskiing is permitted from sunrise to sunset; there must be both an operator and competent observer in the towing vessel. Water-skiers must wear a lifesaving device. Skiing is not permitted in channels, within 500 feet of harbors, near swimming beaches or mooring areas, or within 100 feet of any person in the water.
- Vessels in designated harbors must be operated without causing a wake, or at a speed of no more than 5 miles per hour. They must proceed slowly and cautiously in the vicinity of diver's flags or persons in the water.
- In case of accidents, operators shall render assistance to the injured. Accidents must be reported to a park ranger as soon as possible, or at least within 24 hours. Park rangers or Texas game wardens may board vessels at any time to examine documents and inspect vessels for compliance with regulations.

*A complete list of regulations can be obtained from park rangers or from Lake Meredith Headquarters.*



### A Sparkling Oasis

In any season, Lake Meredith can fill a week-end visit or longer with a tempting mixture of healthy exercise, fun, and relaxation at the water's edge. Water activities include boating, waterskiing, sailing, swimming, and scuba diving. Or you can camp, picnic, study nature, ride motorcycles, or sightsee. Throughout the year special events, such as motorcycle or dune buggy races, fishing tournaments, and sailing regattas, are held by local groups.

**Be on the alert for the onset of severe weather.** High winds from sudden storms are the leading cause of boat swampings and capsizings in Lake Meredith. Prior to boating, obtain a current weather forecast. If you are out on the water and a storm is imminent, proceed to the closest sheltered cove or other protected area and wait out the storm there. Park rangers patrolling the lake sometimes are unable to warn all boaters of an approaching storm.

Campers may stay up to 14 days. No camping is allowed in the launching areas or the parking lots. Private campgrounds with hookups are located in nearby towns.

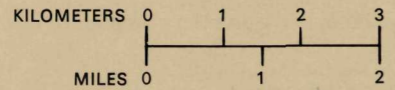
**Please help prevent range fires.** Remember, the lake is surrounded by dry, windswept plains. Protect all campfires from the wind so that fire does not spread to grass, shrubs, or trees. Never leave fires unattended and extinguish fires completely before leaving.

Note: This map is not recommended for navigation.

**Hunting and fishing** are regulated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in cooperation with the National Park Service. Texas licenses are required. Anglers can fish for largemouth, smallmouth, and white bass, catfish, white crappie, sunfish, carp, and walleye. The portions of the recreation area open to hunting offer the only public hunting land in the vicinity. Game includes geese, ducks, quail, dove, turkey, whitetail deer, and mule deer. Hunting success for big game animals is limited.

**Please don't pollute.** Lake Meredith is a municipal water supply. Pollutants in the lake are a health hazard and will destroy water quality. Do not discharge toilet wastes into the lake. Holding tanks may be emptied at designated sanitary dumping stations. Vessels without holding tanks must have toilet facilities sealed. Fish baiting and fish cleaning in the lake are prohibited. Trash should be discarded in receptacles provided, or be carried out. Do not bury refuse.

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|--------------------------|------------------|--|
| Information Station      | Drinking Water   | Launching Ramp                                     |
| Marina                   | Swimming         | Off-Road Vehicle Use                               |
| Parking Area             | Bank Fishing     | Picnic/Camping Area                                |
| Restrooms                | Chemical Toilets | Picnic/Camping Area (Shelters, Tables, Fireplaces) |
| Recreation Area (Major)  | Paved Road       | Dayboards Red Green                                |
| Mid Channel Lighted Buoy | Unpaved Road     | Nat Rec Area Boundary                              |



**Plum Creek**  
Shady groves of cottonwood. Shoreline camping and boat launching available only when lake level is above 95 feet.

**DEVILS CANYON**

**BIG CANYON**

**SADDLE HORSE CANYON**

**Rosita**  
A challenge in overland driving, this area is for trail bikes and 4-wheel-drive and off-road vehicles of all descriptions. Access is from U.S. 87-287, Amarillo-Dumas highway. All bikers must wear helmets. Outside Rosita, bikers must stay on established roadways.

**McBride Canyon Mullinaw Creek**  
At the upper end of these canyons are picnic areas among tall cottonwoods. At the canyon's mouth are the river flats where hunters gain access on foot to the upper reservoir. The McBride house, an early settler's cabin that has been restored, can be seen.

**Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument**  
Access is by ranger-guided tours only. Tours are available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day and by advance reservation during the rest of the year. This area is closed to hunting. For information or reservations contact the recreation area.

**Bates Canyon**  
Fish from the bank here. Shoreline camping and shallow-water launch ramp not available when lake level is below 95 feet.

**Harbor Bay**  
Harbor Bay Access road is located near the Fritch city limits. Boat launching possible only when lake level is between 79 feet and 99 feet.

**Fritch Fortress**  
Short access to main lake from launch, but little protection from high winds. Courtesy dock. Deep-water launching ramp not usable when lake level is below 71 feet.

**Blue West**  
This area combines access to Blue Creek and a fine panorama of Lake Meredith. Deep-water launching ramp and courtesy dock. Launching ramp is not usable when lake level is below 70 feet.

**Blue Creek Bridge**  
Picnic area. Explore creekbed on foot, on horseback, or by off-road vehicle. Outside creekbed motorists must stay on roadways. Motorcyclists must wear helmets.

**Blue East**  
Come by boat; there is no road access. You will find several sandy areas popular with water-skiers and campers.

**Bugbee**  
Submerged trees provide a concealed habitat for fish, and Bugbee has a local reputation for good fishing. The relatively small area is nestled within a narrow canyon, and road access is difficult.

**Sanford Dam**  
The fishing is good from the trail across the face of Sanford Dam. In summer, Spring Canyon, below the dam, is the only supervised swimming area at Lake Meredith.

**Sanford-Yake**  
A marina, indoor and outdoor fishing docks, and abundant parking make this area a favorite for boaters, fishermen, and water-sport spectators. Courtesy dock, dryland boat storage, and sanitary dumping station are available. As the lake level drops, the launching ramp here remains available for use the longest of any ramp on the lake.

**Cedar Canyon**  
Good water skiing. Courtesy dock. Deep-water launching ramp not usable when lake level is below 69 feet.

**Motels, hotels and restaurants** are located in nearby towns and along some approach roads. Groceries can be purchased in nearby towns. The marina at Sanford-Yake has a limited selection of groceries.

