

The National Park Service

# National Natural Landmarks Program



## Promoting Conservation through Cooperation

The National Natural Landmarks (NNL) Program offers participants the opportunity to share information, solve problems cooperatively, and conserve important natural areas. For over 40 years, the NNL Program has involved private, municipal, state, and federal landowners, all working together toward the conservation of natural resources. Land acquisition by the federal government is not a goal of this program; NNLs are nationally significant sites owned by a variety of land stewards, and participation in the program is voluntary. Established in 1962, the program aims to encourage and support voluntary preservation of sites that illustrate the geological and ecological history of the United States, and to strengthen the public's appreciation of America's natural heritage.

The NNL designation is made by the Secretary of the Interior after in-depth scientific study of a potential site; all new designations must

have owner permission. The National Park Service (NPS) administers the program and regularly reports on the condition of the NNLs. The selection process is rigorous: to be considered for NNL status, a site must be one of the best examples of a natural region's characteristic biotic or geologic features. The NNL designation can only be removed if the values for which it was designated are lost or destroyed, or if there was an error in the evaluation or designation procedures for the site. The regulations that currently govern the NNL Program were revised in 1999 to better protect the interests of private landowners who participate in the program.

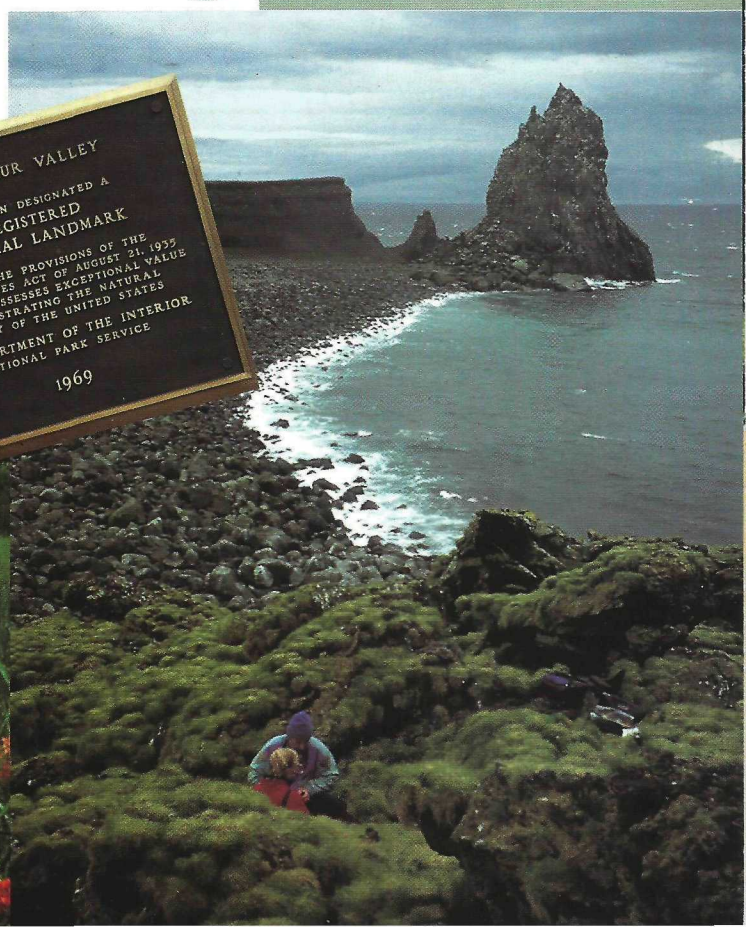
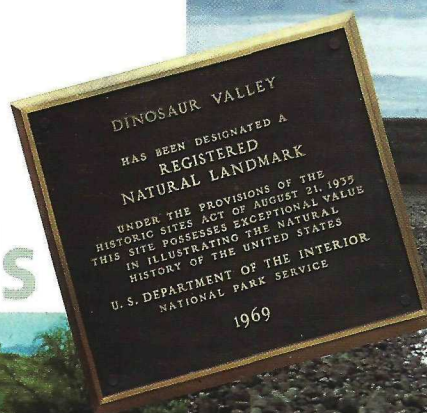
The present 587 NNLs include public and private lands with a variety of uses, including ranching, agriculture, recreation, nature preserves, research areas, camps, conference centers, and commercial ventures. All of these uses can be compatible with NNL designation.

**Strong Partnerships are Key to the Program's Success.**

The NNL Program has become more service oriented in the last 10 years, with coordinators working diligently to find technical specialists who can advise landowners on how to care for their special sites. While funding for projects is not the norm, in some cases, regional coordinators have been successful in helping NNL owners obtain small grants. The NNL designation is meaningful to many program participants; it affords them recognition and supports their conservation efforts. There are many success stories to tell. ...

For nearly 40 years, the NNL Program has involved private, municipal, state, and federal landowners, all working together toward the conservation of natural resources.

## Canelo Hills



## Bogoslof Island



## NNL Designation Often Leads to Local and Agency Partnering Opportunities.

NNL Program coordinators visit most NNLs to meet with owners or site managers. This is often the time when discussions occur about changing conditions at the landmark, or specific concerns that owners may have. NNL program coordinators routinely involve others to provide assistance when questions arise, and the result has been a number of long standing partnerships.

### EZELL'S CAVE

In 1996, murky water was observed in the lake at The Nature Conservancy's Ezell's Cave (designated in 1971) in San Marcos, Texas, causing cave specialists to question whether the unique aquatic environment was changing in some way. To answer this question, a small NPS grant was obtained to monitor changes in the cave's water quality. This monitoring project continues today without any federal funding. It now has a broad base of supporting partners, including the non-profit San Marcos River Foundation and students and staff from the local university. Regional interest is particularly high because the cave is linked to the Edwards Aquifer, which supplies drinking water for much of central Texas. The project that began as a way to monitor NNL conditions now provides baseline data for monitoring regional water resources.

### PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK

The Lone Star Interpretive Theater at Palo Duro Canyon State Park was dedicated in the summer of 2000. The dedication ceremony brought together community members, the media, and those who built the project for a celebration of what this partnership was able to do. The project began when Texas Parks and Wildlife and NNL Program staff collaborated on a grant application. The agencies continued working together through design and construction of the theater, adding Texas Dept. of Corrections laborers to the team to help with construction.

The new interpretive theater will provide an outdoor space in which to host educational programs for school children, campers, scouting groups, and others. "Due to the National Natural Landmarks Program, the people of Texas now have an unparalleled opportunity to learn about Palo Duro Canyon's resources," said Superintendent Hi Newby. "We're now able to do something we've never been able to do in the past," he added.



### KAMIAK BUTTE COUNTY PARK

Another local partnership effort took place at Kamiak Butte County Park, a National Natural Landmark 60 miles south of Spokane, Washington. The NPS provided seed money to improve a section of the Pine Ridge Trail, which is part of the National Trails System. The trail improvements were done by work crews consisting of personnel from the Whitman County Parks and Recreation and Mount Rainier National Park, plus community volunteers, a county inmate crew, the NNL regional coordinator, and the Park manager. "What made this project so successful was the mutual sharing of both fiscal and human resources," said NNL regional coordinator Steve Gibbons. Nearly one mile of the trail was reinforced and brought back up to grade at the end of a two-week period, reducing erosion and making it safer for visitors. Perhaps just as important, this project can be viewed as a case study in successfully working across agency lines to accomplish a task that benefits a significant natural resource area and the public.

## Palo Duro Canyon



Texas Parks & Wildlife and NPS staff share ribbon cutting honors at the dedication of the Lone Star Interpretive Theater in Palo Duro Canyon State Park. An area of the park was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1976.



# National Natural Landmarks Program



*National Natural Landmarks  
provide habitat for a variety  
of creatures, and recreational  
opportunities at some sites.*

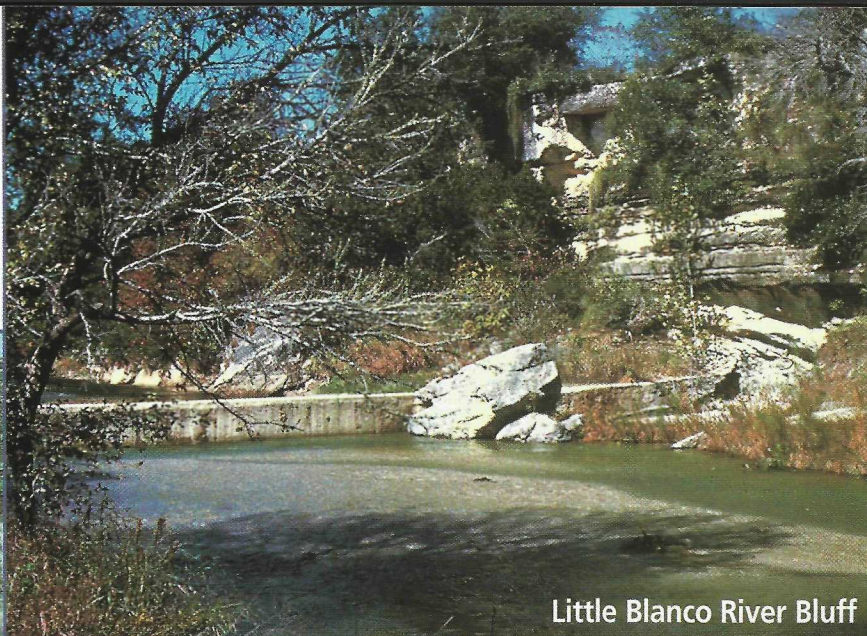






## LAWRENCE MEMORIAL GRASSLAND PRESERVE

The improving condition of the Lawrence Memorial Grassland Preserve NNL in central Oregon has led to the establishment of a cooperative weed management area (WMA) that involves partners from the surrounding federal and private lands. During the 1990's, local staff from the Nature Conservancy worked with NNL Program staff to apply for grants to monitor and restore the native prairie vegetation, which was being crowded out by non-native species. Site improvements include an overall reduction in non-native plants and successful revegetation using native plants. The regional alliance of the WMA will help to continue this trend toward improved conditions.



Little Blanco River Bluff

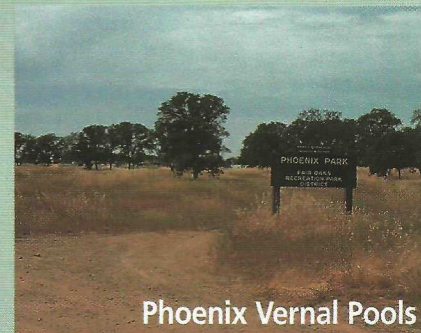
## Recognition of National Significance can lead to Good Stewardship.

In some cases, without NNL designation, nationally significant resources may have gone unnoticed, with no special safeguards to protect them. Simple recognition of resources important to our continent's natural history has helped owners and managers appreciate what they have and take steps toward conservation.

Ranch hands clearing brush at the Little Blanco River Bluff NNL in Texas were unknowingly cutting down the rare plants that led to the designation of this NNL. Recognition of the unusual shrub and diverse flora on this site (designated in 1982), and providing this information to the new owner of the site has led to their conservation. This private landowner now regularly hosts groups of visitors at the site, many of them elementary school children, and the NNL resources are an important part of the ranch tour.

A volunteer task force now meets quarterly to make recommendations for the care of the Phoenix Vernal Pools NNL (designated in 1976) near Sacramento, California. Located near the baseball fields and open turf of a county park, the significance and special needs of this NNL were not fully realized until a task force brought together scientists from academia, state and federal agencies, and consulting firms. The pools are small depressions in the landscape that trap rainfall and provide a unique habitat for a variety of organisms; they are remnants of what was once a widespread system of vernal pools. When the significance of the pools was better understood, an earthen berm was built to protect them from runoff containing fertilizers and other chemicals. A prescribed burn is also being planned that will help reduce weed species and fuel accumulation. The NNL Program continues to assist with community involvement, and provides continuity to a dynamic volunteer task force.

On a regional scale, early awareness of NNL resources by agencies proposing large public works projects can help to ensure continued conservation of significant natural areas. After the Department of Energy was made aware of an NNL within an alternative corridor for the Sonora-Arizona Interconnection Project (a high voltage transmission line), it used its National Environmental Policy Act Newsletter to disseminate information nationally on the need to consider impacts to NNLs during project planning. Early disclosure of the presence of nationally significant resources in the project area can make avoidance, and continued conservation, easier to achieve.



Phoenix Vernal Pools



## Agency Partnerships are Helpful in Managing Large, Remote Sites.

The NNL Program and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are working together to provide support for research and monitoring within NNLs at the 4.5 million acre Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Three NNLs are located within the refuge – Unga Island, Bogoslof Island, and Simeonof Island. A specially designed research vessel owned by the USFWS, the *Tiglax*, provides transportation to, and lodging at, these very remote and otherwise inaccessible sites during NPS site visits. The NNL Program provides a portion of the funding for these trips, which also support other research. By partnering, the NPS and the USFWS have stretched limited funds to benefit the nationally significant resources of the NNLs and the refuge.

A large area within the Kaibab National Forest and adjoining Grand Canyon National Park is home to the Kaibab Squirrel; this habitat was designated a NNL in the 1960's. NNL Program staff works with USDA Forest Service and Grand Canyon National Park biologists to monitor and map conditions within this NNL. This partnership allows the partners to pool their resources to monitor a species that is of mutual interest. Communication and cooperation across program areas have resulted in a partnership that leverages limited funds to monitor and manage a unique area.

## NNL Designation Brings Prestige to Commercial Sites

NNL designation does not require sites to be open to the public, however, the NNL registry includes many sites of national significance that are open for public tours. Brass plaques are usually presented upon designation of the site, often during a ceremony that brings together owners, community members, elected officials, and NNL staff. Today, the value of NNL designation is evident in proudly displayed plaques, incorporation of "National Natural Landmark" into logos, and notation of NNL designation on brochures and signs. Luray Caverns in Virginia, Cave of the Mounds, Wisconsin, and Marengo Cave in Indiana are just a few of the sites whose owners value the prestigious recognition of NNL

designation. Gary Robertson, one of the owners of Marengo Cave, summed it up this way: "While we certainly do our part to preserve the cave, it's great to know we could get help from the NNL Program if we needed it."

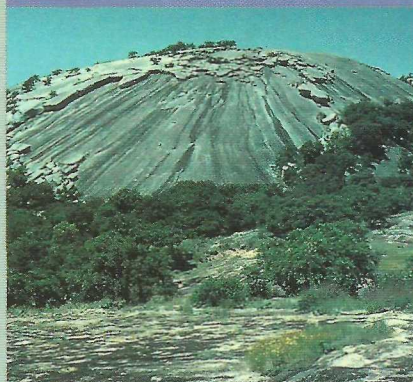


**CAVE OF THE MOUNDS.**  
National Natural Landmark



Hammocks Beach State Park, North Carolina

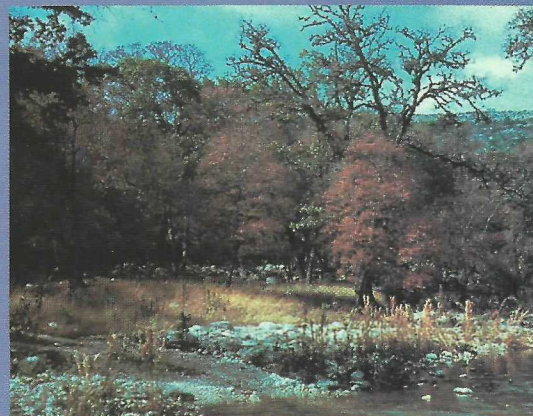
Bear Island



Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, Texas

Enchanted Rock

*Many state parks and natural areas contain features of national significance.*

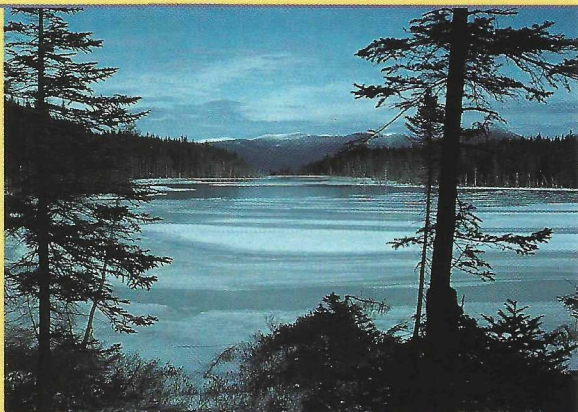


Lost Maples State Natural Area, Texas

Lost Maples



# How to contact us:



**Nancy Brook Virgin Spruce Forest,  
New Hampshire**



**Cave of the Mounds, Wisconsin**

## **ALASKA REGION**

### **Alaska**

National Park Service  
2525 Gambell St.  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
907-257-2635

## **INTERMOUNTAIN REGION**

### **Colorado, Utah, Montana, Wyoming**

National Park Service  
Box 170001  
Bryce Canyon, UT 84717  
435-834-4108

### **Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas**

National Park Service  
1415 N. Sixth Ave.  
Tucson, AZ 85705  
520-670-6501, ext. 232

## **MIDWEST REGION**

### **Arkansas, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin**

National Park Service  
1709 Jackson St.  
Omaha, NE 68102  
402-221-3418

## **NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

### **Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina and parts of Virginia and West Virginia**

National Park Service  
George Washington Memorial Parkway  
C/o Turkey Run Park  
McLean, VA 22101  
703-289-2540

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont**

National Park Service  
15 State St.  
Boston, MA 02109-3572  
617-223-5064

### **Pennsylvania and parts of Virginia and West Virginia**

National Park Service  
Philadelphia Support Office  
209B Ferguson Building  
University Park, PA 16802-4301  
814-863-9414

## **PACIFIC WEST REGION**

### **Idaho, Oregon, Washington**

National Park Service  
909 First Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104-1060  
206-220-4105

### **California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam, and American Samoa**

National Park Service  
1111 Jackson St. Suite 700  
Oakland, CA 94607  
510-817-1427

## **SOUTHEAST REGION**

### **Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virgin Islands**

National Park Service  
1924 Building, Atlanta Federal Center  
100 Alabama St. SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
404-562-3113, ext. 509

## **WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE**

National Park Service  
1201 I St. NW  
Washington, DC 20005-5905  
202-513-7166

## **ON THE WEB AT:**

[www1.nature.nps.gov/nnl/index.htm](http://www1.nature.nps.gov/nnl/index.htm)