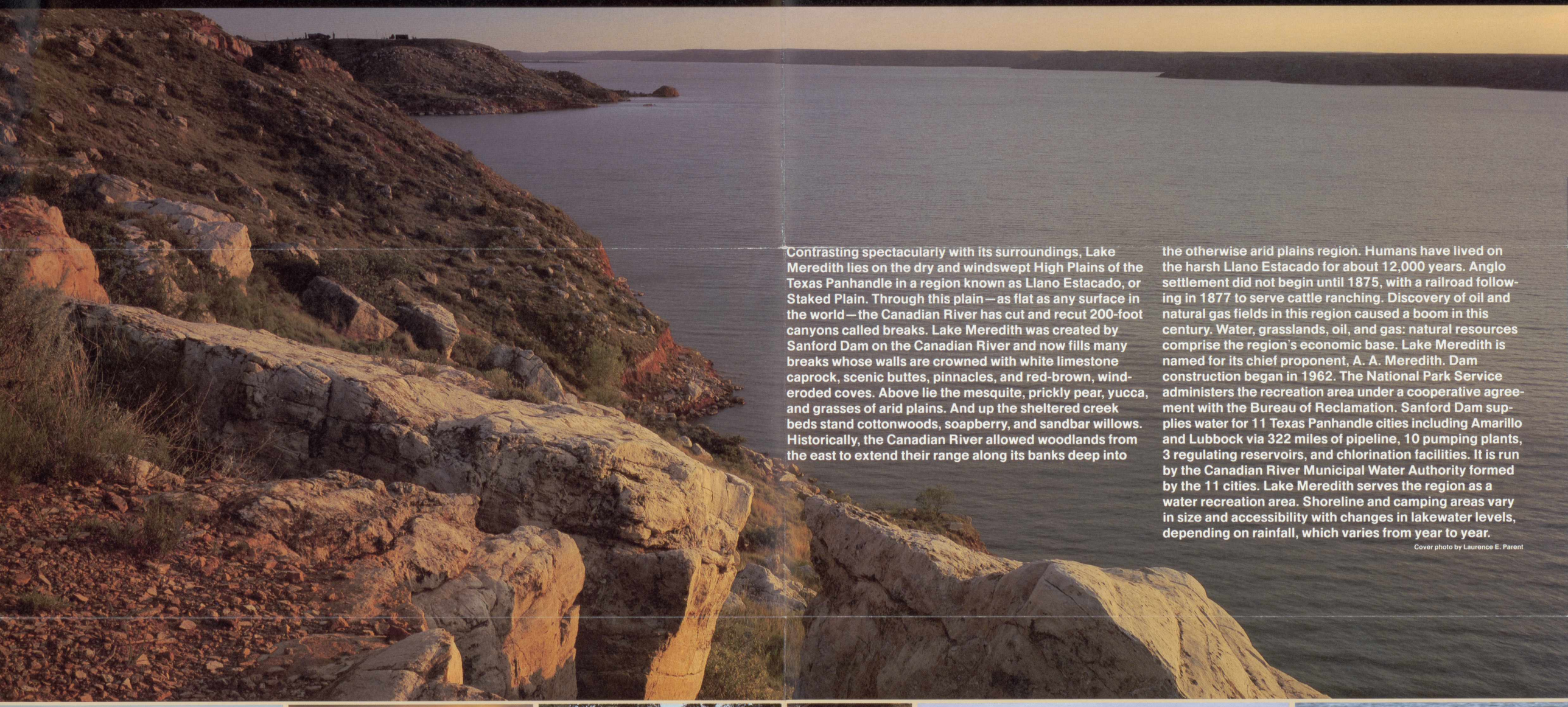
Lake Meredith
and Alibates Flint Quarries

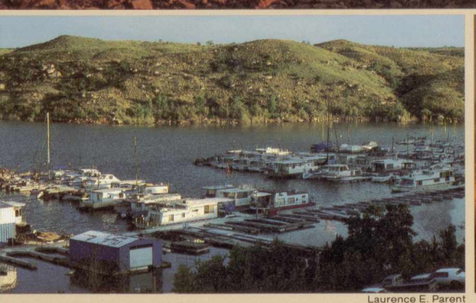
Lake Meredith National Recreation Area
Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument
Texas

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Contrasting spectacularly with its surroundings, Lake Meredith lies on the dry and windswept High Plains of the Texas Panhandle in a region known as Llano Estacado, or Staked Plain. Through this plain—as flat as any surface in the world—the Canadian River has cut and recut 200-foot canyons called breaks. Lake Meredith was created by Sanford Dam on the Canadian River and now fills many breaks whose walls are crowned with white limestone caprock, scenic buttes, pinnacles, and red-brown, wind-eroded coves. Above lie the mesquite, prickly pear, yucca, and grasses of arid plains. And up the sheltered creek beds stand cottonwoods, soapberry, and sandbar willows. Historically, the Canadian River allowed woodlands from the east to extend their range along its banks deep into the otherwise arid plains region. Humans have lived on the harsh Llano Estacado for about 12,000 years. Anglo settlement did not begin until 1875, with a railroad following in 1877 to serve cattle ranching. Discovery of oil and natural gas fields in this region caused a boom in this century. Water, grasslands, oil, and gas: natural resources comprise the region's economic base. Lake Meredith is named for its chief proponent, A. A. Meredith. Dam construction began in 1962. The National Park Service administers the recreation area under a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. Sanford Dam supplies water for 11 Texas Panhandle cities including Amarillo and Lubbock via 322 miles of pipeline, 10 pumping plants, 3 regulating reservoirs, and chlorination facilities. It is run by the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority formed by the 11 cities. Lake Meredith serves the region as a water recreation area. Shoreline and camping areas vary in size and accessibility with changes in lakewater levels, depending on rainfall, which varies from year to year.

Cover photo by Laurence E. Parent



Laurence E. Parent

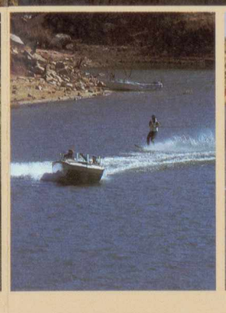
Boating. Water activities include boating, waterskiing, and swimming. Boat launch ramps and a marina are shown on the large map. Be alert for sudden onset of severe weather; high winds cause most boat swampings and capsizings. Get a weather forecast before boating. Obtain complete boating regulations from a park ranger. There are no boat rentals in the park.



Laurence E. Parent



Fishing. Anglers try for largemouth, smallmouth, and white bass, catfish, white crappie, sunfish, carp, and walleye from the lakeshore and boats. Lake water levels determine access in many areas.



Waterskiing and Sailing. Waterskiing, sailing, and sail-boarding are popular water sports on Lake Meredith. Waterskiing is permitted from sunrise to sunset. An operator *and* a competent observer must be in the towing vessel. Waterskiers must wear a lifesaving device. Observe no-skiing regulations and respect rights of anglers.





Laurence E. Parent

Swimming and Scuba Diving. Lifeguards are on duty only in the summer at a beach below Sanford Dam in Spring Canyon. Lake swimming is not recommended and is at your own risk. Poor visibility limits scuba diving. Divers' flags are required. No swimming or diving is allowed in designated harbors and near courtesy docks and the dam.

Alibates Flint Quarries



Flint for Toolmaking. Alibates flint is a hard rock that can be shaped to sharp cutting edges.

Toolmakers chipped and flaked it to make knives, hammers, drills, axes, awls, scrapers, gravers, dart points, and arrowheads.



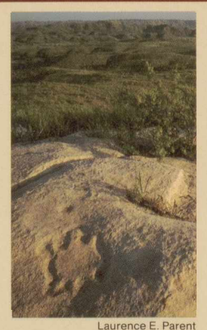
Archeological traces of prehistoric Indians—homes, workshops, and campsites—dot the entire Canadian River region of the Texas Panhandle. Few sites are as dramatic as Alibates Flint Quarries, where, for 12,000 years, people quarried flint for toolmaking. Indians of the Ice Age Clovis Culture used Alibates flint for spear points to hunt the Imperial Mammoth before the Great Lakes were even formed. The flint usually lies just below the surface at ridge level in a layer up to 6 feet thick.

Unweathered flint was obtained by digging by hand or with sticks or bone tools. Chunks and pieces lying around these shallow quarry pits are the tailings or waste pieces. Flint was gathered and used by nomadic peoples for most of the quarry's history. However, farming Indians lived here between 1150 and 1500. They quarried the flint for tools and as trade goods. They hunted bison, antelope, deer, turkey, and other game and gathered mesquite beans, plums, and yucca. They grew corn, beans, and squash using drylands methods with plants spaced far apart to capture sparse soil moisture. You may visit the flint quarries only on guided walking tours with a park ranger. Tours leave at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day from the Contact Station. Off-season tours may be arranged in advance. *Rock collecting is prohibited at Alibates.* Natural features and archeological and historical objects are protected by federal law.



Laurence E. Parent

Wide-ranging Trade Networks. Archeologists find tools made of Alibates flint in many places in the Great Plains and Southwest. Its use dates from 12,000 years ago to about 1870. Distinctive for its many and bright colors, this flint comes from a 10-square-mile area around Lake Meredith.



Laurence E. Parent

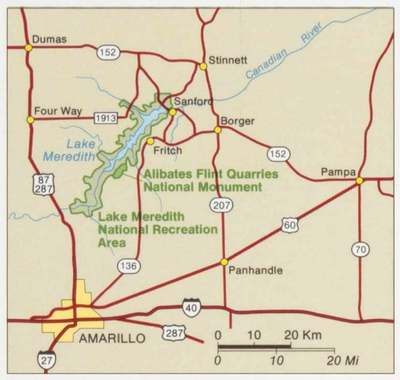
Plains Village Indians. Between 1150 and 1500, Indians identified as the Plains Village Indians, ancestors of Pawnee or Wichita Indians, lived here in large permanent villages and smaller, outlying farming and gathering communities. Villages were built of rock-slab houses of from one to 100 rooms. Most were single-unit dwellings, although some rooms were connected. Architecture of this period featured rectangular, semi-circular, and circular rooms, with tunneled entranceways and stone enclosures. It is believed that extensive, severe drought, coupled with raids from aggressive tribes to the west, drove these Indians out of this region by the end of the 15th century. The next historical period, the Plains stage, from 1500 to 1875, was characterized by nomadic tribal groups of hunters, Apache, Comanche, and Kiowa. During this time horses and European trade goods were introduced and, eventually, Anglo military campaigns and eastern buffalo hunters ended Indian occupation of the area.

Lake Meredith

and Alibates Flint Quarries

Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument are adjoining parks in the Texas Panhandle. They are units of the National Park System, which consists of more than 350 parks representing important examples of our country's natural and cultural inheritance. For road access information, see the small map. For further information about the parks and their facilities, services, and programs, write or call: Superintendent, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, P.O. Box 1460, Fritch, TX 79036; (806) 857-3151.

Lake Meredith Aquatic and Wildlife Museum is run by the City of Fritch and the National Park Service. It provides lake use information and features exhibits of area wildlife. Five aquariums—largest in the Texas Panhandle—display lake fish species in 11,000 gallons of water.



Major Recreation Areas

Sanford-Yake offers a marina operated by the park concessioner; indoor and outdoor fishing docks, courtesy dock, dryland boat storage, dump station, public telephone, and limited groceries and fishing supplies. The launch ramp here remains usable the longest as lake level drops.
Sanford Dam offers fishing from its face. The only supervised swimming at Lake Meredith is available below the dam in summer.

Bugbee is a small area with good fishing.
Blue East, reached by boat only, offers good waterskiing and camping sites.
Blue Creek Bridge offers a picnic area and off-road vehicle use in the creek bed only. Motorcyclists must wear helmets.
Blue West provides access to Blue Creek, a panorama of the lake, deep-water launching ramp (usable at lake level above 70 feet), and courtesy dock.

Plum Creek offers shoreline camping and boat launching at lake level above 95 feet.
Rosita offers 4-wheel-drive and off-road vehicle use. All bikers must use helmets. Access is via U.S. 87-287. Outside Rosita, stay on established roadway. Chicken Creek marks the lower limits of the Rosita ORV area.
Alibates Flint Quarries—see other side.

McBride Canyon, Mullinaw Creek offers canyon picnic areas, restored 1903 McBride House, and river-flats hunter access to the upper reservoir.
Bates Canyon offers bank fishing, shoreline camping, and shallow-water launch ramp at lake level above 95 feet.
Harbor Bay access roads is near the Fritch city limit. Boat launch is usable between lake levels of 79 and 99 feet only.

Fritch Fortress offers short access to main lake from launch but is subject to high winds. Courtesy dock. Deep-water launch ramp is usable at lake level above 71 feet.
Cedar Canyon offers good waterskiing, courtesy dock, and launch ramp usable at lake level above 69 feet.

Regulations and Safety Information

Federal and state boating regulations, including those for boat numbering and use of lights and life preservers, apply. Children under 13 years of age must *wear* a USCG-approved flotation device when the vessel is under way. Riding on bow, transom, or gunwales is prohibited. In designated harbors, operate vessels at wakeless speeds or no more than 5 mph. Report accidents to a park ranger.

Do not pollute lake waters and tributary streams. Lake Meredith is a municipal water supply. Pollutants are health hazards and destroy water quality. Do not discharge toilet wastes into the lakes. Empty holding tanks at designated sanitary dumping stations. Vessels without holding tanks must have toilet facilities sealed. Fish baiting and fish cleaning in the lake are prohibited. Place trash in receptacles provided, or carry it out. Do not bury refuse.

Campers may stay up to 14 days. No camping is allowed in launching areas or parking lots. Private campgrounds with hookups are found in nearby towns. **Motels, hotels, restaurants, and groceries** are located in nearby towns and along some approach roads. The marina at Sanford-Yake offers limited groceries.

Hunting and fishing are regulated cooperatively by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and National Park Service. Texas hunting and fishing licenses are required. *Park rangers and Texas game wardens may board vessels at any time to inspect documents and vessels.* The recreation area lands open to hunting offer the only public hunting lands in the vicinity. Game includes geese, ducks, quail, dove, turkey, white-tailed deer, and mule deer. Few hunters succeed in taking big game animals.

Prevent range fires. The lake is surrounded by dry, windswept plains. Protect campfires from winds so fire cannot spread to vegetation. Never leave fires unattended; put them completely out before leaving.

☆ GPO: 1992—312-248/40136 Reprint 1992

Map Warning. Do not use this map for hiking or navigation purposes. For information about maps, ask a park ranger or write to the superintendent.

