

From Suburban Newspapers, Inc. Staff Writers

Free Days Open the Gates to Texas, America's Parks

For Texans looking to explore the outdoors without stretching the family budget, several annual free-admission days offer opportunities to visit both Texas state parks and America's national parks at no cost.

The programs, offered through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the National Park Service, are designed to encourage families to experience the natural landscapes, historic sites and wildlife areas that define the country's heritage.

In Texas, the statewide free-admission event is known as Texas State Parks Day, typically held on the first Sunday in November. During the annual celebration, day-use entrance fees are waived at participating parks across the state, from the pine forests of East Texas to the canyons and deserts of West Texas.

Texas also offers year-round free admission for children ages 12 and younger at state parks, while veterans, active-duty military personnel and Gold Star families may qualify for free access through the Parklands Passport program.

For many families, free-admission days provide a rare chance to visit parks they may not otherwise have the opportunity to see. Parks such as Big Bend National Park, Guadalupe Mountains National Park and Palo Duro Canyon State Park draw visitors from around the world, yet remain deeply tied to Texas history and identity.

The National Park Service also schedules several fee-free days each year at federal parks that normally charge entrance fees. According to the National Park Service, the 2026 fee-free days include:

- Feb. 16 - Presidents Day
- May 25 - Memorial Day
- June 14 - Flag Day
- July 3-5 - Independence Day weekend
- Aug. 25 - 110th birthday of the National Park Service
- Sept. 17 - Constitution Day
- Oct. 27 - Theodore Roosevelt's birthday
- Nov. 11 - Veterans Day

Officials note that while entrance fees are waived on those dates, charges for camping, reservations and certain activities may still apply.

Beyond recreation, conservation advocates say the nation's parks serve a much larger purpose.

National and state parks preserve landscapes that existed long before modern cities, highways and subdivisions transformed the country. They protect ancient mountain ranges, rivers, forests and deserts that Indige-

nous peoples, early settlers, soldiers, ranchers and generations of Americans once experienced firsthand.

Standing at the edge of the Rio Grande in Big Bend or hiking through the rugged peaks of Guadalupe Mountains allows visitors to encounter the same horizons viewed by countless generations before them. Historians and park supporters often describe parks as living connections to the American story, places where the nation's natural and cultural history remains visible and accessible.

The National Park Service, established in 1916, was created in part to ensure those landscapes would remain protected "for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations."

In Texas, state parks play a similar role. Sites such as Dinosaur Valley State Park preserve prehistoric footprints left millions of years ago, while parks like Enchanted Rock State Natural Area protect geological landmarks that have shaped Texas folklore and Native history for centuries.

As development continues across Texas and much of the nation, conservationists say public lands are becoming increasingly important. Parks offer not only outdoor recreation but also a chance for younger generations to experience landscapes that resemble the America their ancestors once knew.

For many visitors, the experience is deeply personal, whether it is watching a sunset over desert mountains, walking beneath towering cypress trees or hearing the quiet of an undeveloped wilderness for the first time.

Free-admission days help make those experiences more accessible to families who may otherwise stay home because of cost concerns.

Park officials encourage visitors to plan ahead, especially during free-entry weekends when attendance often increases significantly. Advance reservations are recommended at many popular parks.

Legal Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

Finding of No Significant Impact & No Practicable Alternative

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Executive Order 11988, the United States Air Force has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment and No Practicable Alternative to work within the floodplain for Storm Drain System Improvements at Air Force Plant 4, operated by Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, located in Fort Worth, Tarrant County, TX. The project will upgrade storm drain systems to reduce flood risk.

The Environmental Assessment and FONSI/FONPA are available for public review and comment during a 30-day period ending on May 31, 2026. These documents may be reviewed at White Settlement Public Library, 8215 White Settlement Road, White Settlement, TX 76108; and at Fort Worth Public Library Clifford Crossing, 9336 Clifford Street Suite 120, Fort Worth, TX 76108.

Written comments must be received by May 31, 2026, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company Facilities Engineering, Attn: Angela K. Pereira, PE, PO Box 748 MZ 6445, Fort Worth, TX 76101, or via email to angela.k.pereira@lmco.com.

Legal Notice

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OR PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, COUNTY MECKLENBURG
IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT
DIVISION FILE NO:
26CV0113828-590**

Jimmie Wesley VS Luwinda Wesley who resides in Tarrant County
TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action.

The nature of relief being sought is as follows: Absolute Divorce.
You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than 40 days after May 14, 2026, and upon your failure to do so, the party service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

Jimmie Wesley, 704-493-3443