A Secure Future for Coastal Communities

The Proposed Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area

A mosaic of lands located near Houston, our nation’s fourth largest and most ethnically diverse city, is proposed for inclusion within America’s National Park System (see map on reverse side). The proposal, developed by a public/private partnership including a steering committee led by Houston business leaders John L. Neu, III and Secretary James A. Baker III, and representatives from landowning local, state and federal governments and non-governmental organizations, must be approved by Texas officials and designated by Congress.

The benefits are broad; the community supporters, diverse. In addition to improved access to outdoor recreation, increased nature and heritage tourism, and conservation of important natural ecosystems, the partners seek a more resilient economy that can quickly rebound from storms. The proposal is also specifically structured to respect property rights. Participants will help develop the management plan and collaborate on governance of the recreation area. There will be no requirements for landowners who do not choose to participate.

Projected economic benefits of the proposed Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area include $1.5 million annual visitors supporting a four-fold increase in local sales revenues and an 11% increase in tourism-related jobs — all within one decade.

Learn more at lonestarcoastal.org

Discover Our Legendary Heritage

Foothills of the Republic of Texas

The diverse region of natural beauty is matched by its fascinating cultural history, which holds the story of a land shaped by extraordinary people from all over the world. The San Jacinto people are thought to be among the first inhabitants, possibly arising here from the Caribbean as a result of three centuries around the Gulf of Mexico. Spanish conquistador Cabeza de Vaca encountered them as he was depicted on Galveston Island in 1528.

In the late 1800s, the French explorer La Salle established Fort St. Louis near Matagorda Bay, establishing the area for the future of the Republic of Texas. An independent country until 1845.

The region is home to a number of historic sites related to the culture of the Republic of Texas, the Mexican War, and Mexico’s independence from Spain.

In 1910, the captain of the corvette la Plata established a fort on the island and the Republic of Texas.

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Hurricane Ike’s 16.5-foot surge struck Texas in 2008, underscoring the need to enhance coastal resilience and mitigate storm damage. Rice University’s SSPEED Center proposed the Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area, an approach that supports a nature-based economy compatible with periodic flooding of open lands. The SSPEED Center is funded by Houston Endowment.

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Surprise Yourself!

Discover the Lone Star Coast

Come see a side of Texas you’ve never seen before. A place with so many colorful songbirds—violets, orioles, tanagers, buntings—that the migrating flocks show up on radar. A place with hiking and kayak trails threading through watery cypress forests and cordgrass marshes. An angler’s saltwater soup of redfish, flounder, and speckled trout. Some of the best winter surfing east of California—especially for romantic that Glenn Campbell sang a love song to it.

The upper Texas coast sits at nature’s crossroads. Four major biomes of spectacularly diverse flora and fauna converge here. In addition to the Gulf of Mexico, there are 150 miles of sparkling bays, barrier islands, and ancient river deltas. Diverse canopy forests and the nation’s westernmost Cypress flourish along five major rivers and countless bays. Coastal prairies, estuaries and marshes provide wide-open vistas of flocks of waterbirds and shorebirds.

Sneak past drowsing alligators as you float through watery forests draped with Spanish moss. Climb a hawk watchtower at Smith Point and imagine spying with raptors as they search for prey on the coastal prairies below. Hunt waterfowl, deer, and wild boar in season, or if you’re lucky, watch a bobcat stalk smaller game. If photography is more your style, join in the Christmas Bird Count — this region regularly boasts three of the top ten tallies in the entire United States, including at the Flower Gardens National Marine Sanctuary, a coral reef perched on a salt dome just offshore.

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