



HIKING

Hiking and Backpacking

When the Sierra Club in New Orleans first conceived the idea for a guide to local trails, the hiking section was embarrassingly thin. The main reason for this was the near absence of trails to hike on. Once you got tired of the Tuxachanie Trail, there was little to do but get a topo map and a compass and set off cross-country. This is still a good alternative, but there are now a number of trails in the area suitable for hiking, and several for backpacking.

The number of hikers and backpackers has also multiplied in the twenty years since the first of the Sierra Club's local guides was published. (It was called the "Outings Kit" and consisted of a bunch of mimeographed sheets and leaflets in an envelope.) More people have discovered the trails that exist. Spring days on the Bayou Coquille Trail (see Baratavia Hiking) when the irises are in bloom can actually leave you with a crowded feeling. But the number of people on the trails isn't really large yet anywhere in our area.

Hike gently. Don't collect things, but do bring back everything you took with you. Aluminum foil doesn't completely oxidize in a campfire, and it doesn't weigh that much. If you can

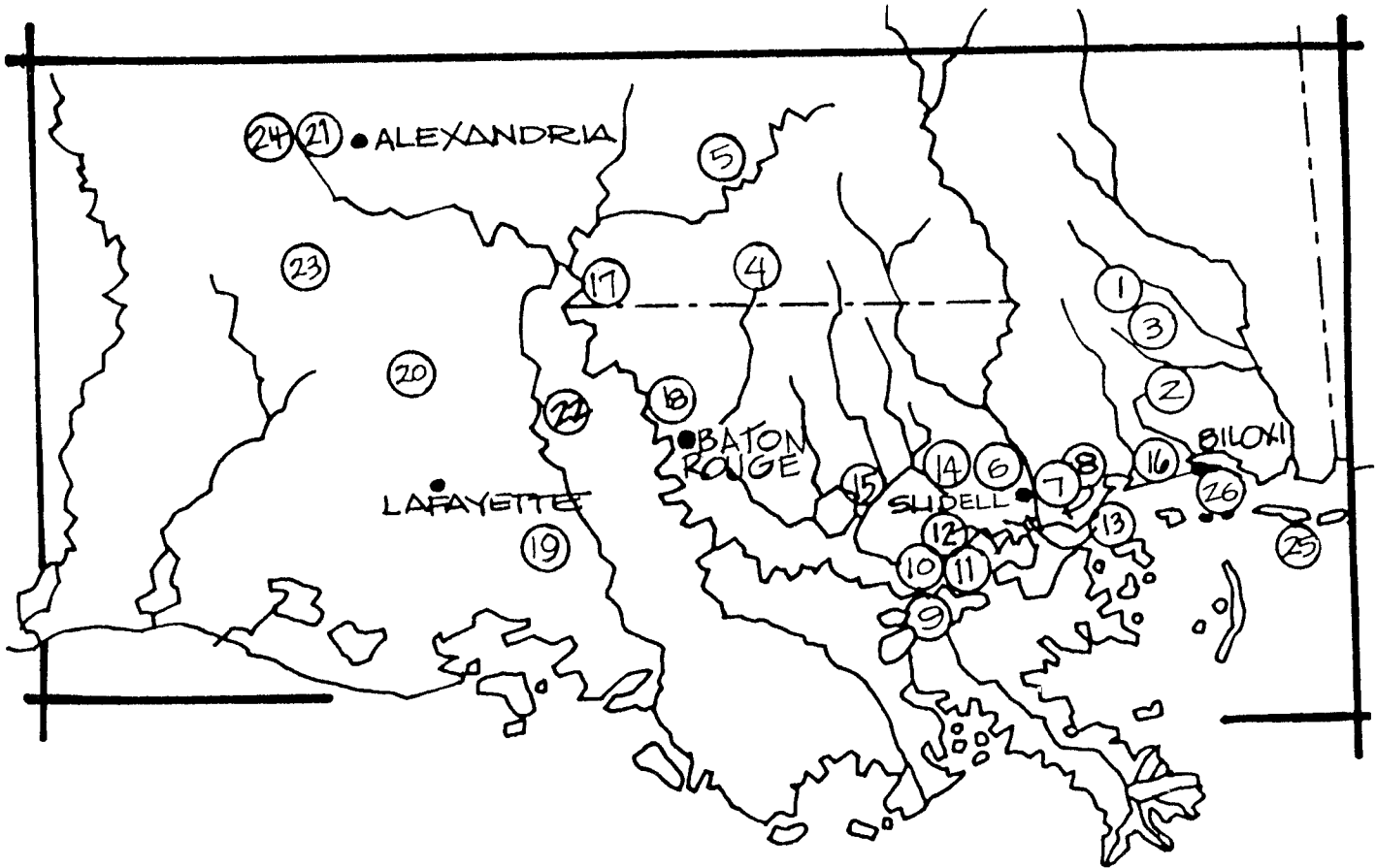
carry full cans and bottles in you can carry empty cans and bottles out. If you carry in oranges you can carry out orange peels. If you can carry it in, you can carry it out.

Equipment for a day hike is simple. You need good shoes or light hiking boots, a little emergency money, a canteen and snacks, first aid supplies, and maybe a rain jacket, depending on the weather. For most of the year, some protection against biting insects is advisable. This part of the country is gentle; don't approach the mountains of the western USA this casually. For an overnight trip, you will need the full equipment of the backpacker, of course.

If you go on a Sierra Club outing, your trip leader will be able to give you advice on the equipment and physical condition required for the trip; don't hesitate to call. Many outdoor stores will give advice and assistance. Others lead outings; consult the Directory. How-to-do-it books on hiking and backpacking are available in many stores.

The exercise, peace, and beauty of the hills and forests are closer than you think. Good walking! ■

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Black Creek Trail

John Sevenair and Adele Plauche, New Orleans Sierra Club

This 41-mile-long hiking and backpacking trail is both a delight and a challenge for those wanting to get away from it all. The trailheads are 2 1/2 hours away from New Orleans in De Soto National Forest in Mississippi. It's longer than the Wild Azalea Trail, and is probably the most beautiful and challenging backpacking trail anywhere near New Orleans.

The diversity of terrain and great variety of flora and fauna are the elements that make the Black Creek Trail so special. You can cross open pine forest into swampy bogs, through dense undergrowth, over rolling and sometimes even steep hills, and onto the river's beautiful white sandy edge. There is plenty of wildlife in the forest, though the armadillo is the animal you're most likely to see.

The trail generally follows Black Creek, which is a favorite canoeing destination. Backpackers can choose from trips of many different lengths because the trail crosses a number of paved and unpaved roads. Three National Forest canoe landings are located close enough to the trail to serve as end points, and these have parking and restroom facilities. The canoe outfitter at Brooklyn is probably the most secure place to park. They do car shuttles for hikers and backpackers when their canoe business isn't too busy; see the Directory.

This area becomes crowded with hunters during deer season, so use extreme caution and wear hunter's orange or (probably best) go somewhere else at that time of year. The Forest Service (see the Directory) can provide you with exact dates for hunting season, which generally runs from November through January.

Probably the most scenic weekend backpack trip begins at Fairley Bridge Landing and ends at Janice Landing. It winds approximately 18 miles through the Red Hills and the Black Creek Wilderness. At first the trail from Fairley Bridge Landing parallels a gravel road. When it reaches another gravel road, turn right and cross a bridge to a T junction. The trail resumes ahead of you.

The trail soon enters the Red Hills, and you'll climb up and down slopes as much as 100' high. After about five miles or so you'll find yourself on the banks of Black Creek, and if you got a late start there are some wonderful white sand beach campsites here.

Then the trail climbs near a gas pipeline, crosses an unpaved National Forest road, and enters the Black Creek Wilderness (there's a sign). From here you follow the valley of Mill Creek down to the Black Creek flood plain. If you got an early start there are campsites at the mouth of Mill Creek and several other places further along on the banks of Black Creek.

After it leaves Mill Creek the trail through the wilderness wanders for several miles across the flood plain. Then it follows lovely Beaverdam Creek for a couple of miles up to a paved road (MS 29). (Is Beaverdam Creek big enough to canoe? Some say yes, some say no.) Turn right on the pavement, cross Beaverdam Creek, and turn right again to follow the creek back down toward Black Creek. You'll emerge again on the pavement opposite a parking lot. Janice Landing is less than half a mile to the right (north) down MS 29.

The trail continues, of course, and it's about 14 more miles to Brooklyn. Beyond the parking lot mentioned in the last paragraph the trail crosses or parallels several logging roads, and it's easy to lose it if you don't watch for the rectangular white blazes on the trees. The trail follows Black Creek or crosses its flood plain for several miles. Several narrow wooden bridges cross wet areas. The longest of these was apparently built when the water was very low, because it's underwater most of the time. Use a walking stick and be careful here; it's slippery when wet. Beyond this the trail skirts the edges of some sandy hills and sometimes climbs into them.

There are several more unpaved Forest Service roads in this stretch. The trail finally emerges on a relatively wide gravel road. Follow this road to a T junction with a paved road. The trail continues into the woods on the far side. If you left your car in Brooklyn, turn right on the pavement, cross Black Creek, and go on into town.

The western part of the trail is scenic too. The trail's western end is at Big Creek Landing. From here the path follows the river (there are beautiful overlooks) for several miles. Then it leaves the creek and wanders through sandy upland pine forest. There is an abandoned CCC camp, now a parking lot, just east of US 49.

Getting there: To get to Janice Landing, take I-10 to the US 49 exit near Gulfport and go north to

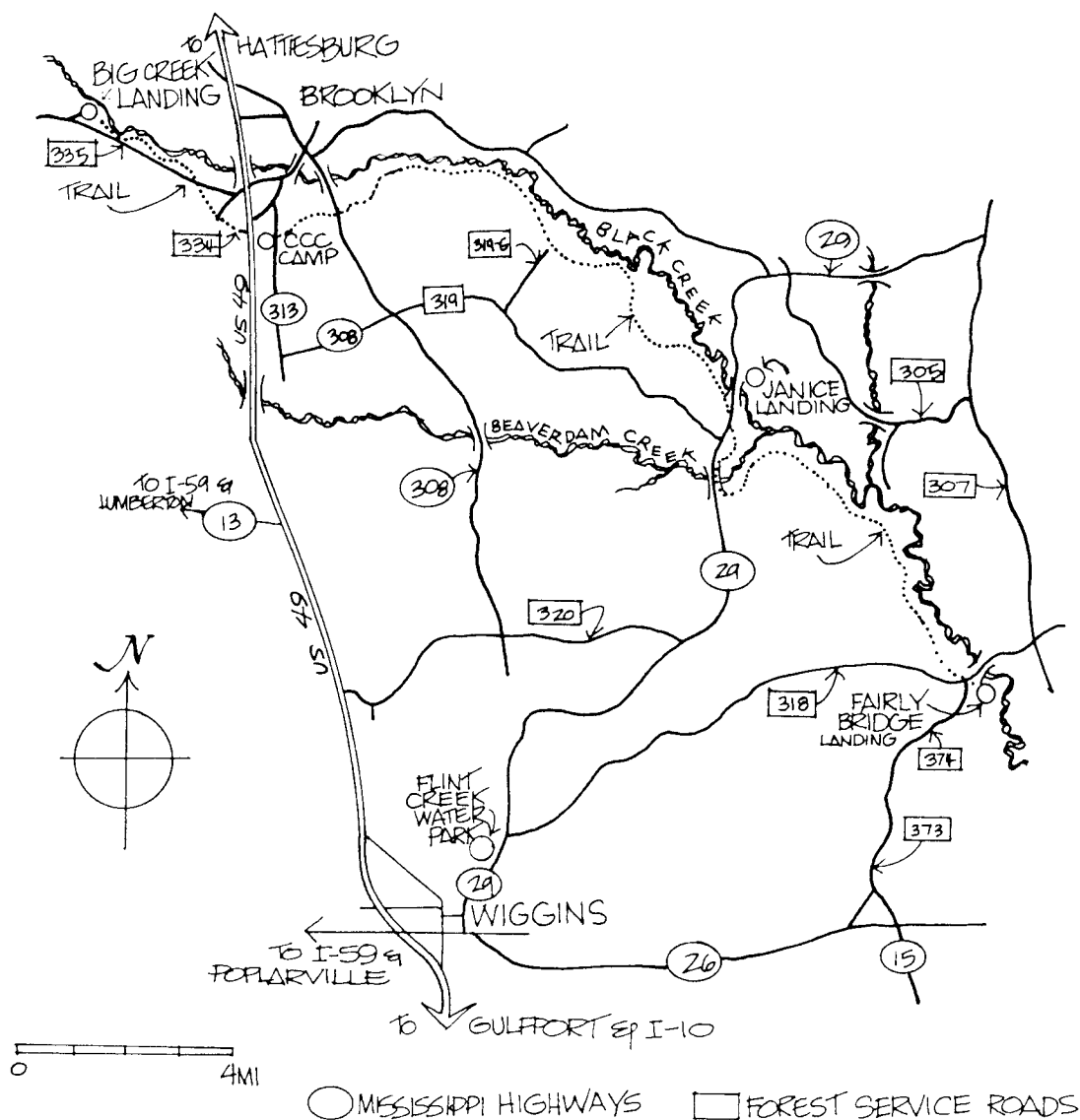
Wiggins, Mississippi. Turn onto MS 29 and follow it through Wiggins and the forest, across Black Creek to the landing. To ferry cars to the Fairley Bridge landing from here, go back south on MS 29, turn left on "Florida Gas Road" not far beyond the Beaverdam Creek bridge, and then turn left on Forest Service 318 to Fairley Bridge. The road to the landing and its parking lot goes to the right just before the bridge. The turnoff to Brooklyn from US 49 is well marked.

To reach Big Creek Landing at the western end of the trail, take the MS 13 exit from I-59 at Lumberton and go east. Then turn left (north) at divided four-lane US 49. You can also reach this intersection from Gulfport to the south. Turn left again on a paved road just before you reach the bridge over

Black Creek. Take the first paved right a few hundred yards later, and after a few miles turn right at the Big Creek Landing sign.

To reach the abandoned CCC camp/parking lot just east of US 49, take the turnoff (a right turn) to Brooklyn. Make a very sharp right turn a few hundred yards later, and go another few hundred yards to the right turn to the parking lot.

There are two good maps of the area, and these are recommended for this trip or any other segment you may choose. You can obtain a free map from the Forest Service at the address and phone number given in the Directory. The Forest Service sells a more detailed map, and this is carried by some local outfitters as well. ■



Tuxachanie Trail

by John Sevenair

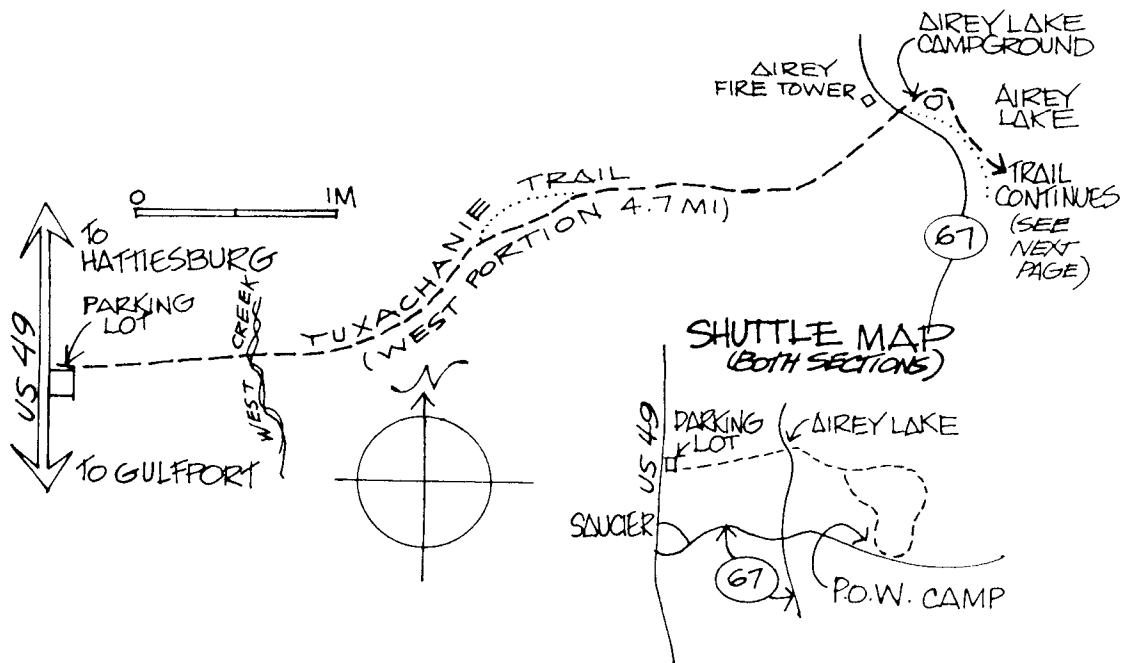
There was a time when, if you wanted to backpack on a marked trail between Alabama and Texas, the Tuxachanie Trail was just about the only possibility. With a total of 17 miles of trail, the Tuxachanie is still a good choice, though it can be crowded.

For the first five miles east of US 49 the trail follows the bed of an abandoned logging railroad that dates from the early part of this century. There is a small pond full of water lilies near US 49. A mile from the trailhead the path crosses a footbridge over West Creek. This can be impassable in wet weather. Further along you can see low sandy ridges with longleaf and slash pine, cactus, and palmetto. Between these ridges there is savannah and boggy grassland. Look for pitcher plant flowers and tiny wild orchids in

spring.

Not far to the east of Airey Tower Road on the trail you come to Copeland Spring, named for a clan of outlaws who used it. A little further beyond this the trail enters what can seem to be a tangle of hiking trails, horse trails, and logging roads. It's easy to get confused without a map, and you can do it even if you have one.

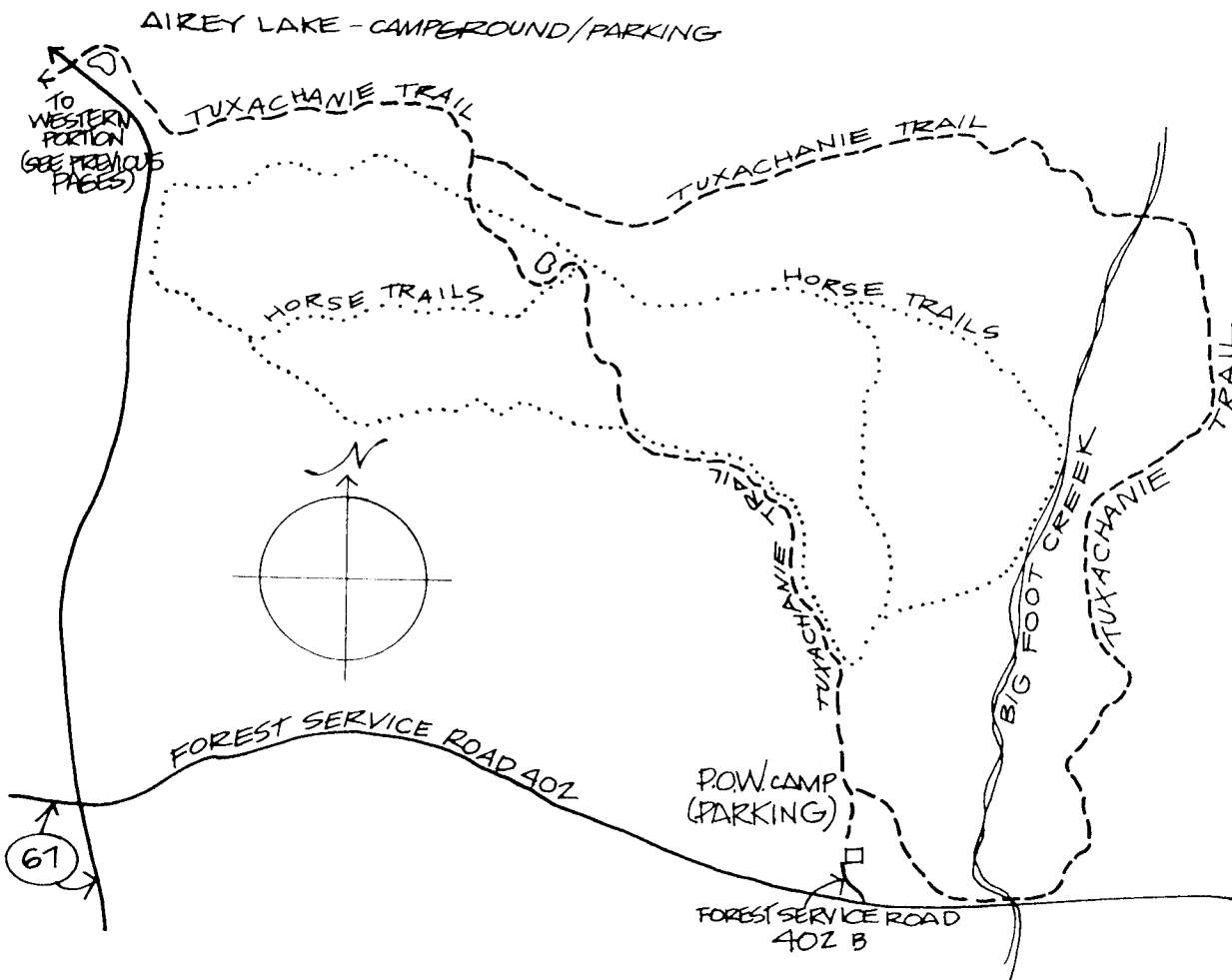
The southeastern access point is an old P. O. W. camp, used to house German prisoners of war during WWII. Camping is possible, but there have been too many incidents of vandalism on cars left there to make it a good beginning or ending point for a backpack trip. This segment of the trail goes on past the camp to the paved road, crosses Tuxachanie Creek, and turns back to the north and west to rejoin the original trail near Copeland Spring. This makes a loop trip



possible, with both the start and the finish at Airey Lake.

The U. S. Forest Service has produced a map of the trail, which can be ordered from them for a modest price. Their address and phone number is given in the Directory.

Getting there: The western end of the trail is 17 miles north of the intersection of I-10 and U.S. Hwy. 49 at Gulfport. The parking lot is well marked. The central access point at Airey Lake and the P. O. W. camp are also easy to find; see the car shuttle map. ■



Flint Creek Water Park

by John Sevenair

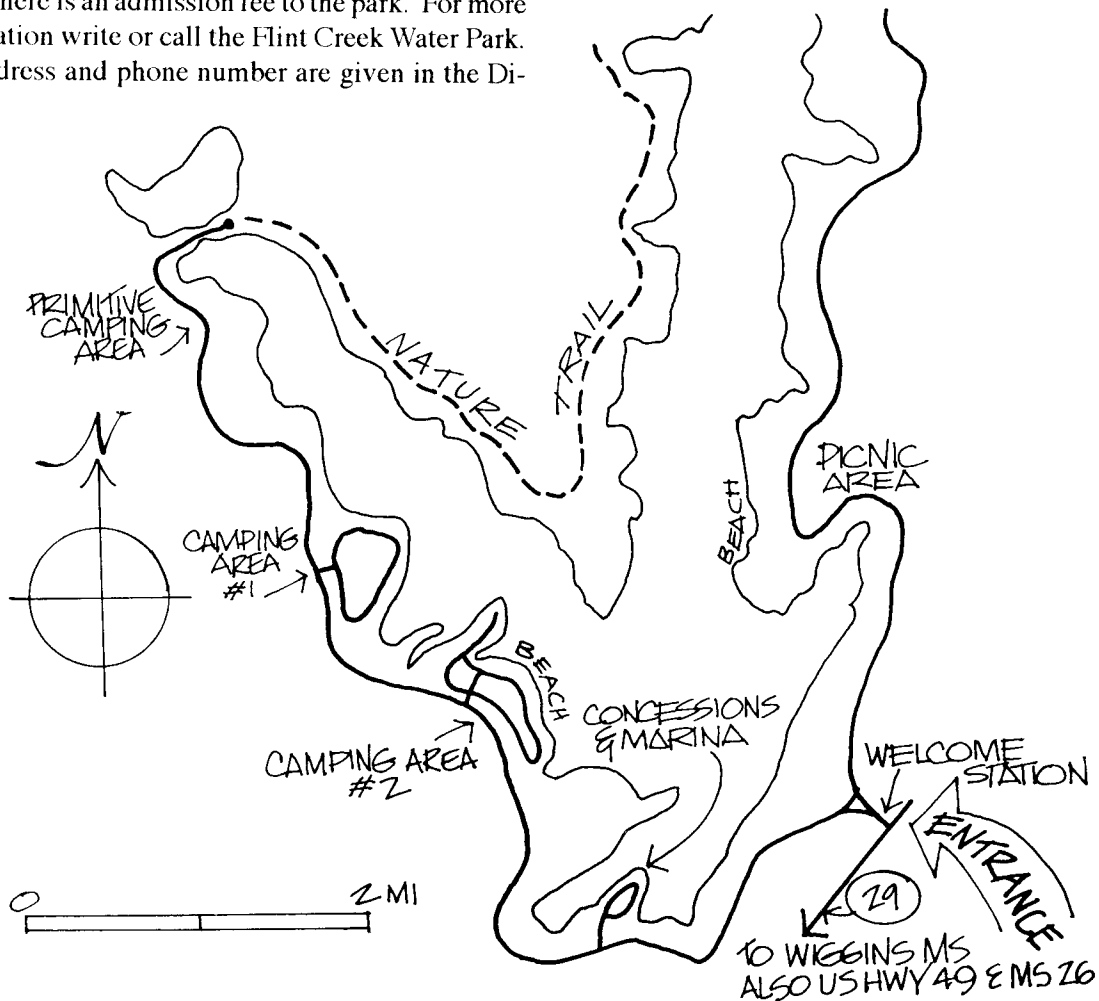
Flint Creek Water Park contains a nature trail that passes through pine forests and over gentle hills, with occasional views of the lake that is the park's centerpiece. The trail once circled the lake, but the fall of some of its wooden bridges and logging on the east side put an end to that. With the superb Black Creek Trail to the north and the Tuxachanie Trail to the south, there are better places to go, but it's worth a look.

The easy-to-follow trail goes about 3 1/2 miles to a dead end. There are gullies and a barbed wire fence along at least one section. Many types of plants live along the trail, including huckleberries in May and wildflowers in season. It makes for a fairly pleasant moderate day hike that can be combined with car camping in the park. Swimming in the lake is permitted only at the designated beach near the picnic area. There is an admission fee to the park. For more information write or call the Flint Creek Water Park. The address and phone number are given in the Di-

rectory.

Getting there: Flint Creek This water park is on Mississippi Highway 29 just north of Wiggins and south of Black Creek. To reach the end of the trail from the Welcome Station/Park Headquarters, take the road that goes west (to the left of the dam). Go past the marina, cabins, campgrounds, the end of the pavement, and the primitive campground. Cross a causeway and park near the gate that blocks your progress on the far side. Walk around the gate and continue on the road about 100 feet until you see a sign pointing to the trail.

The author is indebted to Cornell J. Tramontana Jr. and Jim Nanninga for their assistance. ■



Percy Quin State Park

by John Sevenair

This Mississippi park surrounds Lake Tangipahoa just west of I-55 near McComb. It has the usual state park amenities of cabins, campgrounds, picnic areas, and boat launch facilities. There are also some trails in the park. Sometimes trail maintenance is a little casual or overdue, but you might think of this as adding to the adventure. Unfortunately, sometimes a bridge fails, and this closes the trail. For up-to-date information, contact the park; its address and phone number is given in the Directory.

A boardwalk nature trail leaves from the park's northernmost comfort station and makes a loop through the swamp formed where the Tangipahoa River enters the lake. A pleasant, somewhat primitive hiking trail takes off from the outermost end of the nature trail loop and goes about four miles around the undeveloped western side of the lake to a point near the western end of the dam. It makes for a good, interesting day hike.

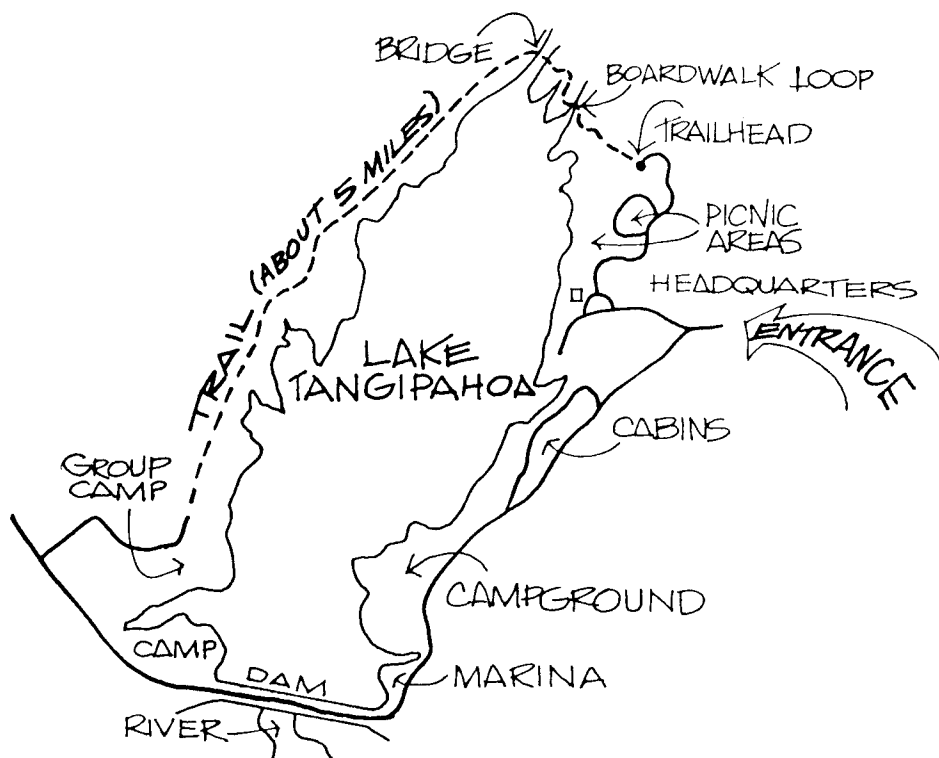
The trail twists and turns through the swamp near the boardwalk nature trail, where it consists of narrow boardwalks, primitive bridges, and wet ground. Percy Quin veterans will miss the wobbly and unstable foam-block pontoon bridge, which was

replaced by a more solid wooden span. Hikers finally cross the main channel of the river on a bouncy suspension bridge to reach higher ground. Here the trail turns south to run through the forest along the western shore of the lake.

The last time I hiked this trail an area of fallen trees blocked the trail not far north of the southwestern end of the trail. We went around this through wet ground on the lake side, following the shoreline and rejoining the trail at a small footbridge. Soon after this we reached the paved road at the group camp.

The Percy Quin State Park trail system continues across the Lake Tangipahoa dam and goes on through the more developed eastern portions of the park. The more vigorous hiker (or the one with no second car and companions for a shuttle) can make a complete circle around the lake if the bridges are in good repair.

Getting there: Take I-55 to Exit 13 (Fernwood Rd.) in Mississippi. This exit is 13 miles north of the LA-MS state line, and the park is a mile or two west of the interstate. Follow the signs from I-55 to the park. ■



Clear Springs Hiking Trail

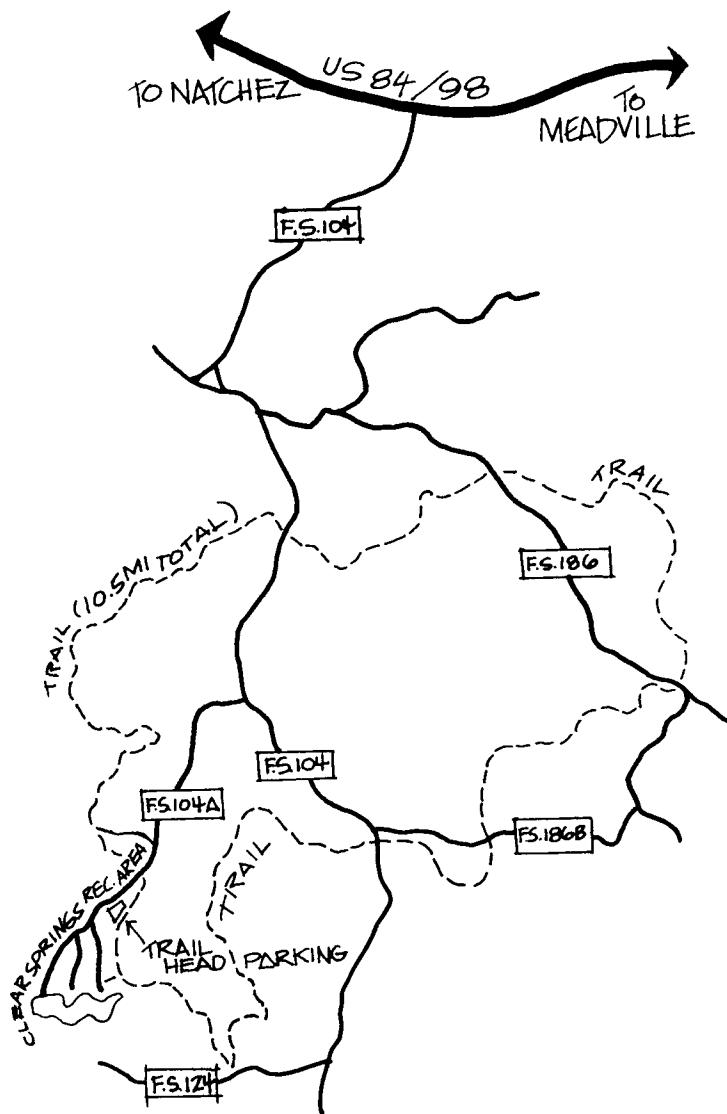
by George Barry, Honey Island Sierra Club

This trail mostly goes through multi-species, multi-age second growth woodland, though you will see some even-aged management (that is, pine plantations and clearcuts) from time to time. There are a remarkable number of hillsides you must climb, considering what part of the country this trail is in. It's an excellent trail for a long day hike or a fairly short backpack trip.

The trail is ten and a half miles long. It leads through mature stands of mixed pine and hardwood tree cover with a few open areas, over hilly terrain dissected by permanent and intermittent streams. All but the smallest streams are bridged, and the area is popular with mountain bikers as well as hikers. For shorter hikes, you can gain access to the trail from several Forest Service road crossings. The trail is adequately marked with small white diamond blazes. Flat areas for large group camping are limited east of Forest Service Roads 104 and 104-a.

Getting There: The access road, Forest Service 104, runs south from divided US 84/98 between Natchez and Brookhaven. The turnoff is approximately five miles west of the Meadville area and approximately six miles east of Roxie. A Forest Service sign at the junction shows the way to Clear Springs. The trailhead is on the east (left) side of the road about 4 miles south of 84/98, just above the fee station. No fee is re-

quired for trail use when parking at the trailhead. A fee is required for day use and overnight camping in the developed recreation area. ■



The Pearl River Basin

by Byron Almquist

For information on where the Pearl River Basin is located and the type of terrain in it, refer to the section on canoeing in the basin. Hiking in the basin is a viable alternative to paddling. Usually in summer and autumn there is considerable room to

roam around in the flood plain. As there are few trails, the venturesome hiker or backpacker has the thrill of exploring an area that is largely devoid of the signs of humanity. That is the greatest appeal of the Pearl River Basin. ■

From Lock #2

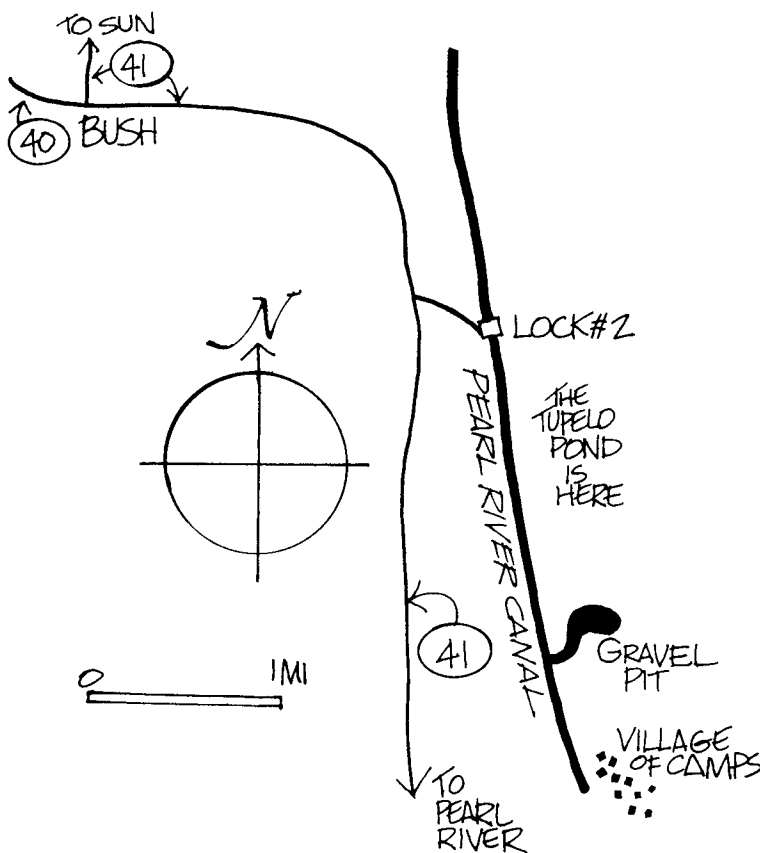
by Byron Almquist, Canoe and Trail Adventures

The main suggestion at Lock #2 is to cross the locks and walk south along the canal. For approximately a mile and a half the hiker can observe off to the left an extensive tupelo pond. Depending on the water level, time of year,

day, etc., there can be considerable activity in the tupelo pond. If you are patient and conditions are right, you can see stationary floating logs covered with turtles and a variety of birds winging through the foliage.

At the end of the tupelo pond is a pond left over from gravel operations. Hike around the rim of the pond admiring its deep blue water. A fourth of a mile after rejoining the levee, the hiker comes to a village of fishing camps complete with electricity, two streets, and piles of discarded cans. One can continue along the levee as far as desired - even to Lock #1, a distance of approximately 12 miles. Depending on the water level, the curious hiker can leave the levee opposite the gravel pit and range out to the east - all the way to the Bogue Chitto. From that departure point there is high ground for miles around that can be explored.

Getting there: To reach Lock #2, go about 20 miles north of Pearl River on LA Hwy. 41 and turn right just south of Bush. The topo map is the Henleyfield quad. ■



From Lock #1

by Byron Almquist, Canoe and Trail Adventures

From Lock #1 there are basically two areas to explore. One is easy - from the parking area walk south, on the west side of the barge canal, to the intersection of the canal with the West Pearl River. From there the hiker can follow the river either by walking at waters edge on its beaches or on 15' banks overlooking the river. It is said that one can, at low water, walk all the way to the city of Pearl River - a distance of approximately seven miles.

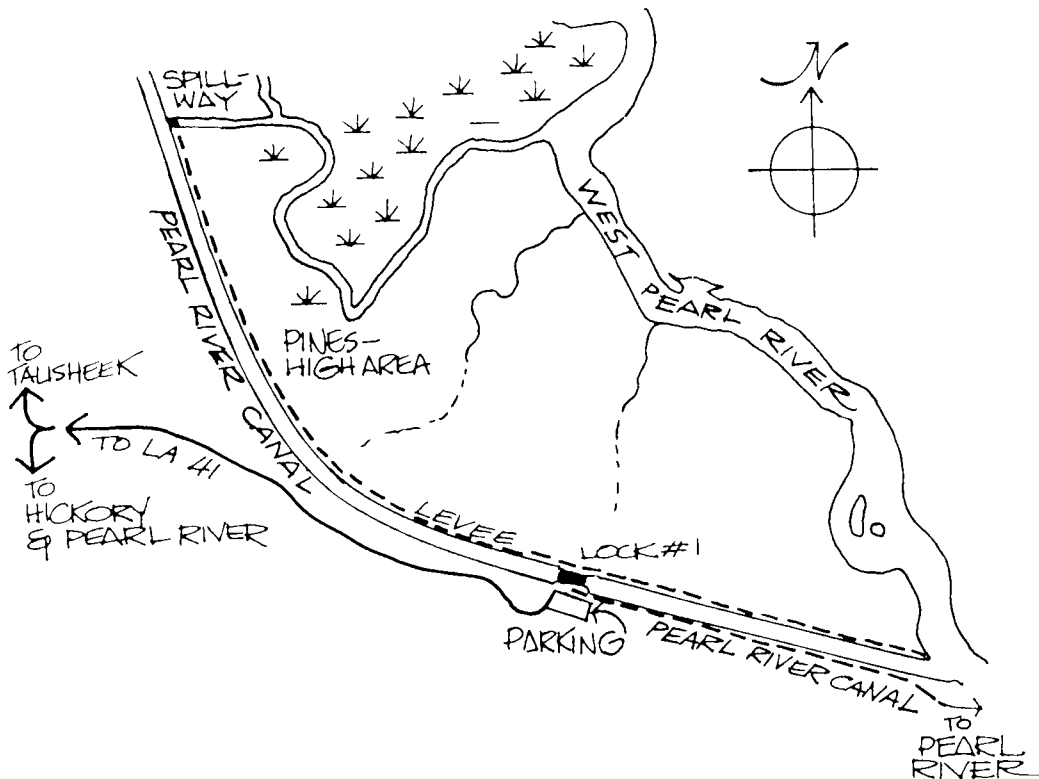
A variation of this route is to hike out away from the West Pearl into the flood plain that lies between it and La. Highway 40.

The other area is reached by crossing the lock and walking in either direction along the barge canal. To the north in approximately 2 1/2 miles are the ponds from a commercial gravel mining operation. En route to that destination the hiker will need to go past a spillway, either by walking on its concrete "toe" or by clamber-

ing over the logs piled up immediately downstream of the spillway.

Another alternative is to walk ESE along the canal to its intersection with the West Pearl - a distance of a mile. Of course anywhere along the canal it is possible for the hiker to turn NE toward the West Pearl and hike to it. Restrictions on this would be any posted property, high water, and heavy undergrowth. But if these are not present, one can meander around between the canal and the West Pearl to the length of one's curiosity or time.

Getting there: The turnoff to Lock #1 is nine miles from I-59 via Pearl River and La. Hwy. 41. The Charter Oak Grocery and (sometimes) a sign mark this right turn. The topo map to use is the Hickory, La. 7 1/2 quad. You will also need the Nicholson, MS. 7 1/2 if you are headed toward the city of Pearl River. ■



Honey Island Swamp Nature Trail

by John Sevenair and Adele Plauche, New Orleans Sierra Club

This loop trail in the Pearl River Basin is about a mile long. With the interpretive trail guide pamphlet, camera, binoculars, and field guides you can spend all day on it, and find yourself coming back, again and again.

The attractions of the trail are many. For instance, it's a good place to see wildlife unless there are a lot of people around. Turkeys can sometimes be seen in the clearings, and Horseshoe Lake is a nesting area for wood ducks. Perhaps even more notable are the plants, some of which have numbered signs keyed to a guide pamphlet. If you walk the trail using the pamphlet you will have a much greater knowledge and understanding of the natural communities that make up Louisiana and Mississippi bottomland hardwood ecosystems.

There are some dangers, however. Water moccasins live in the area, and are sometimes common around the lake; they're poisonous. Insect repellent is recommended unless it's cold.

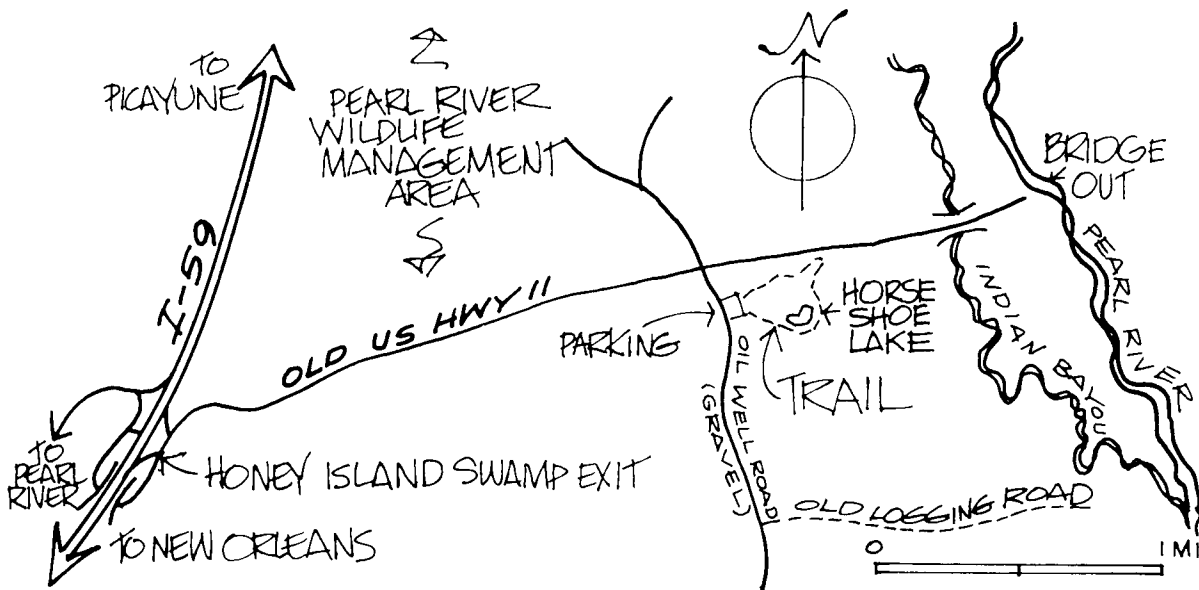
There are restrictions on the use of the trail in hunting season, too, since the land for wildlife management areas such as this is bought with money from hunting and fishing licenses. Don't hike on the trail before 9:30 A.M. during squirrel or turkey season,

and be sure to wear hunter's blaze orange clothes if you hike during the gun season for deer.

Bottomland hardwood habitat is rapidly becoming soybean habitat in this part of the country. This trail, prepared jointly by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries of Louisiana and the Delta Chapter of the Sierra Club, provides a good introduction.

For further exploration of the area, you can walk down Well Rd. south for about 3/4 mile beyond the nature trail. You will see a trailhead on the left leading into the woods. Follow this along the remnants of an old logging road. You may have to do some clearing and bushwhacking, but the tranquility of this lush swamp trail is well worth while. Hike as far as you can without swimming—the logging road eventually runs into a lowland area near the Pearl River—and return.

Getting there: Take the Honey Island Swamp exit on I-59 between Slidell and Picayune, as shown on the map, and follow Old US 11 into the wildlife management area. A sign on Old US 11 points to the trail. Since this is a state wildlife management area, you should have a Wild Louisiana Stamp (or a fishing or hunting license) before you enter here. ■



Barataria Hiking

by John Sevenair

The fact that there is a national park in Louisiana is not as well known as it should be, though many Sierra Club members have been familiar with it since its beginnings. The Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve has several units. The one of most interesting to hikers, canoers, and naturalists is the Barataria Preserve Unit. Its trail system has been enlarged and improved in recent years. Habitats visible from the trail system include natural levee woodlands, cypress-tupelo swamp, and freshwater marsh. Here are some details.

The handicapped-accessible **Bayou Coquille Trail** is the park's most popular, and can be crowded on fine spring and fall days. It begins at a shell midden, the site of a prehistoric Indian village on the natural levee. Hardwoods, including live oaks, grow around the parking lot. The trail then descends the backslope of the natural levee through dwarf palmettos and swamp red maple. Finally it penetrates the swamp, a flooded forest of baldcypress, water tupelo, and pumpkin ash, to the edge of freshwater marsh.

The all-weather **Marsh Overlook Trail** is a boardwalk that continues from the end of the Bayou Coquille Trail, providing more views of the marsh and its wildlife as it follows the edge of the Kenta Canal. It ends at a raised marsh overlook, providing a fine panoramic view of the marsh and its wildlife. This and the Bayou Coquille Trail are the best trails in the park for seeing alligators. A trip from the Coquille Trail parking lot to the far end and back is about two miles long.

The **Palmetto Trail** is also a boardwalk. It's slightly less than a mile long, and like the preceding two can be hiked in all kinds of weather. It connects the park headquarters with the Coquille Trail parking lot. There is a short spur very near the park headquarters that leads to a restful spot to sit. The Palmetto Trail runs parallel to Bayou des Familles and between the natural levee and the swamp. The north half passes through transitional backslope areas, thick with palmettos and red maples.

The unimproved **Twin Canals Trail** runs between the canals atop the spoil bank of an incomplete drainage and development scheme. It is much used for bank-side fishing, and can also provide a

mile and a half round trip walk with good views of the swamp and marsh and opportunities for wildlife observation.

A parking lot with rest rooms, located in an old overgrown pecan grove, provides access to the extensive trail system east of LA 45. The paths here are longer, more primitive, and less crowded than the trails west of the road. This is a good area to see armadillos, swamp rabbits, gray squirrels, and birds.

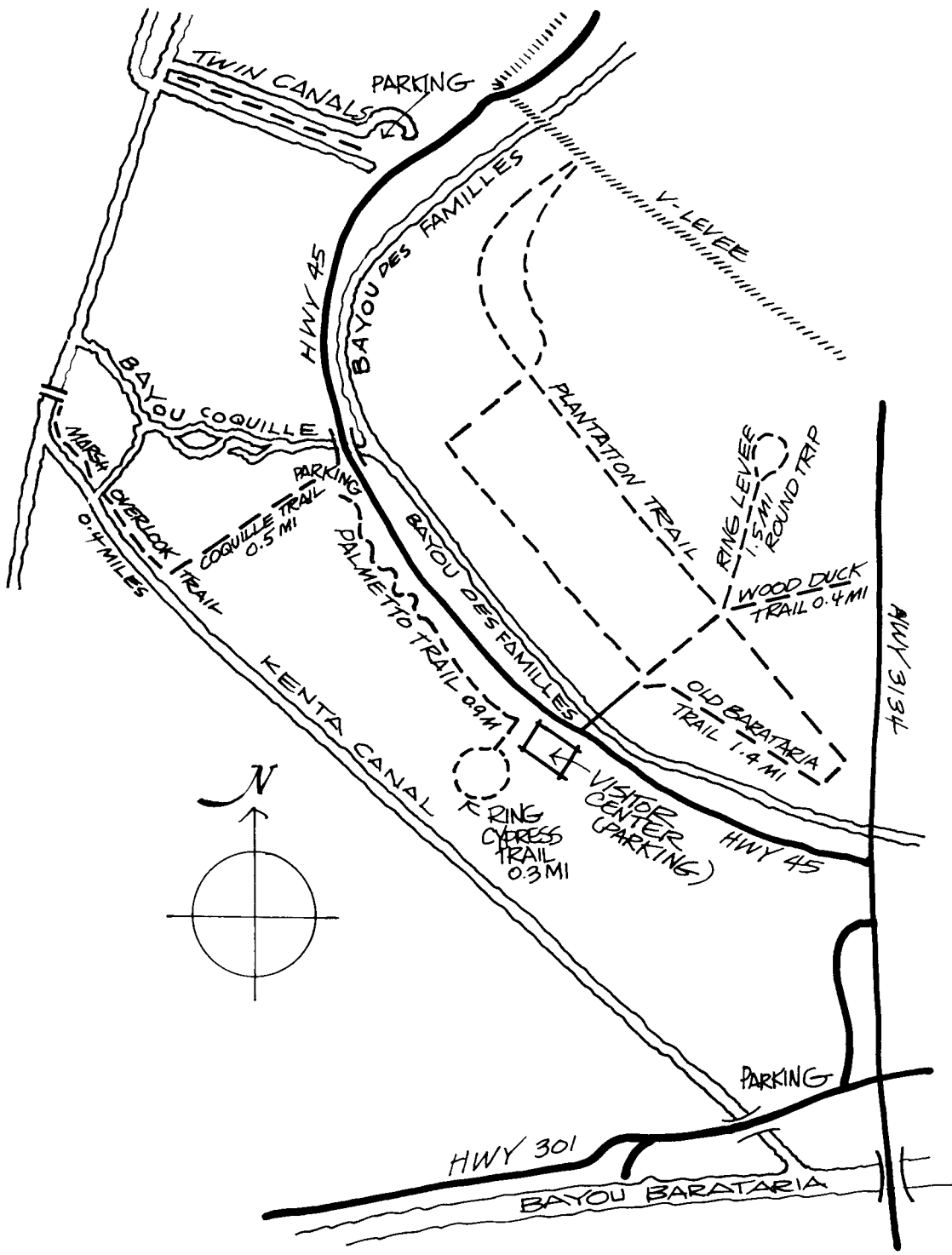
Most of the **Ring Levee Trail** is a narrow boardwalk that penetrates a beautiful swamp, ending at a former oil well site now overgrown by trees. This is the best trail for observing swamp creatures, from painted turtles basking on logs, to brilliantly-hued prothonotary warblers nesting in trailside cavities, to the occasional glimpse of a mink loping along the boardwalk. The path that leads to the branching of the Ring Levee Trail and the **Wood Duck Trail**, plus the Wood Duck Trail itself, are former shell roads. These can be walked in almost any weather.

The other trails here, the **Old Barataria Trail** and the **Plantation Trail**, can be very wet and muddy after rains. Calf-length rubber boots or sacrificial old tennis shoes should be worn at such times. These trails allow you to experience one of the most extensive natural levee hardwood forests left in the delta.

Hiking in the summer can be an ordeal by mosquitoes and deer flies on any of the park's trails. For more information, contact the Jean Lafitte National Park visitor center. The address and phone number are given in the Directory.

Getting there: To reach the Barataria Preserve Unit, get on the West Bank Expressway (US 90) south of New Orleans. Turn south on LA 45 (Barataria Boulevard), which is about halfway between the Greater New Orleans and Huey Long bridges. The park entrance is less than ten miles south of the intersection. LA 45 through the park parallels Bayou des Familles, a former distributary of the Mississippi River.

The author is indebted to the National Park Service and its personnel for information about this area and its trails and wildlife. ■



Public Transit and Levee Hikes

Have you ever wanted to get on a train or bus, get off at the trailhead, and start hiking on a wilderness trail? Would you like to avoid parking your car, retracing your steps to the car, and (for those who know the need for energy conservation) using gas in the car? In many places abroad and a few in the U. S. you can use public transportation this way.

In the New Orleans area you can use the bus, ferry, and streetcar system to take yourself to hikes on the Mississippi River levees. On these trips you can see a plantation home or two, explore wooded trails on the batture (land outside the levee, next to

the river), and watch the changeless and ever-changing panorama of North America's greatest river. Another levee trail, the Jefferson Parish Linear Park, follows the shoreline of Lake Pontchartrain.

The levee-top paths are level, with good surfaces, and if you get tired there's usually a bus line nearby. There is also suburban housing and River Road traffic. This is not premier wilderness, but it's good exercise and often interesting. For up-to-date information on transit routes and schedules, contact the Regional Transit Authority (see the Directory) or the bus companies.

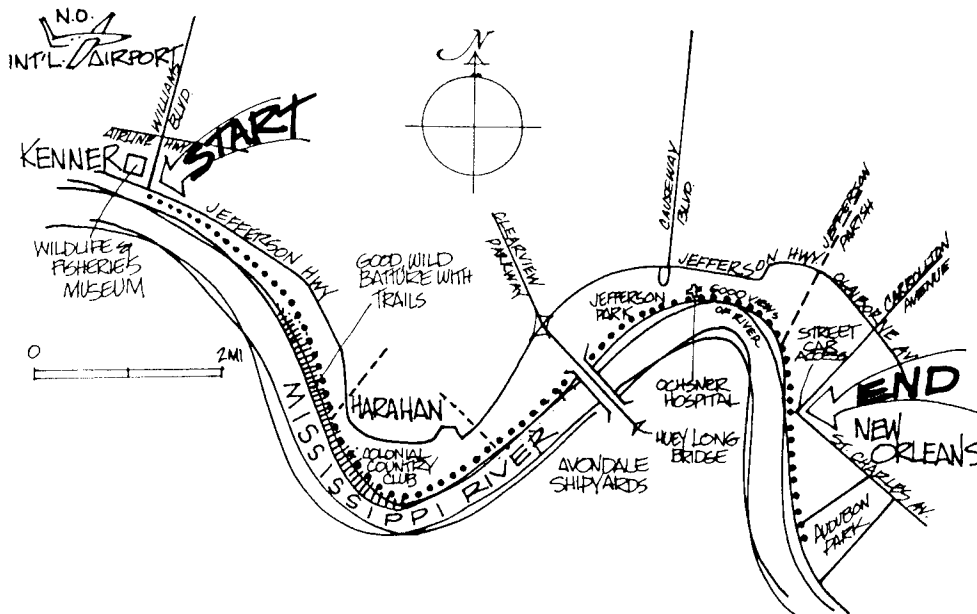
Harahan Trail

This route follows the Mississippi River from Williams Blvd. in Kenner to St. Charles Ave. in New Orleans. By the time you read this, the entire length of this section of levee may be surfaced with a ten-foot-wide strip of asphalt paving.

The batture from Harahan to the west is a notable feature of this route. Paths run through it, birds frequent it, and there are small ponds with populations of turtles. You can't hike on the batture when the river is high. For other landmarks, see the map. One caution: the levees are used by horseback and

bicycle riders, and the battures are used by barge companies and some other industries. Be careful. For a Boy Scout trail pamphlet that follows a slightly different route in this area, and has considerably more historical detail, write the Harahan Historical Trail (see the Directory).

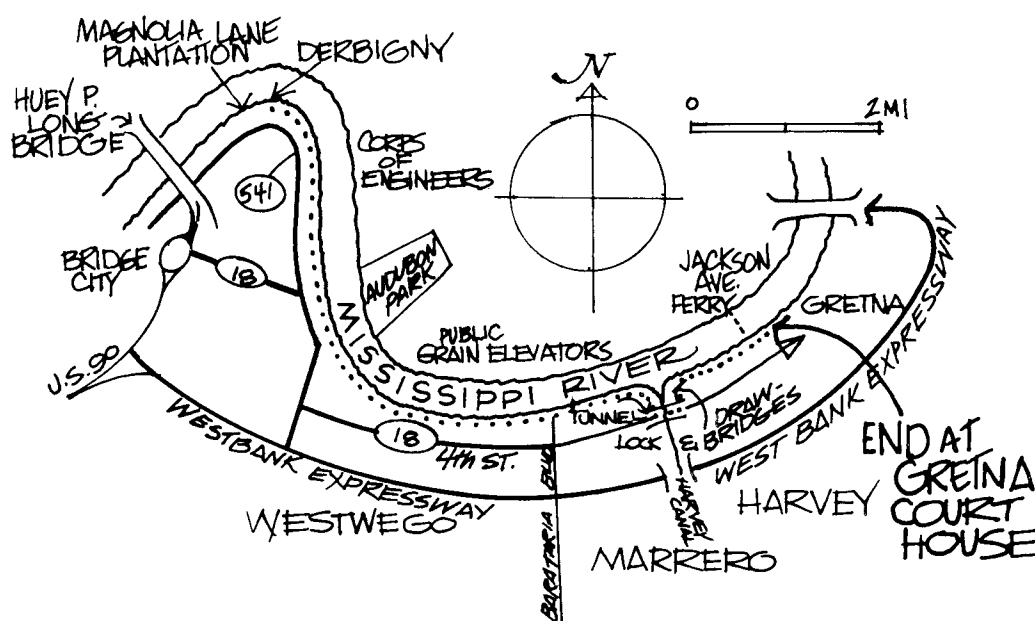
Getting there: Buses run from the intersection of Carrollton and Claiborne in New Orleans via the Jefferson Hwy. to Kenner, so the bus line is near this trail for most of its length. So if you don't want to walk the whole thirteen miles, you have an out. ■



Westwego Levee Hike

This ten-mile-long route follows the river from Nine Mile Point above Westwego to the Gretna Courthouse or the Gretna ferry landing. It leaves the river briefly to cross the Harvey Canal and returns through an industrial park. The hike generally borders industrial areas, though there are two plantation homes near the beginning of the trip.

Getting there: To reach the start you first take a Westwego bus, either from downtown New Orleans or from the Gretna ferry landing. From Westwego take the Avondale bus to either Pecan Grove Road or Bridge City. From either point it is about a mile and a half to Magnolia Lane Plantation, which is open to the public for a moderate fee. ■

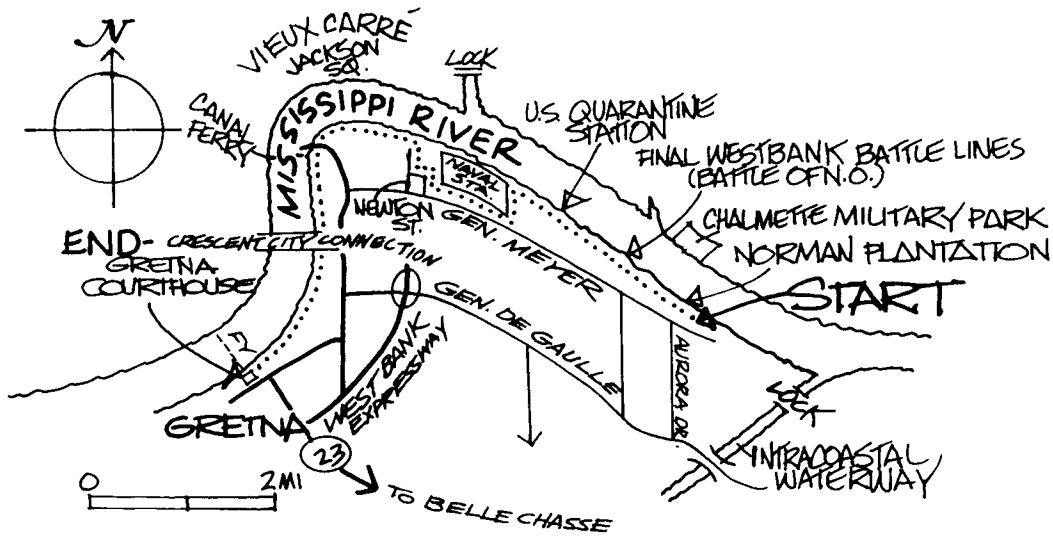


Algiers Levee Hike

The route mainly follows the river levee from the foot of Aurora Drive in Lower Algiers to the Gretna ferry landing or the Gretna Courthouse. This ten-mile walk borders on residential, commercial, and industrial activity, and provides views of river commerce and cross-river views of the New Orleans

riverfront.

Getting there: To reach Aurora Drive, take the Gen. Meyer bus from the central business district or the Algiers local from the Gretna ferry landing. You can return to New Orleans using either the Jackson Ave. or Canal St. ferry. ■

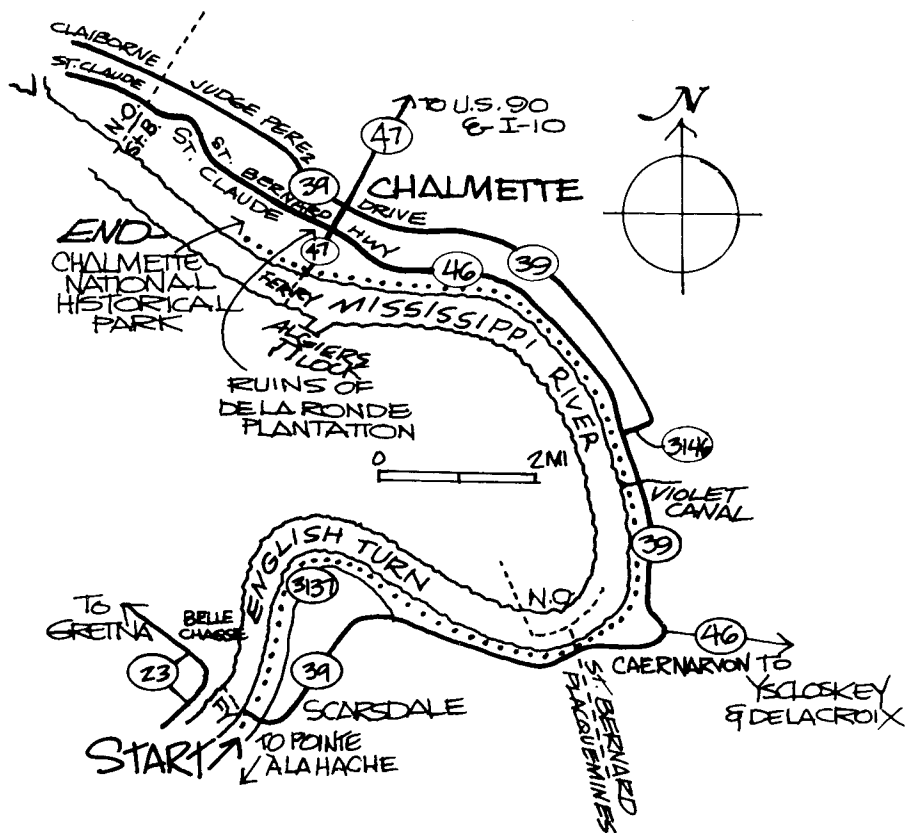


Chalmette Trail

This route follows the Mississippi River levee from the ferry landing at Scarsdale to the Chalmette National Military Park, the site of the Battle of New Orleans. The hike has a largely rural character, but it also passes industrial areas near Chalmette. This is the longest of the public transit hike (sixteen miles), and has no transit access from the middle portions of

the route—so be in good condition before you start.

Getting there: To reach Belle Chasse and the ferry landing for Scarsdale, take a Trailways bus. To return, cross the ferry at the end of Paris Road (La. 47) and walk to the end of the Gen. Meyer Avenue line in Algiers. ■



Jefferson Parish Linear Park

James Guilbeau

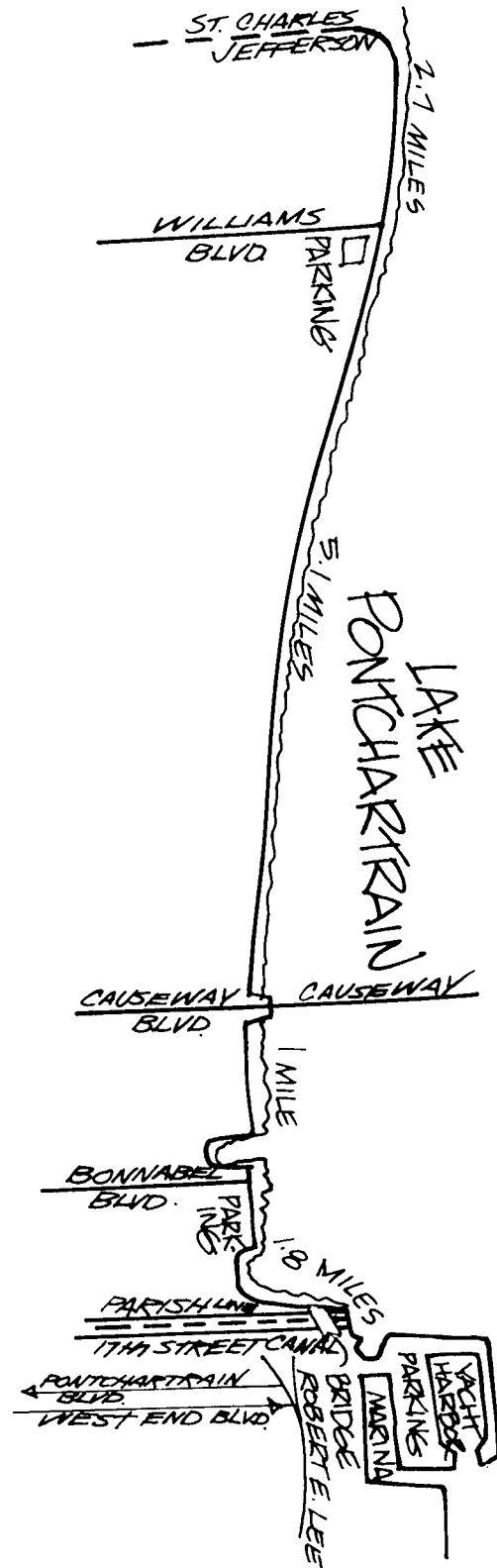
This trail runs from the West End in New Orleans, all the way along the Jefferson Parish shoreline, and south along the Jefferson-St. Charles parish line almost to I-10, a total of over twelve miles. You can begin the trail by crossing a pedestrian bridge over the 17th Street Canal between Coconut Beach (New Orleans' beach volleyball center) and some West End restaurants. The path follows Orpheum St. along the canal for a few dozen yards and turns onto the top of the levee. A few hundred yards further on it drops down to an asphalt path and follows the lake shore for almost ten miles.

The park from Orleans Parish to Williams Blvd. is mostly grass with scattered trees on it. The path makes a short detour through a residential neighborhood at the Bonnabel Canal, which has a boat launch, park, and a pumping station. At Causeway Boulevard a new paved trail follows the lake shore under the end of the bridge; it's no longer necessary to dodge high-speed traffic while crossing the road. In July and early August, swarms of migrating Purple Martins roosting at sunset on the south end of the Causeway provide a great natural spectacle.

There's a small park near the end of Severn Ave., a larger park (with a pond and bird refuge) at the end of Lake Villa Dr. at the Suburban Canal, and a small wild area at the end of the Elmwood Canal. Between the casino at Williams Blvd. and the parish line the land between the path and the levee is mostly filled with trees and brush. The path along the parish line canal mostly has views of suburban back yards and the concrete wall of a hurricane protection levee.

Grassy lawns with scattered trees don't make for very good wildlife habitat, but in the winter and early spring you can often see Brown Pelicans offshore, especially near the canals farther west. The recovery of this species, once extirpated from Louisiana, is an encouraging sign for our environment.

Getting there: Public transit can take you to the north end of Pontchartrain Blvd. a few blocks from the West End, Causeway and Williams at the lake, and the intersection of West Esplanade and Loyola a few blocks from the path in the far west. You can park a car near the park at a number of other spots (see the map). ■



Short Trails around Lake Pontchartrain

This section describes some short hiking trails. Many of them have good views of the marshes and swamps of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. None of these trails are far from Lake

Pontchartrain, and none is more than couple of miles long. The first trails in the section are in eastern New Orleans, and we'll go counterclockwise around the lake from there.

Louisiana Nature and Science Center

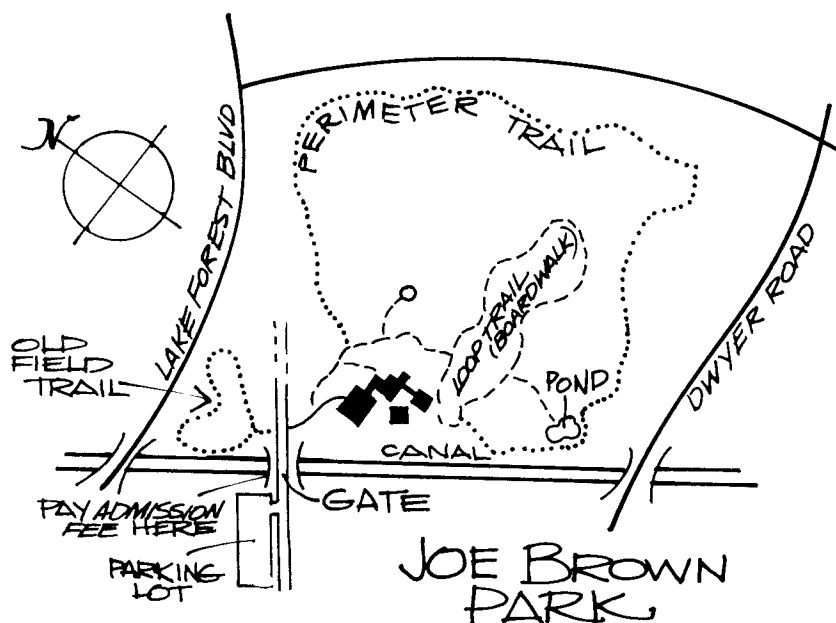
by Bob Thomas, Audubon Institute

The three nature trails at the Center are designed to bring visitors into the heart of a living forest community, and to remind all of us of the subtle beauty that is ours to preserve. The 3/4-mile Wisner Loop Trail is an elevated boardwalk that is wheelchair and stroller accessible, and leads to the Nature Center's wetland s area. The shorter Old Field Trail and the longer Perimeter Trail are both ground-level trails. They offer an exciting and educational look at the forest surrounding the Nature Center.

Located on an 86-acre preserve in eastern New Orleans, only 20 minutes from downtown, the Louisiana Nature and Science Center also

features hand-on interpretive exhibits, native plants and animals, and a planetarium. The Center offers a variety of educational and recreational programs in environmental and natural science for people of all ages. These programs include classes, workshops, camps, hikes, boat excursions, and special events for people of all ages.

Getting there: From I-10 in eastern New Orleans, take Read Blvd. south (away from Lake Pontchartrain) to Joe Brown Park (you can follow the signs). For more information about the Louisiana Nature and Science Center, consult the Directory and go from there. ■



Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge

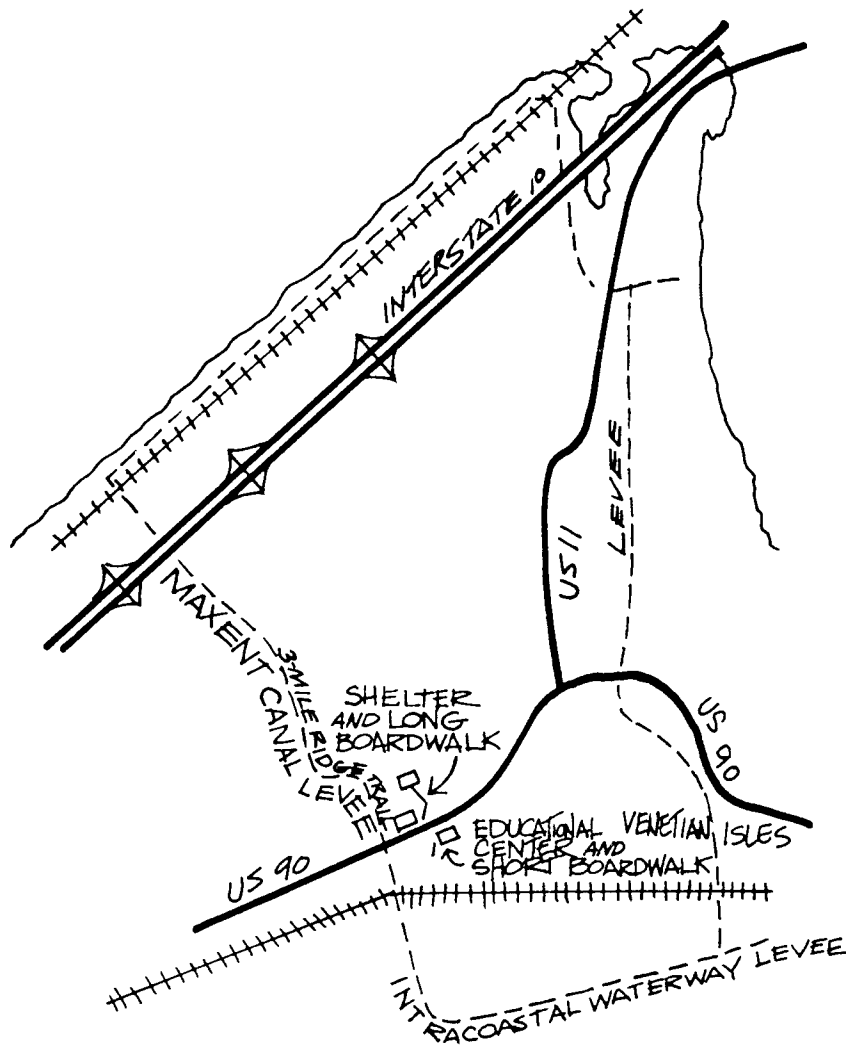
by James Guilbeau

Two trails lead from a parking area at the western edge of the refuge. One is a boardwalk a few hundred yards long. This trail leads across the wooded natural levee of Bayou Sauvage, a former distributary of the Mississippi River, to the edge of a marsh. There is hiking, and biking too, on the three-mile-long Ridge Trail on the Maxent Levee to the northwest of the parking lot. This trail gives views of swamps and marshes, with good chances of seeing birds (usually plentiful) and mammals, for most of its length.

The Bayou Sauvage Refuge is 19,000 acres in size, with another 4,000 acres from the Conservation Fund (north of I-10) under management

lease. Over half the Refuge is an impounded freshwater marsh, bounded by levees near US 11 on the east and the Intracoastal Waterway on the south. The eastern and southern portions, adjacent to Lake Pontchartrain, Chef Mentour Pass, and Lake Borgne, is an estuarine (brackish) marsh.

Getting there: In New Orleans, take either I-10 or I-510 to the Chef Mentour Parkway (US 90) and turn east. After crossing a canal (the Maxent Canal) you'll see a parking lot entrance on your left. In addition to the two trailheads, there is a shelter with picnic tables and handicapped-accessible rest rooms. There is no access the refuge directly from I-10. ■



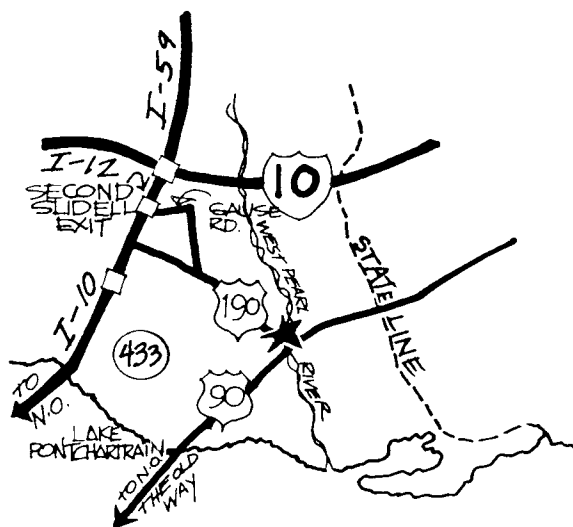
Chevron (Nature Conservancy) Boardwalk

by John Sevenair

This is a very short boardwalk trail, only about a hundred yards long, but it's very lovely and fascinating in its way. From its origins in a rest area with oak trees it penetrates a narrow fringe of cypress swamp to a broad marshy area. In winter and early spring you can see a distant Bald Eagle nest if you have very good eyes—binoculars or, even better, a spotting scope will help here. There is also a large roost of wading birds, equally far away. In spring and summer the area off the end of the boardwalk becomes a superb water garden, full of water lily leaves and blossoms.

Getting there: The rest area is at the intersection of US 90 and US 190 a few miles east of Slidell. It's on the left (north) side of both roads as you go east. For more information about the Louisiana Nature Conservancy, consult the Di-

rectory. There are also several commercial swamp tours available in this area. ■



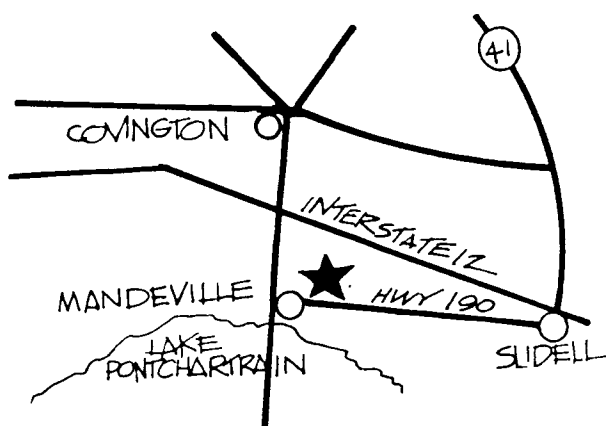
Northlake Museum and Nature Center

by John Sevenair

Once upon a time this was the beginnings of a golf course. Then the project was abandoned and the trees started to grow. Now, after half a century or more, the land here is nicely wooded,

and is the property of a new organization called the Northlake Museum and Nature Center. From the sign in the parking lot, the main trail passes through the woods past the ruins of the old clubhouse (which will be converted into an interpretive center) to a beaver pond. A boardwalk takes you across this beautiful waterway to a loop trail. There are other side trails—one circles the old clubhouse, for instance. There is about a mile of trail on the site. There are interpretive signs, exhibits, and a leaflet that will identify and explain many of the natural phenomena you see.

Getting there: From the north end of the Causeway, take US 190 through Mandeville. Just across a bridge (Bayou Castine) you will see the parking lot on the left (north) side of the road. If you're coming west on 190, the parking lot is a mile or so west of the main entrance to Fontainebleau State Park. For more information about the Northlake Museum and Nature Center, see the Directory. ■



Fontainebleau State Park

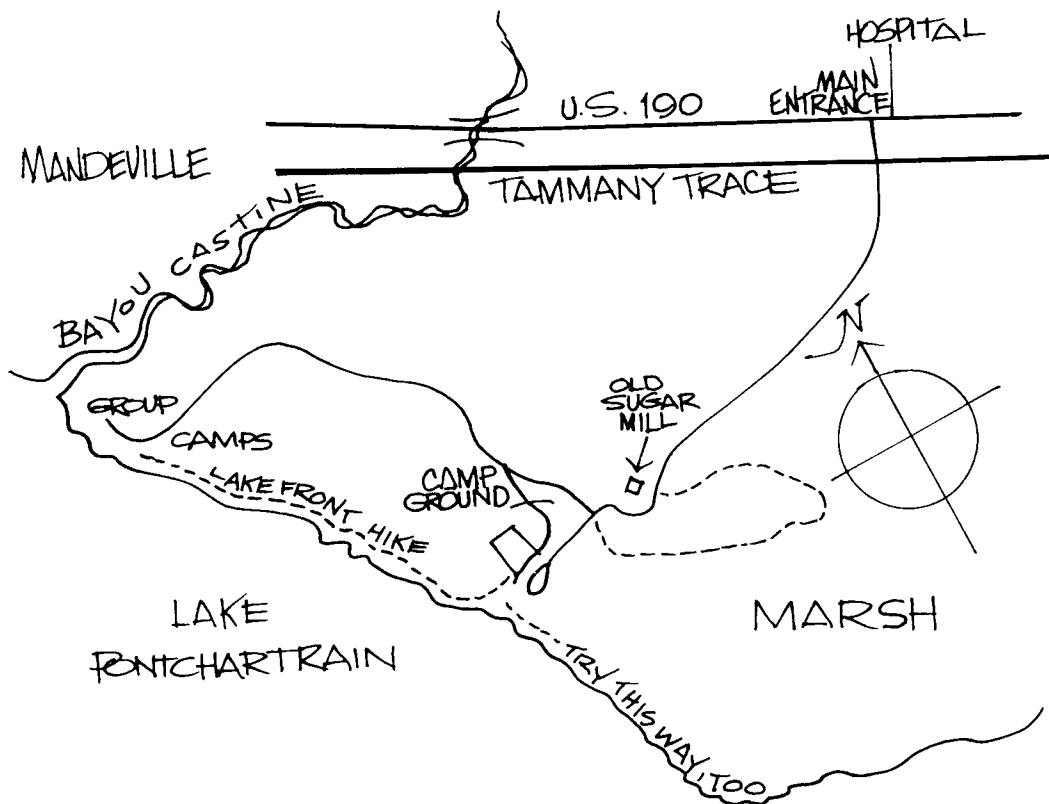
by John Sevenair

To most people this state park consists of a swimming pool and a large cleared area for picnics and games. There are also individual and group campgrounds. Several square miles of forest surround the cleared recreation area. What was once a sugar plantation has returned to a more natural state. Recently the area suffered a serious infestation of pine beetles, and most of the park's pine trees were cut down to prevent the insects from spreading. The nature trail is closed as of this writing.

There are still interesting short hikes in this park. From the swimming pool and bath house area, you can hike to the west along Lake Pontchartrain toward Mandeville. The informal trail here follows a narrow ridge of sand between

the lake and a marsh through most of its length. Cypress trees, Spanish moss, and clear evidence that the lake's shoreline is receding makes this an interesting walk. You can also hike along the shoreline to the east of the cleared area. This is a narrow sandy ridge between a broad marsh and the lake, less interesting to most people than the western trail.

Getting there: The main entrance to Fontainebleau State Park is on the south side of US 190, about a mile east of the eastern boundary of the city of Mandeville at Bayou Castine. As I write this the park's entrance fee is \$2 per car. You might check at the entrance to see if the nature trail has been reopened. ■



Hiking the Tammany Trace

by John Sevenair

Most of the cycling routes in this book follow roads, and are not suitable for hikers, who do not coexist well with cars and trucks. One exception to this is the Tammany Trace, which is a Rails-to-Trails conversion that doesn't allow motor vehicles. This largely straight, paved route is less satisfactory as a hiking trail than as a cycling route, but a horse trail parallels the paved trail in many places. It's muddy when the weather is wet, but brings you closer to the sec-

ond-growth pine forest that makes up much of the Trace corridor.

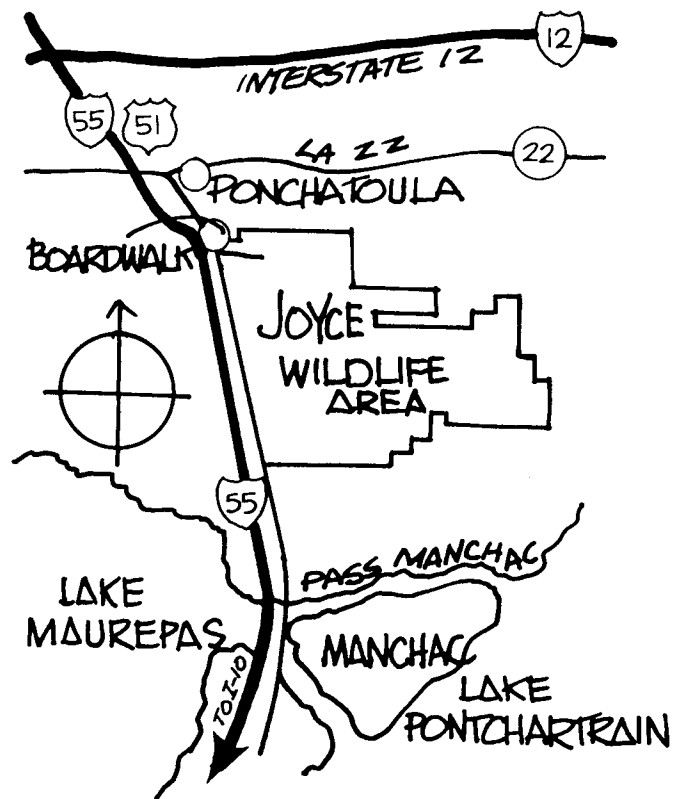
There are plans to connect the Tammany Trace, the Public Transit and Levee trails in this section, and other routes to make a long network around Lake Pontchartrain and the New Orleans metropolitan area. The fulfillment of these plans probably lies in the far future, but keep them in mind, applying political pressure and making donations when you can. ■

Joyce Wildlife Management Area

by John Sevenair

This trail is a boardwalk about a thousand feet long. From its parking lot it crosses railroad tracks and heads east through a cypress swamp to the edge of a marsh. Irises, cypress trees, floating plants, occasional egrets and herons, and (usually) a lack of crowding make this short trail one of the most pleasant in the area.

Getting there: Head north on I-55 from I-10, get off at the Manchac exit, turn north on old US 51, and go 7.2 miles to the parking lot on the right. If you're coming south, take Exit 22; the parking lot is right at the exit. (There is no exit from I-55 here if you're going north). This is a state Wildlife Management Area, so you'll need a Wild Louisiana Stamp (or a fishing or hunting license) to enter here. ■



Buccaneer State Park

John Sevenair

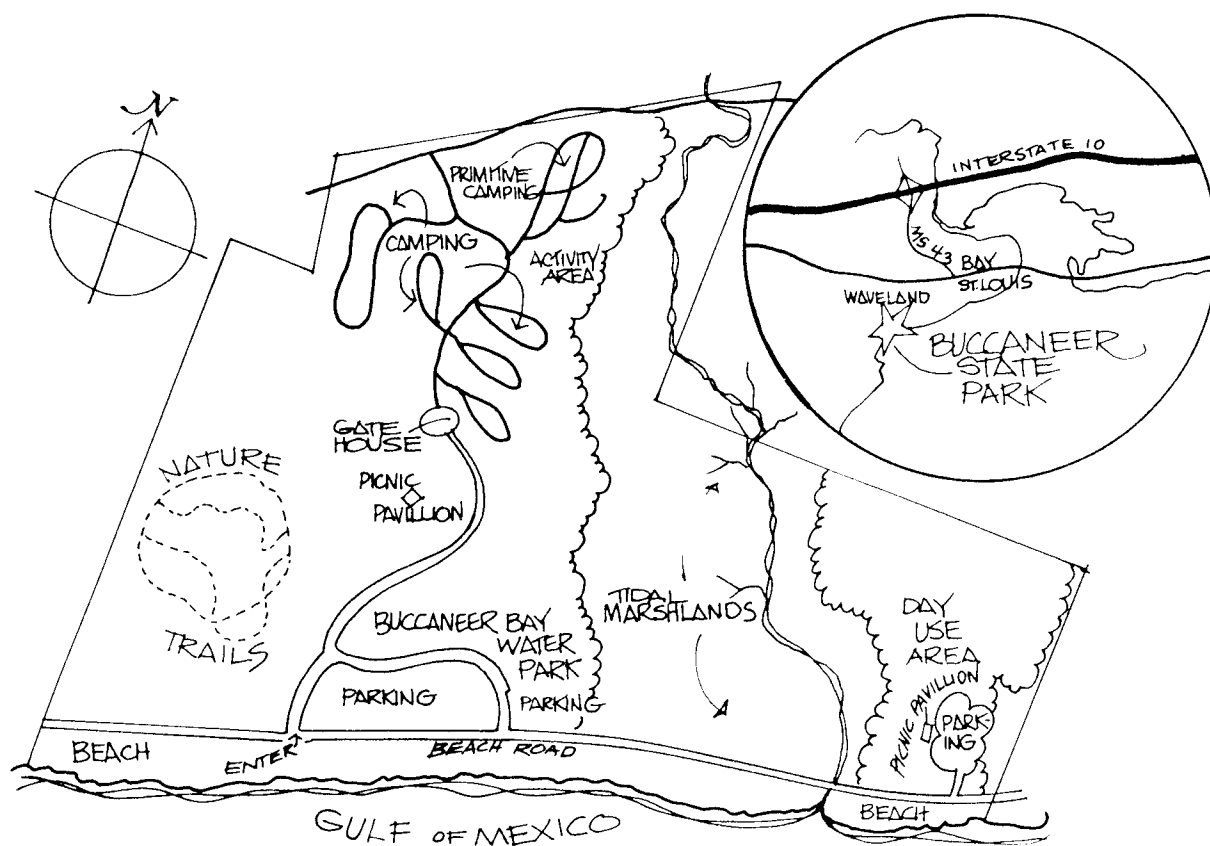
This Mississippi state park is well known for its water park. For the seeker of natural solitude this is not very promising, but the park has not one but two pleasant nature trails in addition to a large campground.

The beginning of the complex of trails in the main portion of the park is not far from the water park. The trailhead is less than a thousand feet from the Beach Road entrance, leading off to the west of the main park road. The hiking paths don't go very far in straight-line distance, but there is a network of them, totaling perhaps a mile in length. Most of the hiking area is open pine woodland, and there is a dock overlooking a marshy waterway to the northwest.

There is a day use and picnic area about half a mile east of the main part of Buccaneer State Park on Beach Road. The trails here are disused and not well marked. This means it's quieter

and less crowded than the main area of the park, and it's fun to figure out where the trails go. To find the trailhead, pass the picnic pavilion and turn left. The trails go through pine woods and follow the edges of a marsh. There are short segments of boardwalk across the marshes, in fact, but these are in poor and unsafe shape; it's best to stay off. There is also an observation tower. The area isn't large, so you can't get too lost if you pay attention to where you are. The total length of the trails here is a mile or so.

Getting there: From US 90 in Waveland, MS, follow the signs. Alternatively, you can follow the directions in the "New Orleans to Waveland, Mississippi, and return" cycling trip elsewhere in this book. You can find the address and phone number of the state park in the Directory. As I write this the park's entrance fee is \$2 per car. ■



Tunica Hills—Clark Creek Natural Area

revised by: Jackie Tamas, Baton Rouge Sierra Club, and Susan Egnew, New Orleans Group

The Clark Creek Natural Area, about 1200 acres, was established in January 1978 by the Mississippi Wildlife Heritage Committee. It is located about 20 miles north of St. Francisville in Mississippi. The principal attractions are the waterfalls. These average 15 ft high and are unique in this part of the country. The falls are surrounded by the tree-lined Tunica Hills, named for a community of Indians who once inhabited the area. In places the difference in elevation between the creek bottom and the hills approaches 200 feet, also unusual for this area.

The Clark Creek Natural Area has had trail improvements, with wooden steps at various steep grades. Due to overuse and misuse, overnight camping is no longer allowed, but you certainly can spend a delightful day hiking the creek, viewing the falls, observing the flora and fauna. Be sure to pack a lunch and carry plenty of water.

The Tunica Hills are composed of loess soils (windblown soils) which have been dissected into high ridges and narrow valleys; the creeks tumble over eroded ledges to form the falls. The high ridges are covered with lush deciduous vegetation; oaks, hickories, sweetgum, elms, and roseau cane are typical. In the damp coolness of the stream bed many more northern plant species are found—violets, jack-in-the-pulpit, trilliums, maidenhair and christmas ferns along the banks, numerous mosses, lichens, and mushrooms. Many "boulders", which are actually clay, dot the creek, particularly near the falls.

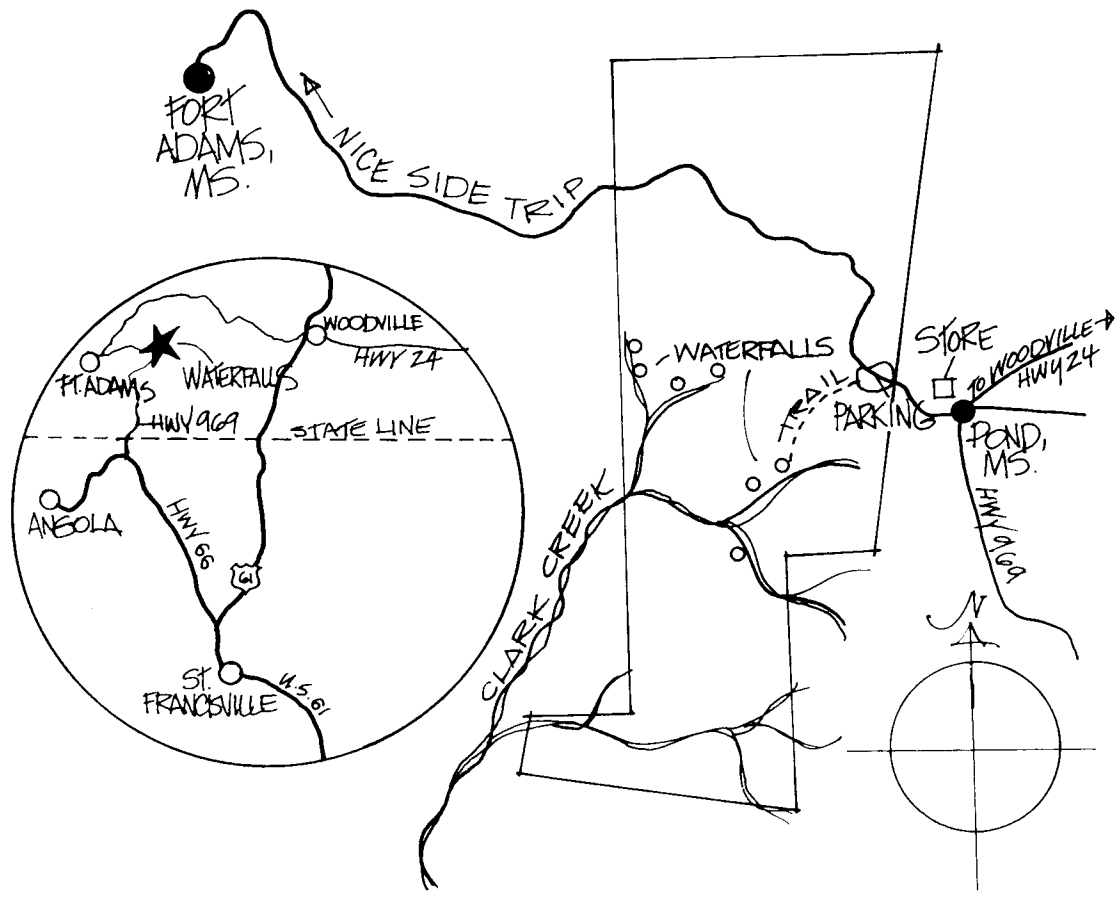
Spring is an excellent time to visit. Worm-eating, Swainson's, Hooded, Northern Parula, and Prothonotary Warblers are present and breeding. White-eyed and Red-eyed Vireos are frequently seen and heard, as well as Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and the resident chickadees, titmouse, Mockingbirds, cardinals, and woodpeckers. Orchard Orioles, Gray Catbirds, Swainson's Thrushes, and Summer Tanagers may also be seen or heard.

The trail leads west (back right) from the parking lot. After a steep descent to the top of the first waterfall, continue to follow the trail to steps leading down into the creek, and backtrack up the creek to the bottom of the waterfall. There are lots of big "boulders" here. For the most part the route follows the creek bed and side creeks to more waterfalls. Heed the hunting club signs across Clark Creek, avoid trespassing, continue to the right to other waterfalls. Because of the steepness of the trail and the "boulders" in the creek beds, hiking boots or good tennis shoes with some tread are recommended.

While you're in the area, you might want to explore the nature trails at the Audubon State Commemorative Area and the Nature Conservancy's Caroline Dormon Preserve. They're both on Hwy 965 - turn right just before entering St. Francisville. The Dormon Preserve may be reserved for group camping. We've been unable to find any other nice primitive camping area near the Tunica Hills.

Getting there: To reach Clark Creek, drive north from St. Francisville on US 61 for 3 miles to just past the sign for the town of Bains and turn left onto LA 66, the road to Angola Prison. Continue on LA 66 for 12 miles and turn right onto Hwy. 969, the road to Pinckneyville, MS. Drive for 7 miles to Wayside Road (the Clark Creek Natural Area direction sign is on the right side of the road), and turn left. On the left is a large pond and on the right up the hill is the Pond General Store (a small grocery store) with some historical paraphernalia. The store is a good place to stop for cold drinks and ice cream, especially after the hike. Drive 0.3 miles from Hwy. 969 to the dirt parking area on the left.

To reach St. Francisville from I-10, take I-110 north. Resist all temptation to exit each time you see an exit marked "U.S. 61" - stay on I-100 until it ends. It will put you right on 61 with a sign to point you in the direction of St. Francisville. ■



Port Hudson State Commemorative Area

by Jackie Tamas, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

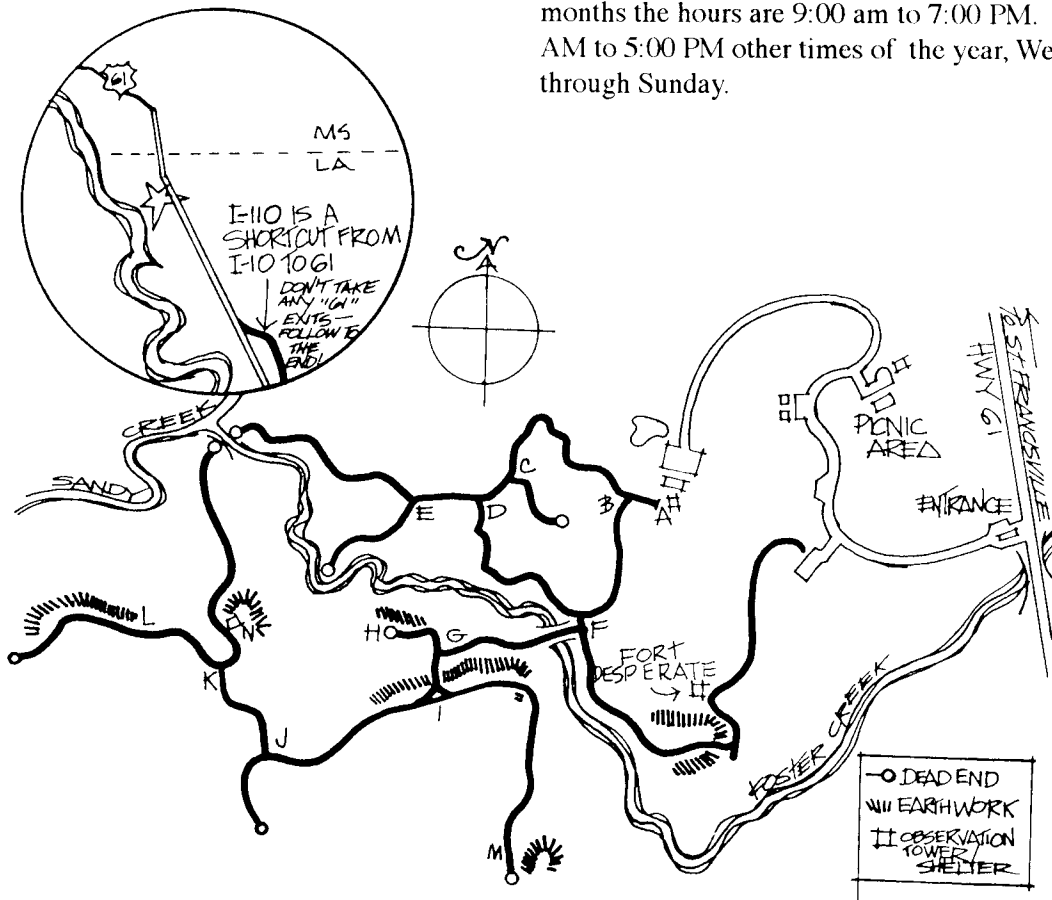
The Port Hudson State Commemorative Area is an important Civil War historical site, but it also has about 6 miles of trails winding through bluffs of loess (windblown) soils lined with pine and hardwood trees. The trails connect battery positions and earthworks of the northern portion of the longest siege, 48 days, of the Port Hudson battle. Flyers are available at the entrance and at the museum for more information about the battle.

Birds that can be seen and/or heard are woodpeckers (including pileated), cardinals, chickadees, titmouse, and yellow-rumped warbler (winter). During warm days snakes that might be seen are the southern hognose and the copperhead. The most common trees are the magnolia, various pines and oaks, sweet gum, sycamore, beech, tulip, hickory, and

maple. Spring flowers include trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit, crabapple, spring beauty, mamou, and woodland violets.

There is a large picnic area with tables (some covered), grills, water, and rest rooms. The museum has a small collection of artifacts, and the 15-minute film of the events of the Port Hudson battle is worth viewing. Rest rooms are available at the museum. Parking is located at the Fort Desperate trailhead (with a concrete walkway to Desperate) and at the museum (where another section of trails begins).

Getting there: The Commemorative Area is located about 14 miles north of Baton Rouge and 6.8 miles south of St. Francisville on the west side of US Hwy. 61. There is a small fee per person for adults aged 13-61, and entry is free for children under 12 and seniors over 62. During the spring and summer months the hours are 9:00 am to 7:00 PM. It's 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM other times of the year, Wednesday through Sunday. ■



Lake Fausse Pointe Nature Trail

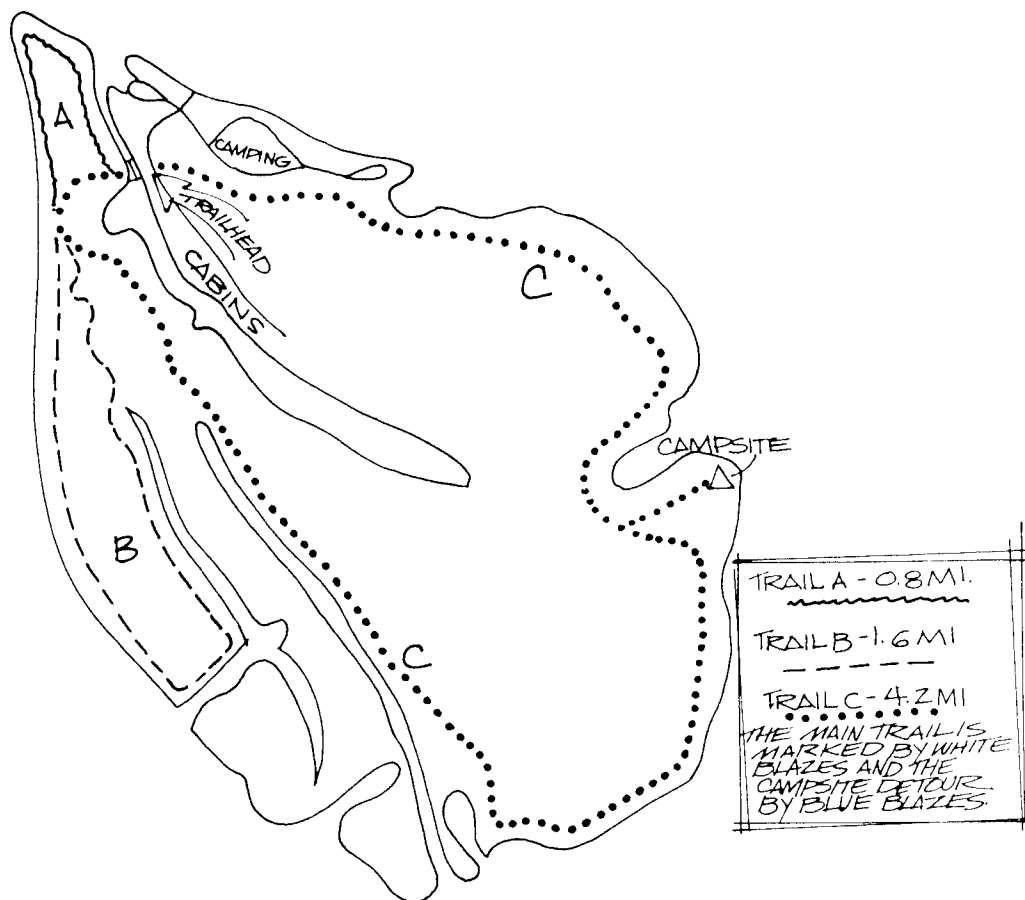
by John Sevenair

This peaceful system of trails is in Lake Fausse Pointe State Park, which is on the west side of the Atchafalaya Basin just outside the guide levee. There is a primitive campsite well away from the road, making the trails suitable for both day hiking and short backpacking trips.

The trail system begins in the developed area of the state park at a well-marked trailhead. The system consists of three loops. For almost all of their length the trails follow the shore of various offshoots of Lake Fausse Pointe. The land is flat and the trails are easy to follow. They run through peaceful woodlands full of the sounds of birds. In wet weather they can be sloppy, and you'll need mosquito repellent in all but the coolest weather.

Getting there: The state park is about 20 miles from St. Martinville. To reach the park, drive east from St. Martinville on LA Hwy 96. Turn right on LA Hwy 679 and then left on LA Hwy 3083, which reaches the Atchafalaya Basin protection levee at a T junction. Turn right here, following the pavement. The entrance to the park is half a mile beyond the boundary between St. Martin and Iberia Parishes. The pavement ends at the park entrance. The trailhead is straight ahead past the entrance station, just before you get to the park's store and cabins.

For more information write Lake Fausse Pointe State Park (see the Directory for contact information). The map below was provided by Lake Fausse Pointe State Park. ■



Chicot State Park and Louisiana State Arboretum

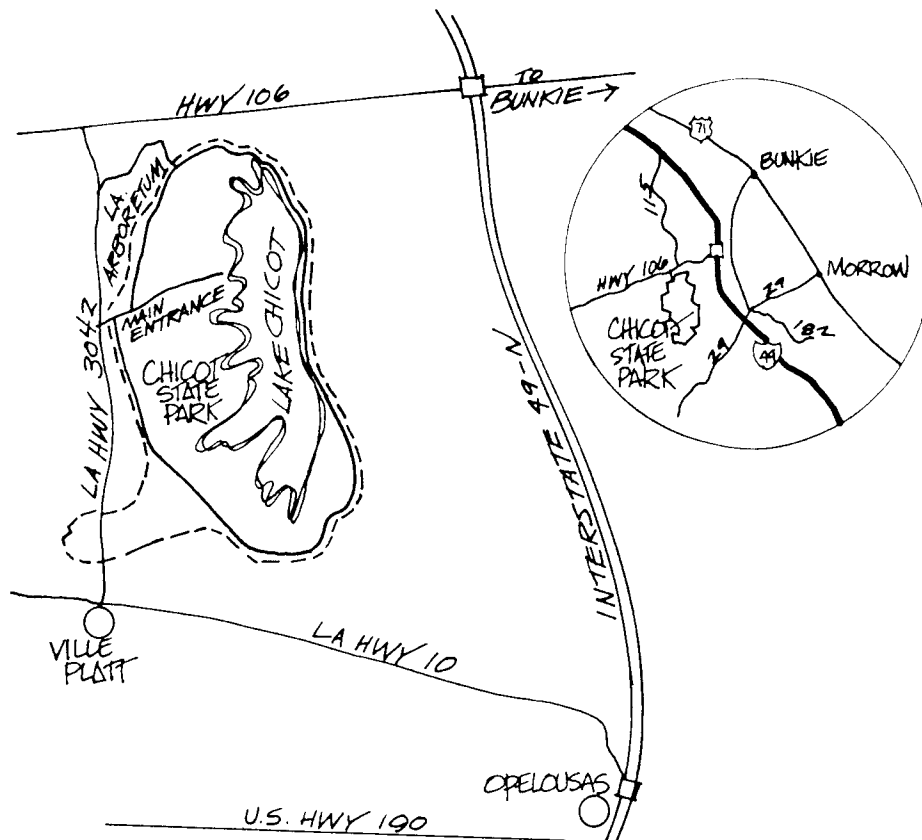
by Jackie Tamas, Baton Rouge Sierra Club
revised by Chris Resweber, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Chicot State Park consists of 6,000 acres of woodlands on rolling hills that surround a 2,000-acre lake. The Louisiana State Arboretum, which has a short trail in a 300-acre area depicting over 150 species of plant life native to Louisiana, is adjacent. The park provides recreation for the backpacker, hiker, camper, and canoeist, as well as facilities for fishing, boating, picnicking, swimming, group camping, and lodging. Various fees are charged depending on the activity and lodging. Boat rentals are available (no canoes). You can obtain brochures and trail maps at the park entrance.

The White Blaze Trail, approximately 15 miles long, circles the lake. The trail passes through rolling hills of hardwoods, some piney woods, and across small streams (most of which are dry except during rainy weather), and along

some old forest roads. You will see numerous varieties of hardwood trees (including magnolia, beech, and various oaks), palmetto at lower elevation, cane at higher elevations, and (of course) many cypress trees along the lake. In some areas pine trees have been cut down because of pine beetle infestation, and these areas have not yet recovered. The bottomlands may be somewhat soggy after rainy weather. Since no hunting is allowed in the park, fall and winter are good times of the year to hike. If the weather is still cool, early spring is exceptionally nice. As usual in Louisiana, warm and hot weather brings out chiggers, ticks, and mosquitoes, so be prepared with appropriate preventive powders and lotions.

Blazes along the entire trail may be hard to spot, as they blend in with the white lichens on



Indian Creek Recreation Area

By Thomas Junk and Chris Resweber, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

One of the less-known recreation areas, Indian Creek, is located within the Alexander State Forest near Woodworth, south of Alexandria between State Highways 165 and 71.

The 2.5 mile long hiking trail leads through mixed pine and hardwood forest, which can be accessed from the entrance station, camping area, and primitive area. This trails offers excellent access to habitats of a variety of animal species, including the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. The lake features a clean, grassy shoreline and relatively clean, open water, which makes it suitable for canoeing and swimming. Cypress swamps, typical of many Louisiana parks, are largely absent. The lake and campgrounds were found completely unused on several occasions, and its remote location makes this site ideal for stargazers.

The area features some of Louisiana's most

inviting primitive campsites, located at the 2,250 acre Indian Creek Lake. Lakefront sites are scenic and offer considerable privacy, with lush grassy campgrounds shaded by pine trees. The 71 campsites are available on a first come basis only, and lakefront sites fill quickly during weekends. Heavy rainfall will soak the red clay soil within minutes, making unpaved roads slippery and difficult to use. This should be considered when selecting campgrounds. Few amenities are available in the primitive area, and one bath house is barely within walking distance. You should bring everything you need.

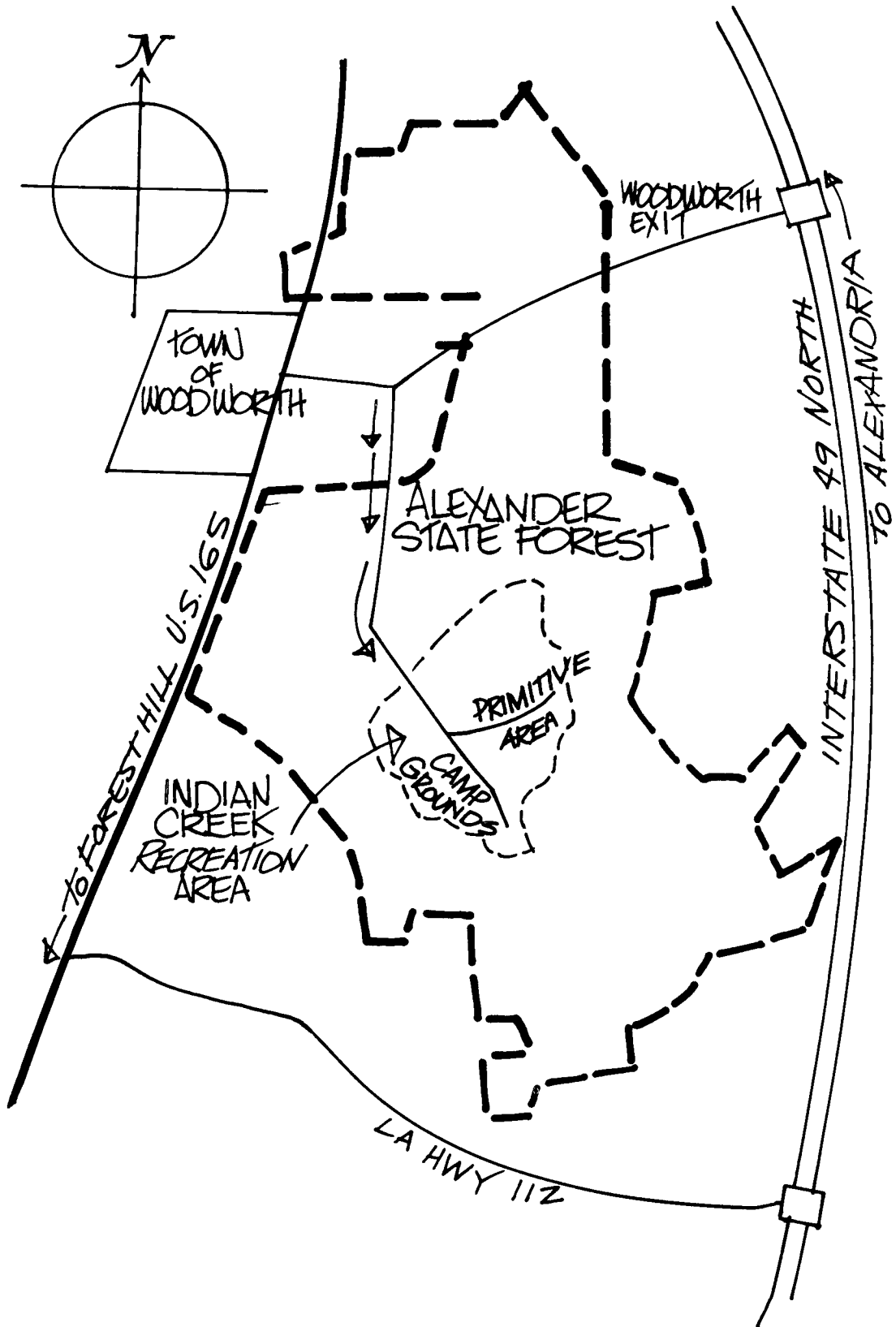
Getting there: To reach Alexander State Forest travel north on I-49 from Opelousas, and take either the LA 112 exit or the Woodworth exit. Watch for signs to the forest and recreation area. For more info see the Directory. ■

Hiking in Sherburne Wildlife Management Area

by Chris Resweber, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Hiking in the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area is available in limited ways: along the oil field roads, at the nature trail, on ATV roads, and there are foot trails (where signs say "no wheeled or track type vehicles") or you bring a compass and topo map and explore the area. Watch for snakes!

Getting there: See the map and directions in the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area writeup in the Marshes and Swamps Canoeing section. Reminder: This is a state Wildlife Management Area, so you'll need a Wild Louisiana Stamp (or a fishing or hunting license) to enter here. ■



Wild Azalea Trail

by Jackie Tamas; revised by Chris Resweber, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

The Evangeline Ranger District of Kisatchie National Forest, southwest of Alexandria, contains the longest trail system in Louisiana. The system includes the Wild Azalea Trail (WAT), the Kincaid Trail, and several spur trails.

The WAT itself is 31 miles long. It winds through rolling hills of hardwood bottoms and pine forest (including managed, cleared, and untouched areas), crosses a number of creeks (a few with water all year), and passes through some soggy and boggy ground. A number of forest roads intersect the trail, making shorter hikes possible. This trail is designated for foot travel only. Overnight camping is permitted as long as campsites are at least 50 feet from the trail. The route is fairly well marked with yellow blazes. Some areas may be a little confusing because of old logging roads, so look ahead for the next blaze if you are uncertain.

The WAT is particularly scenic when the pink and white wild azalea blossoms with a delicate aroma and the snowy-white flowers of dogwood are in bloom from about mid-March through mid-April. You may be lucky and see a deer or two, a wild turkey, various other birds (pileated and red-cockaded woodpeckers are specialties), and snakes, such as water moccasins around the creeks. You can often hear coyotes.

You can also find many varieties of plants and wildflowers depending on the time of the year and the area. Possibilities include longleaf pine (in a grass stage for several years before becoming a woody plant/tree), trillium, various mushrooms, pitcher plants, reeds, cane, sundew (a ground level insect-catching plant), French mulberry, huckleberry bushes (with edible berries in May if you can stand the heat and the chiggers), asters, violets, muscadine vines (possibly with grapes around Aug./Sept.), various ferns, and more.

Lamotte Creek is a popular (and somewhat over-used) camping area near the trail. It's best to have a secondary campsite planned. Tent sites are good further up or down the Creek away from the trail. There is easy hiking access to Lamotte Creek from the Forest Road (FR) 273 parking area; this hike takes less than an hour. If you want an all-day scenic hike to Lamotte, begin at the Valentine Lake trailhead, which

gives about an 11-mile hike. If you decide on the longer hike, take water with you; few of the creeks along the way have reliable year-round water. [Always treat or filter your creek water.] Lamotte Creek always has water. This creek is clear with a sandy bottom, and it lazily snakes through bottomland hardwoods—it is very pretty. There is also a Kincaid trailhead in this area.

The Primitive Camp Site just off FR 273 is excellent for groups. It has a large grassy area with pump water and outdoor toilets. From here there are easy hikes to Lamotte Creek and the Kincaid trails. The Kincaid trails skirt the Kincaid reservoir, and a boardwalk crosses one the lower fingers of the lake.

Probably the WAT between Valentine Lake and FR 273 is the most popular. If you don't want to encounter a lot of people, the southern sections of the trail seem to be less traveled, but some areas here are more scenic than others. If you hike the WAT from FR 273 south at LA 488 toward the Castor Creek Scenic Area, note that the trail passes through a portion of the U.S. Missile Range. If you camp in this section, unfortunately, some mornings you may be awakened by jets passing over and sounds of target practice.

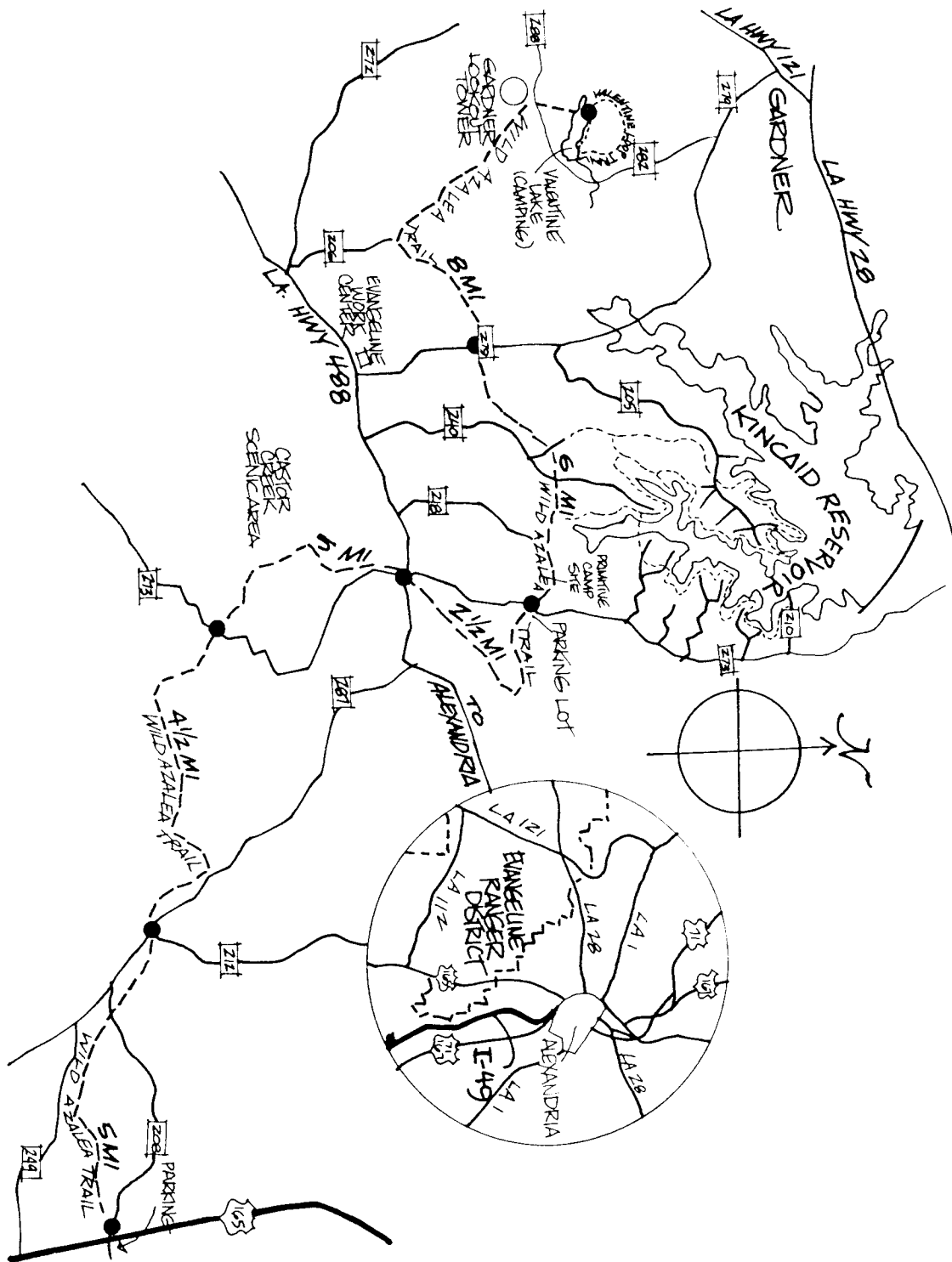
The Castor Creek Scenic Area is a 90-acre site with very large pines and bald cypress. Castor Creek itself is large compared to those between here and Valentine Lake; it flows into Brushy Creek. There is easy access (via a 0.5 mile hike) to Castor Creek from LA 488. Go south on FR 273 for about 2 miles to the trail crossing, park here, and follow the trail northwest.

Getting there: The WAT's trailheads are located at Valentine Lake and at the Woodworth Town Hall (one block west of US 165 in Woodworth). Parking is available at these spots as well as on FR 273 near the Primitive Camp Site. Other points on the WAT are accessible by various forest roads, which in turn can be reached from LA 488 and LA 28, as described above. Another parking possibility is at the intersection of LA 488 and south FR 273. (This one is small and not designated, but the rangers have not objected.) We are not aware of any auto break-ins at any of these sites.

There are car camping, picnicking, swimming,

and boating facilities at 2600-acre Kincaid Lake. This fee area is accessed by FR 205 from FR 279. Valentine Lake (46 acres), also a fee area, has facilities for camping, picnicking, canoeing, swimming, fishing,

hiking, bicycling, and nature study. For up-to-date or more detailed information, contact the Evangeline District Ranger at the address and phone number given in the Directory. ■



Kisatchie National Forest, Kisatchie Ranger District

National Red Dirt Wildlife Management Preserve

by Chris Resweber, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

Kisatchie National Forest is located northwest of Alexandria. To get there take I-49N to the La. Hwy 119/Derry exit. Go southwest on Hwy 119 about 5.5 miles. You will see signs before and at the entrance to the forest. You will enter the area via the Longleaf Vista Trail (a scenic driving trail), but there are plenty of things to do away from the road.

This area is one of many beautiful areas in our state. It lends itself to all types of people wanted to enjoy the outdoors: picnickers, backpackers, birders, fishermen, hunters, photographers, and those who just cruise the state sightseeing. The forest has spectacular views, amazing diversity of plant and wildlife, and a varied topography—"hills"!

There are several designated campgrounds in the forest: Kisatchie Bayou Recreational Area [water, not always potable, and pit toilets]; Lotus and Red Bluff [good water, and portable/pit toilets]; Cane, Corral, Coyote, and Oak Camps [primitive]

From Oct. 1 through Apr. 30 (hunting season),

roadside camping is permitted on some forest roads. From May 1 through Sept. 30 camping is not restricted. Campsites must be at least 100 ft from the centerline of the road.

Kisatchie Bayou Recreational Area is heavily used in the summer and on weekends. At low stage the bayou is used as a swimming hole and has sandstone boulders in the stream bed that draws people to check it out. This bayou also flows north, which is an oddity itself.

Another point of special interest is the bog area and I'm not sure of the location. The map located at Longleaf Vista about 3 miles from Hwy 119 should show the location. Half the fun is trying to find it. Happy hunting.

All the roads have something to offer, if you look closely. Please Note: Since hunting is permitted (Oct. 1 -Apr. 30) one must be careful and should wear hunter's orange. For current information and maps, contact the Kisatchie Ranger District (see the Directory). For hiking and backpacking trails in the forest, see the following two sections. ■

Caroline Dormon Trail

by Jackie Tamas, Baton Rouge Sierra Club

This area has very different terrain from the Evangeline Ranger District. Although you will hike through the usual pine and hardwood forests, some of the terrain is fairly rugged. Elevations range from 120 to 400 feet, and there are mesas, buttes, and sandstone outcrops.

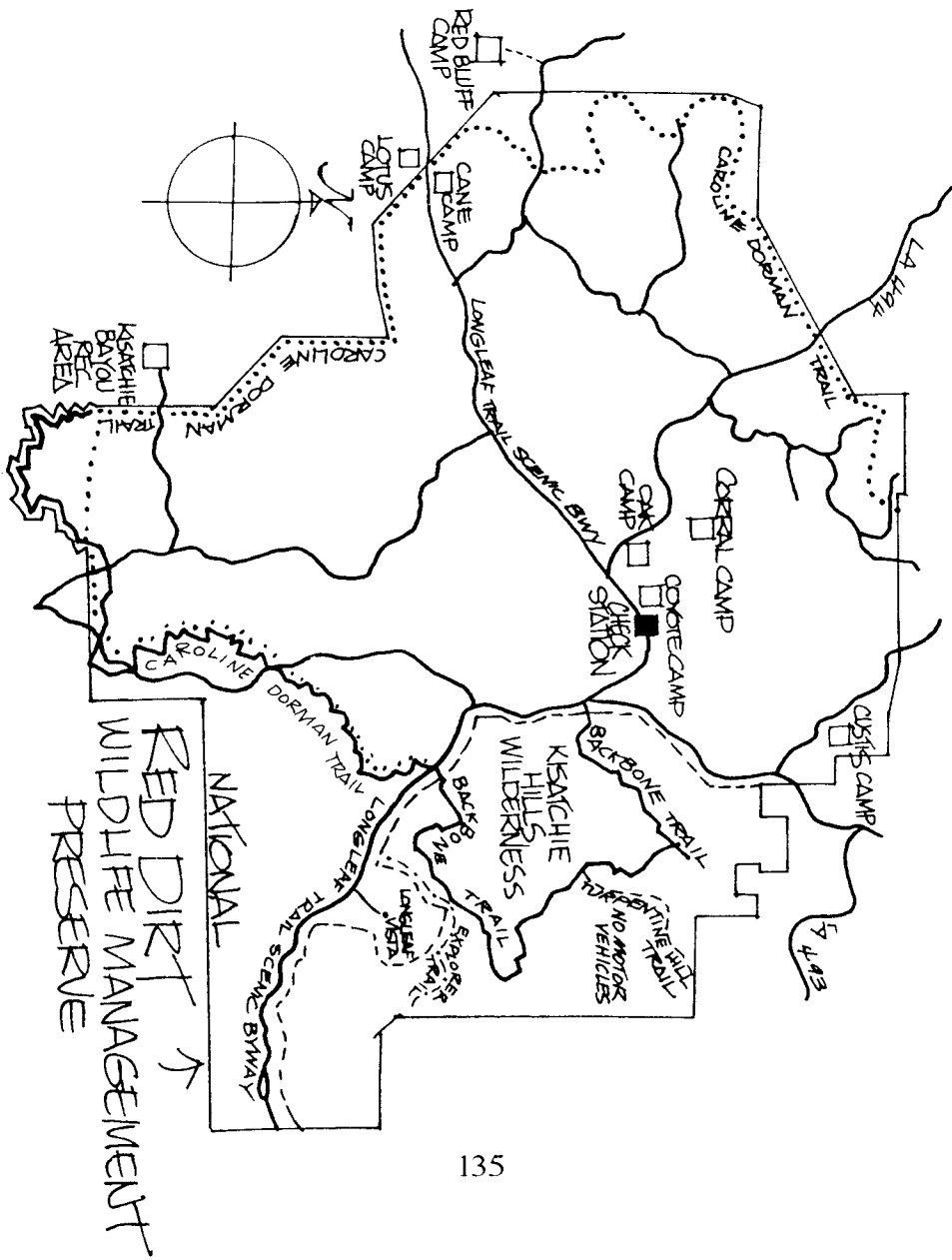
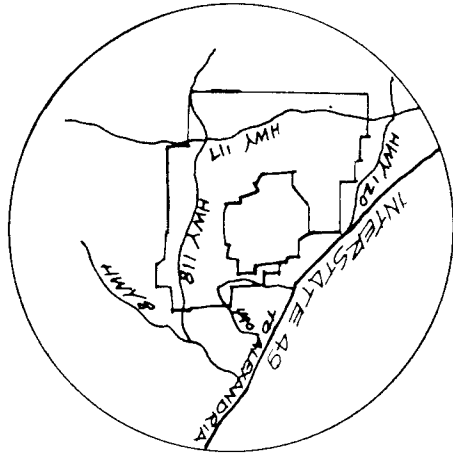
The recently developed Caroline Dormon Trail, used for both hiking and horse trips, is fifteen miles long. One trailhead is located on FR59 across from the Longleaf Trail area, and the other is at the Bayou Kisatchie campground. The trail crosses two forest roads, 321 and 360, which have small parking areas. There are no designated campsites along the trail.

It is blazed, and traverses both rolling hills and flat areas. It passes through both pine and hardwood forests, and follows sections of Bayou Kisatchie and

Bayou l'Ivrogne. It crosses a number of creeks and ravines, some of which are difficult, and through a few areas that are not well cleared. Of particular interest are the huge rock slabs, seemingly fitted together without mortar, seen on the bottom of one of the creeks and protruding from the bank (depending on the water level) into Bayou l'Ivrogne.

Many of the plants, wildflowers, and animals along the trail are the same species seen in the Evangeline District. Also, you may catch a glimpse of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers.

Getting there: To reach it exit I-49 north of Alexandria and take LA Hwy 119 south at Derry. Go 5.5 miles to FR59, the Longleaf Scenic Byway, and turn right. ■



Backbone Trail

by Adele Plauche, New Orleans Sierra Club

This recently cut trail is an extension of the Caroline Dormon Trail. Approximately 11 miles in length, the Backbone Trail can be added to the Dormon to create a 23-mile total trip. Horses are allowed here, as they are on the Caroline Dormon Trail.

The Backbone Trail was completed in 1989, and is not heavily traveled. It can at times be hard to find, and is sometimes obstructed by fallen trees or swamp. Also, if you begin on FS339, it goes for 2.5 miles through clearcut balds. After the Turpentine Spur, the trail once again returns to woodland area. It primarily follows the ridges (hence its name).

About midway through you will reach lovely sandstone bluffs, which have earned this area the nickname of the "Little Grand Canyon." Here you have spectacular views of the Kisatchie Hills. Soon after you pass the bluffs there is a beautiful stream, Bayou Cypré. Depending on rainfall this can be a good water source, but it's best to pack in water just in case. There are no designated camping areas, and camping is permitted anywhere along the trail.

From the stream back to the Scenic Byway the trail passes numerous swampy areas, some of which can be difficult to maneuver in. The trail is generally marked with orange three-inch circles, but again is

sometimes hard to follow. This is not a trail for beginners, and you may need to pull out the old compass from time to time. Despite the clearcut areas and a few trail marker difficulties, this is an exceptionally beautiful and rugged area, one which the adventurous should take advantage of.

Be sure to carry in all your water, since there are only a few creeks or streams here.

Getting there: You can start at the Longleaf Scenic Byway (FS59) near the junction of FS329. The Caroline Dormon Trail goes off to the southwest here, and the Backbone Trail heads to the northeast on the other side of the road. The only other access is on FS339, where there is a parking area.

The Backbone Trail can also be done on its own as a loop. The two access points, FS339 and the Scenic Byway, are about two and a half miles apart by road, and this is easy enough to walk. There is also access to the trail off the Scenic Byway via the Explorer Trail near the picnic area. The trail also has two one-mile spurs that you can explore along the way. The topo maps for the area are the Gorum and Bayou l'Ivroigne quadrangles. This book's map accompanies the Kisatchie Ranger District and Caroline Dormon Trail writeups on the previous page. ■

The Gulf Islands

Victory in one of the local Sierra Club's first conservation battles came in late 1978, when almost the entire area of two of Mississippi's Gulf Islands was designated as wilderness by act of Congress. To many club members these two islands offer the finest wilderness experience in the area. Their isolation, unusual bird and plant life, and unique character are now substantially protected from development scheming.

The offshore islands are part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore. The western half of Ship Island, with its historic fort and ferry service, is the most accessible. The two halves of Ship were separated by Hurricane Camille in 1965. The eastern half has abandoned quarantine facilities, trees, and good spots for camping. Horn and Petit Bois, the two wilder-

ness islands, are to the east of Ship. Deer Island is within canoeing distance of Biloxi, and is partly public land. The two halves of Ship Island and Deer Island are described in this section. Horn Island is a sea kayaking trip at the end of the canoeing section.

Getting there: Most of the islands can be reached only by sea kayak or charter or private boat. All boaters should take precautions. Mississippi Sound is relatively shallow and quickly becomes choppy in a summer squall or winter norther. Northerners make the crossing difficult to impossible from time to time during the period from November to May. Always get the latest weather before departing, and carry a radio to stay up to date. In cases like this you can violate the usual Sierra Club rule against carrying a radio on an outing. ■

Western Ship Island

by John Sevenair

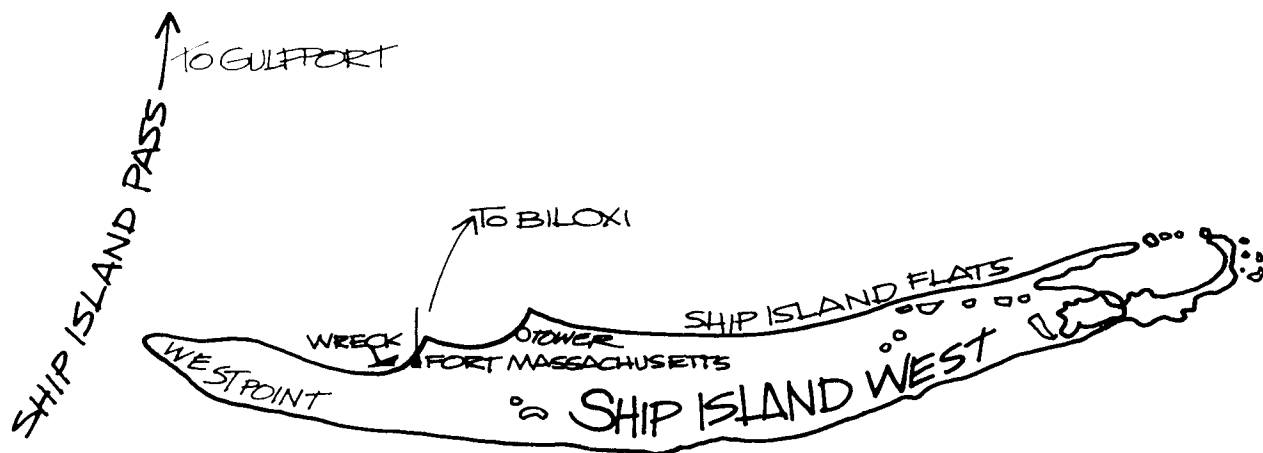
The ferry takes you to a point near historic Fort Massachusetts. Most visitors stay close to the landing area and its few tourist amenities. You can cross the island on a boardwalk here to reach the least-polluted ocean beaches in the northern Gulf, and many do.

A hiker can find some solitude. The island is surrounded by sandy beaches with grassy marsh in the center. Unlike the other Gulf islands, Western Ship has no trees, which makes it the least interesting one. It's possible to walk around the island in a few hours, with a few stops for swims in the surf or a

picnic lunch. There are plenty of birds.

The Park Service does not permit overnight camping on the island. In summer be prepared for heat and bring protection against the sun. There is almost no shade, and the direct sun and reflections off the white sand and water can burn you very seriously.

Getting there: The western half of Ship Island is the only one of Mississippi's offshore islands with scheduled ferry service. The boats run in spring, summer, and fall. Check the Directory for addresses and phone numbers. ■



Eastern Ship Island

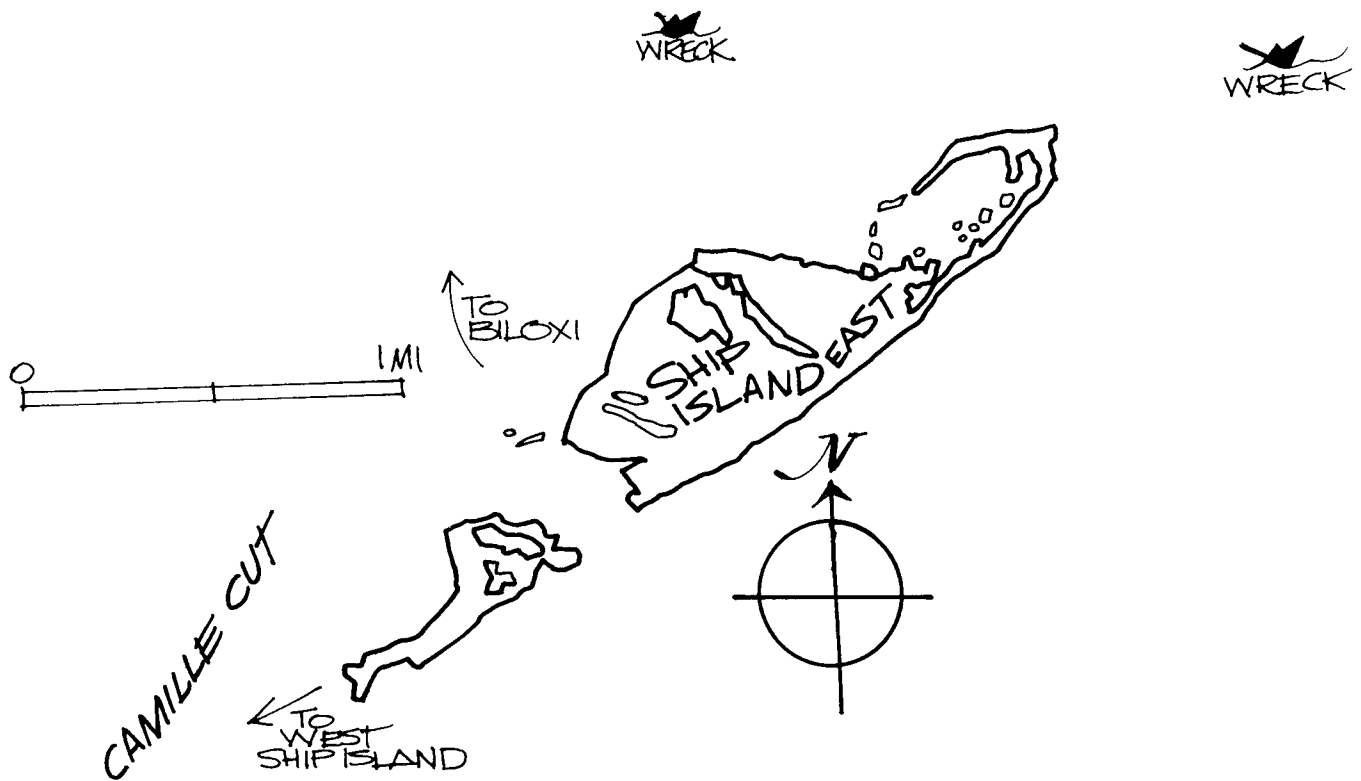
Stuart I. Phillips

When Hurricane Camille cut Ship Island in two in 1966, everyone expected the halves to reunite with the passage of time. This has not happened yet, and does not seem to be happening. The passage between the two halves of the old island is known locally as the "Camille Cut," although this name is not on the charts. The west end of the island has the fort, dock, and ranger station. The east end is uninhabited, though there was once a quarantine station here.

Passage is by private or charter boat only. The best approach is from the north near the middle of the island. No real channel exists, but there is an abandoned channel to the old quarantine station. The channel is marked by a pile of black rocks on shore.

Only a dinghy or other shallow craft should make this last run. Deep draft vessels should stay well offshore in ten feet or more of water. Do not attempt to land in a norther.

Ashore, the island is a deserted paradise. Much less often visited than the others, it offers excellent camping, swimming on its Gulf beach, birding, and fishing. There is a well with excellent water. Trees around the fresh-water lagoon offer summer shade and winter protection from the wind. A recent trip was highlighted by the sighting of herons, egrets, osprey, shorebirds, and warblers. Surf casting with dead shrimp or squid was very productive from the south shore. ■



Deer Island

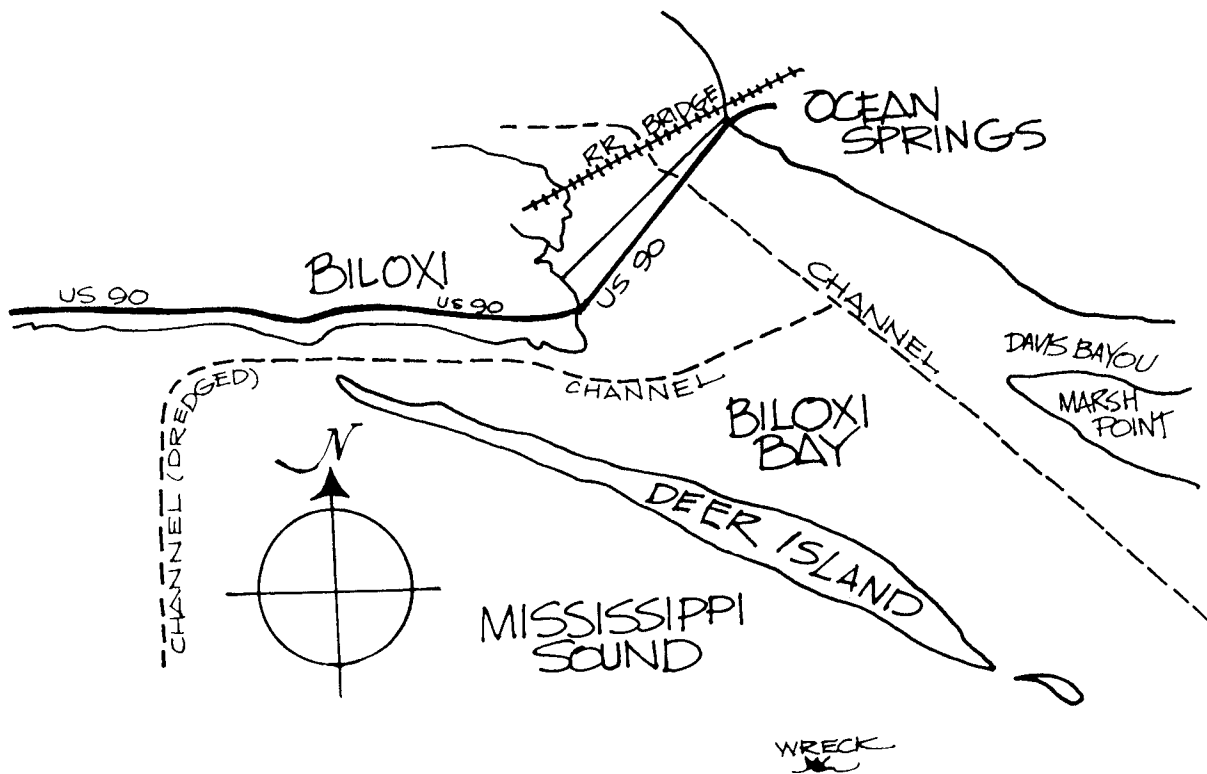
Stuart I. Phillips

This often-overlooked gem is only a stone's throw from the Biloxi small boat harbor. It is easily accessible by dinghy or canoe, and outboard runabouts can also land. The west end of the island is private, and development schemes will threaten until this ends. (The most recent threat is from casino developers.) The east end is owned by the state. A park of some kind has been proposed, but no action has been taken at this writing.

Even though this island is only a mile or so from the lights of Biloxi, the bird life is the equal of Horn or Ship. During the fall and spring migration a warbler watch in the oaks in the middle of the island is

rewarding. The best time is about noon on a clear spring day. Flowers filled with hummingbirds abound between the oaks and the east end. Gull-billed Terns occur in the lagoon on the east end. Shorebirds and alligators fill the salt marsh. Rabbits and raccoons occur frequently. Osprey fly overhead.

Deer Island is the only one of the barrier islands that is sheltered from a north wind. It therefore makes a great first trip, especially if one is not familiar with the weather in spring or fall or one does not have access to large enough boats to cross the often treacherous Mississippi Sound to Horn or East Ship. No fresh water is available on the island. ■



Directory



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Directory

This is a listing of canoe and bicycle clubs, canoe outfitters, guide services, state and national parks and forests, and full service outdoor stores in the area covered by this trail guide. We do not promise that the list is either complete or correct, though we tried. Neither do we know how good the products and services offered by all of the organizations below are, though many of them are tried and true friends of the outdoors and of the people who love them. We just hope you find it useful.

The listing is mostly by location. If you want to go on a given river, trail, or park, look that up in the list. If you live in New Orleans or Baton Rouge and want to know what's available there, look up your city's name. If you find that something is missing, incomplete, or incorrect, please write us at "Trail Guide, New Orleans Sierra Club, P. O. Box 19469, New Orleans, LA 70179" and set us straight.

Adventure Sports see listing under New Orleans or the display ad in this section.

Alligator Bayou

Alligator Bayou Bait Shop and Canoe Rental, 35019 Alligator Bayou Road, Prairieville, LA 70769; phone (504) 642-8297. Canoe rental, swamp tours, Cajun music.

Backpacker, The see listing under Baton Rouge or the display ad in this section.

Barataria Preserve Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve

National Park Service, 7400 Highway 45, Marrero, LA 70072, phone (504) 589-2330. Information on water levels and trail status.

Earl's Bar and Canoe Rental, Rte 1 Box 311A, Marrero, LA 70072; phone (504) 689-3271. Canoe rental on Hwy 45 just outside of park.

Baton Rouge

THE BACKPACKER

The Backpacker, 7656 Jefferson Highway, Baton Rouge, LA 70809; phone (504) 925-2667. For more information see our display ad in this section.

Bayou Haystackers Canoe Club, 25125 Bickham Road, Jackson LA 70748; phone (504) 654-5224. This club conducts canoe trips.

Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, 17158 Chef Menteur Hwy, New Orleans LA 70129; phone (504) 254-4490.

Big Biloxi

River Right Canoe and Camp, 363 Jess Williams Road, Poplarville, MS 39470; phone (601) 795-0814.
r2c2nu@rocketmail.com. Canoe rental; canoes trailered to area streams.

Black Creek

Black Creek Canoe Rental, P. O. Box 213, Brooklyn, MS 39427; phone (601) 582-8817. Canoe rental and shuttle service, shuttle service for backpackers on the Black Creek Trail, information on water levels in Black Creek.

U. S. Forest Service, Box 248, Wiggins, MS 39577; phone (601) 928-4422. Maps, hunting season information, etc.

Bogue Chitto River

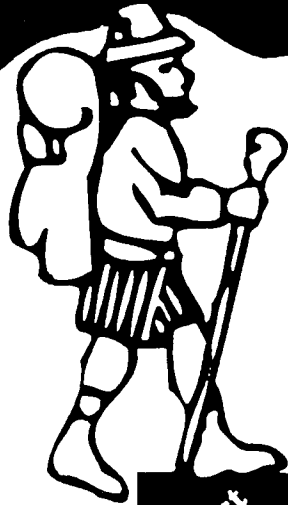
Ryals Canoe and Tube Rentals, Dogwood Trail, McComb, MS 39648; phone (601) 684-4948. Canoe and tube rentals.

Riverview Grocery, 9022 Hwy. 98 East, McComb, MS 39648; phone (601) 249-3670. Canoe rentals, store.

Bogue Chitto Choo Choo, Dogwood Trail, McComb, MS 39648; phone (601) 249-3788. Canoe rentals, campground (reservations).

Canoe and Trail Outpost, Dillon Bridge

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Road, Tylertown, MS 39667; phone (601) 876-6964. Campground, snack bar, canoe rentals, shuttle service.

Bogue Chitto Canoeing and Tubing, 10237 River Road, Bogalusa, LA 70427, off Hwy. 16 in Isabel, LA; phone (504) 735-1173. Canoe rental and campground.

Bowie Creek/Bowie River: There are no outfitters presently operating here. Seminary Canoe Rental (see Okatoma Creek) and River Right Canoe and Camp (Wolf River) will rent and shuttle for large groups only.

Canoe and Trail Adventures see listing under New Orleans.

Chicot State Park, Rt. 3, Box 494, Ville Platte LA 70586; phone 318-363-2503.

Crescent City Cyclists, P. O. Box 6095, Metairie, LA 70009.

Flint Creek Water Park, Rt. 3, Box 309, Wiggins, MS 39577; phone (601) 928-3051.

Fontainebleau State Park, P. O. Box 152, Mandeville, LA 70448, (504) 624-4443.

Global Wildlife Center: Phone (504) 796-3585

Gulf Islands National Seashore, 3500 Park Road, Ocean Springs, MS 39564; Davis Bayou Campground phone (601) 875-0823. Maps and information about Horn, Petit Bois, and Ship Islands.

Indian Creek Recreation Area: Contact the Recreation Area Management at (318) 487-5058 or Alexander State Forest Headquarters at (318) 445-4511.

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, see Barataria Preserve Unit of Jean . . .

Kisatchie National Forest, see also Wild Azalea Trail.

Kisatchie Ranger District, P. O. Box 2120, Natchitoches, LA 71457; phone (318) 352-2568. Maps and information about the National Red Dirt Management Preserve, the Kisatchie Hills Wilderness, and the Caroline Dormon Trail.

Lake Fausse Pointe State Park, Route 5, Box 5648, St. Martinville, LA 70582; phone (318) 229-4764.

Lake Maurepas

Lake Maurepas Society, Ben Taylor, (504) 542-8017.

Louisiana Nature and Science Center, see listing under New Orleans.

Louisiana State Arboretum, Rt. 3, Box 494, Ville Platte LA 70586; phone 318-363-2403.

Magee's Creek

Canoe and Trail Outpost, Dillon Bridge Road, Tylertown, MS 39667; phone (601) 876-6964. Campground, snack bar, canoe rentals, shuttle service.

New Orleans

ADVENTURE SPORTS

Adventure Sports, 333 I-10 Service Road N, Metairie, LA 70005; phone (504) 835-1932. Equipment and information. For more information see our display ad in this section.

Canoe and Trail Adventures, Byron Almquist, 6967 General Haig, New Orleans LA 70124; phone (504) 283-9400. Guided trips.

Mild to Wild Tours, Eric Bajon, 61 Dove St., New Orleans LA 70124; phone (504) 283-4351. www.mild2wild.com. Guided trips.

Louisiana Nature and Science Center, New Orleans, LA 70187-0610; phone 246-LNSC (5672). Trails; book and gift shop.

Okatoma Creek

Okatoma Outdoor Post, Route 2 Box 226C, Sanford, MS 39479; phone (601) 722-4297. Canoe rental, campground, store.

Seminary Canoe Rental, Route 1 Box 294, Seminary, MS 39479; phone (601) 722-4301. Canoe rental and store.

Percy Quin State Park, Route 3, McComb, MS 39648; phone (601) 684-3938.

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Port Hudson: For more information, call the Office of State Parks, (504) 342-8111.

Public Transit Hikes

Regional Transit Authority, (504) 569-2700. Public transit route maps and schedule information, New Orleans and vicinity.

Red Creek

Perk Beach Canoe Rental, US Hwy 49, Perkinston, MS 39573; phone (601) 795-0814. r2c2nu@rocketmail.com. Canoe rental and campground.

Red Creek Canoe Rental, Perkinston, MS 39573; phone (601) 928-7007. Canoe rental and campground.

U. S. Forest Service (see under Black Creek).

Sierra Club

SIERRA CLUB

Delta Chapter (State of Louisiana): P. O. Box 19469, New Orleans, LA 70179; phone (504) 482-9566. Regional groups headquartered in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, the Slidell-Mandeville area, and Shreveport may also be reached at this address.

National: 730 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

See also page v at the front of this book.

Ship Island

Pan Isles, Inc., 240 Iroquois St., Biloxi, MS 39530. Phones: (601) 436-6010 (evenings), (601) 864-1014 (Gulfport ticket office), (601) 432-2197 (Biloxi ticket office). Ferry service. Also see Gulf Islands National Seashore.

Strong River

D'Lo Water Park, P. O. Box 278, D'Lo, MS 39062; phone (601) 847-4310.

Tammany Trace

Tammany Trace Foundation, 21411 Koop Drive, Mandeville, LA 70448; 1-800-43-TRACE.

Tangipahoa River

North Tangi Beach Canoe Rental, 14389 Hwy 16 E, Amite, LA 70422; phone (504) 748-7239. Canoe rental, snack bar.

Tuxachanie Trail, U. S. Forest Service (see under Black Creek).

Wild Azalea Trail

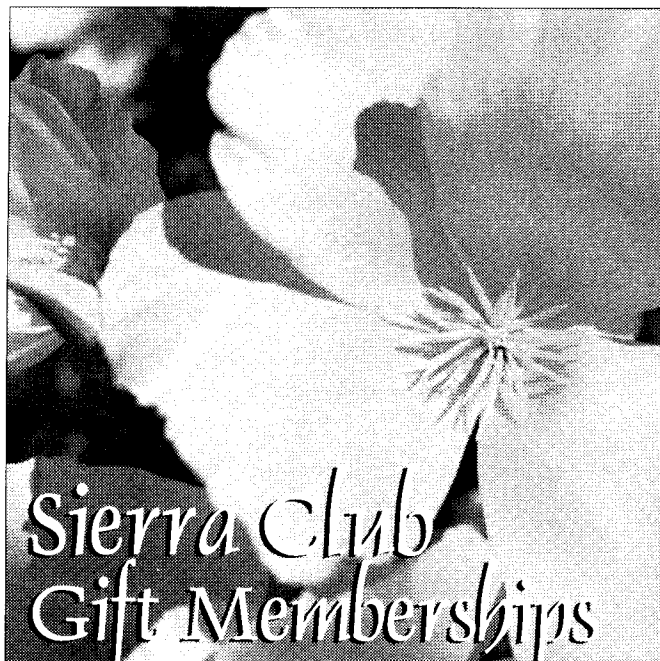
Evangeline Ranger District, 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, LA 71301, phone (318) 445-9396. Maps and information about the trail.

Wolf River

Upper Section: River Right Canoe and Camp, 363 Jess Williams Road, Poplarville, MS 39470; phone (601) 795-0814. r2c2nu@rocketmail.com. Canoe rentals, canoes trailered to area streams.

Lower Section: Wolf River Canoes, 21652 Tucker Road, Long Beach, MS 39560; phone (601) 452-7666. Canoe rentals, campground. ■





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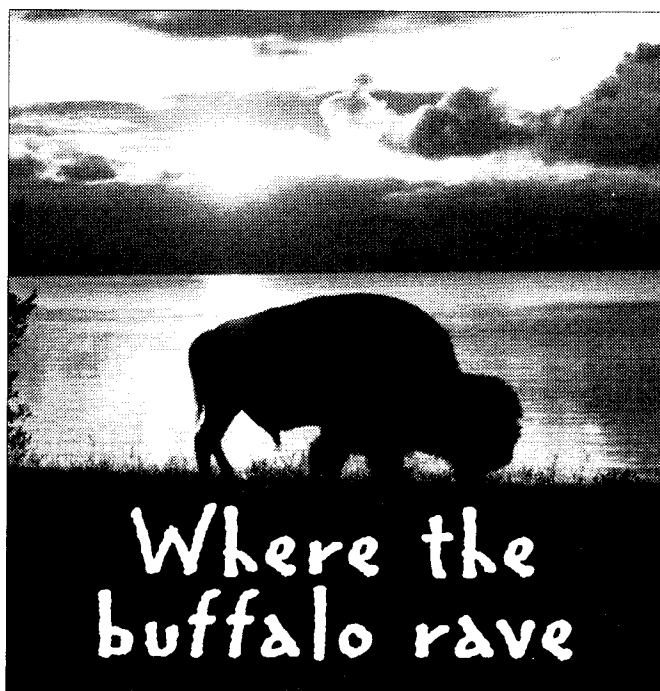
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Codes: C, cycling; H, hiking and backpacking; I, introductory or commentary; K, sea kayaking; M, marsh and swamp canoeing; R; river canoeing. Abbreviations: NF, National Forest; NP, National Park; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; SP, State Park; WMA, Wildlife Management Area.

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Happy Trails!

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