



Turkey Creek Unit Trails



Centrally located in the preserve, the Turkey Creek Unit offers over 20 miles of trails. Dense woodlands of beech, magnolia, and loblolly pine are abundant, but hikers will also find damp bogs of carnivorous plants, arid sandylands with prickly pear cactus and yucca, and cypress sloughs draped with Spanish moss. Several side trails and many trailheads make this a great unit for first-time visitors and repeat hikers alike.

Kirby Nature Trail

Inner Loop: 1.5 mi
Cypress Loop: 0.3 mi
Outer Loop: 2.5 mi



A great introduction to Big Thicket! The Kirby Nature Trail features 3 loops: inner loop (1.5 mi), outer loop (2.5 mi), and cypress loop (0.3 mi). Both the inner and outer loops lead to Village Creek, where a bridge provides scenic views. Don't miss the cypress loop, one of the best places in the preserve to see old-growth bald cypress trees. All loops take hikers through thickets of dense, dimly-lit woods.

Pitcher Plant Trail

1-mi loop



Travel through the longleaf pine upland into a wetland savannah and find a large bog of carnivorous pitcher plants and sundews. Though the savannah appears to be very lush, the soil here is nutrient-poor. Carnivorous plants like these supplement their diet with the nutrients they absorb by digesting insects. The first ¼ mile of the trail from the parking lot to the pitcher plant bog is paved. The full trail makes a one-mile loop that intersects with the Turkey Creek Trail at two locations.

Sandhill Loop Trail

1.3-mi loop*



In the thicket, a slight change in soil and elevation can create a dramatic change in ecology. The 1.3-mile Sandhill Loop highlights this simple change. Elevated areas of sandy soil, remnants of ancient sandbars, create a much drier environment than the surrounding lowlands. Since water percolates quickly through this sand, only plants adapted to drier conditions can grow in this area. Look for prickly pear cactus and yucca growing among the longleaf pines along the trail.

*Getting to the loop requires:
5-mi RT hike via Kirby or
9-mi RT hike via Turkey Creek
(RT = roundtrip)

Turkey Creek Trail

17 mi one-way



Perfect for motivated through-hikers and first time backcountry campers, this 17-mile trek from one end of the Turkey Creek Unit to the other provides a close look at the diversity of the preserve. Intersected by multiple roads and trails, this 17-mile adventure can easily be broken into short trail sections. Be aware that significant rain can cause standing water, swollen drainages, and flooded creeks along the trail.

Hiking Tips

- Let someone know where you are going and when to expect you back.
- Drink plenty of water and always bring more water than you think you might need.
- Bring insect repellent and wear sunscreen.
- Watch out for snakes.

Backcountry camping (backpacking) is allowed in the Turkey Creek Unit year-round with a free camping permit, available at the visitor center.

More Information

**Big Thicket National Preserve
Visitor Center**
6102 FM 420
Kountze, TX 77625
409-951-6700
www.nps.gov/bith

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Turkey Creek Unit

