National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Thicket
National Preserve

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Superintendent's Compendium
Of Designations, Closures, Permit Requirements and Other Restrictions Imposed Under Discretionary Authority.

Approved:

In accordance with regulations and the delegated authority provided in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations ("36 CFR"), Chapter 1, Parts 1-7, authorized by Title 16 United States Code, Section 3, the following provisions apply to all lands and waters administered by the National Park Service, within the boundaries of Big Thicket National Preserve. Unless otherwise stated, these regulatory provisions apply in addition to the requirements contained in 36 CFR, Chapter 1, Parts 1-7.

Written determinations, which explain the reasoning behind the Superintendent's use of discretionary authority, as required by Section 1.5(c), appear in this document identified by italicized print.

36 CFR §1.4 – WHAT TERMS DO I NEED TO KNOW?

(a) The following definitions shall apply to this chapter, unless modified by the definitions for a specific part or regulation:

The term "unmanned aircraft" means a device that is used or intended to be used for flight in the air without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the device, and the associated operational elements and components that are required for the pilot or system operator in command to operate or control the device (such as cameras, sensors, communication links). This term includes all types of devices that meet this definition (e.g., model airplanes, quadcopters, drones) that are used for any purpose, including for recreation or commerce.

36 CFR §1.5 – VISITING HOURS, PUBLIC USE LIMITS, CLOSURES, AND AREA DESIGNATIONS FOR SPECIFIC USE OR ACTIVITIES

36 CFR §1.5 (a)(1): The following visiting hours and public use limits are established for all or for the listed portions of the park, and the following closures are established for all or a portion of the park to all public use or to a certain use or activity.

Visiting Hours:

Big Thicket National Preserve is open 24 hours per day with the following exceptions:

- The Preserve Visitor Center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 7 days a week, except for the following holidays Thanksgiving Day, December 25th, New Year's Day, and otherwise posted.

- The Preserve Visitor Center is open based upon personnel availability.

- All areas designated as DAY USE AREAS are closed between sunset and sunrise for public use unless designated by posting.

- During hunting season, hunters with a Big Thicket Hunting Permit may use the DAY USE AREAS from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset to access designated hunting areas.

- Persons launching/retrieving boats or bank fishing may use DAY USE AREAS adjacent to the Preserve's waterways for those purposes 24 hours a day. Boat launching with trailers is limited to designated boat ramps as listed in this Compendium in section 3.8(a)(2).

The following areas have been designated as DAY USE AREAS:

Beaumont Unit:
Confluence Day Use Area, Boat Ramp, and Parking Area
Four Oaks Day Use and Parking Area
Lakeview Sandbar Day Use Area and Parking Area
Edgewater Drive Day Use Area and Parking Area
Cook's Lake Road Day Use Area and Parking Area

Beech Creek Unit:
Beech Woods Trail Day Use Area and Trailhead

Big Sandy Creek Unit:
Woodlands Trail Day Use Area and Trailhead
Big Sandy Horse Trail Day Use Area and Parking Area
Big Sandy Creek Day Use Area and Parking Area
Sunflower Road Hunter Parking Areas
Beaver Slide Trail Day Use Area

Hickory Creek Savannah Unit:
Sundew Trail Day Use Area and Trailhead

Lance Rosier Unit:
Little Rock Road Hunter Parking Area
Cotten Road Hunter Parking Area
Teel Road Hunter Parking Area
"Bridge to No Where" Hunter Parking Area

Lower Neches River Corridor Unit:
Highway 96 Day Use Area, Evadale Bridge

Menard Creek Corridor Unit:
Holly Grove Day Use Area and Parking Area
Hoop n' Holler Day Use Area
Birdwatcher's Trail Day Use Area and Parking Area

Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit:
Franklin Lake Day Use Area and Parking Area
Timber Slough Road Hunter Parking Areas
Timber Slough Road Day Use Area, located at the terminus of Timber Slough Road at the Neches River
Potato Patch Lake Day Use Area and Parking Area
Sandlot Lake Day Use Area and Parking Area

Ard Lake Day Use Area and Parking Area
Youngblood Road Hunter Parking Area

Turkey Creek Unit:
Kirby Nature Trailhead (Staley Cabin) Day Use Area and Parking Area
Turkey Creek Day Use Area and Trailhead on the south side of FM 1943
Turkey Creek Day Use Area and Trailhead on south side of Gore Store Road
Turkey Creek Day Use Area and Trailhead on the north side of Gore Store Road
Pitcher Plant Trail Day Use Area and Trailhead
Turkey Creek Day Use Area and Trailhead on the south side of Hester Bridge Road
Gardner Cemetery Parking Area

Upper Neches River Corridor Unit:
McQueen's Landing Boat Ramp and Day Use Area

Village Creek Corridor Unit:
White Sand Beach Sandbar Day Use Area, including the sandbar known as the "Island Sandbar"

Determination: These areas are designated as day use areas due to public safety concerns. Some of these improved recreational sites have a history of late night parties, illegal camping, drug use, and poaching activities. The closure is necessary to maintain acceptable conditions to reduce vandalism, to prevent camping in unauthorized areas, and to prevent other common violations (such as underage alcohol consumption, litter, off-road vehicle travel, etc.).

Public Use Limits:

Visitors must remain on the established trail system when hiking the Pitcher Plant Trail in the Pitcher Plant Bog in the northeastern portion of the Turkey Creek Unit.

Determination: Natural vegetation in the Pitcher Plant Savannah is very susceptible to damage from foot traffic. Increasing interest in and publicity about this unusual area has resulted in growing impacts to the resource. A trail with boardwalks was constructed in this area in 1984 to allow public enjoyment of the area without adverse impact to the plants.

- The tying or hanging of rope swings from trees or other structures and their use thereof is prohibited.

  Determination: Rope swings have been a causal factor in numerous visitor accidents in the Preserve. In addition, trees and their limbs have been damaged by the use of rope swings and associated climbing boards.

Closures:

- Glass containers are prohibited on the Preserve's waterways and sandbars.

Determination: Glass, in addition to becoming litter, can create both environmental and safety concerns. Glass containers create serious safety hazards for visitors when broken on sandy beaches and waterways where visitors frequently walk barefoot.

- All areas within the Preserve affected by fire management operations, including wildfires and prescribed fires are CLOSED to public use or entry until declared safe and available for public use by the Incident Commander or Burn Boss.

Determination: Wildland fires, and the activities associated with suppressing and managing them are inherently hazardous. In order to protect the public all areas affected by fire management

operations must be inspected for safety and resource management concerns before being opened to public use activities.

- The Regal Fern Bog Research Natural Area located in the Beaumont Unit and The Neches Bottom Research Natural Area located in the Neches Bottom Unit are CLOSED to public entry or use without a permit. Maps (copies attached) showing these areas are available for public inspection at Preserve Headquarters.

  Determination: Ongoing research in these areas could be compromised by public activities, and entry into these areas must be limited to protect the naturally occurring processes being studied.

- Structures acquired by the National Park Service in connection with the acquisition of Preserve lands are CLOSED to public entry or use. Structures will be marked by the posting of standard "No Trespassing -- U.S. Government Property" signs in conspicuous locations on the exterior of these structures. This closure shall not apply to the Visitor Center, Headquarters/Maintenances Complex offices, Environmental Education Center (Staley Cabin), Woodville Ranger Station, Fire Management Office, and the Saratoga Field Research Station during those times when they are staffed by National Park Service personnel and open for business.

  Determination: The National Park Service has acquired a number of cabins and similar structures located in various parts of the Preserve. The majority of these structures will be disposed of in accordance with applicable Federal regulations. These structures are not being maintained by the National Park Service and are typically unsafe for visitor use.

- The following units of the Preserve are closed to hunting:

  Big Sandy Creek Corridor Unit
  Canyonlands Unit
  Hickory Creek Savannah Unit
  Little Pine Island-Pine Island Bayou Corridor Unit
  Loblolly Unit
  Lower Neches River Corridor Unit
  Menard Creek Corridor Unit
  Turkey Creek Unit
  Upper Neches River Corridor Unit
  Village Creek Corridor Unit

- Limited portions of the following units of the Preserve, as delineated on hunting area maps (https://www.nps.gov/bith/planyourvisit/hunting-and-trapping.htm) provided with each Big Thicket hunting permit and available at the Big Thicket Visitor Center, are closed to hunting:

  Beaumont Unit
  Beech Creek Unit
  Big Sandy Creek Unit
  Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit
  Lance Rosier Unit

<u>Determination:</u> These areas are closed to hunting to allow other recreational uses during the hunting season, to reduce conflicts between hunters and other user groups, and because some areas do not contain sufficient land area to allow hunting without conflicts developing with adjoining landowners.

The following units are closed to trapping throughout the year:

Beech Creek Unit
Big Sandy Creek Unit
Big Sandy Creek Corridor Unit
Canyonlands Unit
Hickory Creek Savannah Unit
Little Pine Island-Pine Island Bayou Corridor Unit
Loblolly Unit
Lower Neches River Corridor Unit
Menard Creek Corridor Unit
Turkey Creek Unit
Upper Neches River Corridor Unit
Village Creek Corridor Unit

- Limited portions of the following units of the Preserve, as delineated on trapping area maps (https://www.nps.gov/bith/planyourvisit/hunting-and-trapping.htm) provided with each Big Thicket trapping permit and available at the Big Thicket Visitor Center, are closed to trapping throughout the year:

  Beaumont Unit
  Lance Rosier Unit
  Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit

<u>Determination</u>: These areas are closed to trapping to allow other recreational uses during the trapping season, to reduce conflicts between trappers and other user groups, and because some areas do not contain sufficient land area to allow trapping without conflicts developing with adjoining landowners.

36 CFR §1.5 (a)(2) The following areas have been designated for a specific use or activity, under the conditions and/or restrictions as noted.

<u>EPAMD (electric personal assistive mobility device, or Segway</u>):

- An electric personal assistive mobility device (EPAMD) when used by a mobility impaired person for locomotion may be used in all portions of Big Thicket National Preserve in the same manner as a motorized wheelchair with the following restrictions:

  An electric personal assistive mobility device is defined as a self-balancing two non-tandem wheeled device designed to transport only one person with an electric propulsion system, with an average power of 750 watts (one horsepower), and whose maximum speed on a paved level surface is less than 20 MPH.

- Electric personal assistive mobility devices shall be limited to a maximum speed of 8 mph.

- An electric personal assistive mobility device operator traveling on a sidewalk, trail, or other pedestrian accessible area of the Preserve shall have the rights and duties of a pedestrian, shall exercise due care to avoid colliding with pedestrians, and shall yield the right of way to pedestrians.

- Electric personal assistive mobility device operators shall be at least 16 years of age.
  Determination: Electric personal assistive mobility devices have increasingly become a common mode of conveyance and are often adopted as a mode of conveyance by the mobility impaired. "These devices provide benefits by increasing people's mobility and substituting for automobile travel, but they can create new problems such as congestion and risks to other non-motorized users." (Todd Litman and Robin Blair, Managing Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs) on Non-motorized Facilities, 26 July 2006). Electric personal assistive mobility devices when operated on trails, sidewalks, and other pedestrian accessible areas can increase access for mobility- impaired people but can also cause increased risks for EPAMD operators and other pedestrians. These restrictions are required to enhance the safety of the public and EPAMD operators.

Horse and pack animal use:

- Horses, burros, mules, or other hoofed mammals are designated as pack animals for purposes of transporting equipment.

Other conditions concerning the use of horses or pack animals:

- Horses must be kept under physical control at all times.
- Horses may not be left to water unattended.
- Grazing is not permitted. Hay is not permitted in the backcountry due to the likelihood of introducing seeds of exotic grasses.
- Off-trail horseback riding is prohibited.
- Hitch rails, when available, must be used.
- In the absence of hitch rails, horses must be tied to a line strung between trees in such a manner that stock cannot damage tree trucks, tree roots, or other vegetation.
- Tying horses directly to trees is prohibited.

Determination: The General Management Plan for the Preserve includes provisions for a horse trail in the Big Sandy Creek Unit. Cross-country use is prohibited in order to reduce adverse impacts from grazing, soil and vegetation disturbances from hooves, and introduction of exotic plants through animal wastes.

Hunters with a hunting permit for the Big Sandy Creek Unit may use horses and bicycles on the Big Sandy Horse Trail during the designated Preserve hunting season as published annually in the Big Thicket National Preserve Hunting Guide and Regulations. All safety regulations and permit conditions, including the use of hunter orange, must be complied with when using horses or bicycles on this trail during hunting season.

Determination: This trail is closed to hiking and other uses during hunting season to limit conflicts between user groups and to reduce safety hazards for non-hunters who are not required to comply with hunter orange apparel regulations. The use of horses and bicycles by permitted hunters should not present a conflict between users groups and will promote hunting as required by Executive Order 13443.

Launching of Vessels:

The following areas/sites are designated for the launching or recovery of vessels using a trailer:

- Confluence Boat Ramp, Beaumont Unit.
- McQueen's Landing Boat Ramp, Upper Neches River Corridor Unit.
- Franklin Lake Boat Ramp, Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit.

The following areas/sites are designated for the launching or recovery of vessels by hand without a trailer:

- All park waters accessible on foot

Launching, Operation, Landing of Unmanned Aircraft:

- Launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft from or on lands and waters administered by the National Park Service within the boundaries of the Big Thicket National Preserve is prohibited except as approved in writing by the Superintendent.

Determination: The use of unmanned aircraft has been determined to be detrimental to the health and safety of the Preserve visitor, the protection of the environmental and scenic values for which the Preserve was established, and to the designation of the Preserve as a Globally Important Birding Area. The Preserve's enabling legislation directs the Preserve to establish and maintain hunting and trapping programs. The use of unmanned aircraft will cause undue conflict with hunters and trappers who use the Preserve as well as visitors who come to the Preserve for its peace and tranquility, to hike its trails, and to sit by its many waterways.

36 CFR §1.6 – ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A PERMIT

36 CFR §1.6(f): The following is a compilation of those activities for which a permit from the superintendent is required.

- §2.4(d) Carry or possess a weapon, trap or net.
- §2.5(a) Specimen collection. (taking plants, fish, wildlife, rocks or mineral
- §2.10(a) Backcountry Camping. (Please refer to §2.10 for detailed camping restrictions
- §2.12 Audio Disturbances:
  - (a)(2) Operating a chain saw in developed areas
  - (a)(3) Operation of any type of portable motor or engine, or device powered by a portable motor or engine in non-developed areas
  - (a)(4) Operation of a public address system in connection with a public gathering or special event for which a permit has been issued pursuant to §2.50 or §2.51.
- §2.17 Aircraft & Air Delivery:
  - (a)(3) Delivery or retrieval of a person or object by parachute, helicopter, or other airborne means
  - (c)(1) Removal of a downed aircraft
- §2.37 Soliciting or demanding gifts, money, goods, or services. (Pursuant to the terms and conditions of a permit issued under §2.50, §2.51 or §2.52.)
- §2.38(a) Explosives: (use, possess, store, transport explosives, blasting agents)
- §2.50(a) Conduct sports events, pageants, regattas, public spectator attraction entertainment, ceremonies, and similar events.
- §2.51(a) Demonstrations. (The term includes demonstrations, picketing, speechmaking, marching, holding vigils or religious services, and all other like forms of conduct that involve the communication or expression of views or grievances, engaged in by one or more persons, the conduct of which is reasonably likely to attract a crow or onlookers.)
- §2.52(c) Sale or distribution of printed matter. (that is not solely commercial advertising)
- §2.61(a) Residing on Federal lands.
- §2.62 Memorialization:
  - (a) Erection of monuments (requires approval from Regional Director)
  - (b) Scattering of ashes from human cremation
- §5.1 Advertisements. (display, posting, or distribution)

- §5.3 Business Operations. (requires a permit, contract, or other written agreement with the United States, or authorized under special regulations applicable to a park area)
- §5.5 Commercial Still Photography/Filming:
  (a) Commercial filming of motion pictures or television involving the use of professional casts, settings, or crews, other than bona fide newsreel or news television
  (b) Still photography of vehicles, or other articles of commerce or models for the purpose of commercial advertising
- §5.6(c) Use of commercial vehicles on park area roads. (The superintendent shall issue a permit to access private lands within or adjacent to the park when access is otherwise not available.)
- §5.7 Construction of buildings or facilities. (trails, roads, boat docks, paths, structures, etc.)
- §7.85(c) Hunting and trapping. (see section 7.85(c) for specific hunting and trapping permit conditions)
- §9.32(a) Access for gas and oil operations. (A plan of operations approved by the Regional Director shall serve as the operator's access permit.)

GENERAL REGULATIONS

36 CFR §2.1 -- PRESERVATION OF NATURAL, CULTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

(a)(4) Dead wood on the ground may be collected for use as fuel for campfires within the park in the following areas:

- The collection of wood (downed wood and/or driftwood) is allowed in any area open to camping as designated in §2.10(a).

((b) Hiking or pedestrian traffic is restricted to trails or walkways as listed in Section 1.5 of this document.

- Hiking or pedestrian use of the Pitcher Plant Savannah in the northeastern portion of the Turkey Creek Unit is restricted to the established trail and boardwalks. The posting of appropriate signs in the unit shall indicate this restriction.

(c)(1), (c)(2) The following fruits, nuts, berries or unoccupied seashells may be gathered by hand for personal use or consumption, in accordance with the noted size, quantity, collection sites and/or use or consumption restrictions:

- Gathering of fruits, berries, and nuts by hand for personal use or consumption is permitted in the Preserve. Gathering is limited to pawpaw, may haw, wild grape, wild strawberry, wild blueberry, wild huckleberry, blackberry, dewberry, mulberry, walnuts, pecan nuts, and hickory nuts. The total quantity of edible fruits, berries, or nuts that may be possessed is limited to one quart per person.

Determination: Limited consumption of these resources does not adversely affect the reproduction of either the plants or the wildlife food source. If future monitoring indicates that such gathering or consumption is likely to cause adverse affects to park resources then the authorization of this consumptive use will be terminated. Use of these items for any purpose other than personal consumption is specifically prohibited.

36 CFR §2.2 - WILDLIFE PROTECTION

(d) The transporting of lawfully taken wildlife through the park is permitted under the following conditions and procedures:

- The transportation of lawfully taken wildlife through the Preserve will be in accordance with applicable State law.
- Or by approved NPS Research Permit

(e) The following areas are closed to the viewing of wildlife with the use of an artificial light:

- The viewing of wildlife with artificial light is prohibited in all portions of the Preserve.
- Except under the conditions of an approved NPS Research Permit, agreement, or contract

36 CFR §2.3 – FISHING

(d)(2) Possession or use of live or dead minnows or other baitfish, non-preserved fish eggs or roe is permitted in the following fresh water areas:

- The possession or use of live or dead minnows or other baitfish, non-preserved fish eggs or roe is permitted in all fresh water areas of the Preserve in accordance with the provisions of State law.

36 CFR §2.4 – WEAPONS, TRAPS, AND NETS

(a)(2)(i) Weapons, traps, or nets may only be carried, possessed or used at the following designated times and locations:

- Crossbows are allowed in accordance with State of Texas Regulations.

- Individuals holding a valid Big Thicket Trapping Permit may, for the purpose of trapping furbearing animals, carry, possess or use in the Preserve not more than an aggregate of 24 foothold and conibear-style traps.

- Or as permitted under an approved NPS Research Permit.

36 CFR §2.10 – CAMPING and FOOD STORAGE

(a) The Superintendent may require permits, designate sites or areas, and establish conditions for camping.

Camping in Big Thicket National Preserve is limited to the backcountry by permit only.

- The following areas are open to backcountry camping:

  Beaumont Unit
  Beech Creek Unit
  Big Sandy Creek Unit
  Big Sandy Creek Corridor Unit
  Lance Rosier Unit
  Lower Neches River Corridor Unit
  Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit

  Turkey Creek Unit, north of the iron bridge adjacent to the Kirby Nature Trail, except within 350 yards of the Pitcher Plant Trail
  Upper Neches River Corridor Unit
  Village Creek Corridor Unit

- The following areas are closed to camping during hunting season:

  Beaumont Unit, north of the Salt Water Barrier
  Beech Creek Unit, hunting area
  Big Sandy Creek Unit south of FM 1276
  Lance Rosier Unit
  Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit with the exception of sandbars on the Neches River within its boundary

- The following areas are closed to camping:

  Day Use Areas
  Canyonlands Unit
  Hickory Creek Unit
  Little Pine Island-Pine Island Bayou Corridor Unit
  Loblolly Unit
  Menard Creek Corridor Unit
  Pitcher Plant Trail, including any area within 350 yards of the trail
  Turkey Creek Unit, south of the iron bridge adjacent to the Kirby Nature Trail
  Visitor Center, Headquarters, Maintenance complex and other administrative use areas including any area within 500 feet of structures, fences, roads, or spray fields

- Permits may be obtained at the Preserve Visitor Center.

- Camping is subject to the following permit conditions.

  - A member of the camping party must obtain a permit. No third party representative is authorized to obtain permits unless that person has been issued a Commercial Use Authorization for that activity.
  - Group size is limited to eight persons.
  - Backcountry use is limited to 14 days per trip.
  - Groups must maintain visual and noise separation.
  - Campsites must be at least 200 feet from a unit boundary, road, or trail.
  - Some banks of Big Sandy Creek, Village Creek, and the Neches River are privately owned – camping is limited to lands within the Preserve Boundary
  - Camping is not allowed in areas posted "DAY USE ONLY".
  - Camping is prohibited in all hunting areas except on sandbars along the Neches River within the boundaries of the Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit.
  - Open fires are allowed in any area designated as open to camping.
  - Campers can use driftwood and/or dead and down timber collected on site or wood and/or charcoal obtained outside the Preserve.
  - Camp stove-use is allowed Preserve-wide.
  - All trash and garbage must be packed out.
  - Horses (except on the Big Sandy Horse Trail in the Big Sandy Creek Unit) and motorized vehicles are prohibited.
  - Bicycles are prohibited on all Preserve trails, except the Big Sandy Horse Trail.
  - Possession of glass containers is prohibited on all waterways and sandbars in the Preserve.

Determination: The public may camp on sandbars on the Neches River within the boundary of the Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit during hunting season. Hunters are not allowed to hunt within 500 feet of the river; therefore, there is no conflict between user groups. In addition, canoeist and kayakers are finding it very difficult to make it out of the no camping area in one day.

(b)(3) Camping within 25 feet of a fire hydrant or main road, or within 100 feet of a flowing stream, river or body of water is authorized only in the following areas, under the conditions noted:

- The public is allowed to camp on sandbars (areas below the vegetation line) within 25 feet of the water's edge on the Neches River in the Upper Neches River Corridor Unit, Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit, Lower Neches River Corridor Unit, Village Creek Corridor Unit, Big Sandy Creek Corridor Unit, and Beaumont Unit.

  Determination: Sandbars in the Preserve are often not large enough for a camper to set up camp 25 feet from a stream. Allowing campers to camp within 25 feet of a stream will not cause undue harm to the Preserve's waterways.

36 CFR §2.11 – PICNICKING

Conditions for Picnicking:

- Burying and/or burning trash is strictly prohibited.

36 CFR 2.13 – FIRES

(a)(1) The lighting or maintaining of fires is generally prohibited, except as provided for in the following designated areas and/or receptacles, and under the conditions noted:

Designated Areas:

Open fires are allowed in any area designated as open to camping.

Established Conditions for Fires:

- Driftwood or dead and downed timber collected on site or wood or charcoal obtained outside the Preserve may be used to build fires.
- Fires must not be left unattended.

(a)(2) The following restrictions are in effect for the use of stoves or lanterns:

- Stoves or lanterns used in the Preserve may not be left unattended when lit.

(b) Fires must be extinguished according to the following conditions:

- Fires must be completed extinguished with charcoal and ashes scattered before leaving an area.

36 CFR §2.14 – SANITATION and REFUSE

(b) Conditions for the disposal, containerization, or carryout of human body waste have been established as follows:

- Digging trenches for toilet purposes is prohibited.
- Disposal of human body waste must be at least 50 feet away from any creek bank or trail.
- Buried human waste must be in a hole 6-8 inches in depth. After use, the hole must be covered.

36 CFR §2.15 – PETS

(a)(1) The following structures and/or areas are closed to the possession of pets:

- Any special event or programs open to the public.
- All areas designated for hunting and trapping during times established for these activities, except that retrievers may be used when hunting for the purpose of retrieving waterfowl.

(a)(5) Pet excrement must be disposed of in accordance with the following conditions:

- Pet excrement must be picked up and carried out of the Preserve or disposed of in an appropriate trash receptacle.

Note: In accordance with 36CFR 2.15(a)(1), these closures shall not apply to guide dogs accompanying visually-impaired persons or hearing-ear dogs accompanying hearing-impaired persons.

36 CFR §2.16 – HORSES and PACK ANIMALS

(a) The following animals are designated as pack animals for purposes of transporting equipment under the authority in 36 CFR §1.5(a)(2):

- Horses, burros, mules, or other hoofed mammals

(b) The use of horses or pack animals is allowed on the following trails, routes or areas under the authority in 36 CFR §1.5(a)(2):

- Big Sandy Horse Trail in the Big Sandy Creek Unit, except during the Preserve hunting season when the use of horses or pack animals is limited to hunters with a Big Thicket Hunting Permit.

(g) Other conditions concerning the use of horses or pack animals:

- Horses must be kept under physical control at all times.
- Horses may not be left to water unattended.
- Grazing is not permitted. Hay is not permitted in the backcountry due to the likelihood of introducing seeds of exotic grasses.
- Off-trail horseback riding is prohibited.
- Hitch rails, when available, must be used.
- In the absence of hitch rails, horses must be tied to a line strung between trees in such a manner that stock cannot damage tree trucks, tree roots, or other vegetation.
- Tying horses directly to trees is prohibited.

Determination: The General Management Plan for the Preserve includes provisions for a horse trail in the Big Sandy Creek Unit. The Preserve will continue to allow traditional horse use along County roads in the Preserve. Cross-country use is prohibited in order to reduce adverse impacts

from grazing, soil and vegetation disturbances from hooves, and introduction of exotic plants through animal wastes.

36 CFR §2.21 – SMOKING

(a) The following portions of the park, or all or portions of buildings, structures or facilities are closed to smoking as noted:

- Smoking is prohibited in all Preserve structures and Government vehicles.

Determination: Employees and Preserve visitors are entitled to a smoke-free environment to prevent involuntary exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.

36 CFR §2.22 – PROPERTY

(a)(2) Property may be left unattended for periods longer than 24 hours in the following areas and under the following conditions:

- Vehicles and boats may be left unattended in the Preserve in conjunction with use of a valid backcountry camping permit. Such vehicles, boats, and property must be removed from the Preserve prior to expiration of the permit. Vehicles and boats must be described at the time a backcountry permit is obtained.

36 CFR §2.35 –ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES and CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

(a)(3)(i) The following public use areas, portions of public use areas, and/or public facilities within the park are closed to consumption of alcoholic beverages, and/or to the possession of a bottle, can or other receptacle containing an alcoholic beverage that is open, or has been opened, or whose seal has been broken or the contents of which have been partially removed:

- The possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages is PROHIBITED in all Day Use Areas listed in Section 1.5 -- CLOSURES AND PUBLIC USE LIMITS -- and in all areas designated for hunting and trapping during the seasons established for these activities.

Determination: All areas listed in Section 1.5 of this document are closed to alcoholic beverages. All of these areas have limited space for the parking of vehicles, and this space needs to be available for visitors using trails and facilities provided by the Preserve. Other locations are readily available in the vicinity for persons who wish to sit in their vehicles and consume alcoholic beverages. Use of these parking areas as gathering places for alcohol consumption also contributes to vandalism and litter. These areas have been improved to include rest room facilities, picnic tables, and barbecue areas. The National Park Service recognizes that the public has a legitimate right to recreate in these areas. However, many of these recreational use areas have a history of late night parties, which includes the consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs The history of illegal activities indicates that the public interest is best served by limiting use. As a result, these areas have been closed to the possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages. Prohibiting the possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages in these areas has not had an impact on legitimate public use of the Preserve.

36 CFR §2.51 – PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES, MEETINGS

(e) The following areas/sites are designated as available for public assemblies:

- The bus parking spaces and the center sidewalk at the Big Thicket Visitor Center parking area as indicated on the map in appendix A.

36 CFR §2.52 – SALE OR DISTRUBITION OF PRINTED MATTER

(e) The following areas/sites are designated as available for the sale or distribution of printed matter:

- The bus parking spaces and the center sidewalk at the Big Thicket Visitor Center parking area as indicated on the map in appendix A.

36 CFR §3.8 – BOATING OPERATIONS

(a)(2) Under the authority in 36 CFR §1.5(a)(2) The following areas/sites are designated for the launching or recovery of vessels using a trailer:

- Confluence Boat Ramp, Beaumont Unit.
- McQueen's Landing Boat Ramp, Upper Neches River Corridor unit.
- Franklin Lake Boat Ramp, Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall unit.

(a)(2) Under the authority in 36 CFR §1.5(a)(2) The following areas/sites are designated for the launching or recovery of vessels by hand without a trailer:

- All park waters accessible by foot

Note: the following public and private boat ramps, adjacent to the Preserve, are also available for launching and recovery of vessels using a trailer.

- Hwy 69 Pine Island Bayou Boat ramp, public
- Hwy 96 Village Creek Boat Ramp, public
- Hwy 96 Neches River boat ramp, public
- Chandler's Landing, private
- Johns Lake, private
- Sheffield Ferry, private

36 CFR §3.21 – SWIMMING AND BATHING

(a)(1) The following areas are closed to swimming and bathing:

- All areas within 100 feet of a designated boat launch facility.

36 CFR §4.10 – TRAVEL ON PARK ROADS AND ROUTES

(a) Park roads open for travel by motor vehicle are those indicated below and/or as indicated in the following publications:

- Park roads open for public travel are those indicated in the Big Thicket Brochure.

36 CFR §4.30 – BICYCLES

(a) Bicycle use is permitted on park roads, parking areas, and on the following designated routes:

Determination: The Big Sandy Trail follows a series of abandoned logging roads that have been heavily impacted during years of private ownership. These roads are now maintained as administrative roads for fire management and other administrative access. The use of horses and bicycles on the Big Sandy Trail have been determined to be compatible, consistent with the Preserve's natural, scenic, and aesthetic values, safety considerations, management objectives, and will not disturb wildlife or resources.

36 CFR §7.85 – SPECIAL REGULATIONS, BIG THICKET NATIONAL PRESERVE

(c) In addition to applicable State licenses or permits, a permit from the Superintendent is required for hunting or trapping on Preserve lands.

Hunting permit conditions

- The hunting season within the Big Thicket National Preserve extends from the opening date of the State of Texas fall archery-only season through the end of the State general season. Hogs may be taken from the opening date of the State's fall archery-only season until the last day of February. You may only hunt during the dates established by the State of Texas for the archery-only season and the general season. Big Thicket National Preserve does NOT allow hunting of any game animal after the close of the State's general season. Big Thicket National Preserve observes all youth hunts that fall within the State's general season. Hunting at any other time or in any other manner than prescribed in this set of regulations is prohibited

- Only the following game animals and birds may be hunted in the Preserve: white-tailed deer, squirrel, rabbit, feral hog, and waterfowl.

- Hunters must have the following items in their possession while hunting in the Preserve:

  - Big Thicket Hunting Permit;

  - State of Texas Hunting License;

  - Appropriate State and/or Federal stamps;

  - Texas Hunter Safety Course Certification (if required).

- Every hunter (including out-of-state hunters) born on or after September 2, 1971, must successfully complete a Hunter Education Course. Minimum age of certification is 9 years of age.

  If you were born on/or after September 2, 1971, and you are:

  - under 9 years of age, you must be **accompanied**;
  - age 9 through 16 years, you must be **accompanied** at all times even if you have successfully completed the State of Texas Hunter Education Course;
  - age 17 and over, you must successfully complete a hunter education course or purchase a "Hunter Education Deferral" and be **accompanied**.

  Accompanied means: By a person who is a least 17, who is licensed to hunt in Texas, who has passed hunter education or is exempt (born before Sept. 2, 1971), and you must be within normal voice control. Proof of certification or deferral is required to be on your person while hunting. For more information on the Hunter Deferral Program, contact the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at the number listed below.

For more information on the Hunter Education Training Course, and the Hunter Deferral Program, contact the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at 1-800-792-1112 or on the internet at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

- Each hunter must place the top portion of the Hunter Parking/Boat Pass on the vehicle mirror, place on dash, or place on driver's seat of boat in a clear waterproof storage bag so the **Permit Number is visible.**

- Only .17 and .22 caliber rim-fire cartridge rifles are permitted only for small game (rabbits and squirrels). The use of shotguns, muzzle-loading rifles, and bow and arrows are permitted for all animals per the Big Thicket National Preserve Hunting Regulations. Slugs and buckshot may be possessed and/or used only during the general season and the extended hog-only season. Silencers may not be used. Big Thicket National Preserve adopts the State of Texas definition of "muzzleloader."

- During the extended hog-only hunting season, hunters will be permitted to take feral hogs from any of the Preserve's authorized hunting areas (Beaumont, Beech, Big Sandy, Jack Gore Baygall, Lance Rosier, and Neches Bottom).

- No person, while hunting waterfowl anywhere in the State may possess shotgun shells containing lead shot or loose lead shot for use in muzzleloaders. Approved shot, includes steel, including copper, nickel or zinc coated steel, bismuth-tin, tungsten-iron, tungsten-polymer (i.e., molyshot), and any other non-toxic material approved by the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. For all other game, the use of non-lead ammunition is encourage in accordance with the National Park Service's efforts to reduce lead in the environment.

- Hunters may not use handguns or center-fire rifles to take game.

- Crossbows are allowed in accordance with State of Texas Regulations.

- Feeding or baiting of wildlife is prohibited. Baiting and feeding as defined by the State of Texas means "minerals, vegetative material, or any other food substance placed to lure any wildlife resource."

- The use or possession of dogs for hunting is prohibited, except that the use of retrievers for retrieving waterfowl is allowed.

- Possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage while in a unit open to hunting is prohibited.

- Hunter Orange or International Orange must be worn and visible at all times while hunting in the Preserve. All hunters are required to wear a minimum of 400 square inches of Hunter Orange or International Orange while in designated hunting areas, except for waterfowl hunters when stationary in their blinds. This includes headgear and at least 144 square inches on both chest and back.

- Hunters may hunt in the "hunting area" as shown on the enclosed unit map; however, they may not hunt within 500 feet of any designated trail, roadway, residence, or the following navigable waterway (Neches River, Pine Island Bayou, and designated Texas Paddling Trails).

- Flagging, any marking device, or any other method of marking is prohibited.

- Portable deer stands or blinds may be used, but they must be removed each day.

- Construction or use of permanent stands, blinds, or other structures is prohibited. The preserve will confiscate unmarked and/or unattended deer stands

- Cutting and/or removal of vegetation for the creation of shooting lanes, hunting blinds, or for any other reason are prohibited. Machetes, axes, saws, or other types of cutting/chopping devices are prohibited.

- Human waste must be buried at least 100 feet from any water source and not within sight of any road, or trail.

- Camping is prohibited in all hunting areas with the exception of sandbars along the Neches River within the boundary of the Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit with a back country camping permit.

- Portable cooking stoves are permitted, but ground fires are prohibited in hunting areas.

- Hunters must carry out all trash, including empty shotgun shells. Field dressing of game is allowed within the Preserve.

- Off-road use of motorized vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles (ATV's/UTV's) and motorcycles, is prohibited.

- Park vehicles along roads or in designated parking areas. Do not block gates or roads.

- To obtain a hunting permit for the following year, you must reapply during hunter registration. Your "Hunter's Report" card must be returned by April 3, 2017, or you will be disqualified from obtaining a permit the following year

Determination: The superintendent has determined that the above-listed hunting permit conditions are necessary to provide for the safety of the public, the protection of the flora and fauna of the Preserve, effective administration and management of the Preserve, and to provide for the public use and enjoyment of the Preserve.

Trapping permit conditions

- The trapping season in Big Thicket National Preserve is December 1 in a given year through January 31 of the following year.

- The following fur-bearing animals may be trapped in the preserve: badger, beaver, spotted skunk (civet cat), grey fox, red fox, mink, muskrat, nutria, opossum, otter, raccoon, ring-tailed cat, and striped skunk. There is no separate trapping season for muskrat and nutria.

- Trapping is limited to the trapping area as indicated on maps provided with the trapping permits and found online at: https://www.nps.gov/bith/planyourvisit/hunting-and-trapping.htm. Preserve boundaries are marked with National Park Service boundary signs and/or with yellow paint on trees. Trapping areas are bounded by a combination of pipelines, flag lines, and Preserve boundaries. Trapping outside of the designated area within the unit is strictly prohibited.

- Trappers may trap in the trapping area as shown on the map provided with the permit; however, trapping is prohibited within 500 feet of any designated trail, roadway, residence, or any navigable waterway (Neches River, Pine Island Bayou, and/or LNVA Canal).

- Fur-bearing animals may be legally taken with unmodified steel leg hold traps, conibear traps, and live traps. Snares are prohibited.

- The maximum number of traps allowed per trapper is 24.

- No person may use a conibear-style trap with a diagonal opening greater than 10 inches set on land or in water less than 6 inches deep.

- The use and/or possession of dogs, bow and arrow, electronic or hand-held calls, recording or other calling devices, artificial light as an attractant, and falconry is specifically prohibited.

- The use of smoke, explosives, or chemicals of any kind to kill or flush fur-bearers in the wild is prohibited.

- It is illegal to shoot at, take, or attempt to take any fur-bearing animal from a public road or highway right-of-way, vehicle, or boat.

- Traps may not be set on old logging trails, pipelines, or abandoned roads.

- Legal concealed weapons are permitted to dispatch trapped fur-bearing animals. A .17 or .22 caliber rim-fire rifle is also permitted for this purpose. Larger caliber rifles are not permitted. When carrying or possessing a firearm in the Preserve, you must comply with State of Texas law.

- Traps must be checked at least every 24 hours for captured animals

- The following items must be in your possession while trapping in the Preserve:

    - Big Thicket Trapping Permit

    - State of Texas Trapping License

    - Trappers who are also hunting must possess a current Texas Hunting License and a current Big Thicket National Preserve Hunting Permit.

- Each trapper must place a copy of the Big Thicket trapping Permit on the dashboard of the vehicle from which he is trapping so that it can be read from outside the vehicle. Trappers who use a boat to access their hunting area must leave a boat display copy of their permit in the boat in a waterproof container attached to the vessel in plain view.

- Traps must have a waterproof tag with the trapper's name and telephone number attached.

- All trappers are required to wear 400 square inches of "Hunter's Orange" or "International Orange" while trapping in the Preserve. This includes headgear and at least 144 square inches on both chest and back.

- Park vehicles along roads or in designated parking areas adjacent to the trapping area. Do not block gates or roads.

- Off-road use of motorized vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles (ATV's/UTV's) and motorcycles, is prohibited.

- Camping is prohibited in trapping areas with the exception of sandbars along the Neches River within the Neches Bottom and Jack Gore Baygall Unit.

- Carry out all trash.

- Human waste must be buried at least 100 feet from any road, trail, or creek.

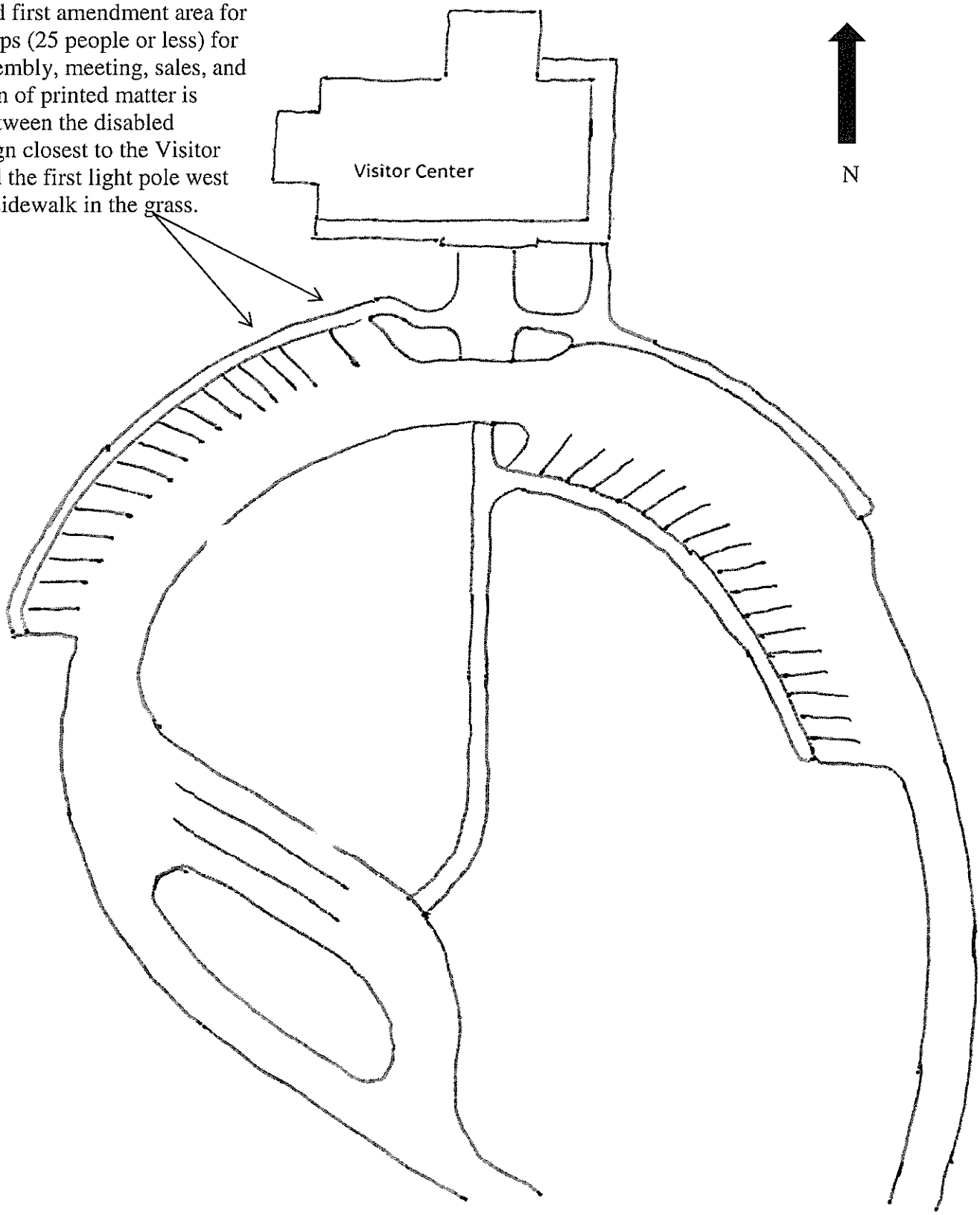
- In established trapping areas, portable cooking stoves and heaters are permitted; ground (open) fires are prohibited.

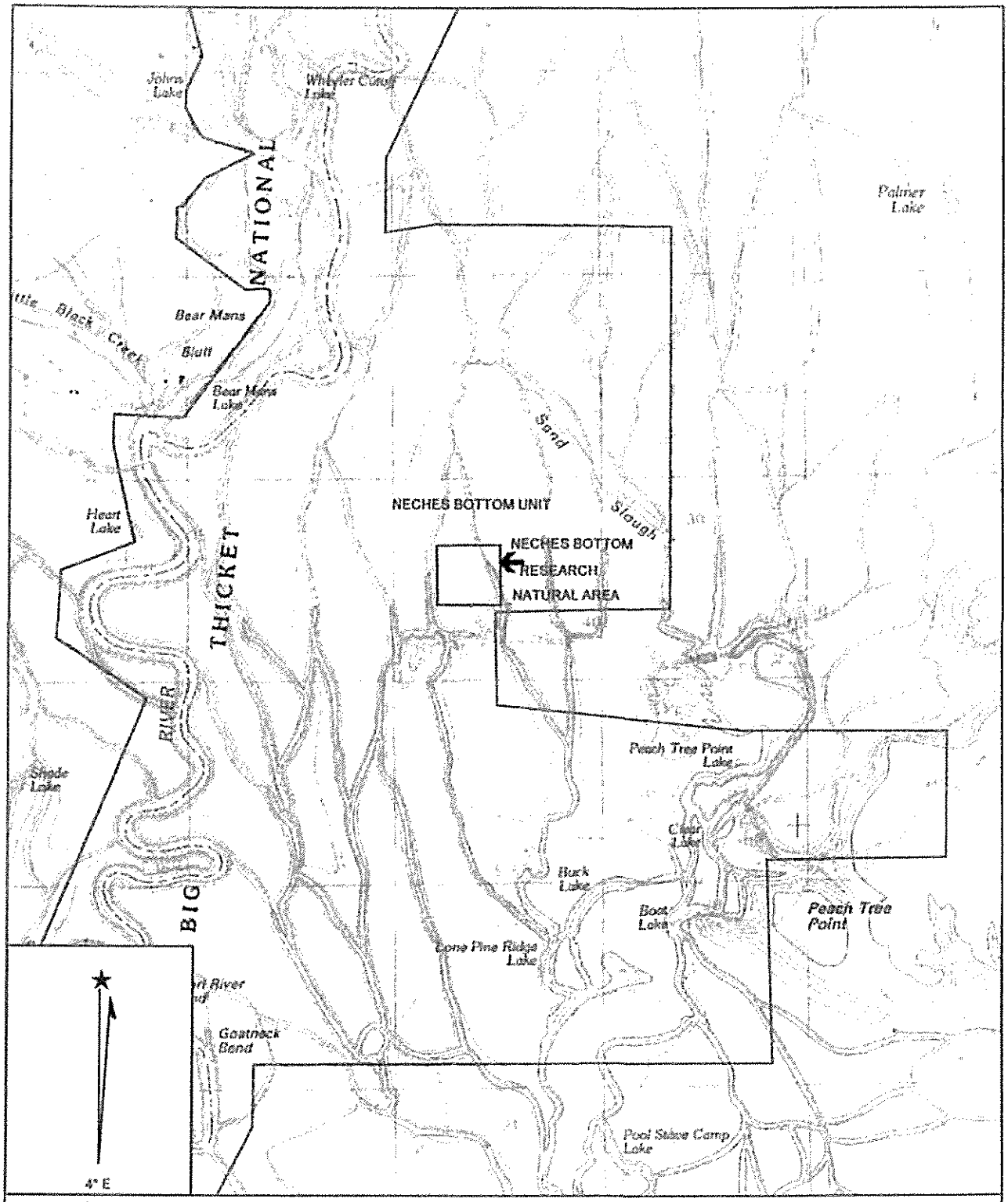
- Except where these regulations are more restrictive, Texas fur-bearing regulations apply within the Preserve. Each fur-bearing animal taken or possessed in violation of these regulations and/or Texas law is a separate offense. No person may possess the pelt of a fur-bearing animal within the Preserve at any time other than open season.

- To obtain a trapping permit for the following year, you must reapply during hunter registration. Your "Trapper's Report" card must be returned by April 3, 2017, or you will be disqualified from obtaining a permit the following year.

Determination: The superintendent has determined that the listed trapping permit conditions are necessary to provide for the safety of the public, the protection of the flora and fauna of the Preserve, effective administration and management of the Preserve, and to provide for the public use and enjoyment of the Preserve.

Designated first amendment area for small groups (25 people or less) for public assembly, meeting, sales, and distribution of printed matter is located between the disabled parking sign closest to the Visitor Center and the first light pole west along the sidewalk in the grass.

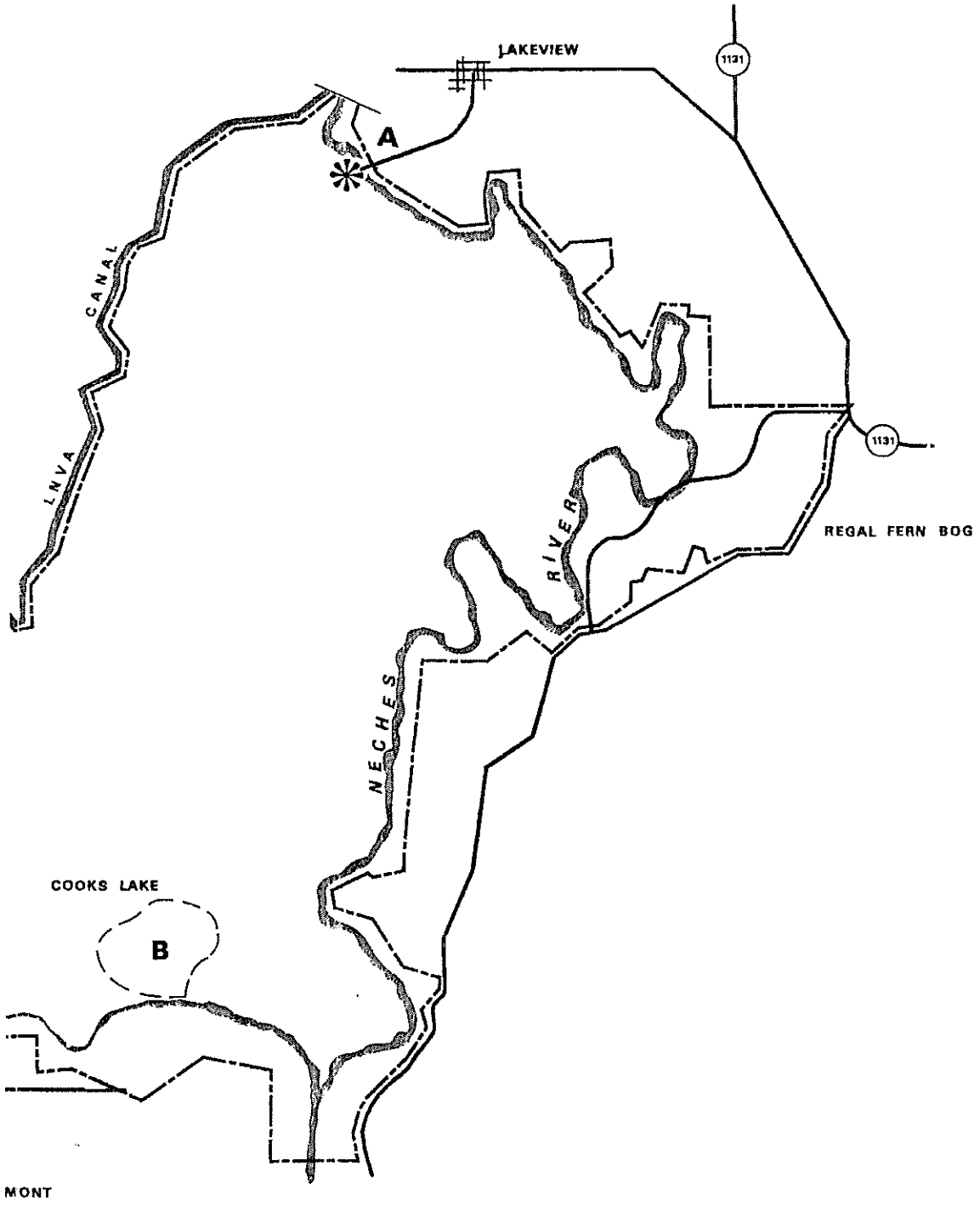




ATTACHMENT TO SUPT'S ORDERS SECTION 1.5 CLOSURES

Scale: 1 inch equals 2000 feet

Caption: NECHES BOTTOM RESEARCH NATURAL AREA CLOSURE



Regal Fern Bog
Research Natural Area
Closure`