

# WHERE TO GO CAMPING

including 25 Week-Long High Adventure Plans

January 2009

<b>Four Nearby Council Camps with High Adventure Programs</b> (These will be more expensive than doing your own, but the logistics and safety certifications are all handled for you)				
	<b>1. James Ray</b> Windjammer	<b>2. Clements</b> Horse Trek	<b>3. Sid Richardson</b> Chisolm Trail Sailing? Horse Trek?	<b>4. Worth Ranch</b> Brazos Canoe Trip

<b>Three Nearby High Adventure Plans</b>				
	<b>5. LBJ Grasslands</b>	<b>6. Sid Richardson</b>	<b>7. Clements</b>	<b>8. Simpson</b>
Mon	this place is huge; lots of flat backpacking through scrub on the equestrian trail system; will see occasional roads and cars; is close and free; you will have to go out beforehand for a day with a map and a car to lay out an itinerary, probably concentrating on the northwest third, including the far western portion of the silver trail	drive out to camp; hike to Hermit's Cave; rock climb	3,000 acres; lots of flat backpacking through woods; canoe on Lake Meisenbach, horses, COPE, climbing tower  not yet familiar with the other end of camp, but probably soon	2,000 acres  have never seen it, but hear it is nice and scheduled to go there in April
Tues		backpack to COPE course; do COPE; continue to Lakeside Lodge		
Wed		sailing from boat dock; BBQ dinner		
Thurs		backpack to Captain's point; lunch; canoe to Steele Island; explore		
Fri		canoe to Devil's Den; rock climb or horses; canoe back to island		
Sat		canoe to Hermit's cave and drive home		

<b>Three Hill Country High Adventure Plans</b>			
	<b>9. Hill Country Driving Tour</b>	<b>10. Hamman/HillCountryNatArea</b>	<b>11. Colorado River Canoe Trip</b>
Mon	drive 195 miles to Lampasas; put into Colorado River; camp on river	drive 350 miles to Hamman Scout Camp; hike in; camp	can canoe from Austin just downstream from the Towne Lake bridge past Bastrop all the way 150 river miles to Columbus on I-10 between Houston & San Antonio
Tues	canoe; camp at Colorado Bend SP	rock climb	
Wed	drive to and tour Longhorn Cavern; dive at Devil's Hole at Inks Lake; drive to Enchanted Rock; camp overnight	backpack to Hill Country NA; mountain biking	there is no shuttle service, but two vehicles with the trailer can be driven downstream from start and a single canoe brought back on a rack on one car to the Weberville put-in point 15 miles downstream, a 3 hour 180 mile driving round trip
Thurs	climb at Enchanted Rock; camp	backpack return to Hamman; camp service project	
Fri	drive to New Braunfels; raft on Guadalupe River; camp at Lazy L&L Ranch	drive to Bandera; raft or kayak on Medina River from Medina to Bandera; return to Hamman to car camp;	
Sat	drive home 260 miles	am shooting; pm drive home 350 miles	drive 225 miles there, 315 miles back  (Colorado Bend State Park is <u>up</u> stream from Austin)
Lost Maples State Park provides two nights of beautiful backpacking, and there are a few other large scout camps in the Area: Bear Creek, El Rancho Cima, and Griffith League; these can be mixed in			

<b>Two Upper Red River Valley High Adventure Plans</b>		
	<b>12. Wichita Mtns NWR</b>	<b>13. Caprock Canyons SP &amp; Trailway</b>
Mon	drive 200 miles to Wichita Mountains Nat'l Wildlife Refuge; shuttle car to Sunset parking lot; backpack (with water & climbing gear) North from Treasure Lake parking lot past Post Oak Waterfall (left split of trail is better); set up backcountry camp; side hike Water Cave	drive 300 miles to Caprock Canyons SP, backpack 3 miles from north primitive parking area to south primitive camping area
Tues	move camp to near Crab Eyes (Twin Rocks Mtn) and Apple & Pear (Elk Mtn); climb between those two locations; backcountry camp	backpack 4 miles to north primitive camping area
Wed	backpack North through Valley of the Boulders to Sunset parking lot; side hike across stream on Elk Mtn trail to summit, Natural Bridge, and Rock Rooms (some rope may be helpful) (I do not think you can backpack from the summit down to Fawn Creek campground, but perhaps you can); drive to Fawn Creek campground; car camp	backpack 1 (or 3½) mile to car; car camp in Little Red Tent Area; mountain bike on rugged trails in the park
Thurs	drive to east end of refuge to rock climb on Mt Scott; drive to Meers restaurant for dinner; still car camp at Fawn Creek	Three choices for Thursday - Saturday:  drive to nearby Monk's Crossing on nearby Caprock Canyons Trailway and mountain bike 5 miles to and through Clarity Tunnel; can camp overnight on the trailway; can return to car or continue 12 miles more to a shuttled car
Fri	early day hike southern Dog Run Hollow Trail through Boulder Canyon, past Eagle Mtn to the Narrows; rock climb (send someone ahead to lay down gear and reserve a spot as early as possible); can side hike to Spanish silver mine; drive back to Fawn Creek; still car camp at Fawn Creek	OR spend night at Copper Breaks State Park near Quanah, Tx and spend next day rock climbing  OR drive to Davis, Ok in morning and spend a day canoeing the Washita River from Hwy 77 to Hwy 53
Sat	drive home	drive home

Capacity at both of destinations is limited, so reserve months ahead. Wichita Mountains issues only a few backpacking permits for Fri-Sun and Mon-Wed, which explains the weird mix of backpacking and car camping. If you do not spend Tuesday climbing, it may be possible to backpack on Monday from Fawn Creek beyond the Bonanza Mine through the gap between Elk Mtn and Mt Lincoln and then toward Treasure Lake.

<b>Three Ouchita Mountains High Adventure Plans (plus the Buffalo River)</b>				
	<b>14. Eagle Rock Loop</b>	<b>15. West Quarter Ouachita Trail</b>	<b>16. Womble Trail</b>	<b>17. Buffalo River Float Trip</b>
Mon	drive 280 miles to Little Mo Falls; shuttle car 6 miles to Albert Pike; rock climb; swim; camp nearby	drive 215 miles to Talihina, Ok, then to trailhead	drive 325 miles to Story, Ark; shuttle car to Oden where Womble Trail joins the Ouachita Trail at mile 116.7	drive 425 miles to northwest, Ark; put in about Pruitt (above or below depending on water flow); take out at Buffalo City at junction with White River
Tues	hike 5.3 easy miles; stop at Albert Pike to rock climb & ditch climb gear in shuttled car; camp nearby	use Tim Ernst's Ouachita Trail Guide, pick your distance, and drive to trailhead at Winding Stair (mile 23.7), Hwy 259 (30.5) Passhube (34.3), Kiamichi River (39.2) or Queen Wilhelmina Lodge (51.6)	Womble Trail is 37 miles long; but additional distance can be included by adding a portion of the Ouachita Trail	contact Buffalo Nat'l River headquarters for river flow conditions 501-741-5443
Wed	hike 3.3 easy miles; stop at Winding Stairs to swim; camp near junction with Viles Branch trail.	On Friday turn off of Ouachita Trail at mile 7 just west of Deadman's Gap onto Indian Nations / Bohannon Trail / Road 6015; go 2 miles south to Camp Tom Hale, BSA; swim; eat in cafeteria if same week as summer camp	use Tim Ernst's Arkansas Hiking Trail guide, pick your distance from the end, and select the appropriate trailhead to begin	Pruitt to Gilbert to Buffalo City is 100 miles, putting in at Ponca adds 25 miles
Thurs	hike 3.5 easy miles and 1.4 hard miles; stop at Eagle Rock Vista; camp Brush Heap Mtn			Upper section good at 3-5½ feet; Pruitt-Gilbert good at 2-6 feet flow at the Hwy 65 bridge; lower section always good
Fri	watch amazing sunrise; hike 5.4 hard miles to Spirit Rock Vista; camp nearby			
Sat	hike 4.7 easy miles to car; swim; drive home	drive home	drive home 300 miles	drive home

<b>Four Piney Woods High Adventure Plans</b>				
	<b>18. Caddo Lake Canoe Trip</b>	<b>19. Davy Crockett NF / Neches River</b>	<b>20. Sam Houston NF Stubblefield</b>	<b>21. Sam Houston NF Double Lake</b>
Mon	drive 200 miles to Caddo Lake SP; put in and canoe to island NW of goat island	drive 200 miles to south trailhead at Ratcliff; backpack; camp on trail	drive 200 miles to Lake Conroe SE of Huntsville; backpack; camp on trail	drive 225 miles to Stubblefield area; backpack; camp on trail
Tues	Caddo Lake is just different; the campsites are only 2'-3' above the lake; there is not really anywhere to "go" to, so the trip length is easily adjusted; inexperienced scouts can get disoriented and lost, so give them whistles and keep them in view of an adult	backpack a total of 20 flat miles camping on the Four-C Trail to Neches Bluff Camp at Hwy 21  then get in canoes and canoe downriver 21 miles to Larrison Creek or 31 miles to Hwy 7; take-out point and number of days on river (2-4) will depend on river flow	there is a network of looping trails in the Stubblefield, Kelly's Pond, Little Lake Creek area. You can just take a map and make it up as you go, camping along the trail  the Lone Star Hiking Trail is well marked, other trails not so well	this is the easternmost 27 miles of the Lone Star Hiking Trail from FM 1725 in the south to FM 945 (3 miles south of Evergreen) in the north; camp along the trail  you can continue further west on the 120+ mile Lone Star Hiking Trail since this is flat and should not take 5 days  will need to shuttle car since this is not a loop
Wed				
Thurs				
Fri				
Sat		canoe downriver; drive home	backpack back to car; drive home.	backpack back to car; drive home.

<b>Four West Texas / SE New Mexico High Adventure Plans</b>				
	<b>22. White Mtns</b>	<b>23. BTR</b>	<b>24. Sacramento Mtns</b>	<b>25. Big Bend</b>
Mon	Drive 520 miles to Guadalupe Peak NP. Hike up Guadalupe Peak & camp near peak	Drive 480 miles to Buffalo Trail Scout Ranch. Hike & camp.	Drive 520 miles to Guadalupe Pk NP; hike up through McKittrick Canyon & camp.	Drive 520 miles to Guadalupe Peak NP. Hike up to Pine Bowl & camp.
Tues	Day hike to peak; hike down & drive to Ruidoso. Hike & camp on White Mountains Crest Trail.	Hike & camp.	Hike down & drive to Cloudcroft. Hike & camp in Sacramento Mountains.	Day hike loop trail around Pine Bowl back to campsite.
Wed	Hike & camp.	Hike & camp, loop through base camp to resupply food.	Hike & camp.	Hike down & drive to Big Bend. Hike & camp on High Chisos trail.
Thurs	Hike & camp.	Hike & camp.	Hike & camp.	Hike & camp.
Fri	Hike out to car. Drive to Carlsbad Caverns NP and go through cave. Drive to Balmorhea SP, swim & car camp.	Hike back into base camp & swim in pool. Drive to MacDonald Observatory at night	Hike out to car. Drive to Carlsbad Caverns NP and go through cave. Drive to Balmorhea SP, swim & car camp.	Hike out to car. Drive to Balmorhea SP & swim. Drive to M a c D o n a l d Observatory at night.
Sat	Drive home. Eat at Pecos Pizza Inn.	Drive home. Eat at Pecos Pizza Inn.	Drive home. Eat at Pecos Pizza Inn.	Drive home. Eat at Pecos Pizza Inn.

### **Northeast New Mexico Mountains**

#### **Philmont Scout Ranch, BSA**

#### **Valle Vidal**

Clayton Camp Trail  
Beatty's Lake Trail

#### **Wheeler Peak & Columbine- Hondo Wilderness Areas**

Wheeler Peak Trail

#### **Latir Peak Wilderness Area**

Cabresto Lake Trail

#### **Pecos Wilderness Area**

Chimayo Scout Reservation  
(Camp Frank Rand), BSA  
Tres Ritos, BSA  
Pecos Trail System

### **GENERAL RESOURCES**

[www.nhnct.org/nature/nature.html](http://www.nhnct.org/nature/nature.html) – Has a list of area nature preserves, hiking trails, paved bicycle trails, links to county topo maps, natural history museums, zoos, etc. – the links don't always work, but this is a great resource for Cub Scouts and Blazer just to let you know what does exist locally – I have not worked through this resource. My list of campsites is weakest in the four counties, and I will start with this website when I get around to polishing it off.

Hiking and Backpacking Trails of Texas. Mickey Little. Lanham, Md.: Lone Star Books 1999. The best single catalog on paper of places to hike or backpack in Texas.

Hiking Texas Falcon Guide. Laurence Parent. Guilford, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press 1992. Not as good as Mickey Little's book (he often seems to have made a token inspection rather than actually being familiar with an area), but definitely the second best.

Hiking New Mexico Falcon Guide. Laurence Parent. Guilford, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press 1998. Same critique. This is about the only thing out there that takes a statewide view of backpacking in New Mexico. Probably better just to focus on specific national forests and wilderness areas.

Arkansas Hiking Trails. Tim Ernst. Cloudland.net, 1992, 2003. Tim Ernst is the guy for Arkansas backpacking guides. Also has books on the Ouachita Trail, the Ozark Trail, and the Buffalo River.

[www.circleten.org](http://www.circleten.org), [www.longhorncouncil.org](http://www.longhorncouncil.org), etc. – Almost all boy scout councils have websites which describe their camps and available programs. Many have site maps, location maps and photos. You can get to a state by state list of all council websites at [www.usscouts.org/databases/searchscoutsites.html](http://www.usscouts.org/databases/searchscoutsites.html) and maybe also at [www.bsacamps.org](http://www.bsacamps.org) and [www.scouter.com](http://www.scouter.com) selecting net compass, where to go, bsa camps, state.

[www.scoutcampsusa.com](http://www.scoutcampsusa.com) – Home website for book reviewing 800 boy scout summer camps, high adventure bases, etc. This is not quite my personal focus and I have not seen it.

Rivers and Rapids: Canoeing, Rafting and Fishing Guide: Tx, Ark, Ok. Ben Nolan & Bob Narramore (book) – Bob Narramore runs High Trails Outfitters in Garland, tel. 972-2PA-DDLE which rents canoes – the book lists good flow levels for some rivers – I copy state park maps that are freely available online anyway, but a lot of work has clearly gone into this book for proprietary purposes, so get your own copy if only for the excellent maps and hazard descriptions.

[www.down-river.com](http://www.down-river.com) – Dallas Downriver Club (canoeing). Has links for water flow levels.

[www.dorba.org](http://www.dorba.org) – Dallas Off Road Biking Association. Has maps and descriptions of mountain biking trails around Dallas-Fort Worth.

[www.ntoa.org](http://www.ntoa.org) – North Texas Orienteering Association. Has frequent orienteering meets that scouts are welcome to attend.

[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us) – Texas Parks and Wildlife Department – Has descriptions, maps and contact information for all Texas state parks. Also see [www.touroklahoma.com](http://www.touroklahoma.com) for Oklahoma and [www.arkansas.com](http://www.arkansas.com) (choose camping) or [www.arkansasstateparks.com](http://www.arkansasstateparks.com) for Arkansas and [www.emnrd.state.nm.us/nmparks](http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/nmparks) for New Mexico. You can order free state parks maps, floater guides, hiking guides, etc. for either free or very cheap.

Internet generally – just search for a camping destination by name and you will find websites by people, troops and other groups with trip journals and photographs

Texas Monthly's guide to Texas – this won't help you find high adventure destinations, but you may find places that you want to stop and see along the way.

Texas Highways Magazine & [www.texashighways.com](http://www.texashighways.com) – occasionally helpful

## MAPS

[www.topozone.com](http://www.topozone.com) – has topo maps of any location in the U.S., you can right-click and save the picture to disk, or you can subscribe for better access

Dallas Public Library – has United States Geological Survey topographical maps (USGS topo maps) for Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas; you can't check them out, but you can look at them all day long

Mapscos store. Retail stores located behind Stonebriar Mall, on Centurian NW of Belt Line & Midway, at Preston & Royal. Also has a website at [www.mapscos.com](http://www.mapscos.com). Many topo maps and national park maps in stock.

Forest Service Maps of national forests. The absolute best maps are the Wilderness Area maps which will have trails and contour lines. These are a little tricky to order and about \$7 each, but worth it. The Forest Service Website is [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us). Good luck from there – I did it once, but I am not sure I could again find the forms for mail order. The online pdf files lack resolution.

## SITE-SPECIFIC RESOURCES

Rivers and Rapids 2000: Canoeing, Rafting and Fishing Guide to Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Ben Nolan and Bob Larramore. In local stores, or contact [www.hightrailscanoe.com](http://www.hightrailscanoe.com) since one of the two authors owns it.

Outdoor and Trail Guide to the Wichita Mountains of Southwest Oklahoma. Edward Charles Ellenbrook. Lawton, Ok: In-the-Valley-of-the-Wichitas House 1983,1998.

Hiking the Wichitas – Now You Can Find It! Alan Thode. Leathers Publishing 2004. [www.leatherspublishing.com](http://www.leatherspublishing.com).

Ouachita Trail Guide. Tim Ernst. Cloudland.Net 2000.

Ozark Highlands Trail Guide. Tim Ernst. Cloudland.Net 2000.

Arkansas Hiking Trails. Tim Ernst. Cloudland.Net 2003.

Big Bend, the Official National Park Handbook. Helen Moss and park staff. A classic. Frankly, just get the entire Trip Planner Deluxe from [www.bigbendbookstore.org](http://www.bigbendbookstore.org) including it and the Hikers Guide to Trails of Big Bend National Park and the Big Bend Backcountry Road Guide.

Trails of the Guadalupe: A Hiker's Guide to the Trails of Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Don Kurtz and William D. Goran. Champaign, Ill: Environmental Associates 1978, 1997.

Lincoln National Forest Trail Guide. John Stockert. Albuquerque: Public Lands Interpretive Association 2002.