

## **VISITOR USE GUIDELINES FOR THE ROY E. LARSEN SANDYLAND SANCTUARY**



The Nature Conservancy's Roy E. Larsen Sandyland Preserve offers the visitor an outdoor experience of the rich natural wonders of the Big Thicket of southeast Texas. Established in 1977, the preserve's 5,673 acres harbors native habitats for the diverse species of plants and animals of the region. The Preserve is listed as Site # 17 on the Upper Loop of the Gulf Coast Birding Trail.

The Preserve is open for day-use only, for hiking, picnicking, photography, and nature study. All other activities are prohibited including overnight camping. Collection of plants, animals and non-living items is prohibited. Alcohol, firearms and fires of any kind are prohibited. Please leave your pets at home. Public access points for fishing, canoeing, kayaking and swimming on Village Creek are the Farm Road 418 and Highway 327 bridges. These access points are maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation.

**Trails** The preserve offers over 6 miles of hiking trails. Portions of the trail system are deep sands. Standing water may be on portions of some of the trail system.

- The Longleaf Pine Loop Trail (0.8 mile) is an easy, self-guided trail with a guide booklet provided to learn more on the natural history and management of the preserve (0.8 mile).
- The Upland Trail (4 miles) provides a longer walk into the interior of the preserve. Visitors will experience great views of Village Creek and then travel through upland pine and hardwood forests.
- The Floodplain Trail (2 miles) takes the visitor to the bottomland hardwood forests along Village Creek. This trail is periodically flooded-check with Conservancy staff for current trail conditions.

### **Village Creek**

- Access to Village Creek is at the Farm Road 418 bridge and the Highway 327 bridge. Both of these areas are maintained by the Texas Dept. of Transportation. A very popular float trip is from Farm Road 418 as the entry point for appx. 8.5 miles of Village

Creek that travels through the heart of the preserve, exiting at the Highway 327 bridge.

- This stretch of waterway is recognized nationally as a popular warm water recreation destination.
- Canoe and Kayak Rentals-Visitors may bring their own boats, or rent from local vendors. Shuttle services are available. Check with vendors or the internet for current water conditions. In dry periods portaging of watercraft may be necessary.
- Swimming-Access to the creek is available at the Highway 418 and Highway 327 bridges. To protect creek bluffs, avoid soil erosion and keep visitors safe swimming at the preserve is prohibited.
- Fishing is allowed in Village Creek as a public waterway. Contact Texas Parks & Wildlife Department for rules, regulations and freshwater fishing license requirements.
- Camping is prohibited on the preserve. Village Creek flows through private and public lands. Be aware of your location to avoid trespass and to know what activities are allowed.

### **Amenities**

There are no restrooms, or vending machines located at the preserve. Convenience/grocery stores and eating establishments are within 1-6 miles of the preserve. A covered pavilion with benches is located overlooking the Blue Hole on Village Creek at the southern entrance of the preserve. The pavilion can be reserved for an event. Contact the preserve manager.

### **Group Tours/Volunteer Program**

Group tours for ten or more individuals are available on a first come-first served basis. Contact the preserve manager for scheduling and more information. Many people enjoy spending additional time on the preserve by volunteering with the organization. Contact the preserve manager for volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups.

### **Hours of Operation and Fees**

The Preserve is open daily from sunrise to sunset. To ensure the public's safety, the Preserve may be closed during fire operations or other management activities. Check with the Preserve Manager for the latest

update. There is no entrance fee for use of the preserve. If you wish to make a donation to the preserve, Forest Program or The Nature Conservancy contact our office or visit the Conservancy's website [www.nature.org/texas](http://www.nature.org/texas)

## **Safety**

Be prepared for the weather and field conditions. Rain gear, sunscreen, a hat, eye protection, drinking water and food items are suggested. Poison ivy, poison oak and stinging nettle are present. Fire ants, stinging insects, non-venomous/venomous snakes and feral hogs are present. The trails of the preserve travel through sandy soils on the uplands and wet soils on the floodplain. Be aware that preserve or service vehicles may be on preserve roads and trails.

## **Security/Emergency Contact**

We recommend that all visitors store valuables out of sight when parking vehicles and lock their vehicles. We encourage visitors to sign in at the visitor registration box. In the event of an emergency this information will be helpful to assist you. For all emergencies call 911. Hardin County emergency personnel will respond. The address of the public parking lot is 4208 Highway 327 West, Silsbee, Texas 77656

## **Other Local Attractions**

Southeast Texas has a wealth of natural and cultural destinations and events for your enjoyment. Check the visitor information box for additional materials to help you take full advantage of the rich heritage of the area. A few favorite attractions include:

Silsbee      The Ice House Museum

Kountze      The Kirby Hill House (historic home)  
Big Thicket National Preserve (Visitor Center) (Various  
preserve units are available in the area for visiting)

Lumberton Village Creek State Park

Woodville Heritage Village

**Trail Maps, Preserve Species Checklists and more Information is available at the Visitor Information box at the trailhead.**

Online information is available at [www.nature.org/texas](http://www.nature.org/texas)

The Nature Conservancy  
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