



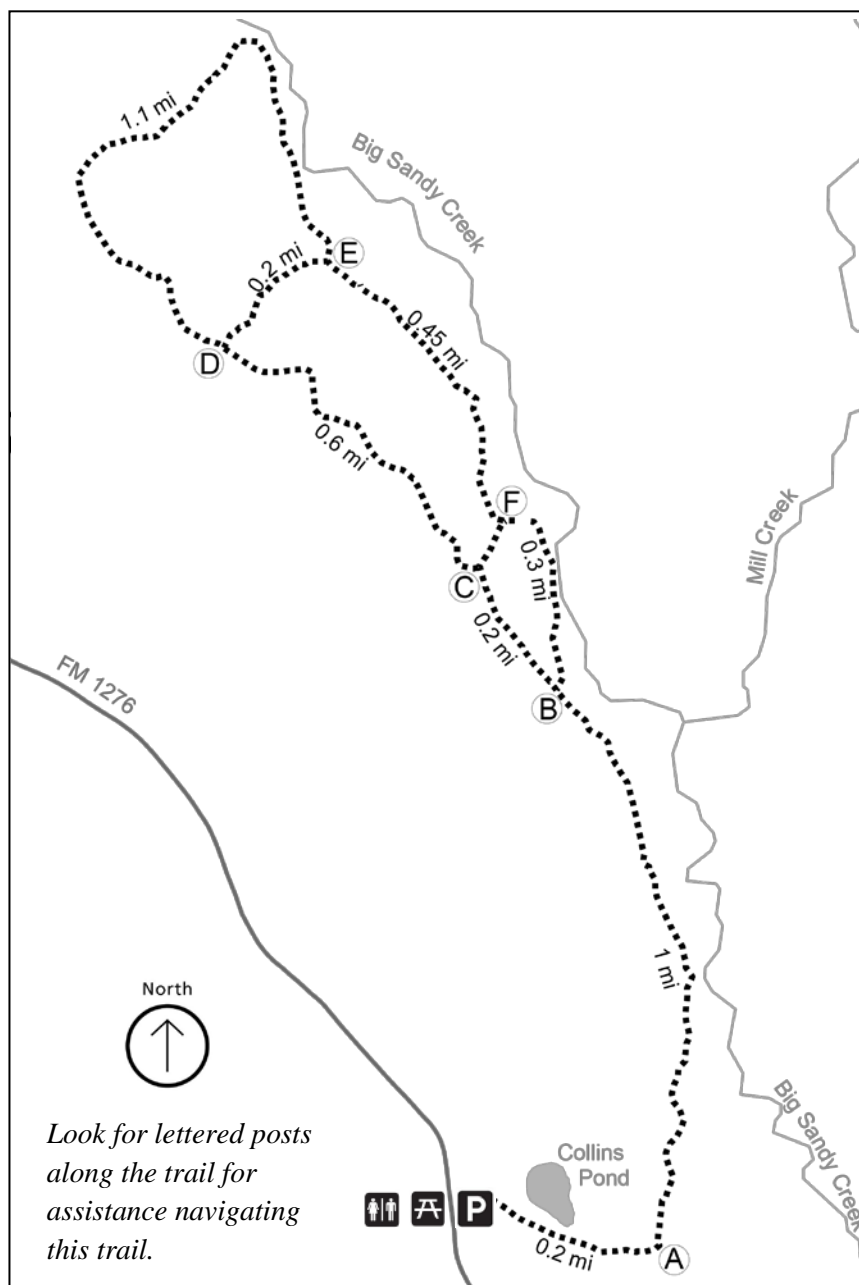
Trails of the Big Sandy Creek Unit

The Big Sandy Creek Unit is located in the northwest corner of the preserve, in Polk County, Texas. This diverse unit of nearly 14,000 acres allows hikers to experience upland pine forests, beech-magnolia-loblolly pine woodlands, a cypress bog, and floodplain plant communities. Three developed trails provide easy access into the Big Thicket, while more adventurous explorers are welcome to travel off-trail into the wilderness.

Woodlands Trail

This 5.4 mile trail begins in an old pine plantation, planted around 1963 after the area was logged. This mature forest community skirts Collins Pond, a man-made body of water found just a short stroll from the trail entrance.

The western portion of the trail follows the top of a slope, where beech, magnolia and loblolly pine trees are common. The eastern portion of the trail winds through the floodplain along Big Sandy Creek. The forest canopy becomes more dense in this area, creating more shade and less nutrients for grasses and shrubs. Common floodplain trees here are sweet gum, water oak, tupelo and basket oak, with an understory of hornbeam and holly.



Fishing is permitted in Collins Pond and all the waterways in the preserve, with a valid Texas State Fishing License.

Backpacking and primitive camping are permitted near the Woodlands Trail year-round with a free camping permit. In other parts of the Big Sandy Creek Unit, camping is permitted only during non-hunting seasons. Inquire with a park ranger for camping details.

Hiking Tips

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

More information is available at www.nps.gov/bith and at the preserve visitor center, 6102 FM 420, Kountze, Tx.

Beaver Slide Trail

This 1.5 mile trail offers a shady retreat from the heat. Enjoy some solitude on this short loop through a floodplain along Big Sandy Creek. Abundant cypress, magnolias, hornbeam, moss, and ferns line this easy walk through the woods.

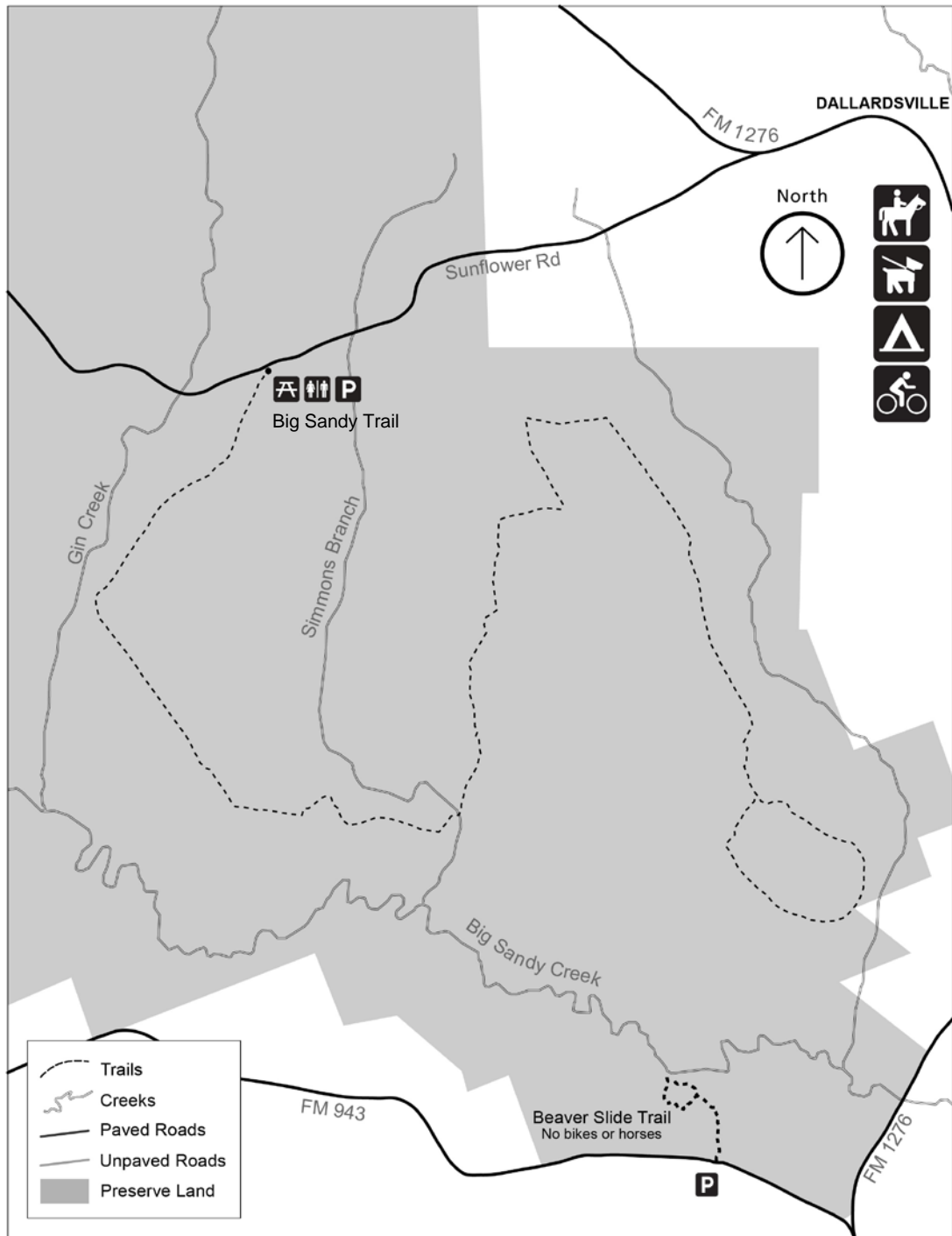
A map of the Beaver Slide Trail is located on the back side of this brochure.

Be Aware!

Hunting for deer, hog, rabbit and other Texas game species is permitted in parts of this unit with a free hunting permit. Hunting season is typically in the fall and winter months. All the hiking trails are open year-around. We recommend all visitors wear hunter orange or international orange when exploring the Big Sandy Trail during hunting season. Ask a park ranger for more information about hunting season.

Big Sandy Trail

The Big Sandy Trail is 9 miles one-way, 18 miles round-trip. It follows a series of abandoned logging roads through several distinct plant communities. This multi-use trail is open to hikers, backpackers, bicyclists, and horseback riding.



Bicycle Use

Bicycle riding is permitted on all park roads, parking areas, and on the Big Sandy Trail. This is the only trail in the preserve that permits bike riding. Off-trail riding is prohibited, as is the construction of jumps or other features. The use of helmets is highly encouraged.

Horseback Riding

Visitors are permitted to bring their own horses and ride on the Big Sandy Trail. This is the only trail in the preserve that permits horseback riding. Below are a few special considerations.

- Off-trail horseback riding is prohibited. Horses must stay on trail.
- Horses must be kept under physical control at all times and may not be left unattended. Tying horses directly to trees 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 trunks, tree roots, or other vegetation.
- Grazing is not permitted. Hay is not permitted in the backcountry.
- Horse manure that has accumulated from tethering must be scattered.