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Jack Lowry, editor
Texas Highways
Box 141009
Austin, TX 78714-1009

Dear Jack,

Basic research on the Urban Trails piece--working title, "Wild in the City"--has turned up quite a nice array of locations, many of which offer guided hikes and have nature centers (on-site or nearby), which cater particularly to educational groups. Some also hold special events open to the public.

All feature natural walkways through undeveloped and often varied ecosystems. Some offer trails for mountain bikes, too. Some cities have other nature trails scattered about, but these seem to be the primary ones with enough land to give a "wild" feeling tucked away in the city. I've limited the search to major metropolitan areas.

Austin

- Barton Creek Greenbelt/Wilderness Park--also rock climbing and sporadic guided hikes (tie in nearby Nature & Science Center)
- **Forest Ridge Preserve** (part of recently-designated Balcones Canyonlands Preserve which protects recharge zone of Edwards Aquifer)
- Wild Basin Wilderness Park--guided hikes (co.-owned, op. by non-profit)

Houston

- Houston Arboretum--nature center, guided hikes, special events
- Memorial Park--horseback riding, jogging/hiking trails
- **Armand Bayou**--nature center, guided hikes, pioneer farm, special events
- Jesse Jones Park--nature center, canoeing, guided hikes, mock Indian village
- Mercer Arboretum--hiking, canoeing, plus formal botanical gardens

Dallas

- Dallas Nature Center--guided hikes, ranch house, amphitheater, nature center planned for 1997.

Fort Worth

--more--

• **Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge (be brief)**--largest in state at 3300 acres, education center, guided hikes, special events (covered in '89)

Arlington

• **River Legacy Park**--new nature center, guided hikes

San Antonio

• **Friedrich Park**--guided hikes, outdoor education amphitheater in progress

El Paso

• **McKelligon Canyon**--adjacent to "Viva El Paso" amphitheater, actually mixed jurisdiction of city/county/Franklin Mountains State Park, steep hikes and also some rock climbing (tie in nearby Wilderness Park Museum)

Lubbock

• **Mackinzie Park/Yellow House Canyon?**--former state park and canyon system runs through entire city as virtually only spot in the county that's not flat; mixed ecosystems--including woods, canyons, prairie dog town, lakes
(call Nola)

There may be a couple added or a couple dropped, depending on some calls still out and how you want to approach this, but there's really a lot out there to cover. With a dozen or more locations, that leaves only 100-150 words each, with little room to deal with how wildlife co-exists with city life.

As I see it, here are our alternatives:

1. Pick the best of each city and do a bare bones survey, hitting the crest of the wave only.
2. **Limit the scope and pick the best half-dozen of the lot to dive deeper into.**
3. Part the Red Sea and break the topic into a two- or three-parter with 4-6 in each part.
4. Jump in a cold creek and figure out another alternative.

Please let me know something ASAP as I'm trying to plan fall travel.

Cordially,

P.S. Tell Mike Wild Basin Wilderness Park in Austin holds a Lunar Eclipse Hike Sept. 26 with lots of telescopes. Georganne Foster (327-7622) says it's the last chance this century to view a lunar eclipse from CenTex. Mike may want to shoot some or send someone...for this piece or something else.

Have not done recently or ever

Forest Ridge

Armand Bayou

Dallas Nature Center