



We touch on public land designations today, and if you want more information, check out this useful [summary](#) the Interior Department published earlier this year.

FEATURED PARK



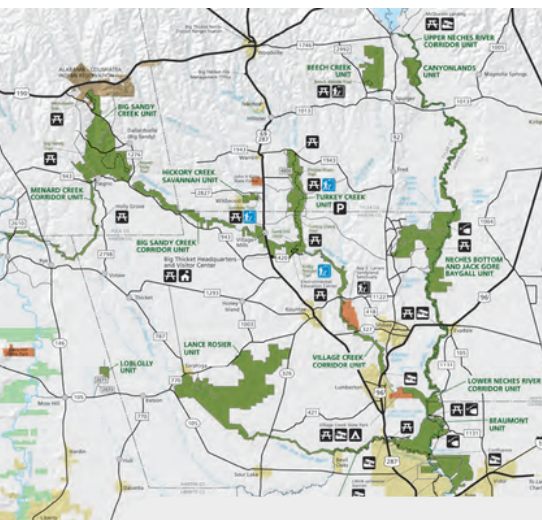
Photos and facts of your favorite parks, one issue at a time

Big Thicket National Preserve Texas

FACT 1: Established on October 11th, 1974, Big Thicket shares the title of the country's **first**

NATIONAL PRESERVE

defined loosely as an area similar to a national park but where hunting, trapping, and resource extraction may be permitted. Can you name the other "Big" National Preserve created on this day?



FACT 2: Nine distinct land units - many of which are connected by the Preserve's six water corridors - give Big Thicket its **irregular shape** that reaches into *seven* different Texas counties.



PHOTO CREDIT: NPS

Nominate *your* favorite local, state, or national park [here](#) so our subscribers can learn about it.

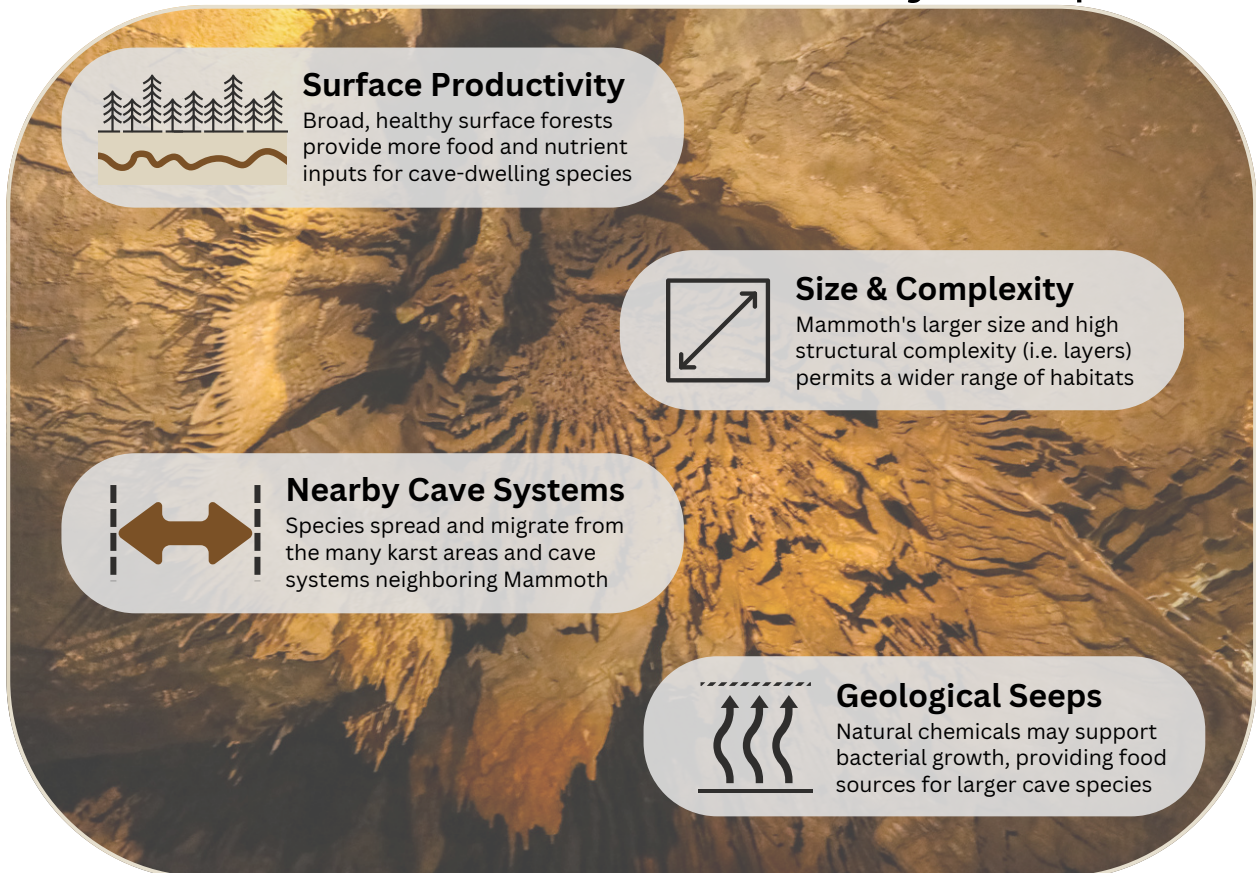
PARK PERKS



Visualizing key research to show why parks matter

In honor of Cave Week, we're going to peek under the forest floor and examine what makes an ideal cave habitat. In a 2021 article published in the journal *Diversity*, university and Park Service researchers analyzed literature on species diversity in the Mammoth Cave System. *Seven* of Mammoth's 49 cave-dwelling animal species exist nowhere else on Earth. The authors detailed several theories for why Mammoth is such a biodiversity hotspot for terrestrial cave-limited species - possibly the **3rd most diverse** in the world.

Attributes of a Cave Biodiversity Hotspot



Sadly, *almost 80%* of the species assessed in the study are of conservation concern due to pollution, groundwater overuse, habitat degradation, and climate change. As a refuge for threatened species, protected areas like Mammoth Cave National Park are now more important than ever.

How do bivalves know when to open their shells?

PLAYGROUND

it's just mussel memory