



Devils River State Natural Area

Devils River Access Permit for Paddlers

Overview

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) acquired and has managed the Devils River State Natural Area (DRSNA) since 1988. In December 2010, TPWD acquired additional acreage approximately 13 river miles downriver from the original SNA. In September 2012, TPWD entered into an agreement with TxDOT to manage the river access and adjacent right-of-way at Baker's Crossing, on State Highway 163, approximately 14 river miles upstream from the original SNA. These three units are being managed by the Texas State Parks system under the overall name of Devils River State Natural Area.

The 20,000-acre original SNA is designated DRSNA –Del Norte. The newly acquired 17,000-acre lower river unit will be known as DRSNA –Big Satan. The paddler access site at the Baker's Crossing Bridge will be known as DRSNA –Baker's Crossing.

The Three Areas of DRSNA:

- **Del Norte** has been opened to the public since the early 1990s with very limited public access to the Devils River itself. During this time, "non-motorized access only" has been allowed to the river through the SNA (except for limited concessionaire shuttle access), with a gate preventing motorized access for the last one or so miles to the river. The SNA access road meets the river at a location known as San Pedro Point. Del Norte encompasses one mile of river frontage. The San Pedro Point Paddler Camp offers "one night only" primitive camping (for paddlers only) who are moving down the river. There are 16 individual paddler camping spots and a reservation is required. Day use (no camping) is also authorized for visitors hiking or biking to the river.
- **Big Satan** is not presently open to the general public, and planning is underway to determine public use and an opening date.
- **Baker's Crossing** - Paddlers who have the required permit will be allowed to put-in at the Baker's Crossing Bridge access, at the northeast side designated put-in.

Most lands adjacent to the Devils River from Baker's Crossing Bridge to Amistad Lake (approximately 47 miles) are privately owned.

TPWD does not have legislative authority to manage the Devils River proper. However, as one of the primary conservation agencies of the state, TPWD does have a broad scope and some specific responsibilities for land and water conservation resource protection, and public recreation on public waters and TPWD-managed lands.

All public access to the Devils River from Baker's Crossing to Lake Amistad National Recreation Area is across TPWD managed lands. TPWD intends to establish a limited number of permits for paddler access to the river through TPWD managed lands at Baker's Crossing, at Del Norte-San Pedro Point, and at Big Satan-Devils Back.

Devils River Access Permits (DRAPs): On a one-year pilot basis, TPWD will issue up to 12 individual river access permits each day for the public to access to and/or from the river across TPWD-managed lands for overnight trips. Additionally, 12 individual permits will also be issued for day trips only (trips to be completed in one day, no overnight). This one-year pilot program will help TPWD determine appropriate access and use levels. Data gathered during the pilot will be helpful in designing and managing a long-term permit system and process.

Any paddler accessing the Devils River through:

- DRSNA Baker's Crossing Paddler Access
- DRSNA Del Norte Unit (San Pedro Point)
- DRSNA Big Satan Unit (Devils Back)
- Or who have launched from private property and are accessing the shores of the Del Norte or Big Satan Units from the river
- Or who have launched from private property and who are staying at the San Pedro Point paddler campground

must have a TPWD Devils River Access Permit (DRAP) in their possession. These permits will be available by reservation only and can be obtained through the Texas State Park's Customer Service Center (instructions to follow). As a condition of the permit, anyone seeking a DRAP will be required to agree to the basic Devils River etiquette and orientation requirements as specified in the TPWD Devils River "Critical Paddler Information" document.

Shuttle Service Providers: TPWD has allowed concessionaire-operated shuttle service since the 1990s to utilize SNA lands. TPWD has determined that continuing to allow shuttle service access to and from TPWD managed lands along the Devils River is reasonable and appropriate. Two TPWD-approved concessionaire shuttle service providers are authorized a one-year pilot permit to provide shuttle service to the three access sites managed by TPWD, including **taking paddlers out** from Devils Back, at Big Satan.

Camping in DRSNA:

- **San Pedro Point Paddlers Camp:** Camping will be allowed at San Pedro Point Paddler Camp in the Del Norte Unit. This is a "paddler's only" camp, and there is a one-night maximum stay limitation. Reservations are required, and there is a \$5 per night, per person camping fee. (There have historically been four, 4-person campsites at this camp for \$20 per campsite. TPWD will maintain the same maximum capacity of 16 campers, but will make it 16 individual campers, instead of 4 @ 4 = 16.) More than one paddling group may use this campsite at the same time.

- **RM 29 Paddler's Camp:** A primitive paddler's camp is available at river mile 29 for up to 8 paddlers, one night only maximum stay, and \$5 per night per person. A reservation is required. More than one paddling group (up to a total of 8 individual paddlers) may use this campsite at the same time.
- **Baker's Crossing Paddler Camp:** A small primitive camping area approximately 0.25 of a mile south of Baker's Crossing bridge, on the southwest side of SH 163, is available for paddlers the night before their launch. There is a picnic table, no fires, and all trash must be removed. Containerized fuel only.

These three sites are the only designated public campsites on the river at this time. Camping permits are available through the Texas State Parks Customer Service Center.

All other camping must be below the gradient boundary, on an island, or with permission from a private landowner.

Planning your trip down the Devils River: It is highly recommended that any person considering paddling the Devils River review the Devils River State Natural Area web page (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/devils-river>) and specific details about paddling the river from the related web page, "Preparing for a Trip on the Devils River," and other publications/Web pages on the subject, prior to obtaining a DRAP.

Anyone obtaining a DRAP will be required as a condition of their permit to abide by the "Critical Paddlers Information" requirements, which are available on the TPWD website (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/devils-river/river-trip-guidelines>).

Conditions of Permit Requirements:

- Waste Alleviation and Gelling Bags (WAG Bag) must be carried and used by paddlers (enough bags to cover paddling group for duration of trip). All human waste must be removed from the river corridor and disposed of in a proper receptacle.
- All trash/garbage must be carried out in a heavy-duty bag or container that will not rip or spill garbage into the river.
- No glass containers are allowed.
- Paddlers must carry adequate line/rope/cord to secure gear in/on vessel. All gear must be secured well enough to prevent spilling out when the vessel rolls over.
- Each vessel must attach and display an identifying boat band supplied by TPWD for duration of the trip.
- If you are taking a trip not supported by a shuttle service, deposit a copy of this completed permit and itinerary in the receptacle at the Baker's Crossing or San Pedro Point put-in locations.
- In order for this permit to be valid, the permitted paddler must sign the Conditions of Permit on the back of their DRAP.

Permitting Procedure: To obtain a Devils River Access Permit (DRAP) or a San Pedro Point or RM 29 paddler camping permit, call the Texas State Park's **Central Reservation Center** at 512-389-8901 and **ask for the Devils River agent.**

- Paddlers should ask the agent if there are DRAPs available for the date for which the paddler(s) wish to put-in. There will be 12 individual overnight permits and 12 day-use permits available each day. The permit numbers for overnight permits are counted based on launches each day (with intent to camp). Paddlers launching from private property who are going to use a TPWD campsite or take-out site will be counted the day they actually launch from the private property.
- Permits may be obtained for up to 11 months in advance and **will cost \$10 each.** Each paddler will need an individual DRAP, though a trip leader may reserve and pay for an entire group. Once the reservation is made and the DRAP purchased, it will become non-refundable after 72 hours.
- The DRAP will be mailed to the permit holder. If the paddler is not using a TPWD Shuttle Service Provider, an identifying boat band will also be mailed with the permit, with instruction on attachment.
- If a TPWD Shuttle Service Provider will be used for shuttle to the river access, the Shuttle Service Provider will supply the identifying boat band.

General Advice: Once the paddler has reviewed all Critical Paddler Information and other necessary information about paddling the Devils River, they should decide their logistics of how they will get to the river and where they will launch and get picked up.

If a paddler (or one of the party) is an experienced Devils River paddler, then the group probably knows what to do as far as planning the support logistics of the trip.

If a paddler(s) is new to the Devils River, and wants to consider shuttle service support to and from the river, they should contact a TPWD authorized Shuttle Service Provider **before** obtaining their DRAP to ensure that the Shuttle Service is available on the dates planned for the trip. They will also want to contact the TPWD Central Reservation Center prior to making a commitment with the Shuttle Service Provider to ensure that DRAPs are available on the date desired to launch. This process will take at least three phone calls. Once the pilot project has been completed, TPWD hopes to have a web-based DRAP process.

Leaving a vehicle unattended at Baker's Crossing is not recommended. A personal drop-off/pick-up or a Shuttle Service Provider drop-off/pick-up is the recommended manner in which to paddle the Devils River.

TPWD-authorized Shuttle Service Provider(s): At this time the following TPWD-sanctioned Shuttle Service Provider(s) is authorized to utilize all designated DRSNA put-in/take-out points at Baker's Crossing Paddler Access; San Pedro Point – Del Norte; and Devils Back – Big Satan.

- Gerald Bailey

Devils River Outfitters
P.O. Box 421923
Del Rio, TX 78842
geraldbailey007@gmail.com
(830) 395-2266

- Kevin Stubbs
Expedition Outfitters
www.expedition-outfitters.net
(210) 602-9284