



Customer Services

The Customer Services Department is responsible for recreation, engineering, environmental education, heritage, archeology, and special uses.

Recreation: The recreation program consists of three regional priority and highly developed campgrounds: Hillman Ferry, Wranglers, and Piney. Piney and Hillman Ferry each generate approximately 200,000 visits annually; while Wranglers Campground is designated for equestrian users and generates 80,000 visits. For a quiet campground experience, there is Energy Lake that generates approximately 25,000 visits annually. Visitors may want to take a more primitive approach and stay at one of our 11 basic-dispersed or lake access areas.

There are over 450 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails. Off-highway users may enjoy the 100 miles of designated OHV trails at the Turkey Bay OHV Area. The recreation program is also responsible for management of many picnic and day use areas and boat launches. The recreation program also manages over 300 special use permits annually from seasonal camping and recreation events to land use, such as cellular antennas and communication sites.

Engineering: Engineering staff provide support to all facilities on the unit. This support includes; but is not limited to roads, dams, water/wastewater, deferred maintenance, infrastructure management, construction and repair projects, contract administration, creating and updating Geospatial Information Data (maps), project planning, and design build. Maintenance work is performed through a contractor, with planning and oversight performed by the Unit.

Environmental Education: Environmental Education is an extremely important aspect of the Customer Service Department. There are three visitors centers and four environmental education facilities. The Woodlands Nature Station, Golden Pond Planetarium and Observatory, and the 1850's Homeplace all provide diverse environmental education programs for people of all ages. Brandon Spring Group Center serves the area as a year-round overnight education and recreation facility for groups of all ages.

Archeology and Heritage: Archeologists serve as liaisons between the Forest Service and former residents. They maintain a positive relationship with prior residence families to provide cemetery access for visitation and burials. A significant role in the heritage department is assisting other specialists with projects by providing pre and post project surveys and insuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Another important responsibility of the archeology program is to collaborate with the seven Native American Tribes that once inhabited the area. They seek input from the Tribes and provide feedback on Forest Service projects and proposals; such as, the Trail of Tears Project in partnership with the National Park Service.

Principle Goal

To protect and manage the resources of the Recreation Area for optimum yield of outdoor recreation and environmental education through multiple use management by the Forest Service.

Strategy & Vision

Working together with visitors and local communities to bring positive, sustainable change through exceptional nature-based experiences that inspire all generations.