



Artifacts and tales of a fascinating past linger as East Texas has grown from a sparsely-populated frontier wilderness to a modern-day world.



**Texas Conservation Alliance**  
P.O. Box 6295, Tyler, TX 75711-6295  
Austin Office 512-327-4119  
Tyler Office 903-592-0909  
Email: [TCA@TCATexas.org](mailto:TCA@TCATexas.org)  
Website: [TCATexas.org](http://TCATexas.org)

# Protecting the Wild Neches



The Neches River is a magnet for hunters, fishermen, canoers, hikers, bird-watchers, and others who enjoy the outdoors.



The Big Thicket National Preserve, Martin Dies Jr. State Park, and numerous other wildlife areas depend on the Neches to nourish their rich biological diversity.



*Photographs courtesy of Mark Bush, Adrian Van Dellen, and Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.*

Flowing through the heart and history of East Texas, the beautiful Neches River is one of our last wild rivers. Home to many kinds of wildlife, the Neches and its bottomland forests draw tourists from across the state and around the world.

**Please join us in protecting this rare natural jewel.**

# The Neches River



For hundreds of years the Neches River Valley has nourished a succession of peoples -- Caddo and Atakapa Indians, then Spanish, French, and Mexican explorers, next early "Texian" settlers, finally the Anglo-Americans who came in droves to the new state of Texas.

One of Texas' last wild rivers, the Neches and its bottomland forests are home to a variety of wildlife -- bald eagles, deer, squirrels, otters, wood ducks, mallards, wild turkeys, and colorful songbirds.

The Neches meanders over 400 miles, from northwest of Tyler to the Gulf of Mexico near Beaumont. The Neches sustains half a million people, meeting the needs of municipalities and industries. Along the way, the river nourishes the forests of the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge, the Davy Crockett National Forest with its Big Slough Wilderness and Neches Overlook, the Angelina National Forest with its Upland Island Wilderness, the popular Martin Dies Jr. State Park, thousands of acres of private land, and the famed Big Thicket National Preserve.

Modernization during the 20th and 21st centuries brought changes to the Neches River Valley -- the comfort of electricity and paved highways, and lakes for water supply and recreation. With these changes come trade-offs -- clearing the river bottom of hardwood trees, excessive damming for reservoirs, litter and pollution. The Neches' bottomland forests provide a last refuge for the plant and animal diversity East Texans enjoy. If the Neches isn't protected, its critical bottomland hardwood forest habitat will be lost, as has been the fate of other Texas rivers.

## Protecting the Wild Neches — What We Can Do for the Future

A growing number of Texans are discovering the value of protecting natural areas, to enhance quality of life and promote economic development. The Big Thicket National Preserve draws tourists and conventions to Beaumont and nearby cities. Approval of the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge on the Upper Neches brought praise from newspaper editorials, legislators, and citizens across East Texas.

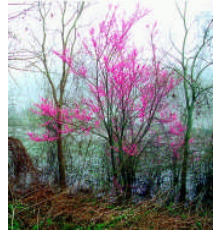
Texas Conservation Alliance and numerous other citizen groups propose that the Neches River be designated a National Scenic River – to protect the river and highlight its value as a tourist draw.



## Designating the Neches A National Scenic River

Texas Conservation Alliance and other citizen groups support designating the Neches River a National Scenic River – to protect it and highlight its value for nature tourism.

Before the Neches can be named a Scenic River, the National Park Service or other federal agency must conduct a study to determine whether the Neches qualifies ecologically as a Scenic River. The study would also determine the benefits to the community and identify any impacts of the designation.



As part of the study, there would be a local advisory group of landowners, hunters, representatives of the timber and tourism industries, paddlers, and others with a stake in the designation.

If the agency recommends the Neches as a Scenic River, and the U.S. Congress approves it, the river would be protected from damming or channelization. Other activities would continue as before.

To learn how you can support designation of the Neches as a National Scenic River, contact

**Texas Conservation Alliance**

**903-592-0909**

**P.O. Box 6295, Tyler, TX 75711**

**Alliance@TCAtexas.org**

**Or log on to TCAtexas.org**