



Palo Duro Canyon “The Grand Canyon of Texas”

Texas’ best kept secret? A 120-mile-long canyon that’s grand in its own right. For much of the past 12,000 years, this canyon was populated by the ancient Clovis and Folsom people who hunted bison. In the 1500s, Spanish explorers traveled through the region. They named the canyon Palo Duro (Spanish for hardwood) because of its numerous juniper trees, a contrast to the nearby plains.

In the 1700s, Native Americans such as the Comanches, Kiowas and Apaches lived in Palo Duro. Here they made their last stand at the 1874 Battle of Palo Duro Canyon with the U.S. Army. Hundreds of the tribe’s horses were slaughtered by the U.S. Army, forcing the tribes to surrender and relocate to the reservations in Oklahoma.

In 1876, Charles Goodnight drove more than 1,000 cattle into the canyon and established the JA Ranch, which still exists today. The Goodnights are known for saving bison calves from slaughter and saving the species. The descendants of these calves make up the Texas State Bison Herd.

Palo Duro Canyon State Park is in the heart of the canyon. The geological features of the park were carved out by the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River. The white caprock, or Ogallala Formation, sits on top; then the reddish sandstone Trujillo; the lavender, yellow and gray Tecovas, and finally, the Quartermaster, a variety of red stones shot through with white bands of gypsum. Some of these layers cascade out in formations called Spanish skirts, named after flowing garments. The rocks erode at different rates, creating hoodoos, tall and impressively balanced rock pillars--the most famous being the 310-foot-tall Lighthouse, a symbol of the park. (*The*

West Texas Trail Walkers Palo Duro Canyon State Park Canyon, Texas October 6-8, 2023



The Lighthouse Formation

Lower Canyon Trails October 6, 2023 124238 - 7k, 10k

Lighthouse Trails October 7, 2023 124234 - 6k, 10k, 14k 17k

Civilian Conservation Corp Trails October 8, 2023 124235 - 5k, 7k, 10k

Canyon City Walk October 5-8, 2023 124241 - 5k, 10k



“Hike with an Altitude”

AVA 60, TX 19

www.westtexastrailwalkers.org

West Texas Trail Walkers (WTTW) is a club dedicated to holding a yearly event in the scenic areas of West Texas which are off-road and challenging.

Eligibility: All persons and ages are welcome. Children under legal age must be accompanied by an adult. None of the events are suitable for strollers or wheelchairs

Volunteer: Volunteers are always needed! We need volunteers to be checkpoints or work at the start/finish point. Please check the registration form to indicate the days you are available and what activities you want to volunteer for.

Fees: Event fee is \$3.00 per walk.

State Park Fee: Palo Duro Canyon State Park charges \$8 per person unless you have an annual pass. You can register online one month before arrival. The website is [texasstateparks/reserveamerica.com](http://texasstateparks.reserveamerica.com).

Safety: Please do not hike alone. Hiking boots and sticks are highly recommended. Wear sunscreen. Carry plenty of water. A good rule of thumb is to carry one 12-oz. bottle of water per mile you plan to walk. The State Park recommends you carry one gallon of water while hiking the Lighthouse trails. No smoking is allowed on the trails. Because Palo Duro is a remote canyon, hikers should not plan on having cell phone reception. Carry a hardcopy map of the area. The USGS Topographic Map for Palo Duro https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ht-bin/tv_browser.pl?id=3287196d26eb2eb138e1e886b5401410.

Pets: Dogs are allowed (but are discouraged) because of the rocky trails and high heat. Don’t forget to carry extra water for your dog. Dogs must be on a leash.

Registration forms can be found at www.westtexastrailwalkers.org. Contact susan.noonan@gmail.com with questions.

Lodging Options

Best Western Palo Duro Canyon Inn & Suites, 2801 4th Ave. Canyon, TX 79015, 806-655-1818, ask for WTTW group rate, \$99 before tax

Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Canyon, 2901 4th Ave., Canyon, TX 79015, 806-655-4445

Buffalo Inn Canyon, 3101 4th Ave., Canyon, TX 79016, 806-655-2124

Palo Duro Canyon State Park, texasstateparks.reserveamerica.com. Cabins, full RV camping, tent camping, and glamping sites.

Annual Awards Dinner: Buffalo Room, West Texas A & M University Alumni Banquet Facility, 104 N 25th St., Canyon, TX 79016. Dinner begins at 7:00 pm on Saturday, October 7, 2023. The cost is \$29 for the Fajita Bar - chicken & beef fajitas, Mexican rice, charro beans, avocado, sour cream, cheese, pepper, onions, salsa, pico de gallo, tortilla chips, cinnamon crisps, and iced tea. A short award’s ceremony/business meeting will be held after the dinner.

Directions: From Best Western parking lot turn left on 4th Ave. Immediately turn left onto Hospital Drive. Drive 0.4 miles, then turn left onto Russell Long Blvd. Just past the WT Buffalo Stadium, turn left into the large parking lot. Drive to the back of the parking lot. Enter the back side of the Alumni Banquet Facility for the Buffalo Room. Look for the WTTW banner and see www.westtexastrailwalkers.org for map.



Lower Canyon Trails
Palo Duro Canyon State Park
Armstrong County, Canyon, Texas
October 6, 2023

Trail Start: Wolfberry/Juniper Camp Area
Walk Director: Susan Medlin
Distance/Rating: 7k rated 2C or 10k rated 3C
Start/End Time: Start between 10 am - 12 noon. Finish by 3 pm.

Highlights: Wide views of the canyon ridges on both options. 7k passes by a peaceful creek that is shaded with mature trees. 10k climbs up to the Comanche trails and passes through the “Rock Garden,” an awesome field of tumbled boulders.

Trail Description: Dirt trails with some rocky surfaces. Moderate elevation gain on 10k. Hiking boots and hiking sticks are recommended.

Restrooms: Restrooms are located at the Wolfberry/Juniper Campground.

Directions/Parking: From the Best Western, Canyon, TX, turn left from the parking lot onto TX-217. Drive for 19 miles, approximately 32 minutes, and enter the State Park. Continue into the canyon passing the Visitor Center, the Amphitheater, the Trading Post, the Soapberry Day Use area. After the Soapberry area, stay to the right at the Y intersection. Continue 1.7 miles. Turn left at the Wolfberry/Juniper Camp area. Park at the restroom parking lot, the Tasajillo Pavilion or at the gravel/dirt parking area ahead along the park road.

Workers Walks—Volunteers Needed!

- October 4: Meet at 8:30 Wolfberry/Juniper Camp Area
 - October 5: Meet at 8:30 am at Lighthouse Trail Area
- Volunteers will need to reserve day passes for these days. Be sure to go on-line to texasstateparks/reserveamerica.com to reserve a day pass. This can be done one month in advance and costs \$8.00.



Lighthouse Trails
Palo Duro Canyon State Park
Armstrong County, Canyon, Texas
October 7, 2023

Trail Start: Lighthouse Trailhead
Walk Director: Will Robinson
Distance/Rating: 6k rated 1C, 10k rated 2C, 14k and 17k rated 3C

Start/End Time: Start 8 am -10 am for 6k and 10k. Start 8 am - 9 am for 14k and 17k. Finish by 3:30 pm.

Highlights: The trails follow the base of multicolored cliffs with bands of rock in shades of yellow, brown, red and purple. The 10k, 14k, and 17k trails go to the base of the Lighthouse formation. The 10k returns back to the start point. The 14k and 17k go up and around the Lighthouse. The 17k adds the Little Fox Canyon trail and returns to the start point on the Givens/Spicer/Lowery trails.

Trail Description: Dirt trails with small hills and stony washes. The 14k and 17k trails up to the Lighthouse are very difficult and rocky. Hiking boots and sticks are recommended.

Restrooms: Soapberry Day Use Area
Directions/Parking: From the Best Western, Canyon, TX, turn left from the parking lot onto TX-217. Drive for 17 miles, approximately 27 minutes, and enter the State Park. Continue into the canyon passing the Visitor Center, the Amphitheater, the Trading Post, and the Soapberry Day Use area. Restrooms are in the Soapberry Day Use Area. Travel another 0.8 miles and then turn right at the sign for the Lighthouse Trailhead. There should be plenty of parking. The State Park allows parking along the road.



Civilian Conservation Corps Trails
Palo Duro Canyon State Park
Armstrong County, Canyon, Texas
October 8, 2023

Trail Start: 5k start/ends at the Visitor Center. 7k and 10k start/end at the Amphitheater parking area.

Walk Director: Helen Hull

Distance/Rating: 5k is rated 3C. 7k and 10k are rated 4C.

Start/End Time: Start 8 am - 9:30 am. End by 2 pm.

Highlights: The 5k CCC trail begins at the Visitor Center. The 7k and 10k start on the canyon floor at the Amphitheater and go out and back to the Visitor Center viewpoint, and along the Goodnight Trail. There are stunning views of the canyon walls and floor from lookout points on the CCC trail and off the Goodnight trail. These historic trails were built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corp. For an additional 3k, cross the Park road and hike the Comanche trail.

Trail Description: 7k and 10k have a 600 ft. elevation gain. These trails are rocky and difficult with switchbacks. The 5k is also rocky with switchbacks and has a modest elevation change. Hiking boots and sticks are recommended.

Restrooms: Located at the Park entrance. The Visitor Center restroom opens at 9 am.

Directions/Parking: From the Best Western turn left onto TX-217. Travel 13 miles to the State Park entrance. For the 5k, travel 0.1 miles and turn right into the Visitor Center parking lot. The 7k and 10k start at the Texas Outdoor Musical Theater two more miles down Park Rd. 5. Turn right and drive to the trailhead at the back of the parking lot.



Canyon City Walk
Canyon, Texas
Armstrong County
October 5-8, 2023

Walk Start: Best Western Palo Duro Canyon Inn and Suites, 2801 4th Ave., Canyon, Texas 79015. The start box will be in the lobby.

Walk Director: Helen Hull

Distance/Rating: 5k and 10k rated 1A

Start/End Time: Daylight hours, October 5-8, 2023. On-line start box, October 1 - December 31, 2023.

Highlights: Canyon is a thriving small city just outside Amarillo, Texas. The walk takes you through the pristine West Texas A & M University campus, Canyon main streets, and past the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. The Museum is the largest history museum in Texas and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Division will have a special display there in October celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the Texas State Park system.

Trail Description: Easy walks on flat, city sidewalks.

Restrooms: Best Western Lobby

Directions: The Best Western is 1.7 miles west of Interstate 27, exit 106. From 1-27, take exit 106. Turn west on 4th Ave and travel 1.7 miles. The Best Western will be on the right.

