



Join us on Monday, May 7, when Wendel Withrow will be speaking on "Exploring the Great Parks of Texas".

Wendel is the author of the new 2018 book "*Best Tent Camping: Texas 2nd Edition*", your car-camping guide to scenic beauty, the sounds of nature, and an escape from civilization.

Wendel says the Lone Star State provides a spectacular backdrop for some of the most scenic campgrounds in the country, from the High Plains of the Panhandle to the beautiful beaches of the Gulf Coast. But do you know which campgrounds offer the most privacy? Which are the best for first-time campers?

Wendel Withrow has traversed the entire state and compiled the most up-to-date research to steer you to the perfect spot.

This latest edition includes beautiful colored pictures taken at each of the 50 parks described and suggestions for restaurants in nearby cities.

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Next TOWN Meeting

Monday May 7, 2018

La Madeleine
5290 Belt Line Road, Addison
6:30 p.m.

Guests always welcome

www.towndallas.org

Inside the book you'll find:

*50 private, state park, and state and national forest campgrounds organized into 7 distinct regions.

*Selections based on location, topography, size and overall appeal.

*Detailed maps of each campground and key information--such as fees, restrictions, date of operation, and facilities.

*Driving directions and GPS coordinates.

*Ratings for beauty, privacy, spaciousness, safety and security, and cleanliness.

Wendel will bring books to the meeting for those who wish to purchase one at a discounted rate!

In addition to being an author, Wendel is a lawyer at Withrow Law and is the most recent past president of the Dallas Sierra Club.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hike

May 5th, Saturday

**Hiking and Picnic at
Hagerman National Wildlife
Refuge**

We will meet at the Super1Food parking lot located on 75, just north of Virginia St in McKinney at 10:00 am. (208 N. Central Expy, McKinney, TX) We'll carpool and caravan to the park and start at the Visitors center to get the latest update on trail conditions. There are 6 different trails to choose from ranging from .75, to 5.7 miles in length. Wear sturdy shoes and bring a hat, sunscreen, water and a sack lunch for a picnic in the park. You might even bring a camp chair if you opt to take a shorter hike and enjoy the views and wildlife. There is a 4 mile Audio Auto Tour route. You can download the audio interpretive files to your mobile device or check out an audio device at the visitor center.

Directions from Dallas: North on Hwy 75 to US 82, west on US 82 for 5 miles; north on Hwy 289 for 4 miles; west on Refuge Road for 4 miles. It is about an hour from our meeting place in McKinney.

Trip Leader Robbie Chandler

rbbchandler@yahoo.com

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Hagerman/visit/plan_your_visit.html

Camping

May 13th – 17th (Sunday-

**Thursday) Camping at
Daingerfield State Park**

Camping without the crowds is always nice. Join us for a couple of nights during the week at Daingerfield State Park. About 2 hours from Dallas, Daingerfield is a nice getaway. There are hiking trails, bird watching and lake activities. The park rents paddle boats, paddle boards, canoes, kayaks and flat bottom boats.

Trip Leader Shirley Meurer

sameurer@yahoo.com

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/daingerfield>

Retreat

**June 11th-15th, Women's
Retreat at Camp Mary
White in Mayhill NM**

Camp Mary White is a 4-night, 5-day retreat located in the beautiful Sacramento Mountains of southern New Mexico. Women travel from near and far to take in the beauty of the forest, take classes, make new friends, reunite with old friends, listen and share, eat good food, laugh, cry, sing, gaze at the stars and just be in the moment.

Check in on Monday at 1 and check out on Friday after lunch.

Preregistration is open \$50. Cost is \$350 for the retreat, all meals included. Cabins are included but if you would like to tent camp instead, let CMW know or:

Contact Robbie Chandler

rbbchandler@yahoo.com

Register at <http://www.campmarywhite.com/blank-c1i02>

Remembering Costa Rica 2012





Caring for Down 101 – Jackets, Sleeping Bags and More

Posted by Whole Earth | 03.23.2018

Down feathers are the ultimate for keeping bodies warm. Down mattresses and down comforters have been keeping sleepers toasty for generations. But what if your life requires you to do more than lounge in bed? Down jackets and vests let you take the warmth with you wherever you go. And if you're camping in cold weather, there's no need to curl up in a shivering ball trying to stay warm. The warmth of a down sleeping bag and pillow will help you relax and get the rest you need.

So what exactly is down? Down feathers are small, soft and fluffy. They grow close to the body of a bird and create a layer of airy insulation that holds in the warmth. The same principle is at work in down jackets and sleeping bags. The down layer is surrounded by lightweight fabric and worn close to the body, surrounding the wearer in a cloud of warmth.

Down jackets, vests and sleeping bags are not inexpensive. If you've invested in these high quality items, you'll want to take good care of them and make them last. Here's how.

Cleaning Down Items

The answer to the question, "How often should I wash my down jacket or sleeping bag," is, in fact, another question: "How often do you use it?" If your jacket or vest has been in heavy rotation or you've been using that down sleeping bag or pillow on an extended trip or two, it may be time to clean them. You'll also want to clean your down items at the end of the season when it's time to store them until Fall and Winter come calling once again.

However, you don't want to over clean your down clothing. Feathers are delicate and will break down over time. As their volume is

reduced through breakage, so too is their ability to insulate. So if it's dirty, if it smells, if you've reached the end of the season, then it's time to clean your down items.

First you'll need a special down cleaner. Feathers have a natural oils to help keep them fluffy. Regular detergents and cleaners can strip the oil from the down leaving it flat and a poor insulator, and they can also remove the Durable Weather Repellent (DWR) coatings on some jackets. So beware of using a regular detergent or fabric softener that can ruin your jacket, vest, pillow or sleeping bag. Use a cleaner specially created for down such as NikWax Down Wash Direct or Granger's Down Wash.

Next, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER clean your down items in a top loading washing machine with an agitator. The agitator will damage both feathers and the lightweight fabrics surrounding them. Use a frontloading washing machine with no agitator. Take a field trip to a laundromat, if necessary, and use the delicate or gentle cycle. It's extremely important to thoroughly dry your down items. Damp feathers can mildew, absorb smells and clump. Use a dryer and a clean tennis ball or two (nothing heavier) to gently fluff the feathers. If you use a commercial dryer, put it on the lowest heat setting and check it frequently. Commercial dryers run hotter than home dryers and too much heat can make feathers brittle and prone to breaking. A long slow gentle drying cycle is best. It can be difficult to know if down is completely dry. Even if it feels dry, let it cool and check again. If it feels damp, continue to dry the items with gentle heat until there is no doubt that they are dry.

Storing Down items

Now that your down jacket, vest, pillow or sleeping bag is clean, how do you store it over the summer? While you might be tempted to use a stuff sack, don't! Storing down items in a compression environment speeds the breakdown of the feathers thus decreasing its ability to insulate. Instead, hang jackets, vests, pillows and even sleeping bags on hangers in closets where they are not crowded and air can freely circulate.

Repairing down items

If you rip your down jacket, sleeping bag or pillow and you're far from home, use a bandaid or some other light adhesive to temporarily close the rip or puncture. Later cut an adhesive nylon fabric patch slightly larger than the tear, round the corners of the patch and place it over the rip. Don't use a needle or thread, as they can further damage the lightweight material, making the problem even worse.

A sensible first step for cleaning down is to read the care label on the item or visit the manufacturer's website for cleaning instructions. Some companies like The North Face suggest using professional cleaners who specialize in down. But most manufacturers believe that you can clean your down items if you use special down cleaners, a front loading washing machine on gentle, and a cool or low heat setting

on a dryer. So take good care of that jacket or sleeping bag by cleaning and storing it properly at the end of the season. And when cold weather returns, you and your down items will be ready for adventure.