

Central Louisiana: Where Culture Connects

“The Great Outdoors”

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Louisiana is known as Sportsman’s Paradise and the natural beauty of central Louisiana is unmatched in any other area. Step outside and explore the great outdoors in central Louisiana through trails, waterways, and courses.

Day One

Begin your outdoor adventure in Leesville, La. Make sure you have plenty of water, snacks, and good hiking shoes. Pack a lunch for a great picnic in the great outdoors.

Head out to Forest Road 403 in Leesville to hike your way to the **Wolf Rock Cave**, located in the Vernon Unit of the Calcasieu Ranger District of the **Kisatchie National Forest**. Archaeological evidence shows that primitive peoples once used the cave as habitation. The site has an informational kiosk and the trail is marked. *Caution, the trail is steep; we recommend that you wear sturdy shoes and be careful.

Make a trip to the **Fullerton Recreation Complex** where you can hike, bike, and camp. This is the perfect place to have that picnic! The complex also features Fullerton Lake, available for non-motorized boat launch and boating.

Grab dinner in Leesville. Try one of the stops on their convenience store eating trail! Overnight at Allen Acres Bed & Breakfast before heading to Alexandria for day two. The B&B is a 26 acre wooded paradise near Fort Polk and adjacent to the Kisatchie National Forest, near the picturesque Ouisca Chitto Creek. It is listed as a State Natural Area. The Allens have spent years developing gardens specifically designed to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. Trails with native trees labeled for identification are available on the property. A national champion large gallberry tree is just a few feet from the property on the National Forest. Also, a variety of chickens, Coturnix Japanese quail, and a flock of guineas can be seen and heard. Breakfast is your choice but the fresh eggs are very popular.

If you would like to be more in-tune with nature, you can primitive camp at Fullerton Recreation Complex.

Day Two

Begin the second day with a hike along the **Wild Azalea Trail**. The Wild Azalea Trail has been designated by the Chief of the Forest Service as a National Recreation Trail because of its outstanding scenic values. The trailheads are located in Woodworth and at Valentine Lake Recreation Area. The Trail is a total 26.2 miles long – making it the longest hiking trail in Louisiana. There are 7 segments to the trail ranging from easy to more difficult. If hiking or biking along Segment 2, you will also see the Wild Azalea Seep, noted for the unique plants it supports, is 123 acres of woodland, and is on the Louisiana Natural Area Registry. For more information on the Trail or the segments of the trail, download the brochure at http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5398478.pdf.

Grab lunch at one of the locally owned restaurants in the area, or pack a picnic to enjoy along the trail or at **Valentine Lake** or **Kincaid Lake Recreation Areas**.

Schedule a guided horseback tour in **Kisatchie National Forest** with Hayes E Daze and their guides. The horseback rides will take you into the forest where you will learn about the history of the area, and the vegetation of the forest. The area where the guided rides take place is in an area that was used prior to World War II for the Louisiana Maneuvers. The maneuvers were used for training the soldiers that would be deployed to WWII's European Theater.

Complete the day with dinner and overnight before heading to Marksville for day three. Area camping spots include Cotile Lake Recreation Area, Kincaid Lake, Valentine Lake, as well as several campgrounds located just miles from the city center.

Day Three

Begin day three with a kayak trip down and back Spring Bayou. The **Spring Bayou Complex** is a complete ecological system in Avoyelles Parish. One of the best ways to experience the area is by kayak along one of three tours. The tours include the Shangri-La Tour which round trip is approximately 15 miles, the La Bonne Vie Tour which round trip is approximately 13 miles, and the Rougarou Tour which round trip is approximately 10 miles. Maps of the three tours can be downloaded at <http://www.springbayoupaddletrails.com/paddel-trails>. *At this time, kayaks are not provided. You must bring your own or rent from an area outfitter.

Grab lunch in Marksville and try a local Broken Wheel Beer from Fresh Catch Bistreaux.

Experience the natural wetlands of the area along the **Marc Dupuy, Jr. Wildlife Walking Trail**. Located in the **Grand Cote National Wildlife Refuge**, this one-mile accessible trail traverses forested wetlands, connects to a boardwalk and elevated observation tower. The observation tower overlooks wetland management units that the refuge manages for wintering waterfowl. Many species of waterfowl, wading birds and mammals may be viewed from this ideal vantage point.

Bring your clubs and take in a round of golf at **Tamahka Trails**, one of the courses on the state's Audubon Golf Trail. Master golf course architect Steve Smyers coupled his "new school" design with a passionate appreciation of Scotland's legendary courses to create 18 holes of pure perfection. Its numerous and often massive bunkers evoke a lunar landscape—and always require strategy.

Bring your RV and head to Gator Grounds RV Resort where RV campers can participate in several on-site activities including ziplining, golfing, fishing, swimming and water sliding. Other on-site amenities include a playground, Gator Grill restaurant, convenience store, outdoor movie theater, and arcade.