

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

relating to the creation and operation of the Northeast Texas Trail State Park.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 22, Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended by adding Subchapter U to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER U. NORTHEAST TEXAS TRAIL

Sec. 22.2701. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Northeast Texas Trail" means the land between Farmersville and New Boston originally held as railway rights-of-way by the Union Pacific and the Chaparral Railroads, released for rail banking through the Surface Transportation Board of the United States Department of Transportation. The term includes rights-of-way converted in part to a trail by a nonprofit entity.

(2) "Park" means the Northeast Texas Trail State Park.

(3) "Transportation department" means the Texas Department of Transportation.

Sec. 22.2702. ACQUISITION AND CREATION. (a) The department shall acquire land, including by means of a long-term lease, necessary to form a continuous linear state park along the area known as the Northeast Texas Trail. The department may enter into an interlocal agreement with a municipality or county that owns or controls land to be acquired under this section in lieu of acquiring a lease or title to the land.

(b) On the acquisition of land described by Subsection (a), the department shall create the Northeast Texas Trail State Park.

Sec. 22.2703. TRAIL COMPLETION AND MAINTENANCE. (a) On the creation of the park under Section 22.2702, the transportation department shall complete conversion of the former railroad right-of-way into a trail and complete other improvements and structures necessary to the function of the park. The transportation department may reroute the trail if necessary to avoid the construction of major bridges, and the department shall adjust the park's boundaries as necessary.

(b) The transportation department shall maintain the trail, improvements, and structures constructed under Subsection (a).

Sec. 22.2704. OPERATION. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), the department shall operate the park, including by providing the administration and staff for the park.

(b) The department may enter into operational partnerships with political subdivisions in which a portion of the park is located for the operation of that portion of the park.

Sec. 22.2705. GIFTS AND GRANTS. The department and the transportation department may accept gifts and grants to pay for actions authorized under this subchapter.

SECTION 2. (a) In this section:

(1) "Parks department" means the Parks and Wildlife Department.

(2) "Study" means the study authorized under this section.

(3) "Transportation department" means the Texas Department of Transportation.

(b) The parks department shall conduct, in cooperation with the transportation department, a study regarding the operational

needs of the Northeast Texas Trail State Park, as that park would exist if it were created as authorized under Section 22.2702, Parks and Wildlife Code, as added by this Act.

(c) The study shall include:

(1) staffing requirements of the park;
(2) equipment and facilities necessary to operate the park; and

(3) operational requirements of the park.

(d) Not later than September 1, 2021, the parks department shall deliver the results of the study to the standing committees of the house and senate having jurisdiction over parks.

SECTION 3. If the Northeast Texas Trail State Park is created under Section 22.2702, Parks and Wildlife Code, as added by this Act, the Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Department of Transportation shall enter into a memorandum of understanding regarding the maintenance and operation of the park.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.