

Jourdan River Blueway

The Jourdan River Blueway Trail invites canoers and kayakers to explore a 8.5 mile trail through coastal floodplains and a riverine ecological system. The river trail links the McLeod Park canoe launch to the Bayou Talla boat launch.

The tranquil waters of the upper Jourdan River offer a haven for birds, wildlife... and paddlers! From Bayou Bacon to Bayou Talla, the blueway trail guides kayakers and canoe enthusiasts past artesian springs, hardwood forests, and through the natural beauty of Hancock County. From the boat launch at McLeod Park, paddlers may go upriver past oxbow lakes and bluffs to Bayou Bacon. The trail continues downriver past sandbars, the Highway 603 bridge, and houses and restaurants of Jourdan River Shores to the Bayou Talla boat launch. The Jourdan River below McLeod Park is a popular area for high-speed water sports, so remain aware!



Directions:

From Interstate 10 take Exit #13 north toward Kiln, Mississippi. At Texas Flat Road which has been recently designated the Santa Rosa Scenic Byway to Space, go left to reach McLeod Park, which will be on your right.

Accommodations:

McLeod has RV campsites and primitive camping. If camping is not your thing, there are a number of hotels on Highway 90 in Waveland and Bay St Louis, less than five miles from McLeod Park.



Printing made possible by the
EPA Gulf of Mexico Program



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0 Bayou Bacon

The Jourdan River is one of the major coastal streams that bring water to the Gulf of Mexico. It is a tidally-influenced freshwater river, with cypress/gum swamp scattered along the river. All year, fishermen will find largemouth bass, freshwater catfish, striped bass... and alligator gar the size of your kayak.

1 Sandbars

These deposits are ever-changing formations that shift with winds and tides, but often form at the curve of the river. Sandbars are popular spots to picnic and play. No motorized vehicles are allowed, so paddlers can enjoy a quiet resting spot. Please respect the privacy of adjacent landowners.

2 Birds

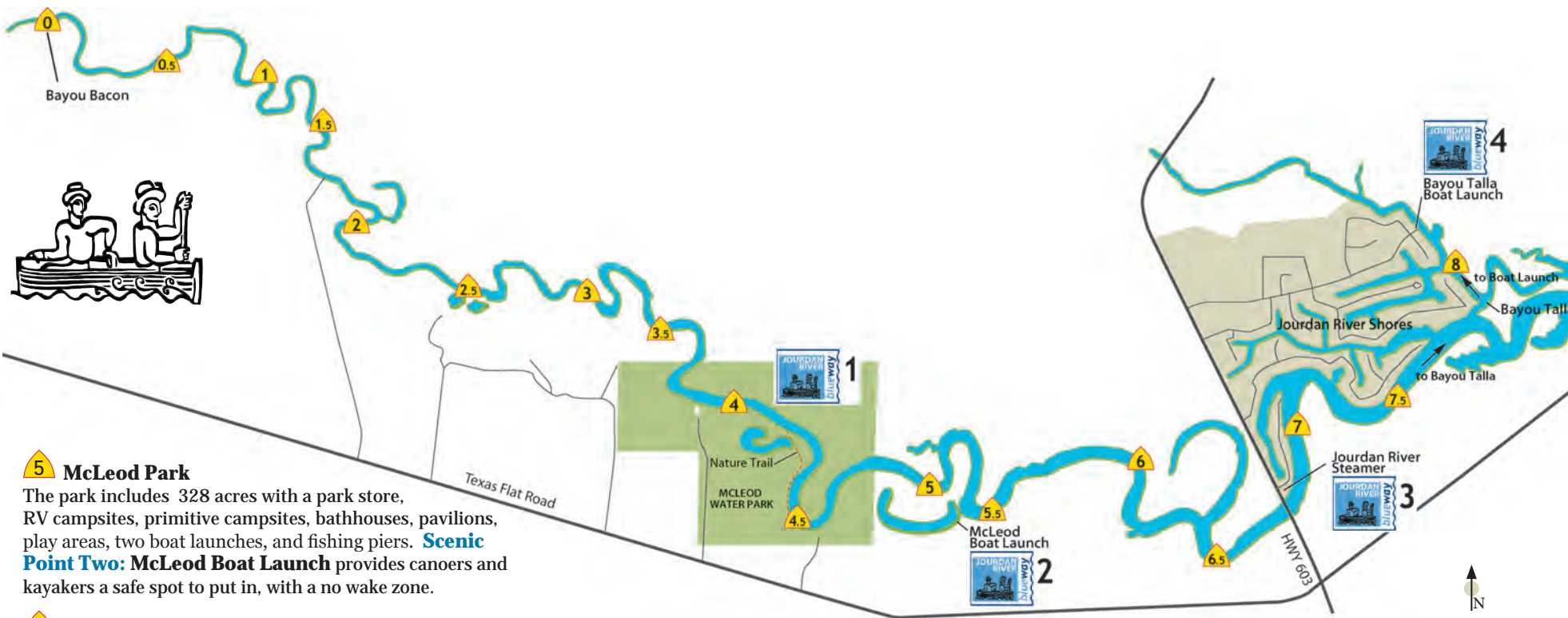
This area has excellent feeding, resting, and wintering habitat for migrating birds such as brown pelicans, white pelicans, and cormorants. Throughout the year hawks, osprey, eagles and other species make their homes in the tall trees.

3 Oxbow Lakes

Formed when rivers meander, and the main stem of a river is cut off to form a lake. In low coastal plains, the river meanders widely, curving across marshes and floodplains. Oxbow lakes were once a part of the river, but now hold water in the channels remaining from when they once flowed to the sea.

4 Scenic Point One: McLeod Nature Trail

The nature trail provides a beautiful 1.25 mile walk, winding through a pine and hardwood forest parallel to the Jourdan River. Many trees are identified with botanical names, and birds and animals will probably cross your path!



5 McLeod Park

The park includes 328 acres with a park store, RV campsites, primitive campsites, bathhouses, pavilions, play areas, two boat launches, and fishing piers. **Scenic Point Two: McLeod Boat Launch** provides canoers and kayakers a safe spot to put in, with a no wake zone.

6 Plant Life

The river is lined with smooth cordgrass and wild rice along the Upper Jourdan River, with floating leafed cow-lily along the shoreline. The Kiln is named for the charcoal kilns which provided fuel for cooking and heating in this area, made from the forests of pine trees.

6.7 Scenic Point Three: Jourdan River Steamer and Highway 603 bridge

The Jourdan River Steamer offers great seafood and fine dining overlooking the river. Choctaw and Creek Indians were once residents of this area. Shell middens are reminders of their lives – and their love of shellfish.

A shell midden is a type of archaeological site made up almost entirely of shells. Over time, plants and then trees cover some of the shells, eventually forming an island of maritime forest.

7 Artesian Springs

When the groundwater beneath the earth's crust is stored in a confined area, it bubbles up to form an artesian spring. Near this mile marker is an artesian spring that bubbles up through the river! Look for it on the south side of the river – it is especially easy to spot at low tide. The Jourdan is a spring-fed river.

8 Scenic Point Four: Bayou Talla

The Bayou Talla Boat Launch is located at the end of Comanche Street in Kiln, Mississippi. There is no charge to launch, and parking is available. A rollicking trade in homemade liquor once flourished in this area. Moonshine such as “Jourdan River Dew” had the reputation for high alcoholic content. Raids often found copper stills, but it was difficult to catch the smugglers... they might have used this launch to spirit their white lightning to New Orleans and across the country!