

## Hamilton Pool Preserve

One of the most beautiful and unique attractions Austin has is Hamilton Pool Preserve, located just a half an hour out of the city, in the gorgeous Hill Country. The historic swimming area and its surrounding grounds were designated a preserve by the Travis County Commissioner's Court in 1990, and this idyllic, untainted spot is like an oasis, offering an accessible get-away from the hustle and bustle of the city. With 232 acres of nature preserve, the emphasis is on preservation of natural habitats, and environmental education, but the crown jewel is the pool and grotto.

Formed from the collapse of an underground river thousands of years ago, and the natural erosion since, Hamilton pool is a classic swimming hole, with the added spectacle of a fifty-foot waterfall. Hamilton Creek causes the spill, over limestone outcroppings, to create the waterfall, streaming down to the pool. One of the nicest naturally occurring benefits of Hamilton pool is that it is covered by a half dome-shaped ledge below the falls, providing cool shade for a refreshing dip. The pool leads into a brook that eventually feeds into the Pedernales River. Although the waterfall can deplete in times of drought, the water level of the pool stays fairly constant, making this a year-round destination in the warm environs of Central Texas. Water quality is gauged, and swimming is permitted only when the water quality meets safety standards. Updated information is posted at the entrance booth and provided on the park's telephone recorder message (512-264-2740).

Nature lovers will appreciate the lush plant communities, the diversity of wildlife species, and the natural shelter that attracted the area's first inhabitants over 8,000 years ago. The hike from the parking lot to the pool is about .5-miles round-trip; the hike along the creek from the pool to the river is about .75 miles, or for those who don't stop to swim, 1.25 miles round-trip from the parking lot. A great variety of birds can be viewed, including the Golden-Cheeked Warbler, and in addition to the juniper and oak savannah, and the variety of native grasses and wildflowers, several rare plant species including canyon mock-orange, red bay, and chatter box orchid have been spotted in the canyon areas along Hamilton Creek.

Because this is a preserve, care must be taken not to disturb the ecosystem unduly, and therefore, no pets are allowed. A maximum of 75 cars are admitted, and should the number of visitors exceed this amount, cars will be held at the gate, and as visitors leave, new ones will be admitted.

Although no camping is allowed, Hamilton Preserve is close enough to make a day trip easy, and offers enough to make return trips essential. Visitors are welcome to participate in nature study, picnicking and hiking their many trails, and groups can inquire about naturalist-led programs on environmental education and nature study.

## About the Author

Ki helps investors looking for properties in the [Austin Texas real estate](#) market. His site provides market updates on his blog about [Austin real estate](#).

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