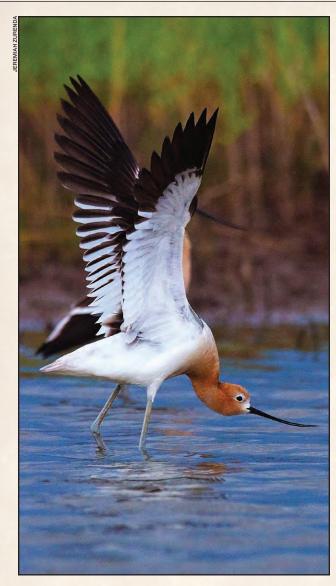


Experience the Wetlands

Hackberry Flat Wildlife Management Area and Hackberry Flat Center







Published by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

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History in the Making

One hundred years ago, it was simply a nuisance. A headache that stood in the way of spring planting and fall harvesting. Local lore says the flood-prone soils of Hackberry Flat could swallow a tractor in just a heavy fog. Times have changed. Today, the Hackberry Flat Wildlife Management Area (WMA) offers a multitude of recreational opportunities, as well as a vital refuge and feeding area for waterfowl and shorebirds.

More than a century ago, the sky over the flood-prone area was blackened with wildfowl as the pioneers arrived on the plains of southwestern Oklahoma. It was quite noisy with birds calling from dawn to dusk and wings whistling overhead. President Theodore Roosevelt was intrigued by the area and even went for a hunt on Hackberry Flat. However, it was not the wildlife that drew rugged homesteaders but rather the valuable commercial potential of the soil.

In the early 1900s, a massive ditch was constructed – some four miles long, 20 feet deep and 40 feet wide – by locals using hand shovels, mule teams and later a steam shovel. The next two generations of area residents maintained the area as farmland instead of the wetland it had been for so many years prior. They had some success in the fertile soil, but the area remained flood-prone so farming was difficult.

The history of Hackberry Flat is an example of the spirit of Oklahomans. Near Frederick in the southwestern corner of Oklahoma, the legendary wetland has been restored by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation with the generous help of several partners.

Breaking Ground

The Wildlife Department began restoration efforts in 1993 by purchasing land from willing sellers. The Department broke ground in August 1995 to form what is now known as Hackberry Flat WMA, a managed area for wildlife and a recreational area for Oklahomans.

The Department built nearly 40 miles of levees and ditches to form a honeycomb of wetland units with the help of many partners. These units allow area managers to flood any part of



the area according to the needs of migrating birds. A 17-mile pipeline connecting Hackberry Flat to Tom Steed Reservoir was a critical component in the process. The pipeline may be an option for water supply when rainfall events are limited such as during drought years. Managers have a wide variety of management options with more than 35 miles of dikes and canals and 99 different water control structures. Within the first year of restoration, shorebirds that had not nested in southwest Oklahoma in decades began nesting on the restored wetland.

Dedicated in May 1999, the Hackberry Flat restoration project was of impressive scope:

- 7,120 acres purchased from 30 willing sellers.
- 3,500 acres for flooding.
- 3,620 acres of combined upland and agriculture.
- 17-mile pipeline to bring water from Tom Steed Reservoir.
- 35 miles of dikes and canals.
- 100 water control structures.
- 35 wetland units.
- \$10 million from private and public partners to help cover the \$14 million cost.

Giving Thanks

The Wildlife Department is grateful for the support of the Hackberry Flat Foundation and other partners that helped make the project possible and keep it going today with the same spirit. The Hackberry Flat Foundation is a nonprofit organization established to promote the restoration project and ensure the promise of continued excellence in conservation, education and recreation.

Key Funding Partners

The Hackberry Flat Foundation U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service North American Wetlands Conservation Council The Williams Cos. Inc. Natural Resources Conservation Service Wildlife Restoration Program City of Frederick Ducks Unlimited Inc. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Phillips Petroleum Co. Inc. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Tillman County Commissioners First Southwest Bank Pioneer Trucking Co. Wildlife Forever Arrow Trucking Co. Oklahoma Station Chapter of Safari Club International Oklahoma City Sportsman's Club

U.S. Geological Survey

If You Build It,

Hackberry Flat was built and is managed to mimic the seasonal wet and dry cycles of the mixed grass prairie region. This provides a mosaic of microhabitats, which attracts a diverse group of species and outdoor enthusiasts from across Oklahoma and surrounding states. It offers a driving tour for wildlife viewing opportunities.

Hunting Hackberry Flat WMA

There are many hunting opportunities at Hackberry Flat WMA. Since the area is a wetland, all shotgun hunting is restricted to federally approved non-toxic shot only.

Waterfowl

Duck and goose hunting are some of Hackberry Flat's best draws. Serious waterfowl hunters view southwestern Oklahoma as one of the nation's best-kept hunting secrets. And now you know about it! Countless mallards, pintails, teal and other waterfowl descend on Hackberry during fall. As with all western wetlands, the amount of water in the area will vary from year to year.

Dove

The area offers some of the best dove hunting in Oklahoma. On a good day, you will see thousands of doves. If you will hunt during opening weekend, plan ahead – area motels fill up quickly!

Sandhill Cranes

The wingshooter's big game, sandhill cranes use Hackberry and the surrounding agricultural fields throughout fall migration, making for a great sight.

Deer

Although the area is not an ideal treestand setting, the deer herd in and around Hackberry Flat is growing and flourishing. Deer hunting opportunities are available to offer sportsmen a unique deer hunting challenge.

Rabbits and Quail

Small game is often overlooked. But with the mixture of upland cover and agricultural cropland, hunters are sure to have an exciting experience, as the mix is sound habitat for both species.

For complete laws and regulations, please refer to the current Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting Guide at wildlifedepartment. com or pick up a copy from your local hunting license dealer. For questions, please call the WMA biologist at (405) 823-8425 or (580) 335-5262. "Hunters play the most significant role in conserving Oklahoma's natural resources."



The Hunters' Helping Hands

Hunters play a significant role in conserving Oklahoma's natural resources – both game and non-game species.

Not only is their enthusiasm for wildlife important for making projects such as the restoration of Hackberry Flat possible, but they are also a primary source of funding for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Each year on average, Oklahoma attracts 550,000 hunters who spend about \$1.5 billion on equipment, travel, food, lodging, etc. (2016 Wildlife-associated Recreation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

The Wildlife Department receives no general state tax revenues, so sportsmen and sportswomen who buy hunting and fishing licenses, along with federal excise taxes on sporting goods, predominantly fund the Department.

They Will Come

Bird Watchers' Paradise

Hackberry Flat is a premier destination for birders. More than 225 species have been identified during surveys. From thousands of doves descending on a sunflower field, to less-common species such as the king rail, whimbrel and long-billed curlew, sheer numbers of birds from eastern and western Oklahoma make this area a time-saving paradise for birding.

Birding Tips

- Study the Hackberry Flat map prior to your trip and take a map along during your trip. The area is divided into named units to help communicate sightings and help navigate the area. Units are marked with a green metal post found at each unit corner adjacent to a road. There is also a self-guided driving tour guide to enhance your viewing opportunities (see next page) and a half-mile walking trail that begins at the Center. Informational signs are posted along the walking trail.
- Although shorebirds are present year round, the best months for observing them are March through May. The best months for viewing waterfowl are February and March. Bird watching is most successful during early mornings and early evenings.
- Use your car as a blind. You can observe a patchwork of wetland habitats from all roads.
- Walk dikes to get deeper into the wetlands for closer viewing.
- Keep a bird guide, binoculars and a camera handy for best identification practices and sharing your experience.
- Check the Hackberry Flat Center page on wildlifedepartment. com or contact Melynda Hickman, wildlife diversity biologist for the Wildlife Department at (405) 990-4977 or melynda.hickman@odwc.ok.gov, for upcoming events at the Hackberry Flat Center.
- See pages 10–11 for a complete birding checklist.



Hackberry Flat Driving Tour

Follow this driving tour for a good overview of the different habitats managed for wildlife. Remember, each unit is marked with a green metal post that can be found at the unit corner adjacent to a road.

To start your driving tour: From the intersection of Highway 5 and HWY 183 in Fredrick, go 2 miles south on 183. Turn east onto Airport Road and go 3 miles, and then follow the blacktop road as it turns south. Go 6 miles. Follow signs to the Hackberry Flat Center parking lot.

Stop 1. Welcome to the Hackberry Flat Center. Restrooms are available and information about the area can be found on the back patio. From the patio you are overlooking most of the wetland area that comprises Hackberry Flat WMA. The hills rising on the horizon form the eastern border of the WMA. It is about 3 miles form this point to the eastern border.

Feel free to walk down the trail to the bird blind at the end of the boardwalk. This trail provides a glimpse into the many components of a wetland in an arid region of the country and the wildlife dependent on it.

Continue the driving tour to learn how this wetland was restored. The design of this wetland consists of over 35 independently managed units. Each unit has been named and marked with a green, metal post in the corner of the unit that lies adjacent to the road.

Stop 2. Turn east (left) when exiting the drive of the Hackberry Flat Center and go about a mile. Weir Unit is on the left. The Hackberry Flat wetland is managed by a water distribution system that restores the functions and productivity of the original wetland. The structures on the south side (right) with a wheel on top floods the units. The steel box structure on the north side moves water in and out of wetland units. These structures control water distribution to achieve desirable water depths needed to create certain soil conditions for desirable plant germination, to provide mudflats for shorebirds during migration or to control invasive plant species.

Stop 3. Travel a half mile to the corner of Pintail and Millet Units. During winter and spring these are two of several units that provide food for waterfowl and shorebirds. Notice the manmade islands scattered throughout both of these units. These islands help to provide areas of elevation that will create drier soil conditions allowing for the germination of different vegetation and, when the units are flooded, would be surrounded by water. Waterfowl in particular enjoy using these islands for "loafing" and some wetland birds will nest on these islands.

Stop 4. Follow this road until it dead ends into a parking lot at an observation tower. From the top of the tower, looking north you can see the Wichita Mountains. The white towers you see are the grain silos in the town of Hollister. The unit to the north, The Big Unit, is so named as it is the largest unit in Hackberry Flat. Feel free to walk east on the dike to observe more wildlife.

To continue the driving tour, head back west for less than a mile and turn south (left) at the corner of Millet and Pintail units. (Stop 3).

Stop 5. Travel for a half mile. You will see more water control structures at this stop. Which ones move water in and which structures move water out? The answer can be found on information board at Center. The tall bunch grass growing along the ditches and edges of the dikes is switch grass (*Panicum virga-tum*). This native grass not only protects the dike from erosion but provides cover and food for wildlife.





Stop 6. Travel a half mile, turn east and continue for 1 mile. You will be at the corner of Goose and Crane units on your left (north). Goose Unit will probably look different than Crane Unit. Each unit is independently managed to provide a "patchwork" of different soil and plant conditions in Hackberry Flat. In addition to flooding and drying out units, soil manipulation is needed to control undesirable and desirable vegetation. This is achieved through disking or plowing all or some of a unit.

Stop 7. Continue traveling east until you are along side a row of willow and cottonwood trees. Trees in a prairie wetland are unique, and when found, these trees provide a microhabitat for some bird species. Orioles, grackles, flycatchers, kingbirds and nighthawks will sometimes nest in the trees. During fall and spring migrations, warblers can sometimes be found in these isolated trees.

Stop 8. Travel a half mile and turn left (north). You are at the southeast corner of Hackberry Flat. Continue traveling north for a mile and a half. This concrete bridge crosses over the original ditch that was dug in the early 1900s to drain the wetland. This ditch represents an amazing feat by the local communities. At the beginning of the project digging was accomplished by the use of mule teams and completed with steam-powered equipment. The ditch is maintained by the Wildlife Department so that it can be used to discharge water quickly from the wetland if needed.

Stop 9. Travel three-fourths mile and then turn left (west) at the Redhead Unit. Continue traveling for two and a half miles. To your left (south) you will see the main distribution canal for the Hackberry Flat wetland. Water from the Hackberry Flat reservoir, located north and west about a half mile, flows into this canal and is distributed through the system of water control structures you've seen while driving the route. All together there are 35 miles of dikes and canals and over 95 water control structures that allow Hackberry Flat to provide habitat for wetland wildlife.

Stop 10. Continue west for half a mile and turn in at the parking lot at the observation tower. The tower provides a view of the Hackberry Flat reservoir built by the Natural Resources Conservation Service in cooperation with the Tillman County Conservation District. A 17-mile pipeline has the capacity to deliver water from Tom Steed Reservoir. Water stored in the reservoir is distributed to the wetland units through distribution canals and water control structures. Waterfowl and other water birds that prefer deeper water can be seen during the winter, spring and fall seasons. This area is in the waterfowl refuge area. Please do not enter the refuge from Oct. 15 through Jan. 31 Any other time feel free to walk on the top of the dam to get a better view of the birds.

Thank you for visiting Hackberry Flat. Be sure to stop in and visit Frederick where you can find restaurants, shopping and lodging.

—Text developed in cooperation with the Friends of Hackberry Flat. Original map design by Larry Greer.

Hackberry Flat Center

Standing as the centerpiece of the 15-year restoration project is the Hackberry Flat Center. It is an example of how successful individuals, private businesses, conservation organizations and government agencies can be when they are committed to a project.



The Center is owned and operated by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, which is a state agency supported by fishing and hunting revenues and special taxes through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program on sporting equipment and motorboat fuels paid by anglers, boaters, hunters and recreational shooters.

The Center is open for scheduled events throughout the year. The facility provides wetland classroom experiences for school groups, programs on wildlife and wildlife-related activities, as well as meeting facilities for resource-oriented programs and workshops.



The Message of Hackberry Flat

- Understanding that sportsmen and sportswomen pay for wildlife conservation
- Understanding the value of wetlands and wetland restoration
- Understanding the wet and dry management techniques of the wetland
- Understanding the wildlife dependent on this wetland and how they use the habitats created
- Understanding the historical events associated with Hackberry Flat

Outdoor Classroom Field Trips to Hackberry Flat

Outdoor classrooms at Hackberry Flat offer students in third grade and up the chance to visit a wetland and learn about the importance of these areas in an arid region. Students will experience a unique hands-on approach that will enhance classroom instruction.

Outdoor classroom field trips are held from September through March. To ensure a quality outdoor classroom experience, each classroom group is limited to 40 students. To schedule an outdoor classroom field trip:

Well before desired field trip date, email Tammi Schrick,

classroom coordinator, at tammi.schrick@gmail.com to discuss possible dates, times, class topic, and number of students and adults to attend.

A wetland classroom field trip grant is available from the Hackberry Flat Foundation; if desired, ask for an application from the coordinator.

Once scheduled, a confirmation document will be emailed to you providing specific information about your field trip, an agenda, checklists for teacher/sponsor and student preparation, and directions to Hackberry Flat Center.

Two weeks ahead of your field trip, contact the coordinator to ensure the original details of your visit are still correct.

Biologist-guided Tours Offered Throughout the Year

Throughout the year, biologist-guided tours and programs are provided free to the public. Each tour coincides with seasonal activities in this prairie wetland. Prairie wetlands experience wet and dry cycles, and tours help explain the dynamics of these critical cycles for the wildlife that depend on this watlan



depend on this wetland. Visitors also learn how the wetland is managed to mimic those wet and dry cycles.

Tours include the winter raptor program and tour, spring bird migration tours, the breeding bird tour, the wetland at night tour, and the fall migration tour. And in fall, visitors can participate in a Monarch Watch event that offers evening tours to a monarch roosting area and morning activities that include tagging the migrating butterflies.

Visitors tour the wetland seated in an open-air trailer. The routes take visitors close enough to observe wetlanddependent birds and other wildlife using Hackberry Flat. Wool blankets and binoculars are provided if needed. Tour visitors are exempt from the required current hunting/fishing license or Wildlife Conservation Passport while on a tour. Tours are free, but reservations are required. Children must be at least 8 years old to go on a tour.

Bird Watching Checklist

Birds that may be seen during the appropriate season. Check your bird guide for accurate sighting seasons.

Loons

Common Loon

Grebes

Pied-Billed Grebe
 Horned Grebe
 Eared Grebe

Pelicans

American White Pelican

Cormorants

Double-crested CormorantNeotropic Cormorant

Bitterns and Herons

American Bittern
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron
Cattle Egret
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

Ibises

White-faced Ibis

Glossy Ibis

Swans, Geese, and Ducks

Greater White-fronted Goose Snow Goose & Blue Morph Ross' Goose Canada Goose Cackling Goose Wood Duck Green-winged Teal Mallard Mottled Duck Northern Pintail Blue-winged Teal Cinnamon Teal Northern Shoveler Gadwall American Wigeon Canvasback

Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Long-tailed Duck
Common Goldeneye
Bufflehead
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Fulvous Whistling-Duck
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Ruddy Duck

Vultures

Turkey Vulture

Kites, Eagles, Hawks and Allies

Osprey
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Ferruginous Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Golden Eagle

Falcons

American Kestrel
 Merlin
 Peregrine Falcon
 Prairie Falcon

Partridges, Grouse, Turkey and Quail

Northern Bobwhite
 Rio Grande Turkey

Rails, Gallinules and Coots

Black Rail
King Rail
Virginia Rail
Sora
Common Gallinule
American Coot

Barn Owls

Barn Owl

Cranes

Sandhill Crane Whooping Crane

Plovers

- Black-bellied Plover
 American Golden-Plover
 Snowy Plover
 Semipalmated Plover
 Piping Plover
- Killdeer

Stilts and Avocets

Black-necked Stilt

Sandpipers, Phalaropes and Allies

Greater Yellowlegs Lesser Yellowlegs Solitary Sandpiper Willet Spotted Sandpiper Upland Sandpiper Whimbrel Long-billed Curlew Hudsonian Godwit Marbled Godwit Ruddy Turnstone Red Knot □ Sanderling Semipalmated Sandpiper Western Sandpiper Least Sandpiper White-rumped Sandpiper Baird's Sandpiper Pectoral Sandpiper Dunlin Stilt Sandpiper Buff-breasted Sandpiper Short-billed Dowitcher Long-billed Dowitcher Wilson's Snipe Wilson's Phalarope Red-necked Phalarope

Gulls and Terns

Franklin's Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Forster's Tern
Least Tern
Black Tern

Pigeons and Doves

Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
White-winged Dove
Inca Dove
Ground Dove

Cuckoos and Roadrunners

☐ Yellow-billed Cuckoo ☐ Greater Roadrunner

Typical Owls

Great Horned Owl
 Burrowing Owl
 Short-eared Owl
 Long-eared Owl

Goatsuckers

Common Nighthawk

Swifts

Kingfishers

Woodpeckers and Allies

Red-headed Woodpecker
 Red-bellied Woodpecker
 Ladder-backed Woodpecker
 Downy Woodpecker
 Northern Flicker

Tyrant Flycatchers

Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Say's Phoebe
Vermilion Flycatcher
Western Kingbird
Eastern Kingbird
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

Larks

Horned Lark

Swallows

Tree Swallow
 Northern Rough-winged Swallow
 Bank Swallow
 Cliff Swallow
 Barn Swallow

Jays and Crows

Blue Jay
American Crow

Wrens

Marsh Wren Winter Wren

Kinglets and Gnatcatchers

Ruby-crowned KingletBlue-gray Gnatcatcher

Thrushes and Allies

Eastern Bluebird
 Mountain Bluebird
 Swainson's Thrush
 Hermit Thrush
 American Robin

Mockingbirds, Thrashers and Allies

Northern Mockingbird
 Brown Thrasher
 Curve-billed Thrasher

Pipits

American Pipit

Shrikes

Loggerhead Shrike

Starlings

Vireos

Bell's Vireo Red-eyed Vireo

Wood-Warblers

Tennessee Warbler
 Orange-crowned Warbler
 Nashville Warbler
 Yellow Warbler
 Yellow-rumped Warbler
 American Redstart
 Common Yellowthroat
 Wilson's Warbler

Cardinals, Grosbeaks and Allies

Northern Cardinal
 Black-headed Grosbeak
 Blue Grosbeak
 Indigo Bunting
 Painted Bunting
 Dickcissel

Sparrows

Spotted Towhee Cassin's Sparrow Rufous-crowned Sparrow American Tree Sparrow Chipping Sparrow Clay-colored Sparrow ☐ Field Sparrow Vesper Sparrow Lark Sparrow Lark Bunting Savannah Sparrow Grasshopper Sparrow Fox Sparrow Song Sparrow Lincoln's Sparrow Swamp Sparrow White-throated Sparrow White-crowned Sparrow Harris's Sparrow Dark-eyed Junco ☐ McCown's Longspur Lapland Longspur Chestnut-collared Longspur

Blackbirds and Allies

Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Rusty Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Great-tailed Grackle
Common Grackle
Bronzed Cowbird
Bronzed Cowbird
Orchard Oriole
Baltimore Oriole
Bullock's Oriole

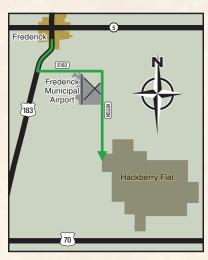
Finches and Weaver Finches

House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

Visiting Hackberry Flat

Directions

From the southern side of Frederick, go 1 mile south on Highway 183. Turn east on County Road E183 (also known as Airport Road). Travel 3 miles, and then follow the road south for 6 miles. Watch for Hackberry Flat WMA and Center signs.



GPS Coordinates to Hackberry Flat Center

34°27'75.72''N 98°96'40.83''W

Amenities

Hackberry Flat Center is open on the second Saturday each month, excluding July, and for scheduled events. Restrooms are available year-round and the pavilion offers a shady place to have a picnic. There is additional information and a message board in front of the Center and on the back porch of the Center.

Lodging, restaurants and shopping are available in Frederick. Visit frederickokchamber.org or call (580) 335-2126 for more information.

Camping at Hackberry Flat is allowed in the designated camping area (see centerfold map). This is a primitive site with no hook-ups.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Friends of Hackberry Flat and the Hackberry Flat Foundation were established to promote Hackberry Flat and insure the promise of continued excellence in conservation, education and recreation. Volunteers help staff with school field trips, surveys, birding tours and special events such as Hackberry Flat Day. For more information, visit the Friends of Hackberry Flat page on Facebook.

License Requirements

Admission to the Hackberry Flat Center is free for school field trips and programs offered by the Wildlife Department. However, some teacher workshops and events not provided by the Department may charge a participation fee.

A Wildlife Conservation Passport is required of all residents or nonresidents who enter or use Departmentowned lands such as Hackberry Flat, unless exempt. Individuals who possess any current hunting or fishing license issued by the Wildlife Department are exempt from Conservation Passport requirements, except holders of the resident two-day fishing license and the nonresident six-day fishing license who must purchase the Wildlife Conservation Passport. Additionally, residents under 18 years of age are exempt from Conservation Passport requirements. The Passport is an annual permit and may be purchased online at wildlifedepartment. com, on the Go Outdoors Oklahoma mobile app, or from a license dealer. Licenses may be purchased at Alco, located on the north end of Frederick.

Please Note: Visitors who stop at the Hackberry Flat Center to use the facilities or get information from the message boards are exempt from this license requirement. Additionally, participants who attend programs, tours and school field trips at the Center are exempt from this requirement. The Conservation Passport is valid for all other Department-owned lands in Oklahoma. Visit wildlifedepartment.com for a list of wildlife management areas that require a Wildlife Conservation Passport.

Contacts

Hackberry Flat Wildlife Management Area Kelvin Schoonover, Wildlife Biologist Cell Phone: (405) 823-8425

Hackberry Flat Center and Field Trips

Melynda Hickman, Wildlife Diversity Biologist Phone: (405) 990-4977 Email: melynda.hickman@odwc.ok.gov

Website

www.wildlifedepartment.com/wildlife-managementareas/hackberry-flat/center

Hours

Hackberry Flat WMA is open year-round.

Hackberry Flat Center is open for scheduled events. Check www.wildlifedepartment.com/wildlifemanagement-areas/hackberry-flat/center for a complete list of scheduled events.

