

# Hackberry Flat Wetland Classroom

## Guidelines for the Educator



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## INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to provide the educator with information and ideas that will make your visit to Hackberry Flat and the Hackberry Flat Center safe, fun and informative.

The wetland classroom at the Hackberry Flat Center will offer children of all ages the experience of visiting a wetland and learning about the importance of wetlands in an arid region. From putting on rubber boots to sweeping the watery habitat with a net to bringing the collected aquatic “critters” back to the classroom to getting a closer look through field scopes and projection scopes, children will experience a unique hands-on approach that will enhance classroom instruction.

Staff from the Oklahoma Wildlife Department offer school children of all ages an outdoor experience that incorporates the following

### **Science Education Standards:**

- systems, order & organization
- scientific inquiry
- structure & function in living systems
- diversity & adaptations of organisms



### **Conservation Messages include:**

- Wetlands are not always wet.
- Wetlands in a mixed-grass prairie region are critical habitat for migratory birds in need of food, shelter and rest.
- Wetlands harbor a wide diversity of invertebrates.
- The Oklahoma Wildlife Department restores and manages wetlands for wetland-dependent wildlife.

## IN THIS PACKET...

This packet includes a booklet about Hackberry Flat, the Wetlands Mystery Bag and a vocabulary list. The colorful booklet provides information about the wetland area. Reading excerpts from the booklet can give students a chance to understand a little about the area they will be visiting. Students will have the opportunity to pick up their own copy during their visit.



**The Mystery Bag is an activity that needs to be conducted with the students before visiting Hackberry Flat. Instructions for conducting this fun and imaginative activity are on the bag.**

We hope your wetland classroom experience sparks in your students more appreciation for and a better understanding of our natural resources.

## FACILITY INFORMATION

Handicap-accessible restrooms and drinking fountains are available at the Hackberry Flat Center. **While the Center is handicap accessible, we would appreciate you letting us know ahead of time of any special needs your group may have. We will adjust our schedule and curriculum to fit any special educational or mobility requirements.**



There is a pavilion with 4 picnic tables available as well as a large covered patio on the east side of the Center. We could also accommodate the school children inside the Center for seating if the weather does not cooperate with us.

## **TEACHERS! PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION!**

### **GROUP SIZE CONSIDERATION**

If more than 20 students are participating in your wetland classroom field trip, your students will need to be divided into smaller groups prior to arriving at Hackberry Flat. Based on our conversation with you, you will divide your students into groups of each. Name tag stickers for each group are included in this packet. Groups will rotate through different activities provided at the Center.

### **PREPARATION**



Being prepared for your visit will help insure that your students have a safe and enjoyable time. It is very important that the children are dressed appropriately. Due to tall grass, mud, bugs and the length of your stay, we would like to strongly encourage you to ask your students to please bring and wear the following items:

#### **Wear**

- long pants or jeans
- comfortable shoes (please no sandals or flip flops)
- a hat helps protect from sunburn

#### **Bring**

- an extra pair of shoes and socks to change into
- a wet washcloth in a Ziploc bag
- bug spray



## **TO PUT YOUR MIND AT EASE**

You may have some concerns about visiting the wetlands at Hackberry Flat. Please know that:

- There are ticks and mosquitoes in the area. Using insect repellent and tucking the ends of pants into the tops of your socks will help keep ticks from finding access to your skin
- poison ivy does not occur in the wetland classroom area



## **AREA RULES AND REGULATIONS**

All plants and animals in the area are protected or regulated by state and federal laws. A trip to Hackberry Flat should be a positive experience. To avoid negative undertones, please consider reviewing the following rules with your students in the format provided before arriving at Hackberry Flat.

1. **How do you behave when you visit someone else's home?** The area is home to many plants and animals. We should act like guests when we visit someone else's home.
2. **Please walk at all times.** Running may scare animals away that you might want to see.
3. **If you see an animal, quietly let your teacher know.** Please step back and watch the animal. Picking up the animal may frighten it too much and it might bite.
4. **Use 12" voices when walking around the wetland.** Twelve-inch voices are voices that can be heard no more than 12" from your mouth. Twelve-inch voices help keep animals where we might see them.