

Guide to Crow Hill Trail

By Doug Raasch

To reach Crow Hill Trail, Take Refuge Road to Wildlife Drive. Traveling southwest on Wildlife Drive, turn left at the first opportunity, Silliman Road, then follow the gravel road to the right before the gated cattle crossing. For you old timers, the parking area has been moved from the old site. The bad news is the rustic old stick gate with "CROW HILL" artistically spelled out with stick letters is missing. Whoever took it down should be given two lashes with a Crow Hill switch. However, the good news is we have a nice, new parking area that is easily seen by visitors coming in.

Walk up the road about 300 yards (think 3 football fields) and take the path on the left into the trees. When the path approaches the main circle trail, go right and enjoy the shade. There is a bench if you want to sit for a while and look for birds or maybe just contemplate. The trail circles Crow Hill and gives you the opportunity to look for the common songbirds that are plentiful in the trees along the trail. From spring to fall the scenic prairie meadow is full of wildflowers, and butterflies and other insects abound. There are placards identifying many of the native trees. The largest turkey gobbler I have ever seen anywhere was at the base of Crow Hill.

There used to be an old tower at the top of the hill, but it was removed for safety reasons. Now you will find a bench for resting and taking in the sounds of nature. Sometimes you can see the former town of Hagerman from parts of the trail—off to the northeast. The founder of Hagerman, J.P. Smith, called his town "the little village in the valley between two hills." From our little observation spot on a hill we can imagine a community with three churches, a train depot, cotton gin, lumber business, a brick school, bank, grocery, drug store, and ten additional stores. The school, by the way, was the first brick school in Texas. It closed in 1942. Looking out over Texoma, be aware of the size of this lake project, started in 1939. The shoreline covers parts of two states and six counties. It has one of the largest watersheds of any area in the United States, covering more than 39,000 square miles.

Descend down the hill and continue the trail back to the parking area. Amazingly, this little adventure is only a 3/4 mile walk.