

# Guide to Haller's Haven Trail

By Doug Raasch,

The Visitor Center volunteers know that most folks who come in for information are looking for a “trail” to walk and, hopefully, see wildlife. The hike that every visitor should be offered is the newly named “Haller's Haven Nature Trail.” The name was chosen in April, 2009 by popular vote.

To reach the trail from the Visitor Center, turn right out of the driveway, stay straight and cross the low water crossing, go past the intersection with Hagerman Road, make a hard left at the curve ahead. In about 1/2 mile the road splits. Stay to the right and proceed into the Day Use Area. Stay right and pass the restroom. The trailhead sign is about 200 feet ahead on the right.

Follow the trail about 400 feet to Picnic Pond, turn left for less than ¼ mile to the steel bridge. The large pond on the right past the bridge is quaintly named “Dead Woman's Pond.” The name in fact may be as fascinating as the trail. Since no one has a story that is something other than rumor, each of us can choose the variations we like best. Here goes: A farmer and his much younger wife were scraping out a living in Grayson County. The attractive young wife had not been seen for a while when her husband was noticed by a neighbor driving his wagon down to the local pond with a large bundle in the back. Said farmer returned home with the bundle missing. From that time on, the locals began referring to the pond as “Dead Woman's Pond” thinking he must have dumped her there. No one knows what happened to the farmer or his much younger wife.

Dead Woman's Pond is a true Hagerman gem. From the parking area to the pond is only

¼ mile so most visitors are capable of walking the ½ mile round trip. This is one of the few places on the refuge that visitors are guaranteed to see birds or wildlife. As you walk the road that defines the pond you will see and hear birds of all kinds. The herons, objecting to your presence, make a fabulous squawk that is somewhere between a very old rusty gate hinge and an unhappy burro. Year-round there is a flow of activity that never disappoints. Keep your eyes and ears open for stately turkeys, woodpeckers, eastern bluebirds, hawks, deer, and maybe even a beaver.

The pond is a jumping-off point for those who are looking for a more strenuous adventure. A hiker can continue on up the hill and walk a mowed loop trail while looking for upland birds. There is a bench on the left at the ½ mile point over-looking Lake Texoma.