

Natural Beauty – Natural Wonders

Three Days/Two Nights on the Byway



DAY ONE

Check into your hotel in **Great Bend** and prepare to orient yourselves with the **Wetlands and Wildlife National Scenic Byway**. Start with a visit to the Raptor Center (a rehabilitation facility for injured raptors) at the Brit Spaugh Zoo which is a Byway Interpretive Center. Join the locals for an espresso at Great Bend Coffee, and then stroll around the Courthouse Square that includes the Santa Fe Trail, the Jack Kilby Memorial, a songbird habitat on the courthouse lawn, and the sidewalk Quilt Walk. Find over 70 large, one of a kind, artist-decorated birdhouses throughout downtown and at businesses all over town.

Next stop: Barton County Historical Village to view antique quilts, tour an original Lustron Home (a mid-century architectural delight) and explore the historic buildings. After dinner at Lumpy's Homefield, a Great Bend landmark, drive to Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area to watch the sun set over these expansive and magnificent wetlands.

DAY TWO

Enjoy breakfast at Granny's Kitchen where featured specials are from America's heartland. Drive to **Hoisington**, a town that has survived all manners of severe weather including a 2001 F4 tornado. Stroll down Main Street to examine the 60 metal banners installed on lampposts that reflect the history and the pastimes of the residents. Appreciate the work of Depression era craftsmen in the Post Office lobby, and in the WPA construction of the high school and the City Building and sundial. Take the back roads to find eight post rock WPA bridges and miles of limestone fences (called Post Rock) that lead visitors from Hoisington to **Claflin**. The Dubuque and Odin Churches stand as proud displays of the rich vein of limestone near Claflin. See rigs steadily pumping in a region where oil has steadily flowed since 1923. Park on Claflin's Main Street, and experience for yourself, this friendly little town now entirely dedicated to the sale of furniture by Millers of Claflin, established 1903. Drive back to your Great Bend hotel through **Cheyenne Bottoms**, once again pausing for what will hopefully be a majestic sunset.

DAY THREE

Head for the south end of the Wetlands and Wildlife Scenic Byway. Drive to the visitor center of the **Quivira National Wildlife Refuge**. Talk with the staff and read interpretive materials that explain the geology of this immense salt water marsh, a place where eagles nest and wild whooping cranes rest, an internationally important wetland on the Central Flyway for migrating birds. Here, one can truly enjoy the quiet majesty of nature and thrill to the chance sighting of a bird, a deer, or a muskrat. Pause frequently as you drive. Only six miles down the road is the town of **Stafford** that boasts six buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Methodist Church, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright, and the Larabee Library. A must-see stop is the Stafford County Historical Museum where 29,000 images on glass negatives from 1880 -1947 are archived. If you are looking for homemade, local and organic food visit The Gathering Place on Main Street or book a meal at Henderson House.

Eleven miles north of Stafford is **St John**, which boasts a picture-perfect town square, complete with a splashing fountain, lush grass and a quirky Science Museum. This town grows food: the mayor grows pumpkins, Spare's Farms grows produce for Farmers' Markets, DeVore Farms grows pumpkins and gourds, and 4-Star Hydroponics grows fresh tomatoes and herbs all year long.



More to see and do on the Byway

Hudson. Visit the Stafford County Flour Mill and take home some Hudson Cream Flour.

Stafford: Take a cooking class at Henderson House and "put up" Sand Hill Plum Jelly and Syrup.

Claflin. Check out the message barrel that sits in the middle of Claflin's Main Street.

Ellinwood. View the Panning Sinkhole, a four-acre hole that appeared in 1959.

Great Bend. Stop at the Great Bend Cemetery for a walking tour then view the Lustron houses in the adjoining neighborhood

Hoisington. View the Prairie Wavemaker Mural, painted by artist Christina Lamoureux and over 30 Volunteers

St John. Visit Delp's Christmas Tree Farm.