

GET BACK TO NATURE AT GENE HOWE WMA

NATURAL HISTORY

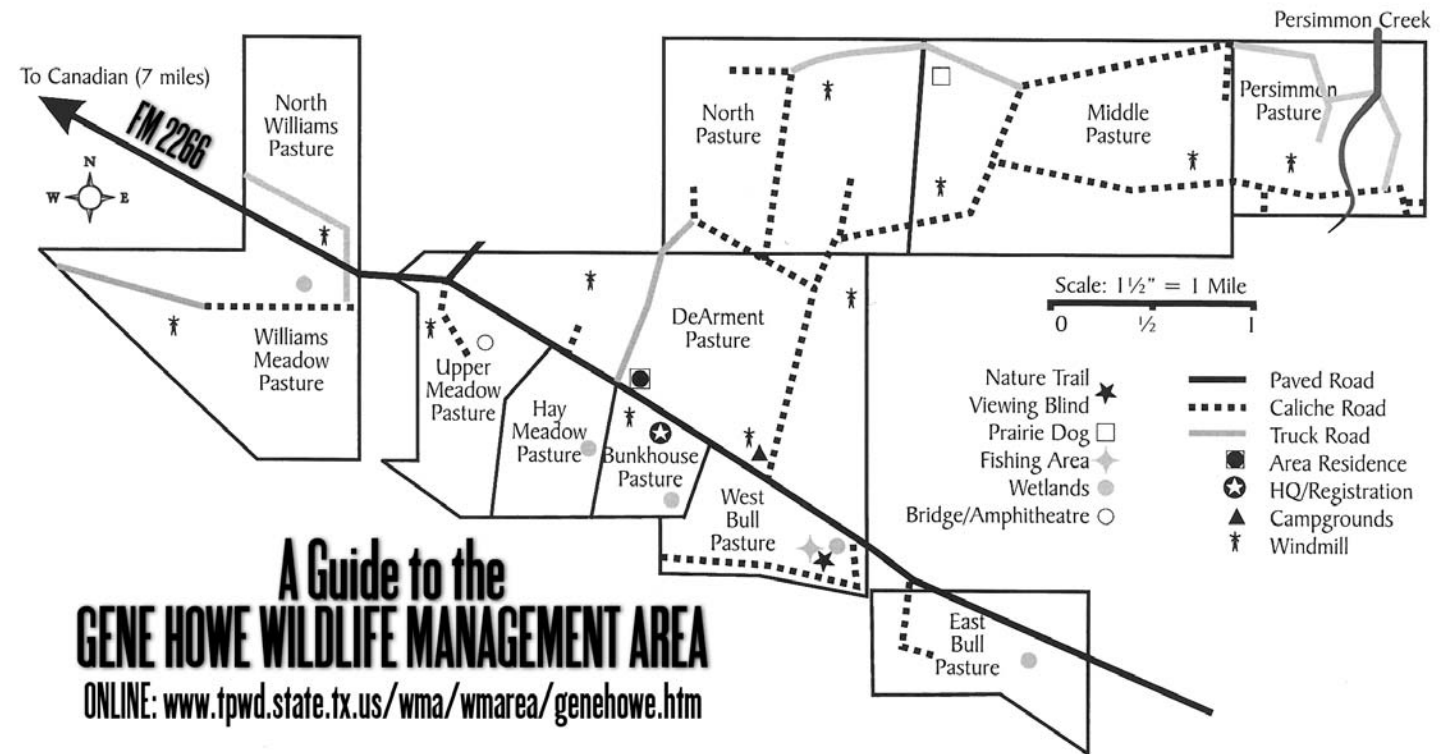
The Gene Howe Area is comprised of roughly two-thirds sandsage/midgrass rangeland and one-third cottonwood/tallgrass rangeland. Common plant species in the sandsage/midgrass habitat type include sand sagebrush, Chickasaw plum, fragrant sumac, little bluestem, sand bluestem and blue grama.

Dominant plants found in the cottonwood/tallgrass habitat type include eastern cottonwood, hackberry, black locust, big bluestem, switchgrass, indiangrass and alkali sacaton. Extensive plantings of the introduced tree Russian olive were also established in this habitat type in the 1950s and 1960s.

Principal game species found on the Gene Howe Area include bobwhite quail and scaled quail, Rio Grande wild turkey, white-tailed deer and small populations of ring-necked pheasant and lesser prairie chicken. Other wildlife species present include mule deer, pronghorn antelope, coyote, bobcat, blacktailed jackrabbit, eastern and desert cottontails, black-tailed prairie dog, raccoon, opossum, striped and spotted skunks, porcupine, southern plains woodrat, kangaroo rat, feral hog, roadrunner, prairie rattlesnakes and massasauga. Some of the many bird species present, such as Mississippi kite and burrowing owl, are migrants, while others are year-round residents of sandsage/midgrass or cottonwood/tallgrass habitat types.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Most past research on the Gene Howe area has focused on quail; specifically, gathering information pertaining to population dynamics, parasites, food habits, weights and aging techniques for this popular gamebird.



These investigations have enable biologists to make sound management recommendations to individuals interested in providing optimum habitat for quail. The foundation for many of the quail hunting regulations pertaining to the northern rolling plains is a direct result of research on the Gene Howe Area.

Present and future research projects include exploring techniques for controlling non-native Russian olive, developing waterfowl habitat in the cottonwood/tallgrass habitat type, assessing burrowing owl productivity and survival, and developing sound management practices for the lesser prairie chicken.

PUBLIC USE INFORMATION

Public hunting is one of the primary uses of the Gene Howe Area, and public

hunts are held for mourning dove, quail, deer and feral hog in the fall and for wild turkey and feral hog in the spring.

Hunting rules, regulations, species and sex to be hunted, hunt dates and more are subject to change each year.

The area is also utilized by students, teachers, researchers and wildlife enthusiasts for instructional and educational purposes. Specific information regarding public use may be obtained by contacting the Gene Howe Area office at 806.323.8642.

A primitive camping area is located one-half mile east of the self-registration headquarters, and is equipped with fire pits and a toilet. Each person using the camping area must possess either an Annual Public Hunting (APH) permit or a Limited Public Use (LPU) permit.

Cutting or removal of firewood is not permitted, and trash receptacles are not provided. Please take all trash with you upon departure, and leave a clean campsite for your next visit.

GENERAL INFORMATION

All public users must perform on-site registration, and are required to possess either an APH or LPU permit, with the exceptions of persons performing a driving tour of the area. The Gene Howe Area is not open to the general public when hunts by special permit are being conducted, and an APH permit is required to fish. Disturbance or removal of plants, rocks, animals or other objects is prohibited.