

OLD TRAINS AND TERRY LANE by Doug Raasch

This article in the Hiking Hagerman Series will explore the area northeast of the visitor center. Once again, the old rail bed provides access to excellent birding and wildlife viewing. Our first hike will be three miles round trip plus some suggestions for side trails.

Park your car at the gate at the north end of Wildlife Drive and follow the old railroad bed along Raasch Trail. The trail crosses Myers Branch on a sturdy, relatively modern bridge. For the next ¼ mile the trees are rich with songbirds. As you leave the trees the rail bed/trail bisects a large field that from time to time is planted to provide food for the migrating flocks that pass through Hagerman. Bird nest boxes along the way attract bluebirds, titmice, and Carolina chickadees.

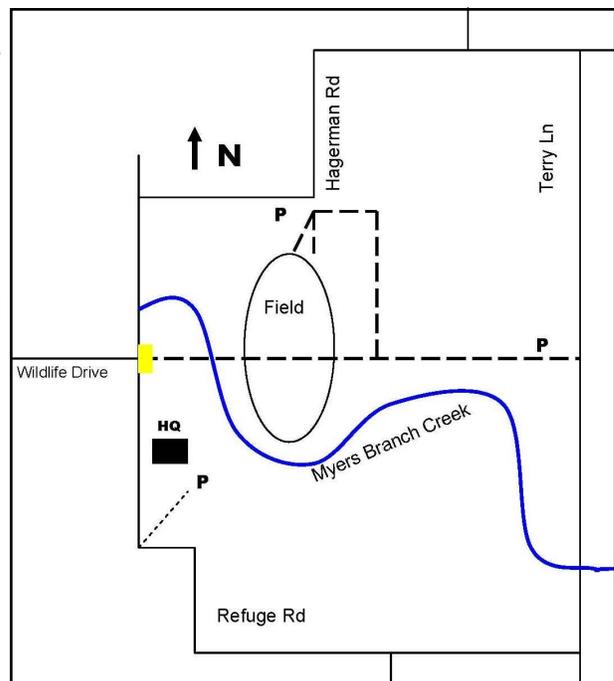
Soon after re-entering the trees, a mile into the hike, you will have the opportunity to turn left and follow the fence north. Let's save that for later and walk east an additional half mile to Terry Lane. The turn-around point is the parking area at Terry Lane, which will provide a three mile walk upon returning to the visitor center.

Terry Lane cuts through the eastern tip of the refuge, leaving a relatively undisturbed section that, you guessed it, can best be seen from the old rail bed. The parking area on the west side of Terry Lane can be used to access several adventures. You can explore on the east side by climbing the gate and walking the rail bed or following the fence lines. If you like turkeys, go south on Terry Lane crossing Myers Branch creek. Follow the fence along the south refuge boundary and you will find turkey heaven. Yes, you can gate jump to follow the trails. Just don't blame me if you snag your new hiking britches.

One last hike is worthy of mention. * This is a 1½ mile total walk for those who don't mind some light bushwhacking. From the parking area on Terry Lane, walk west ½ mile to the fence line that we bypassed on the previous walk. Follow the fence north, then west along the refuge boundary. The low areas have beautiful large trees and a very large deer population. You will arrive at a refuge entry point on Hagerman Road. Your presence will be announced by the dogs in a private kennel. Turn south at the entry point and follow the trails (there are several) back to the wheat fields. Walk the edge of the field to reach the rail bed trail and go east back to the starting point.

*This area is not maintained, including mowing.

Note: In honor of Doug Raasch's volunteer service to the Refuge, this trail is now to be called Raasch Trail.



Raasch Trail

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