



Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway – Great Bend, KS

Day 1

Begin your day at the **Barton County Historical Village & Museum**. The Museum (*a Santa Fe Trail interpretive site*) sits among rescued and restored building from the past, including a post World War II prefab Lustron home, an 1898 church, and a 1915 one-room school house. (*Insider's tip*" Pick up a self-guided tour of Lustron homes in Great Bend at the Museum). **Jack Kilby Square/Santa Fe Trail.**



When you walk the Santa Fe Trail here on the square, quilt patterns embedded in the sidewalks tie you to Kansas history and the square is dominated by a beautiful and historic courthouse. (*Insider's tip* "Pick up a quilt history brochure in the Courthouse)

Nobel Laureate Jack Kilby (inventor of the integrated circuit) graduated from Great Bend High School and is honored by this plaza where his bronze likeness stands. Kilby's 1958 invention is now hailed as the "birth of the digital age".

Downtown Great Bend/Birdhouse Art Tour. Downtown is full of great shops and historic buildings. The north side of the courthouse square is home to a songbird habitat. You can sit on a bench and enjoy the square and the birds. Walk along downtown sidewalks and see a diversity of decorated birdhouses nestled in front of various local businesses. They vary in size from 3,4, and 5 feet tall. The birdhouses are not solely located in the downtown area, but also speak out across the city at various businesses. This project is designed to bring art and nature together in a community that values both. (*There is a brochure and map available showing the locations of over 70 birdhouses and providing artist descriptions.*) Stop for lunch at **Great Bend Coffee Company** in the historic and quirky Masonic Lodge building. **Great Bend Brit Spaugh Zoo.** The Raptor Center is the entrance to the Great Bend Brit Spaugh Zoo. Founded in 1952, the Great Bend Brit Spaugh Zoo is home to over 100 mammals, birds, reptiles, and



insects. The zoo shelters animals and gives visitors a chance to observe and learn about the natural world. *(Insider's tip: The Raptor Center is also an interpretive center for the*



Byway to prepare you for a day of Byway exploration.) Journey to **Heartland Farm**(a project of Dominican Sisters) a 80 acre sustainable prairie retreat. Visitors are welcome to explore the straw bale buildings, the acoustically perfect silo, learn about the large organic garden/sustainable farming practices and get to know a herd of beautiful, inquisitive alpacas. *(Insider's Tip: Don't leave without a visit to the Gift Shop)*

Day 2

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before departing for a drive on the Kansas Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway. **Hoisington, KS.** As you drive up the brick Main



Street, check out the vintage neon sign at Manweiler's Chevrolet. Park and stroll Main Street, where award-winning locally crafted metal art banners hang from streetlight poles(take time to visit this artist's workshop- B & B Metal Arts). Stop at the Post Office to view the WPA era mural inside, and the WPA constructed city

auditorium with its impressive Sun Dial. Stop for a morning break at Dairy Queen on your way out of town. **Cheyenne Bottoms Scenic Overlook.** Stop here for the best view of Cheyenne Bottoms. From this vantage point it's easy to see that Cheyenne Bottoms is a giant 64 square mile depression in the prairie. **Kansas Wetlands**

Education Center/Cheyenne Bottoms. The crescent-shaped museum building curves around the marsh, offering great wildlife viewing. Learn the story of Cheyenne Bottoms from the museum's interpretive displays. Naturalist-guided tours(a step on provided) start here and take you into the Bottoms for bird and nature watching. *(insider's tip: If you're looking for souvenirs the gift shop at the Center is a fabulous place to shop.)* **Ellinwood,**



KS Lunch at the local favorite Lone Wolf Café before beginning to explore. A tour of Ellinwood's Tunnels is a must. Built under the town's buildings, sidewalks and streets, the tunnels were home to a barber shop, a brewery, soiled doves, cowboys and gamblers. After the tour, shop in seven downtown antique shops.

Head back to your comfortable Great Bend hotel for a good nights sleep.

Day 3



Back on the Byway. Today you will travel south on the byway through prairie grass, shelter belts, and cultivated farm land. **Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.** Stop at the Visitors Center to get your bearings and find out what's on the marsh. The rangers can tell you where you might see whooping cranes or eagles and what bird species are

abundant. The Big Salt Marsh Loop Drive is a perfect way to do some wildlife watching from the bus and the Migrants Mile and Birdhouse Boulevard trails will get you out of the bus and into the wetlands. In contrast to Cheyenne Bottoms, which is a fresh water wetlands with no trees, some of Quivira's wetlands are salt marshes, and large, impressive, old Cottonwood trees thrive here. **Hudson, KS.** This tiny town (pop 125) is an amazing and very rural stop. Visit the Stafford County Flour Mill for a video tour of one of the few remaining independent flour mills in the United States.

Treasured by cooks around the world, you can buy bags of flour and biscuit mixes at the mill. Delight your group with a great catered meal in the community center by making prior arrangement with Hudson's



Wheatland Café. The town square is a real retreat (take note of Dillons Market on the square-one of the first in the nation). A 100 year old fountain, miniature Statue of Liberty and beautiful buildings (including a striking Courthouse) make this an interesting stop. Tours of Delp Tree Farm are available by advance arrangement. **Stafford, KS.** Stop for home made pie and coffee at The Gathering Place or an old fashioned soda at The Mercantile. .Tour the Stafford County Historical Society and Museum. The Society has one of the largest collections of glass negatives in the United States and would be happy to schedule your group to spend an hour helping to restore them and hearing their stories.



Day 1 –Great Bend

8:30 a.m. Depart hotel

9:00 – 10:30 a.m. Barton County Historical Village

10:45 – 12:00 p.m. Downtown Great Bend

12:00 - 1:15 p.m. Lunch at Great Bend Coffee

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Great Bend Brit Spaugh Zoo

2:30 p.m. Pick up afternoon snack break at Raptor Center before boarding bus.

3:15 p.m. Heartland Farm

Dinner at restaurant of your choice

Overnight in Great Bend

Day 2 – Hoisington, Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area, Ellinwood

9:00 a.m. Depart hotel

9:30– 10:30 a.m. Hoisington Pole Art Tour/WPA Art

10:30 – 10:45 a.m. Refreshment Break in Hoisington

11:00 – 11:15 a.m. Cheyenne Bottoms Scenic Overlook

11:30 - 2:30 p.m. Kansas Wetlands Education Center/Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area
catered lunch

3:00 p.m. Ellinwood Underground Tunnel Tour/Antique Shops

Return to Great Bend .

Dinner on your own.

Day 3 – Quivira Wildlife Area, Hudson, St. John, Stafford

8:30 a.m. Depart hotel

9:30 – 11:15 a.m. Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

11:30 – 1:00 p.m. Hudson – Tour of Flour Mill

Catered lunch at Community Center

1:30 – 2:00 p.m. Carol Long's Pottery Studio

2:30 – 3:00 p.m. St. John Tour

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Refreshment Break at The Gathering Place

4:15 – 5:30 p.m. Stafford Tour