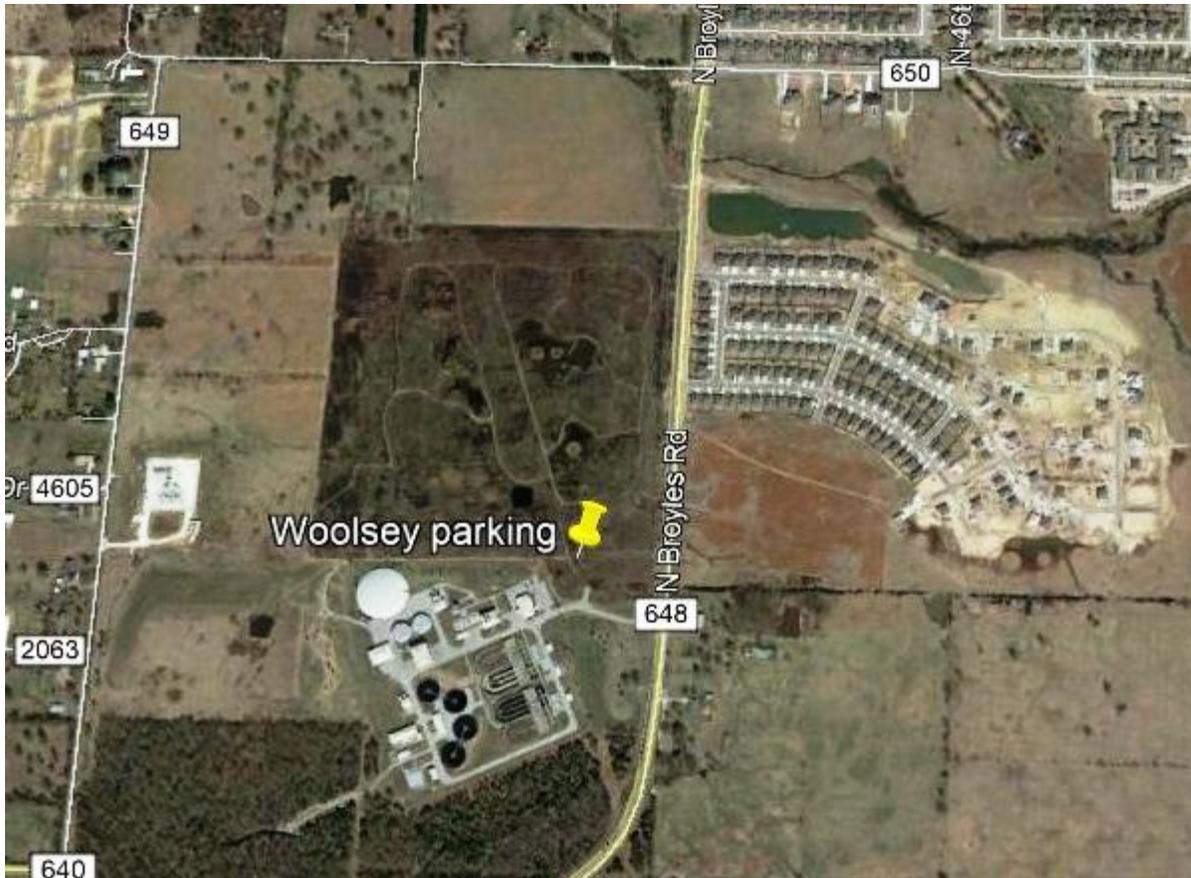


# WOOLSEY WET PRAIRIE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



**DIRECTIONS:** The starting point is the intersection of highway 16W (Wedington Road) and I-49 in Fayetteville. Take Wedington (16W WEST) approximately 1.7 miles to Broyles Avenue. Turn left (SOUTH) onto Broyles. Travel on Broyles to Fayetteville's West Side Wastewater Treatment Facility at 15 S. Broyles Ave, Fayetteville 72704 (1.0-1.1 mile). Turn right into the drive to the facility, then make the first right turn, which is a short dead end (before you reach the main gate). This is on the south end of Woolsey Wet Prairie Wildlife Sanctuary.



Woolsey Wet Prairie Wildlife Sanctuary is a wetland mitigation site adjacent Fayetteville's West Side Wastewater Treatment Facility. It is a former seasonal wetland associated with Tallgrass Prairie habitat. The 46-acre wetlands project is attractive to birds otherwise hard to find in a rapidly developing urban environment. It is also a biologically-rich landscape. Plant surveys had documented 431 species (up to 2013) including at least 8 plant species tracked as



elements of conservation concern (rare species) by Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. Most are sedges (family Cyperaceae) and all are characteristic of prairie remnants. Students in Professor J.D. Willson's lab at UA-Fayetteville have documented numerous rare and unusual snakes, frogs, and salamanders. Osage burrowing crawfish – an endemic species associated with seasonal wetlands here – are common.

Woolsey currently consists of a series of shallow wet cells separated by earthen berms. The many "islands" are actually prairie mounds that are a natural feature of unplowed or moderately plowed former prairies. Earthen berms provide a good walking surface throughout the 46 acres. Crews from the West Side plant maintain the walking areas.

WWPWS is an excellent birding site for numerous wetland and open country birds. Please take a look at the surrounding landscape. Part of the ecological wealth at WWPWS is its openness. The 46-acres are protected on 3 sides by other city-owned property. The once open landscape of prairie fields on the east side of Broyles Avenue is now being developed as a subdivision. This reduces rare wetlands habitat in the area, which in turn makes the adjoining city-owned property all the more important for maintaining Woolsey's ecology integrity.

There are no bathrooms or other facilities.

Visitors with walking limitations will find the berms easy to negotiate.

The bird list for Woolsey is full of surprises. A few examples: Mike Mlodinow found a Purple Gallinule on April 26, 2011, and saw it again on May 12. He found Arkansas's only record of a Brewer's Sparrow on December 1, 2011, and it was subsequently seen by people who came from all over the state. During the Fayetteville Christmas Bird Count, December 16, 2012, Andy Scaboo and Brandon Schmidt saw (and photographed) a Prairie Falcon. Woolsey visitors were surprised by a Burrowing Owl that they showed Jeff Hickle April 7, 2016, and identified by Bruce Shackleford. UA-Fayetteville graduate student Alyssa DeRubeis found a King Rail on May 29, 2017. It was seen or heard by others for several

days thereafter. Northern Bobwhites that have all but disappeared elsewhere in Fayetteville were still being found at Woolsey in summer 2018.



Check both the Arkansas Audubon Society database and eBird for a full site list. A few more examples: transient & occasional nesting Blue-winged Teal, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk (nesting nearby), Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Sora. Many shorebird species were found here before the ponds became fully revegetated (with fewer since). These shorebirds have included American Golden-Plover, Killdeer (nesting), Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs,

Wilson's Snipe. Other species of interest: Short-eared Owl, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike (now only in winter), Sedge and Marsh Wrens, Eastern Bluebird, American Pipit, Common Yellowthroat. Woolsey's sparrow list is long including Vesper, Le Conte's, Nelson's, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp, and others.

In past years, Tallgrass Prairie conservation and restoration work on Woolsey included significant involvement by Joe Woolbright and his company Ozark Ecological Restoration, Inc (OERI). Woolbright & OERI are now involved in such projects elsewhere in northwest Arkansas:

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Bruce Shackelford continue as a strong advocate for the ecological integrity of Woolsey. Here is his website with lots more information about Woolsey Wet Prairie Wildlife Sanctuary:  
<http://ecoarkansas.com/WoolseyMain.html>

--updated by Joe Neal July 24, 2018