



La Frontera del Llano

Click to view Area attractions and map in new window.

Spend the day traveling through the high plains and grasslands of northeast New Mexico and experience the naturally wild West. Stretching from Abbott to Logan, the byway covers 94 miles of wilderness. Most of the drive extends through Harding County, with a total population of 750, less than 1 person per square mile. Cattle outnumber people 7 to 1. The plains, mottled with the shadows of clouds overhead, stretch as far as the eye can see.

Kiowa and Rita Blanca National Grasslands

After the Homestead Act of 1862, thousands of settlers poured into this shortgrass prairie. It was always marginal farmland, wiped out in the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s. The federal government bought much of the land, and reseeded it for grassland agriculture, with thousands of acres of bunching gramma grass. Game and bird habitats have been restored and the land is leased for regulated grazing. www.hardingcounty.org/Events-Attractions/kiowa_national_grasslands.htm

Mills Canyon

Driving south through the Kiowa grasslands, you encounter the small community of Mills, named for Melvin W. Mills, rancher, entrepreneur, and Territorial legislator. A sign directs travelers west to the Mills Canyon Campground. The first 6 miles are relatively flat, but don't go farther without a vehicle with high clearance. The road dips down into the Canadian River canyon and becomes narrow and rocky. The campground sits at the site of Orchard Ranch. In the 1880s, Mills built a hotel down here and planted a dozen miles of riverfront with thousands of fruit trees, grapes, melons, and other produce. The river flooded though and wiped out the entire enterprise. All that remains today are the stone shells of a couple of buildings.

Roy

Ten miles south of Mills, sits the quiet ranching town of Roy. A railway was constructed through here in 1906, to link Tucumcari to Dawson. The town was the central shipping point of area crops, cream, and eggs, until the Dust Bowl shut down most farming about 3 decades later. Dry ice was produced here in that same era because the town sits over the huge Bravo Dome carbon dioxide field. Buildings from more than a century ago, including the red brick Floersheim Mercantile, still line the main streets today. Ironically, Western swing musician and songwriter Bob Wills was living in Roy at the time he wrote the iconic Texas tune "San Antonio Rose." He was a barber by day and played at the local dance hall at night. www.hardingcounty.org/Roy/Index.htm

Bueyerros

A number of small mission churches dot the byway, but the oldest and most beautiful of them is the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Bueyerros (place of the oxen drivers), 18 miles from NM 39. The stone church, dating to 1894, was constructed in French style, unusual for its era. It features turquoise trim and a copper steeple, and the wall behind the altar is painted to resemble stained glass. This and the other churches along the route are kept locked but nearby neighbors have the keys. www.hardingcounty.org/Bueyerros/Bueyerros.htm

Mosquero

Southeast of Bueyerros in Mosquero, historic memories are stirred by views of Bell Mountain, the Goodnight-Loving Cattle Trails, and today's working cattle ranches. Mosquero Canyon's

Dinosaur Freeway paralleled a prehistoric inland sea. You can still see many million-year-old dinosaur tracks in the rocks. www.hardingcounty.org/Events-Attractions/la_frontera_del_llano.htm

Ute Lake State Park

The byway ends in Logan, known for this state park. Ute Lake, a Canadian River reservoir some dozen miles long, offers excellent walleye fishing. Anglers can also try their luck for bass, crappie and catfish. Fishing is available 24-hours per day, every day of the year for fishing fanatics. The lake has produced several state-record game fish. Marina and full range of water sports. www.emnrd.state.nm.us/PRD/UteLake.htm