



Lake Mineral Wells State Park

PENITENTIARY HOLLOW



The rugged rocks and steep cliffs provide the perfect place to rappel. They also shelter an ancient Cross Timbers forest.



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As you explore the maze of sandstone conglomerate bluffs, you will find an ancient Cross Timbers forest protected by this rugged landscape.

There are post oaks over 250 years old in this area. Aging trees are like aging people; they become bent and twisted with age. Look for trees with a spiral twist in the bark. The branches are often heavy and gnarled.

Post oak trees have a leathery leaf with lobes that look like a cross.

Look for tall, thin cedar elms reaching for the sky. There are four in a row that are about 250 years old.

The westernmost Shagbark Hickory tree in the world is found in this hollow. The bark on the trunk makes loose plates that give the tree its shaggy appearance.