

RECREATION AND PLACES OF INTEREST³⁴

National Areas³⁵

Nebraska has two national forest areas with hand-planted trees: the Bessey Ranger District of the Nebraska National Forest in Blaine and Thomas counties, and the Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest in Cherry County. The Pine Ridge Ranger District of the Nebraska National Forest in Dawes and Sioux counties contains native ponderosa pine trees. The U.S. Forest Service also administers the Oglala National Grassland in northwest Nebraska. Within it is Toadstool Geologic Park, a moonscape of eroded badlands containing fossil trackways that are 30 million years old. The Hudson-Meng Bison Bonebed, an archaeological site containing the remains of more than 600 pre-historic bison, also is located within the grassland.

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument in Sioux County contains animal fossils. Homestead National Monument of America near Beatrice was built on one of the first pieces of land claimed under the U.S. Homestead Act of 1862. Scotts Bluff National Monument near Scottsbluff is an 800-foot bluff that was a landmark for pioneers on the Oregon Trail. Chimney Rock National Historic Site, a 500-foot spire carved by the elements, is near Bayard. It also served as a landmark for Oregon Trail travelers. The Niobrara National Scenic River is a popular canoeing river. The Missouri/Niobrara/Verdigris Creek National Recreational Rivers and the Missouri National Recreational River offer land and water recreation and views of the waterways similar to those the Lewis and Clark expedition saw as they crossed the Great Plains.

State Areas³⁶

Nebraska's eight state parks are Eugene T. Mahoney and Platte River in Cass County, Smith Falls in Cherry County, Chadron in Dawes County, Fort Robinson in Dawes and Sioux counties, Indian Cave in Nemaha and Richardson counties, Niobrara in Knox County and Ponca in Dixon County.

Arbor Lodge in Otoe County is one of the state's most popular historical parks. J. Sterling Morton, who founded Arbor Day, built a four-room house in 1855 that was transformed into an elegant 52-room mansion. More than 200 varieties of trees are planted on the estate's grounds.

Other Nebraska historical parks include:

- Ash Hollow (Garden County), a rest stop for Oregon Trail travelers
- Ashfall Fossil Beds (Antelope County), a working paleontological dig of ancient rhinoceroses
- Fort Atkinson (Washington County), the first U.S. military post built west of the Missouri River

³⁴Information for this section compiled from the following sources: Nebraska Department of Economic Development; Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; Nebraska Indian Commission; National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior; U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Nebraska State Historical Society.

³⁵For more information about the areas in Nebraska administered by the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, see Pages 105-107 and 153-154.

³⁶For more information on state areas, see Page 649.

- Arthur Bowring Sandhills Ranch (Cherry County), a working Sandhills cattle ranch donated by Nebraska's first female U.S. senator
- Buffalo Bill Ranch (Lincoln County), the home of William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, Army scout and showman
- Champion Mill (Chase County), the last water-powered mill to operate in Nebraska
- Fort Hartsuff (Valley County), a restored 1870s military post
- Fort Kearny (Kearney County), an Army frontier outpost to guard the Overland Trail
- Rock Creek Station (Jefferson County), a stop on the Pony Express route where Wild Bill Hickok killed David McCanles

Other Places of Interest

Thousands of travelers pass through Nebraska each year on highways that follow the Oregon, California and Mormon trails. In some places, ruts from the pioneers' wagon wheels can be seen from the road.

The Fontenelle Forest Nature Center at Bellevue, site of Nebraska's oldest settlement, was established as a trading post by John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company around 1832.

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo has the world's largest indoor rain forest, the world's largest indoor desert, the Kingdoms of the Seas aquarium, a nocturnal exhibit and indoor swamp, and an IMAX theater. The zoo also operates a conservation park and wildlife safari near Ashland. The Hastings Museum of Natural and Cultural History has the world's largest diorama of whooping cranes and Sandhill cranes in the world, a planetarium and the Lied Super Screen Theatre.

The State Capitol in Lincoln is considered an outstanding example of modern architecture.

Willa Cather, Nebraska's most famous writer, is honored with a pioneer memorial at Red Cloud.

Lake McConaughy, Nebraska's largest lake, is a popular recreational area. Campers and hikers visit the rugged Pine Ridge area in northwestern Nebraska. Other scenic spots are found along the Platte, Niobrara, Big Blue, Loup, Republican, Dismal and Missouri rivers. Fishing, hunting, horse racing and rodeos also are popular pastimes in Nebraska.

Special Events

One of the state's largest events is Nebraskaland Days. The weeklong celebration, which features parades, an old-time Wild West show and a rodeo, is held each June in North Platte. Other rodeos include the Burwell Rodeo and Omaha's Ak-Sar-Ben (Nebraska spelled backwards) River City Rodeo and Stock Show. The Nebraska State Fair is held in late August and early September.

Many of the state's ethnic groups hold annual festivals that feature native costumes, dances and foods. Among the most popular events are Germanfest in Syracuse, the Swed-

ish Festival in Stromsburg, the Danish Festival in Dannebrog and the National Czech Festival in Wilber. Many people attend powwows of the Ponca Tribe in Niobrara, the Omaha Tribe in Macy, the Santee Sioux Tribe in Niobrara and the Winnebago Tribe in Winnebago. Other events include Oregon Trail Days in Gering, Sandhill Crane Migration Days and Husker Harvest Days in Grand Island, and Kool-Aid Days in Hastings.



The Lied Jungle at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo

Husker Football³⁷



For 40 years, the University of Nebraska has ranked among the most dominant powers in college football. Since Coach Bob Devaney arrived in 1962, the Cornhuskers have become one of the most recognizable symbols of the state.

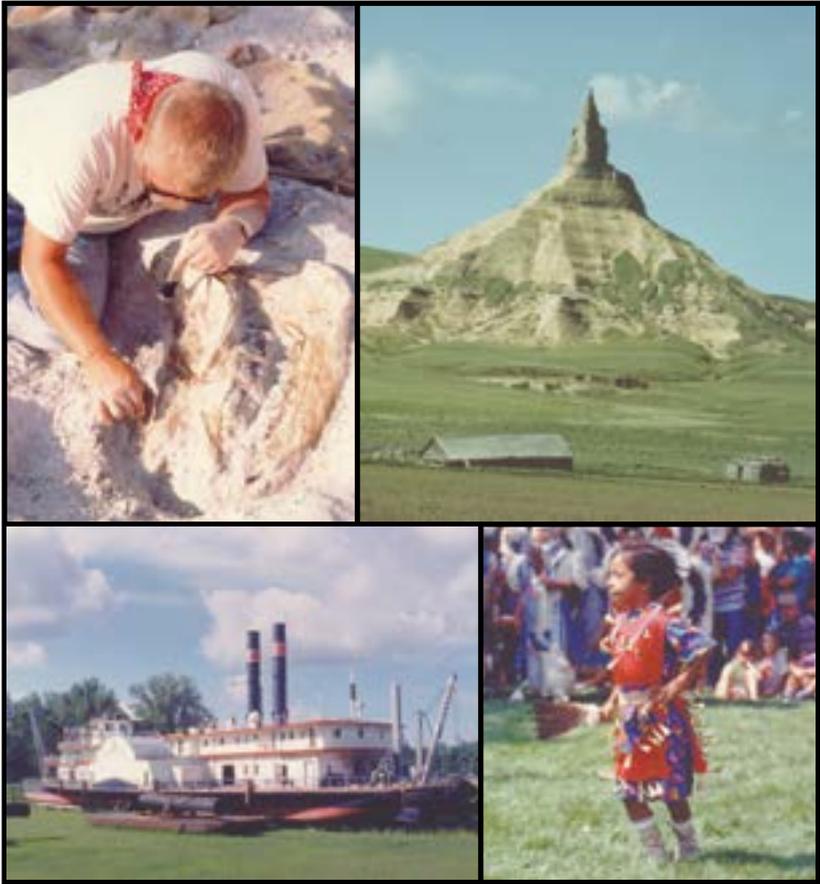
Since winning its first game on Nov. 27, 1890, the Nebraska football program has amassed more than 830 victories. Since 1970, Nebraska has won five national championships. Under the direction of Coach Tom Osborne, the Huskers posted the best five-year record in NCAA football history — 60-3 from 1993 to 1997, including three unbeaten and untied seasons.

Husker football fans are widely known as some of the most devoted fans in sports. Starting on Nov. 3, 1962, there have been 311 consecutive sellouts of Memorial Stadium — an NCAA record.

Besides football, Nebraska has fielded national championship teams in men's gymnastics, volleyball and women's indoor track and bowling. With several College World Series appearances, most recently in 2005, both the baseball and softball programs have excelled at a national level. The men's track, women's gymnastics, wrestling and rifle teams have all earned top-10 finishes at the national championships in recent years.

For more information, visit the Web site —www.huskers.com.

³⁷ Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Sports Information Office. Photo courtesy of University of Nebraska Alumni Association.



Special Attractions in Nebraska

Nebraska's special attractions include (clockwise, from top left) Ashfall State Historical Park near Royal, Chimney Rock National Historic Site near Bayard, American Indian dancing demonstrations and the historic Meriwether Lewis dredge near Brownville.

Attendance at Selected Nebraska Attractions, 2011³⁸

Attraction	Location	Attendance ³⁹
Aksarben Aquarium.....	Gretna.....	30,000
Arbor Day Farm.....	Nebraska City.....	36,000
Arbor Lodge State Historical Park and Arboretum.....	Nebraska City.....	110,000
Ash Hollow State Historical Park.....	Lewellen.....	13,375
Bess Streeter Aldrich House and Museum.....	Elmwood.....	845
Bluestem State Recreation Area.....	Sprague.....	73,164
Bowring Sandhills Ranch State Historical Park, Arthur.....	Merriman.....	1,885
Branched Oak State Recreation Area.....	Raymond.....	443,550
Bridgeport State Recreation Area.....	Bridgeport.....	32,614
Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park and Recreation Area.....	North Platte.....	21,324
Calamus Reservoir State Recreation Area.....	Burwell.....	532,500
Carhenge.....	Alliance.....	85,000
Chadron State Park.....	Chadron.....	280,200
Children's Museum, Kearney Area.....	Kearney.....	41,542
Children's Museum, Omaha.....	Omaha.....	268,954
Children's Zoo, Lincoln.....	Lincoln.....	162,484
Conestoga State Recreation Area.....	Denton.....	128,358
Dead Timber State Recreation Area.....	Scribner.....	7,050
Durham Museum.....	Omaha.....	162,000
Enders Reservoir State Recreation Area.....	Enders.....	132,555
Forest, Samuel R. McKelvie National.....	Nenzel.....	1,000
Fort Atkinson State Historical Park.....	Fort Calhoun.....	29,040
Fort Hartsuff State Historical Park.....	Burwell.....	11,153
Fort Kearny State Historical Park.....	Kearney.....	58,675
Fort Kearny State Recreation Area.....	Kearney.....	121,410
Fort Robinson State Park.....	Crawford.....	257,194
Fremont Lakes State Recreation Area.....	Fremont.....	870,750
Front Street and Cowboy Museum.....	Ogallala.....	53,958
Fur Trade, Museum of the.....	Chadron.....	59,437
Genoa Indian School Interpretive Center.....	Genoa.....	1,265
Governor's Mansion.....	Lincoln.....	2,500
Harlan County Lake.....	Republican City.....	624,252
Hastings Museum/Lied Theatre/J.M. McDonald Planetarium.....	Hastings.....	59,987
Henry Dooley Zoo.....	Omaha.....	1,380,259
Holland Performing Arts Center.....	Omaha.....	113,611
Holy Family Shrine.....	Gretna.....	23,686
Indian Cave State Park.....	Shubert.....	114,850
Jewish Historical Society and Riekes Museum, Nebraska.....	Omaha.....	3,000
Johnson Lake State Recreation Area.....	Lexington.....	59,973
Joslyn Art Museum.....	Omaha.....	114,254
Lake Maloney State Recreation Area.....	North Platte.....	168,150
Lake McConaughy/Lake Ogallala State Recreation Areas.....	Ogallala.....	646,802
Lake Minatare State Recreation Area.....	Minatare.....	111,250
Lauritzen Gardens.....	Omaha.....	175,549
Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park and Wildlife Safari.....	Ashland.....	70,977
Lewis and Clark Lake State Recreation Area.....	Crofton.....	255,679
Lewis and Clark Visitor Center.....	Crofton.....	44,935
Louisville Lakes State Recreation Area.....	Louisville.....	533,400
Mahoney State Park, Eugene T.....	Ashland.....	968,600
Malcolm X Birthsite.....	Omaha.....	2,100
Medicine Creek State Recreation Area.....	Cambridge.....	54,965
Merritt Reservoir State Recreation Area.....	Valentine.....	94,000
Mormon Island State Recreation Area.....	Grand Island.....	50,800
Museum of Nebraska Art.....	Kearney.....	21,411
Nebraska Prairie Museum.....	Holdrege.....	7,835
Niobrara State Park.....	Niobrara.....	114,391
Olive Creek State Recreation Area.....	Kramer.....	21,509
Oliver Reservoir State Recreation Area.....	Kimball.....	29,269
Omaha Community Playhouse.....	Omaha.....	81,701
Orpheum Theater.....	Omaha.....	257,422
Pawnee State Recreation Area.....	Lincoln.....	299,925

³⁸ Attractions selected include state historical sites, state parks, state historical parks, federal areas and non-commercial attractions reporting annual attendance of 20,000 or higher. Other attractions were selected based on their historical or geographical significance.

³⁹ Source: Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Figures represent attendance reported by the attractions themselves for all of 2011.

Attendance at Selected Nebraska Attractions, 2011 (Cont'd.)

Attraction	Location	Attendance
Pioneers Park Nature Center.....	Lincoln	89,642
Platte River State Park	Louisville.....	675,606
Ponca State Park.....	Ponca.....	778,313
Pony Express Station.....	Gothenburg.....	21,908
Red Willow State Recreation Area.....	McCook	57,960
Rock Creek State Station Historical Park and Recreation Area.....	Fairbury.....	34,251
Roller Skating, National Museum of	Lincoln.....	1,200
Sherman Reservoir State Recreation Area	Loup City.....	63,325
Smith Falls State Park	Valentine	37,412
Stagecoach State Recreation Area.....	Hickman.....	103,671
Strategic Air and Space Museum.....	Ashland	82,806
Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer.....	Grand Island	70,153
Summit Lake State Recreation Area.....	Tekamah.....	32,000
Sumtur Amphitheater at Walnut Creek	Papillion	20,950
Sutherland State Recreation Area	Sutherland.....	33,450
Swanson Reservoir State Recreation Area.....	Trenton	86,193
Two Rivers State Recreation Area	Venice.....	263,347
University of Nebraska State Museum of Natural History	Lincoln.....	76,671
Victoria Springs State Recreation Area.....	Anselmo.....	22,250
Wagon Train State Recreation Area	Hickman.....	150,277
Wehrspann Lake at Chalco Hills Recreation Area	Omaha.....	480,960
Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area	Gering	28,127
Willow Creek State Recreation Area	Pierce.....	173,000
Windmill State Recreation Area.....	Gibbon.....	48,650