RECREATION AND PLACES OF INTEREST[34]

National Areas[35]

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 prehistoric 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/Verdigre 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 Areas[36]

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

[34] Information 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.

[35] For more information about the areas in Nebraska administered by the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, see Pages 106-107 and 154-155.

[36] For more information on state areas, see Page 650.

● 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 plantetarium 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) Stock Show and Rodeo. 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

Uniquely Nebraskan

Husker Football[37]

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.

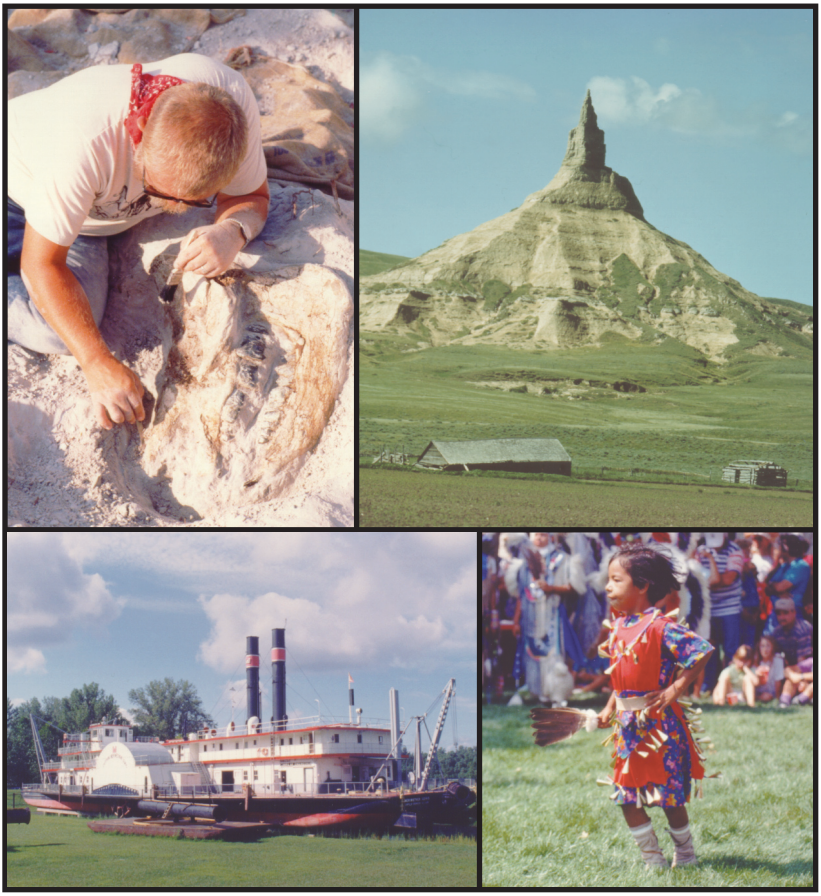
Since winning its first game on Nov. 27, 1890, the Nebraska football program has amassed more than 780 victories. Since 1970, Nebraska has won five national championships. Under the direction of Coach Tom Osborne, the Huskers posted the best five-year record in NCAA football history — 60-3 from 1993 to 1997, including three unbeaten and untied seasons.

Husker football fans are widely known as some of the most devoted fans in sports. By the end of the 2005 season, there had been 275 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, 2007[38]

Attraction	Location	Attendance[39]
Agate Fossil Beds National Monument	Harrison	13,000
Aksarben Aquarium	Gretna	20,000
Arbor Day Farm	Nebraska City	100,000
Arbor Lodge State Historical Park and Arboretum	Nebraska City	50,000
Art, Museum of Nebraska	Kearney	19,890
Ash Hollow State Historical Park	Lewellen	24,000
Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park	Royal	18,500
Bluestem State Recreation Area	Sprague	67,917
Bowring Sandhills Ranch State Historical Park, Arthur	Merriman	5,624
Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge	Fort Calhoun	27,286
Boys Town Visitor Center/Father Flanagan's Boys Town	Boys Town	168,341
Branched Oak State Recreation Area	Raymond	1,247,656
Bridgeport State Recreation Area	Bridgeport	46,570
Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park and State Recreational Area	North Platte	56,417
Calamus Reservoir State Recreation Area	Burwell	406,266
Capitol Building, State	Lincoln	84,300
Carhenge	Alliance	NR*
Cather State Historic Site, Willa	Red Cloud	9,187
Chadron State Park	Chadron	207,000
Champion Mill State Historical Park	Champion	2,625
Children's Museum, Lincoln	Lincoln	129,423
Children's Museum, Omaha	Omaha	234,783
Chimney Rock National Historic Site and Visitors Center	Bayard	26,176
Conestoga State Recreation Area	Denton	114,196
Davis Creek Reservoir	North Loup	42,100
Dead Timber State Recreation Area	Scribner	30,000
DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge	Blair	215,000
El Museo Latino	Omaha	72,374
Enders State Recreation Area	Enders	46,235
Folsom Children's Zoo and Botanical Gardens	Lincoln	155,000
Ford Birthsite and Gardens, Gerald R.	Omaha	18,000
Forest, Samuel R. McKelvie National	Nenzel	311
Fort Atkinson State Historical Park	Fort Calhoun	27,375
Fort Hartsuff State Historical Park	Burwell	20,000
Fort Kearny State Historical Park	Kearney	50,000
Fort Kearny State Recreation Area	Kearney	120,000
Fort McPherson National Cemetary	Maxwell	8,500
Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge	Valentine	40,000
Fort Robinson State Park	Crawford	460,154
Fremont Lakes State Recreation Area	Fremont	840,000
Fur Trade, Museum of the	Chadron	53,245
Gene Leahy Mall	Omaha	75,000
Genoa Indian School Museum	Genoa	1,596
Governor's Mansion	Lincoln	NR*
Grassland, Oglala National	Crawford	NR*
Great Platte River Road Archway Monument	Kearney	70,000
Harlan County Lake	Alma	514,925
Hastings Museum/Lied Theatre/J.M. McDonald Planetarium	Hastings	66,949
Henry Doorly Zoo	Omaha	1,335,170
Holy Family Shrine	Gretna	30,000
Homestead National Monument of America	Beatrice	70,216
Indian Cave State Park	Shubert	154,600
Jeffrey Lake	Brady	35,500
Johnson Lake State Recreation Area	Elwood	85,197
Joslyn Art Museum	Omaha	201,021
Lake Maloney State Recreation Area	North Platte	100,000
Lake McConaughy/Lake Ogallala State Recreation Areas	Ogallala	811,600
Lake Minatare State Recreation Area	Minatare	95,400
Lauritzen Gardens	Omaha	132,973
Lewis and Clark Lake State Recreation Area	Crofton	221,873
Lied Center for the Performing Arts	Lincoln	110,967

[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 2007. "NR" stands for "not reporting."

Attendance at Selected Nebraska Attractions, 2007 (Cont'd.)

Attraction	Location	Attendance
Louisville Lakes State Recreation Area	Louisville	600,000
Mahoney State Park, Eugene T.	Ashland	187,950
Medicine Creek State Recreation Area	Cambridge	57,853
Merritt Reservoir State Recreation Area	Valentine	101,500
Missouri National Recreational River	Niobrara	145,767
Missouri River Basin Lewis & Clark Visitor Center	Nebraska City	25,144
Mormon Trail Center	Omaha	57,219
Museum of Nebraska Art	Kearney	19,890
Nebraska Prairie Museum	Holdrege	23,484
Neihardt State Historic Site, John G.	Bancroft	3,000
Niobrara National Scenic River	Valentine	79,942
Niobrara State Park	Niobrara	147,000
Oliver Reservoir State Recreation Area	Kimball	35,589
Omaha Community Playhouse	Omaha	90,555
Pawnee State Recreation Area	Lincoln	318,660
Pelican Point State Recreation Area	Tekamah	40,000
Pioneers Park	Lincoln	440,000
Pioneers Park Nature Center	Lincoln	83,777
Plainsman Museum	Aurora	2,806
Platte River State Park	Louisville	625,003
Ponca State Park	Ponca	749,250
Pony Express Station	Gothenburg	25,492
Red Willow State Recreation Area	McCook	36,129
Riverside Zoo	Scottsbluff	31,000
Rock Creek State Station Historical Park	Fairbury	35,000
Schramm Park State Recreation Area	Gretna	50,000
Scotts Bluff National Monument	Gering	111,891
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden	Lincoln	55,000
Sherman Reservoir State Recreation Area	Loup City	68,425
Sod House Museum	Gothenburg	30,000
Strategic Air and Space Museum	Ashland	124,129
Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer	Grand Island	59,882
Sutherland State Recreation Area	Sutherland	40,000
Swanson Lake State Recreation Area	Trenton	29,309
Toadstool Geological Park	Crawford	NR*
Two Rivers State Recreation Area	Venice	265,567
University of Nebraska State Museum of Natural History	Lincoln	56,000
Valentine National Wildlife Refuge	Valentine	15,000
Verdon Lake State Recreational Area	Verdon	30,000
Victoria Springs State Recreation Area	Anselmo	30,000
Walnut Creek Lake and Recreation Area	Papillion	NR*
Wehrspann Lake at Chalco Hills Recreation Area	Omaha	480,000
Western Heritage Museum, Durham	Omaha	118,464
Wildlife Safari, Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park and	Ashland	82,722
Willow Creek State Recreation Area	Pierce	170,000
Windmill State Recreation Area	Gibbon	53,150