

State Parks Film: “Nebraska Beautiful” (1938)

[An introduction to the distinctive natural resources and man-made park facilities of the state of Nebraska, sites that are outstanding because of their scenic beauty or historical significance]

Script and Introduction by Frank B. O’Connell
Produced by Winger-Maasdam Industrial Cinematographers
Directed by William Lytle
Photography: Felber Maasdam
Film Editor: J.F. Winger
Narrator: Woody Smith
Sound: The Calvin Co.

The Nebraska Game, Forestation, and Parks Commission presents “Nebraska Beautiful.”

The narrator begins by inviting the viewer to a journey to places around the state of Nebraska that are outstanding for their scenic beauty or historical significance. He expresses the hope that those who view this film will invite friends from other states to enjoy the variety and richness of Nebraska.

Map of Nebraska, with the narrator referring to “The Tree Planter’s State” while describing the “new” state Capitol in Lincoln (aerial view), “one of the great buildings of modern times.”

The journey around the state continues in Thurston County with a view of the “Big Muddy” (the Missouri River) and Ponca State Park in Dixon County.

Niobrara Island State Park (or Niobrara State Park), near the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri Rivers, is unique because part of the park is a game refuge and bird-rearing station. The park offers cabins, picnic facilities, swimming, good boating and fishing. Excellent views of the Niobrara River, known by the Indians as “running water,” are featured.

Brown County, farther west, includes a wooded canyon (Pine Creek) near Long Pine. A tourist camp along the creek is known as “Hidden Paradise.”

The journey continues in the Sand Hills of Cherry County, a county larger than several Eastern states. Here the visitor will find huge cattle ranches and, surprisingly, several waterfalls along the Snake River.

Smith Falls (also known as White Birch Falls), in the Niobrara Valley near

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Valentine, offers another unique Nebraska vista. In Valentine, a visitor can see one of the four state fisheries. Cherry County also includes a herd of buffalo on the Niobrara National Game Reserve (17,000 acres).

Dawes County includes Nebraska's largest park, Chadron State Park, which offers an abundance of pine trees, numerous rock formations, cabins, boating, swimming, horseback riding, and spectacular scenery.

Sioux County offers elephant fossils, rocky vistas, flat open country, Crow Butte, Saddle Rock, Giant's Coffin Rock, Lover's Leap Rock, and the Agate Museum.

Scotts Bluff County includes the Wildcat Hills State Park, the state game reserve (for buffalo, elk, and deer), Mitchell Pass (a landmark from pioneer days), and Scotts Bluff National Monument and Museum. The view from the top of the monument reveals the city of Scottsbluff, "the metropolis of the Panhandle," the rich North Platte Valley, and the Badlands.

Traveling through Morrill County, we see Chimney Rock, Courthouse Rock, and Jail Rock, natural monuments named by the early pioneers.

Dundy County offers Rock Creek Lake with fine fishing and boating, picnic facilities, and a fish hatchery.

Thomas County, in the Nebraska Sand Hills, includes the Nebraska National Forest, all of its trees hand-planted, a tribute to the foresight of Dr. Charles Bessey of the University of Nebraska. The recreational facilities within the forest were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Custer County, the second largest county of Nebraska, includes Victoria Springs State Park, with its mineral springs, fine old trees, picnic facilities, a lake, a small museum, and a monument to the early settlers of Custer County.

Adams County offers the Hastings Recreation Grounds, with its beautiful woods, rustic bridges, nature trails, Crystal Lake, and picnic facilities.

Otoe County includes Arbor Lodge State Park, the home of J. Sterling Morton (1832-1902), the "author" of Arbor Day. Arbor Lodge, the Morton family home, is now a museum. The grounds offer 200 species of trees and shrubs.

Sarpy County: the Gretna Station, a Nebraska State Fish Hatchery on the banks of the Platte River.

The journey around Nebraska ends at the State Capitol building in Lincoln, with the narrator expressing the hope that the viewer has gained a richer appreciation of Nebraska's history, traditions, and scenic attractions.

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The Great Seal of the State of Nebraska concludes the film.