

Historical Connections

NEWS FROM THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDATION



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Alkali Station Tour Draws Strong Community Interest Through WanderNebraska and Trail Trek Partnership



Retired State Archaeologist Rob Bozell and Site Supervisor Tamara Cooper of Ash Hollow State Historical Park provided historical interpretation of Alkali Station.

Approximately 30 participants attended a recent guided tour of Alkali Station, offered through a partnership between Nebraska Game and Parks' Trail Trek program and the NSHSF WanderNebraska initiative. The event highlighted the continued collaboration between state partners and local supporters in preserving and sharing Nebraska's historic landscapes.

The tour was led by retired State Archaeologist Rob Bozell and Site Supervisor Tamara Cooper of Ash Hollow State Historical Park. Together, they provided historical interpretation of Alkali Station, sharing insights into its archaeological significance, frontier-era history, and ongoing preservation efforts.

NSHSF Director Marvin Stumpf also attended the event. Stumpf is among the donors who supported the successful campaign that raised approximately \$250,000 for the purchase

of Alkali Station in 2019, helping ensure stewardship of the site.

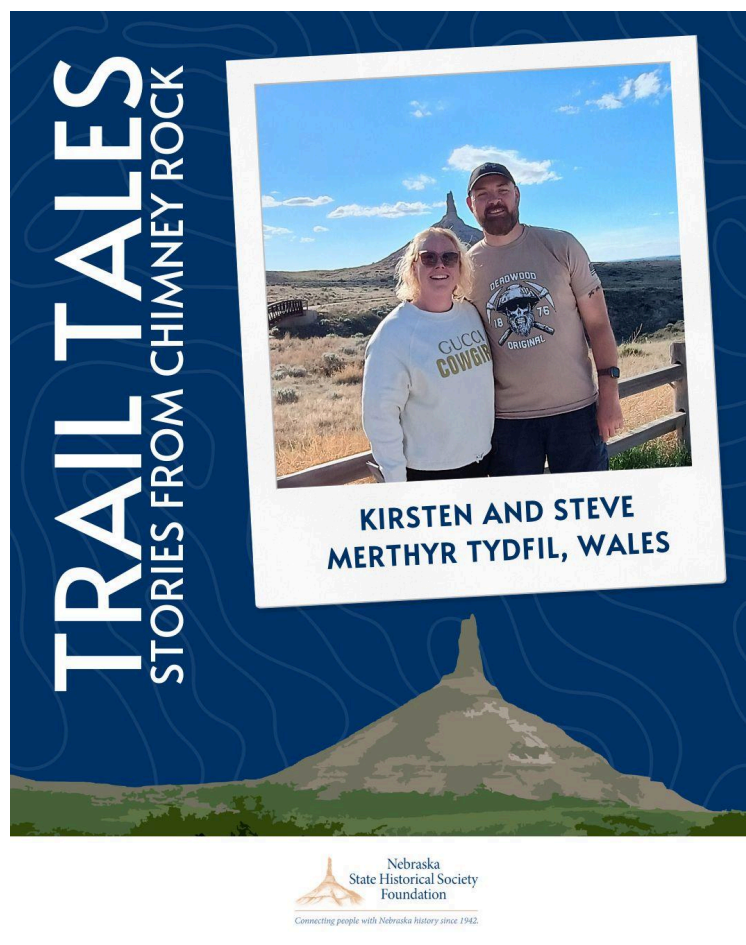
The event is part of the broader WanderNebraska program, which continues to expand opportunities for Nebraskans and visitors to engage with historic sites across the state through experiential tours and partnerships like Trail Trek.

Organizers noted strong public interest in the site and emphasized the value of hands-on educational programming in connecting communities with Nebraska's cultural heritage.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ALKALI STATION'S HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE



Trail Tales: Welcoming Visitors to Walk to the Rock



Kirsten and Steve from Merthyr Tydfil, Wales recently stopped by WTTR. They are the first Welsh visitors to stop by for a visit! They are concluding a western mountains trip.



Juneteenth Tour Attendees Share a Meaningful Day of Reflection, History and Community



Tour participants pause to reflect during the "Hate & Hope" exhibit, confronting the painful realities of racism in the Great Plains while also honoring the resilience, progress, and stories of hope found in Omaha and across the nation.



Eric Ewing, Executive Director of the Great Plains Black History Museum, shares insights from the "A League of Our Own: Negro League Baseball" exhibit with participants during the WanderNebraska Juneteenth Adventure Tour



Bryan Mattox, Operations Manager for Salem Baptist Church, led our tour of this historic North Omaha landmark and shared the church's rich history, rooted in faith, resilience, and community leadership



JoAnna LeFlore-Ejike, Executive Director of the Malcolm X Birthsite and Museum, shares the organization's mission to preserve Malcolm X's human rights legacy while inspiring civic engagement, economic empowerment, and community leadership.

On Friday, June 19, WanderNebraska's Juneteenth Tour offered participants a meaningful day of history, reflection, and community connection across North Omaha. The group visited the Great Plains Black History Museum's "A League of Our Own: Negro League Baseball" exhibit, the "Hate & Hope" exhibit, the Malcolm X Birthsite and Museum, and Salem Baptist Church, where they learned how each site helps preserve and interpret Nebraska's Black history and broader American civil rights legacy.

The day also included an outstanding lunch provided by Big Mama's Kitchen & Catering, adding a warm and memorable touch to the experience. The tour concluded with a two-hour River City History Tour led by Kyle Chatteleton of The Durham Museum, highlighting Omaha's Negro Motorist Green Book sites and the vital role these locations played in Black travel during segregation.

Celebrated on Juneteenth, the tour honored the day freedom was announced to enslaved people in Texas in 1865 while reflecting the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation's mission to advance the study and preservation of history and support the organizations that keep these stories alive.

Don't miss your last chance to register for a WanderNebraska Adventure Tour this year! We have just a few spots available for the Golf & History Tour coming up from July 7-10. [Click here to register by this Friday, June 26!](#)

There are so many fun ways to wander Nebraska this summer! Visit WanderNebraska.com to learn more about our travel adventure program, and scroll down in this newsletter to learn about exciting upcoming joint WanderNebraska and Nebraska Game and Parks Trail Trek Tours.



500 Mile Sculpture Garden: Special Screening and Panel Discussion, June 30



Celebrate the 50th anniversary of Nebraska's I-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project with a **special screening** of 500 Mile Sculpture Garden, a 1976 documentary produced by Nebraska Public Media that chronicles the creation of the landmark public art project. The program will also feature two short films exploring the sculptures' history and legacy.

The screening will take place on June 30, 2026, from 3–4:30 p.m. at the Ross Media Arts Center in Lincoln. It will serve as the kickoff to a series of events recognizing the project during the national America 250 celebration.

The event is made possible through the support of the Committee for the Preservation of the I-80 Bicentennial Sculptures, the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation, and the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center.

The screening is free and open to the public, but seating is limited. Reserve your tickets using the link below or by calling 402-472-9100.

RSVP TO THE SPECIAL SCREENING EVENT

Following the screening of 500 Mile Sculpture Garden at The Ross, join a **special panel discussion** at 5:30 p.m. just around the corner at the Sheldon Museum of Art.

This panel will feature key figures behind Nebraska's I-80 Bicentennial Sculpture Project. Hear firsthand perspectives from artist John Raimondi, project director Art Thompson, preservation advocate Dan Worth, and former Sheldon Museum education director Karen Janovy as they reflect on the vision, creation, and lasting legacy of these iconic sculptures that transformed Interstate 80 into a corridor of public art.

To RSVP for the panel discussion, please complete this form:

<https://www.artscouncil.nebraska.gov/500-mile-sculpture-garden-with-panel-discussion-rsvp/>



Learn More about Snakes of the West at Walk to the Rock



Join Nebraska Game & Parks at Chimney Rock for a Snakes of the West Hiking Tour on June 27 at 11 a.m. Mountain Time.

Take a guided hike with Game & Parks Outdoor Education Specialist Amanda Filipi into the world of western snakes and discover how these often-misunderstood reptiles play an important role in healthy ecosystems. Along the way, guests will explore how to identify common species, what they reveal about habitat health, and how to safely share the landscape with them.

This event will take place at the Walk to the Rock patio and parking lot across from the Chimney Rock Cemetery on County Road 98. Please come prepared for hiking conditions; bring plenty of water, wear sunscreen, and make sure to wear close-toed shoes suitable for a mostly flat, crushed-gravel 1.1-mile trail.

SEE FULL EVENT DETAILS



**Free Admission Day:
Celebrating America's 250th!**



On **Saturday, July 4th, 2026**, all NSHS historic sites across the state of Nebraska will be free to visitors, thanks to the support of the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. Special events will also be happening throughout the day at each site.

Nebraska History Museum - The museum will be open from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm CT. Activities include Shaping Nebraska Bingo, creating a mini puzzle of Nebraska, and other activities!

Ethel S. and Christopher J. Abbott Chimney Rock Visitor Center - The Chimney Rock Visitor Center will be open from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm MT. Activities at Chimney Rock include an Interactive Oregon Trail Game, a touchable artifact table, and other activities!

Senator George Norris State Historic Site - The Norris House will be open from 12:00 to 5:00 pm CT. Activities include House tours from the Norris House Manager, Harold Callahan, a trivia pursuit challenge, and other activities!

Fort Robinson History Center - The History Center will be open from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm MT. Activities include a scavenger hunt, building spotlights from the Fort Robinson History Center Manager, Will Kessen, and other activities!

Neligh Mill - The mill will be open from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm CT. Activities at the mill include a scavenger hunt and tours of the mill.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT FREE ADMISSION DAY](#)



Mark Your Calendars for These Exciting Upcoming Events!

JULY 11 - LEWIS AND CLARK VISITOR CENTER - WanderNebraska/Trail Trek Tour: Join the museum's Executive Director, Doug Friedli, at 9:00 a.m. for a one mile guided hike along the Tree Trail and walk in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark. The trail has a chipped wood surface and is stroller friendly. Living history reenactors will be on site at 10 a.m. and Joe Starita, author of *I Am a Man*, will give a special presentation at 11 a.m.

AUGUST 8 - BUFFALO BILL RANCH - WanderNebraska/Trail Trek Tour: Join Nebraska historian and author Jeff Barnes for an insightful tour of Buffalo Bill Cody's home

property. A Buffalo Bill impersonator will be on hand and Barnes will sign purchased copies of his book. The tour begins at 10:00 a.m. and will be approximately half a mile on level ground. This event is free and open to the public, but a valid state park vehicle permit is required for park entry.

SEPTEMBER 12 - ENGINEER CANTONMENT - WanderNebraska/Trail Trek Tour:

Nebraska State Archaeologist, Rob Bozell, will share the history of the Engineer Cantonment site as well as archaeological insights. Participants will walk to the site from the county road. This program begins at 9:00 a.m. and will last approximately one hour. Length of walk is approximately one-quarter mile. Engineer Cantonment is located .2 miles south of the intersection of County Road P51 and Bluebird Lane, Omaha. There is limited parking at the site and all others will need to safely park along side the road. Watch for yard signs with more information.

VISIT THE TRAIL TREK WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE



Upcoming Cottonwood Society Events

JULY 31 - SPECIAL TOUR OF JAPANESE HALL AT LEGACY OF THE PLAINS: On July 31 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., Cottonwood Society members—and their friends—are invited to a special tour of the Japanese Hall located on the Legacy of the Plains grounds in Gering. The tour will be led by Vickie Sakurada Schaepler, who will share the inspiring story behind the creation of the Japanese Hall, its development, and the history and contributions of Japanese Americans in the North Platte River Valley. We encourage Cottonwood Society members to bring a friend and introduce them to this remarkable Nebraska story. More details will be coming soon, but for now, please save the date for what promises to be an engaging and memorable evening.

RSVP or more information - LFattig@nshsf.org

JULY 31 - SPECIAL MORNING TOUR OF FORT ATKINSON AND FORT CALHOUN:

Also on July 31, Cottonwood Society members and their friends are invited to a special morning tour of Fort Atkinson and Fort Calhoun led by Archaeologist Nolan Johnson. The tour will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will provide participants with a unique opportunity to explore these important historic sites while learning about their archaeological significance and role in Nebraska's early history. We encourage Cottonwood Society members to bring a friend and introduce them to this remarkable Nebraska story. More details will be coming soon, but for now, please save the date for what promises to be an engaging and memorable evening.

RSVP or more information - LFattig@nshsf.org



Get Your Tickets for WanderNebraska: The Great Road Trip

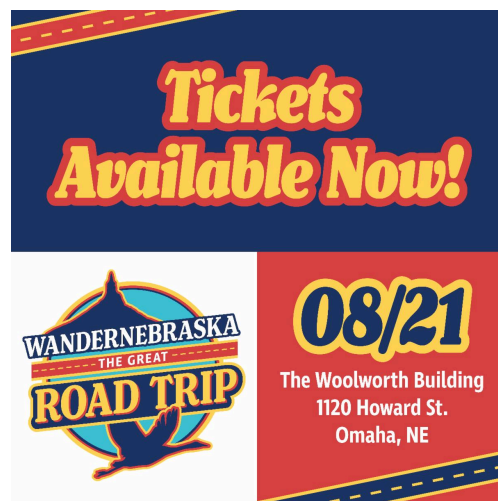
We are excited to announce the date for our 2026 **WANDERNEBRASKA: THE GREAT ROADTRIP!** Mark your calendars for August 21st so you don't miss the fun.

Thank you to our Sponsors!

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For more information on sponsorship, [click here](#).

**Get Your Tickets Now - Click
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