

# Trail Rules and Regulations

- ♦ **Trail Hours:** Open one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.
- ♦ No motorized vehicles allowed.
- ♦ Obey traffic signs. Vehicles have right of way at road crossings.
- ♦ Stay to the right. Pass slower traffic on the left. Yield to oncoming traffic.
- ♦ RIGHT OF WAY: Cyclists yield to all other trail users; hikers yield to horseback riders.
- ♦ Cyclists should wear a helmet at all times.
- ♦ All pets must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet.
- ♦ Drinking alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- ♦ Littering is subject to \$100 fine.
- ♦ Camping, fires, hunting, and use of firearms are prohibited, unless posted otherwise.
- ♦ Horseback riders should dismount when crossing bridges and road intersections.
- ♦ Horseback riders shall NOT use the main trail surface.
- ♦ Avoid disturbing natural features, wildlife, and farm animals. Leaving the trail right-of-way except at public crossing could subject you to trespassing violations and prosecution.
- ♦ Report fire or medical emergency by dialing 911.
- ♦ To report vandalism or violators, call 800-742-7627.
- ♦ No livestock allowed on trail or right-of-way.

## Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Offices:

### Headquarters/Southeast District

2200 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> St. / P.O. Box 30370  
Lincoln, NE 68503-0370  
402-471-0641

### Omaha Metro Office

8495 Frederick St.  
Omaha, NE 68124  
402-595-2144

### Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium

21502 W. Hwy 31  
Gretna, NE 68028-7264  
402-332-3901

### Northwest District

299 Husker Road / P.O. Box 725  
Alliance, NE 69301-0725  
308-763-2940

### Bassett Service Center

524 Panzer St. / P.O. Box 508 Bassett,  
NE 68714-0508  
402-684-2921

### Northeast District

2201 N. 13<sup>th</sup> St.  
Norfolk, NE 68701-2267  
402-370-3374

### Southwest District

301 E. State Farm Road  
North Platte, NE 69101-0430  
308-535-8025

### Kearney Service Center

1617 First Ave.  
Kearney, NE 68847-6057  
308-865-5310

**COVID-19 information:**  
[outdoornebraska.gov/healthinfo/](https://outdoornebraska.gov/healthinfo/)



**Come enjoy the  
Cowboy Trail!**



Under federal and/or state law, discrimination is prohibited on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, marital status, national origin, disability or political affiliation. If you think you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility or want more information, contact the Affirmative Action Officer, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lincoln, NE, 402-471-0641; the Equal Opportunity Commission, Lincoln, NE, 402-471-2024, TTY / TDD 402-471-4693. USFWS, Division of Bird Habitat and Conservation, Civil Rights Coordinator, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, MBSP 4020, Arlington, Virginia 22203.

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# Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail



**The Longest Rails  
to Trails Conversion  
in the Nation**

**Open from  
Norfolk to Valentine**

**NEBRASKA**  
— GAME  PARKS —





# Nebraska's First Recreational Trail

The nation's longest rail-to-trail conversion and Nebraska's first state recreational trail was accepted as a donation from the Rails to Trails Conservancy on December 5, 1994. Acceptance of the gift was authorized by law through the Nebraska Legislature under the provisions of federal railbanking statutes.

The historic Chicago and Northwestern Railroad right-of-way, now the Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail, passes through spectacular Nebraska scenery as it travels from Norfolk west through the Elkhorn River Valley with its companion route U.S. Highway 275. Farmsteads, cropland, and timber-covered riverbanks dot the landscape.

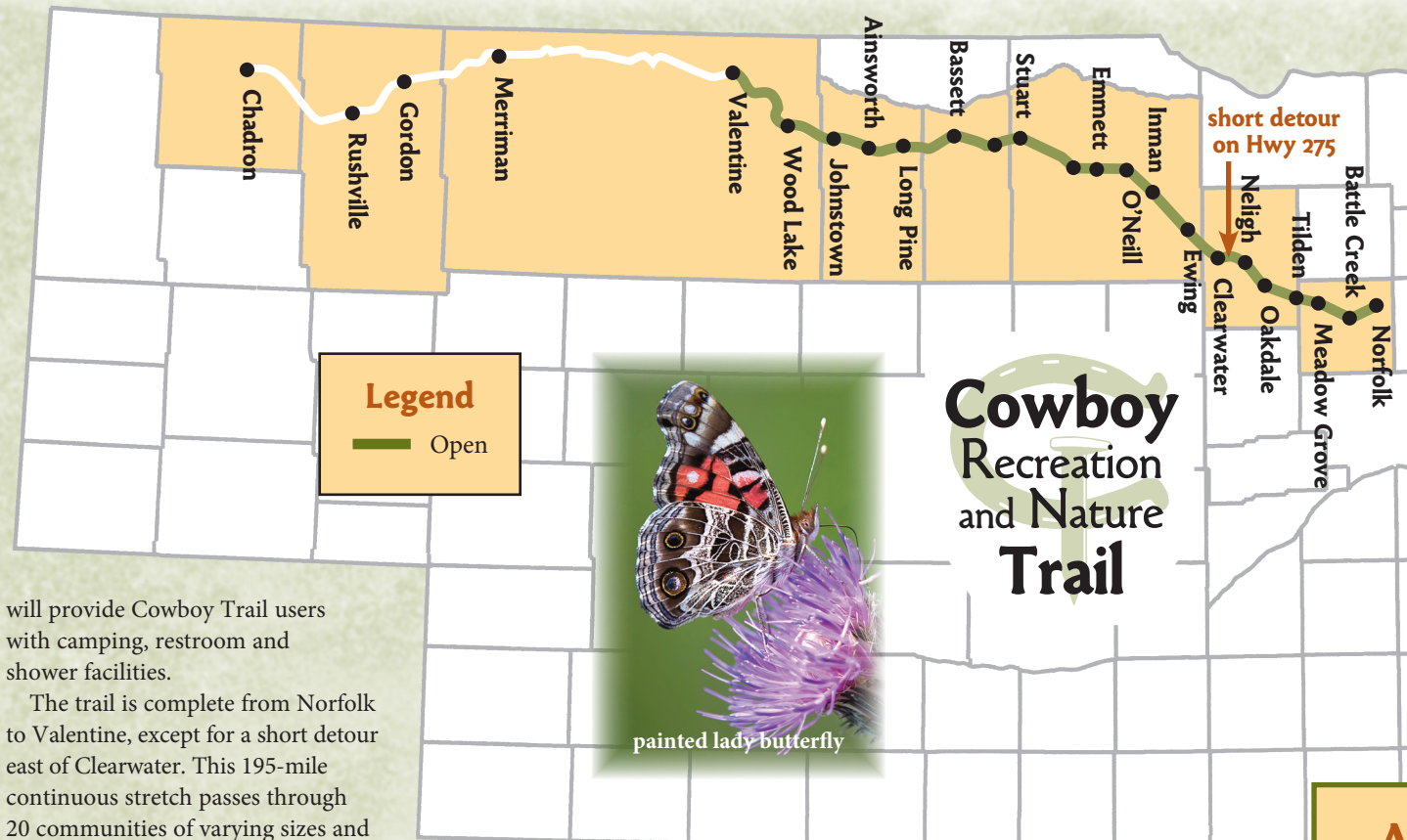
At O'Neill, a trailhead is provided at the Old Historic Railroad Depot, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Parking, restrooms, water and trail information are available to the public.

West from O'Neill the trail parallels ranching, hay and native prairie along U.S. 20. At Long Pine, the trail enters Nebraska's unique and renowned Sandhills. Except for an oasis containing a quarter-mile-long bridge crossing the Niobrara River Valley at Valentine, one of the nation's top 10 canoeing rivers, these vast grass-covered dunes border the trail en route to the Pine Ridge country near Chadron.

When finished, this hiking, biking and equestrian trail will stretch 321 miles across Nebraska. The trail will pass over 221 bridges and through 29 communities nicely spaced about 10 to 15 miles apart. These communities



ornate box turtle  
*(please leave the wildlife in the wild)*



painted lady butterfly

## Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail

will provide Cowboy Trail users with camping, restroom and shower facilities.

The trail is complete from Norfolk to Valentine, except for a short detour east of Clearwater. This 195-mile continuous stretch passes through 20 communities of varying sizes and offerings. Each stop has unique features that only rural America can offer. See old-time soda jerks, historic depots and one of the last drive-in movie theaters still in operation. The communities offer some of the best in cafes with that good old-home cooking that you just don't experience every day.

Camping is available in most community city parks at little or no charge. Visit the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's website for a list of amenities in each community. The amenities listing will show you where to find food, lodging and supplies, as well as special events and festivals that take place during the summer months. See online map for current closures and trail conditions:

[maps.outdoornebraska.gov/Trails/](https://maps.outdoornebraska.gov/Trails/)

[OutdoorNebraska.gov](https://OutdoorNebraska.gov)

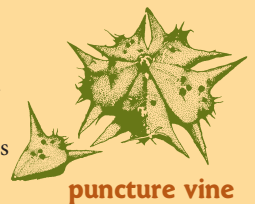


## Attention Bicyclists

This trail is of crushed limestone and is generally quite hard when dry. It can become soft when rain has fallen within a 12-hour period. It may also become rough if some improper use has occurred. It is always best to use a mountain, gravel, or hybrid bike. It is also suggested that your tires have flat protection and carry that you carry extra tubes.

The Texas sandburs (goathead) or puncture vine may be present and unseen since they are so small. Avoid the edges of the trail if possible.

This burr is a problem in almost all states and can prevent you from enjoying a great day of riding.



puncture vine