

Flint Hills Scenic Byway

Gateway to the tallgrass prairie, the Flint Hills Scenic Byway offers travelers an unchanged view of the grasslands of the Great Plains. Explore historic sites, quaint towns, and scenic vistas as you discover where the West truly begins.



Length: 48 miles / 76.8 km

Time Allow: Take one hour to drive or a day and a half to enjoy the entire byway.

Local Information

Chase County Chamber of Commerce
620-273-8469

Morris County Convention and Visitor's Bureau
620-767-5882

Visitor Services

Fees



There are no fees along the byway proper. There might be fees along various roads leading to the byway, such as the Kansas Turnpike.

Accessibility



Handicap-accessible restrooms are available at the Kaw Mission Historic Site's hands-on education center. The first floor of the Kaw Mission is also accessible. The byway overlook and Bowers Community Center are handicap accessible, as are portions of the Z-Bar/Spring Hill Ranch at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities



There are no bike or pedestrian facilities on the byway; the shoulders of the road are narrow and unwise to travel.

Food



There are places to eat and buy food along the byway.

Information



The Kansas Scenic Byways Program has erected route markers at numerous places along the byway. The byway overlooks and kiosks provide interpretive information and the four kiosks have maps. The following facilities provide

travelers with information about the byway: Cassoday Café, Emma Chase Café/Prairie Maid Shop, Fiber Factory, Chase County Museum, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Chase County Chamber of Commerce, Council Grove County Visitors Bureau, Bower Community Center, Kaw Mission Historic Site and other sites.

Lodging



There are places to stay overnight along the byway.

Retail



There are places to shop along the byway.

Special Considerations

Byway kiosks are in Cassoday, Cottonwood Falls at Bates Park, Strong City at the Caboose Park, and in a pocket park in Council Grove. In addition, Chase County Chamber of Commerce and Council Grove CVB have byway information, as does Bower Community Center in Council Grove.

The Grand Central Hotel in Cottonwood Falls (an AAA four-diamond hotel) in Cottonwood Falls has a Prairie Drifter Sunset Tour out on the prairie. The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve offers prairie tours, ranchstead tours, and, upon reservation, will allow meals served in the three-story barn. Bowers Community Center in Council Grove provides a staging area for tour groups. With advance arrangements, step-on guides are available through the Council Grove CVB for the Council Grove Historic District.

Restrictions

The entire route is paved and capable of accommodating any size vehicle. Motorists may be detained on rare occasions by cattle drives.

Seasons

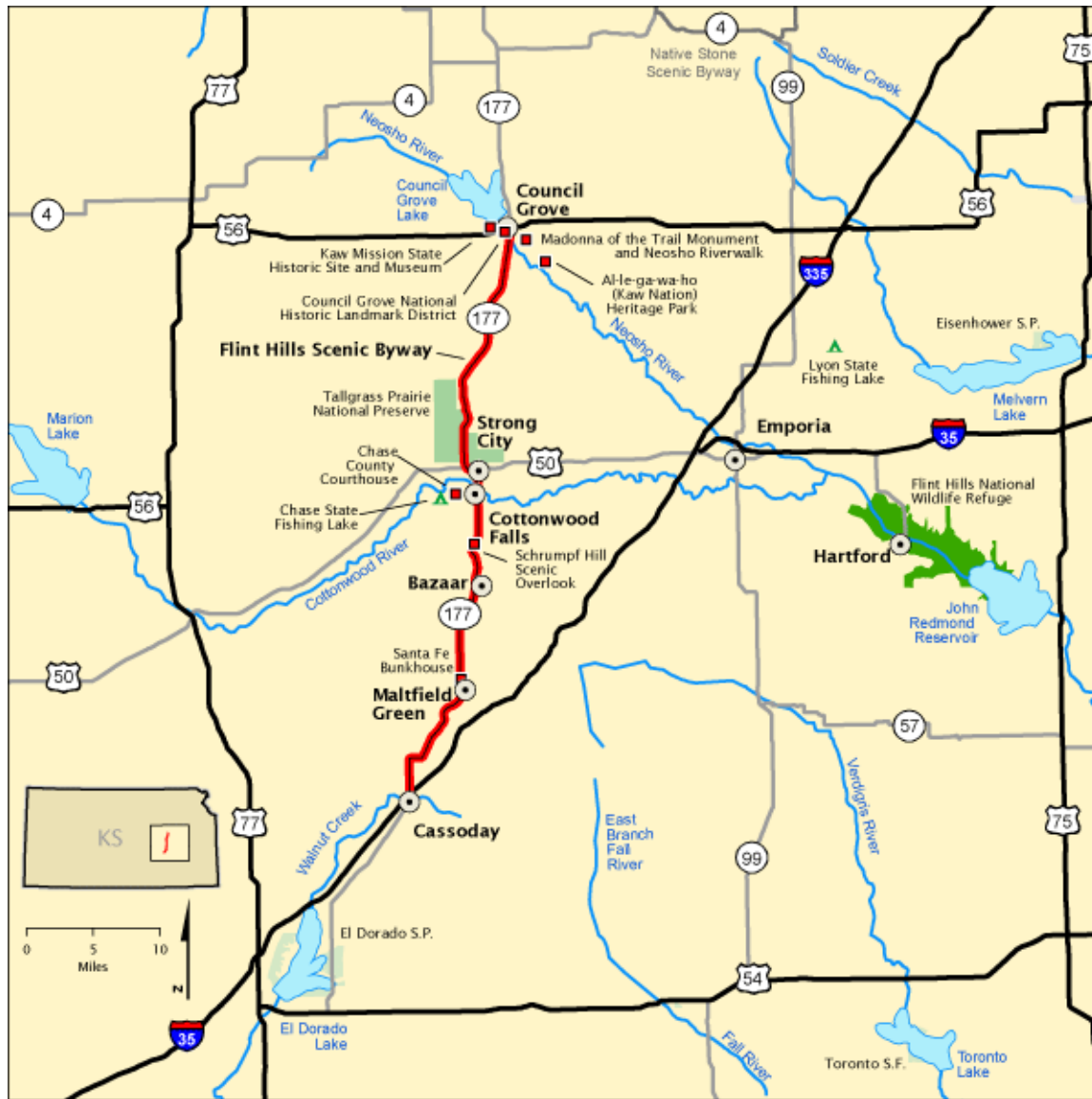
Best Time to Drive

Spring wildflowers are at their peak in late May-early June. Motorcycle groups tour the byway on the first and third Sundays of every month between May and October. Fall foliage is at its peak in October.

High Season

Summer travelers are more numerous, but do not lessen the traveler experience.

Map and Directions



Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

- Start at the junction of KS-177 and I-35 north of Cassoday, KS.


- Continue north on KS-177 going through Matifield Green, Baazar, Cottonwood Falls, and Strong City, KS.
- End at the southern city limit of Council Grove, KS.

Getting to the Byway



Nearby cities

Kansas City, KS (117 miles / 188.29 km, 2 hours 2 minutes)

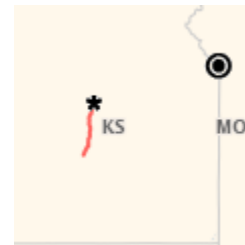
Start:  I-70 westbound, Kansas City
N 39.103° W 94.623° [?]

- Take I-70 west to Topeka.
- Merge onto I-335 and go southwest to US-56.


Directions:

- Follow US-56 west to KS-177 in Council Grove where the byway begins.

Junction with byway: * Intersection of Main St. and Neosho St., Council Grove
N 38.661° W 96.491° [?]



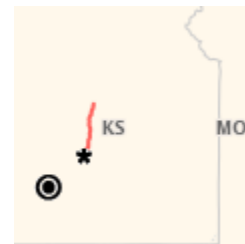
Wichita, KS (47 miles / 75.64 km, 43 minutes)

Start:  I-35 northbound, Wichita, KS
N 37.688° W 97.178° [?]

- Take I-35 northeast to Cassoday.
- Get on KS-177 in Cassoday where the byway begins.

Directions:

Junction with byway: * KS-177, Cassoday KS
N 38.048° W 96.639° [?]



Road Trip: Journey over the Grassland Sea

Departure: Council Grove National Historic Landmark District, Kansas

Destination: Stone Fences at Pioneer Bluffs-Rogler Ranch Historic District, Kansas

Time to allow: 1 day

The Journey provides you with an opportunity to experience what early pioneer travelers experienced as they wended their way on the Santa Fe Trail. It also showcases what life has been and is like on the beautiful Tallgrass Prairie.

Day 1

- **Start: Council Grove National Historic Landmark District**

Begin your journey over the Grassland Sea as Native Americans and the Santa Fe Trail travelers once did from Council Grove. Take time to appreciate the the early European settlers throughout the Council Grove Historic District and the Kaw Nation at the Kaw Nation Heritage Park. Enjoy the historic manmade scenery all over town as you take the National Park Service self-guided wayside tour. Begin at the Kaw Mission State Historic Site and obtain a guide brochure and map. The tour may be driven or, for the hearty, it may be walked. It includes stops at the DAR and Kaw statues on the Neosho Riverwalk. It also includes Hays House, an historic restaurant that serves great strawberry pie.

- **Stop 1: Flint Hills Tallgrass Prairie**



From previous stop: 5 minutes

Directions: Following K-177 along the Byway.

As you travel south from Council Grove, you will ascend up onto a hillside to catch your first glimpse of the vast Tallgrass Prairie. The Byway then takes you up, down and around the Flint Hills. Enjoy the wildflowers: look for profusions of pale blue pitcher sage in the fall or the brilliant orange butterfly milkweed in spring and summer.

- **Stop 2: Lower Fox Creek School**

From previous stop: 10 minutes / 10 mi (16.0 km)

Directions: Remain on K-177 until you cross a bridge and see the Lower Fox Creek School ahead. Take the first road to the west and turn immediately south onto the driveway to the schoolhouse.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

The Lower Fox Creek School sits on a hillside. It is a one-room schoolhouse left much as it used to be. The view from the schoolhouse is great, and the perspective of early life on the Prairie enhances the journey.

- **Stop 3: Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 1 mi (1.6 km)

Directions: Return to K-177 and proceed south on the byway.

Suggested time at this stop: 4 hours

This stop provides an opportunity for you to get out of your vehicle and learn about life on the prairie. See the intricate balance between flora and fauna. You'll get an "up close and personal" perspective of the prairie and feel a connection to the earth.

- **Stop 4: Chase County Courthouse**



From previous stop: 5 minutes / 5 mi (8.0 km)

Directions: Proceed south on the Byway, cross US 50 and continue on K-177 through Strong City. You might stop at Caboose Park and check out the Byway kiosk for information about Strong City along the way. Continue south on K-177. Cross the Cottonwood River Bridge (check out the falls to the west) and turn west onto Main Street to Broadway. The Courthouse will loom large.

Suggested time at this stop: 5 hours

The Chase County Courthouse demonstrates how early residents celebrated life in the Flint Hills using native stone material to build a beautiful building. While you're in Cottonwood Falls, visit the Chase County Museum, the Roniger Museum, the Fiber Factory, the shops, the galleries, and Grand Central Hotel. Stop at the Prairie Maid/Emma Chase Cafe for an ice cream cone and a "traffic waving license" so you can sit outside on the park bench eating your ice cream and waving at passersby.

- **Stop 5: Scenic Byway Overlook**



From previous stop: 3 minutes / 3 mi (4.8 km)

Directions: From Broadway in Cottonwood Falls, proceed east on Main Street to K-177, the Byway. Continue south on the Byway, past the sand-green golf course on the prairie. As you climb the next hill, the overlook is on the west side of the Byway. It has a handicapped accessible parking area and ramp. There are no restroom facilities here.

Suggested time at this stop: 25 minutes

This Byway overlook will give you a chance to park the car and get a 360-degree view of the Prairie. There are native wildflowers to see, as well as five interpretive panels that describe life on the Flint Hills.

- **End: Stone Fences at Pioneer Bluffs-Rogler Ranch Historic District**



From previous stop: 5 minutes / 5 mi (8.0 km)

Directions: Proceed south on the Byway past Bazaar and continue south. The Pioneer Bluffs-Rogler Ranch District is on the east side of the Byway.

While this is not a "stop," it is part of the visual experience along the Byway. The Ranch Historic District provides a wonderful example of ranching in the river valley beside the Pioneer Bluffs. The stone fences have been wonderfully preserved.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 24 miles / 38.4 km

Total Travel Time: 29 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 9 hours 55 minutes