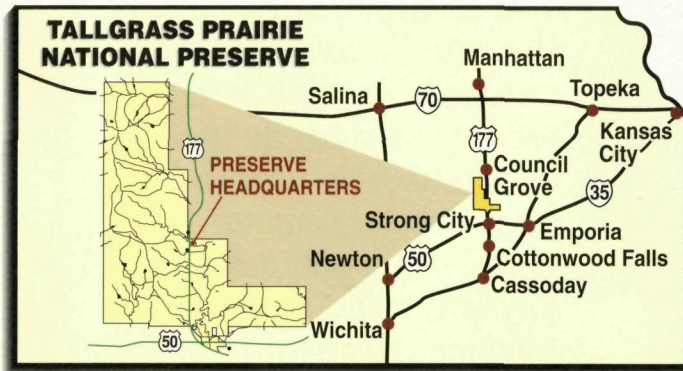


The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve headquarters lies 2 miles north of Strong City, Kansas, on Highway 177 (18 miles west of Emporia, 16 miles south of Council Grove and 85 miles northeast of Wichita).



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Photos by Ron Klataske  
Schoolhouse photo by  
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# Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

*Whether you are visiting from the next county, a distant state, or another country, you now have a prairie destination, rich in the unique history, culture, and ecology of the Great Plains...*

## Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

### A Partnership for the Prairie

#### National Park Trust \* National Park Service

"A model for the nation" is how former Kansas Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker described the manner in which the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve was created and will be developed. The only unit of the National Park System dedicated to the rich natural and cultural history of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, the preserve was established in 1996.

This portion of the once-vast tallgrass prairie is being preserved as a critical resource for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Indeed, the private/public partnership of the National Park Trust (NPT) and the National Park Service (NPS) is a unique approach to conservation that will pay dividends for all of us in the years to come. Only a small portion of the preserve (a maximum of 180 acres) will be owned by the federal government with the National Park Trust continuing to own the rest of the property — nearly 11,000 acres!

### A Private Resource for America

#### The National Park Trust

NPT, which is dedicated to saving national parklands and resources, purchased the 10,894 acre remnant of tallgrass prairie, known as the Z Bar/Spring Hill Ranch, in June 1994, for future management as a unit of the National Park System.



The Trust was founded in 1983 as a private, nonprofit, land conservancy that is funded through individual and institutional contributions and grants. The Trust is the only nationally-based land trust exclusively dedicated to preserving and protecting America's endangered national park lands. Through cooperative efforts with willing sellers, the NPT facilitates and, in some cases, secures lands for which there are no (or insufficient) federally appropriated moneys.

### Preservation & Enjoyment for All

#### The National Park Service

The park service is conducting the formal planning for the new preserve with the input from the general public and an advisory committee composed of representatives of the National Park Trust, adjacent landowners and ranchers, educational institutions, local and state officials, and conservation and historic preservation organizations. Once completed, the general management plan (GMP), will provide a vision for the future of the preserve as well as a practical framework for decision-making. The plan will describe the general direction the NPS intends to follow in managing the preserve for the next 10 to 15 years. When fully developed as a park unit, the preserve will offer interpretive exhibits and programs covering the natural history of the prairie, the cultural history of American Indians, and the legacy of ranching in the Flint Hills.



*Welcome* to the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, formerly known as the Z Bar/Spring Hill Ranch, in the heart of the Kansas Flint Hills – your opportunity to experience the natural wonder and rich history of this quintessential American landscape. The expansive rolling hills and wide-open vistas of the prairie in this region of the Great Plains are a rare remnant of the vast expanse of tallgrass prairie that once covered much of the central portion of North America.

## *A Prairie Paradise: The Z Bar/Spring Hill Ranch*

When Stephen F. Jones built his home in the early 1880's, it was a crowning achievement in his career as a cattleman. Built with hand-cut native limestone, the 11-room house is characteristic of the Second Empire style of 19th Century architecture. The massive three-story barn is impressive in its own right. Visitors also enjoy seeing the Lower Fox Creek School, a one-room schoolhouse located on a nearby hilltop. A spring on the hillside provided water to the house. Thus the name, the Spring Hill Ranch. The ranch was designated a National Historic Landmark in February of 1997.

## *The Southwind Nature Trail*

A leisurely stroll across hill and dale, watercourse and prairie grassland, gives visitors a close-up look at that which truly makes up the prairie preserve. Named for the Kansa Indians, the People of the Southwind, the 1.75 mile trail presents marvelous vistas as well as an opportunity for detailed looks at the prairie ecosystem. The trail winds across rolling hills, over a spring-fed stream lined with cottonwood and hackberry trees, and through a fascinating array of grasses and flowers. Along the way is evidence of the tiny insects and small animals that make the prairie their home. Take your time and notice the gray and white rock, the limestone and steel-tough chert, commonly called "flint," that was formed between 200 and 300 million years ago and gives the name to the resulting hills.

## *At Home On The Range*

Once the hunting grounds of the Kansa and Osage Indians, the hills and prairie streams are home to an astonishing variety of life. Nearly 400 species of plants, 150 kinds of birds, 39 types of reptiles and amphibians, and 31 species of mammals can be found on the preserve. The natural prairie cycle of climate, fire, and animal grazing — once buffalo, then cattle — has sustained the tallgrass and its plant and animal life. Much of the prairie flora and fauna is far too tiny to be seen from a passing car. But careful scrutiny reveals a special beauty and natural wonder that makes one appreciate the complexity of the prairie.

## *A note on visiting the ranch:*

- ❖ *For your enjoyment and safety while visiting the ranch, comfortable outdoor clothing is recommended, as well as footwear suitable for negotiating uneven walkways, steep stairs, and unpaved footpaths.*
- ❖ *Services at the site are limited - there are no picnicking/camping facilities, flush toilets, or potable water.*
- ❖ *Assistance and/or alternative programming is available for our guests with physical limitations. Please call ahead to make arrangements.*

While in Chase County make time to visit the towns of Strong City and Cottonwood Falls. Steeped in prairie history, these scenic communities will take you back in time. They also offer dining, shopping and much more...