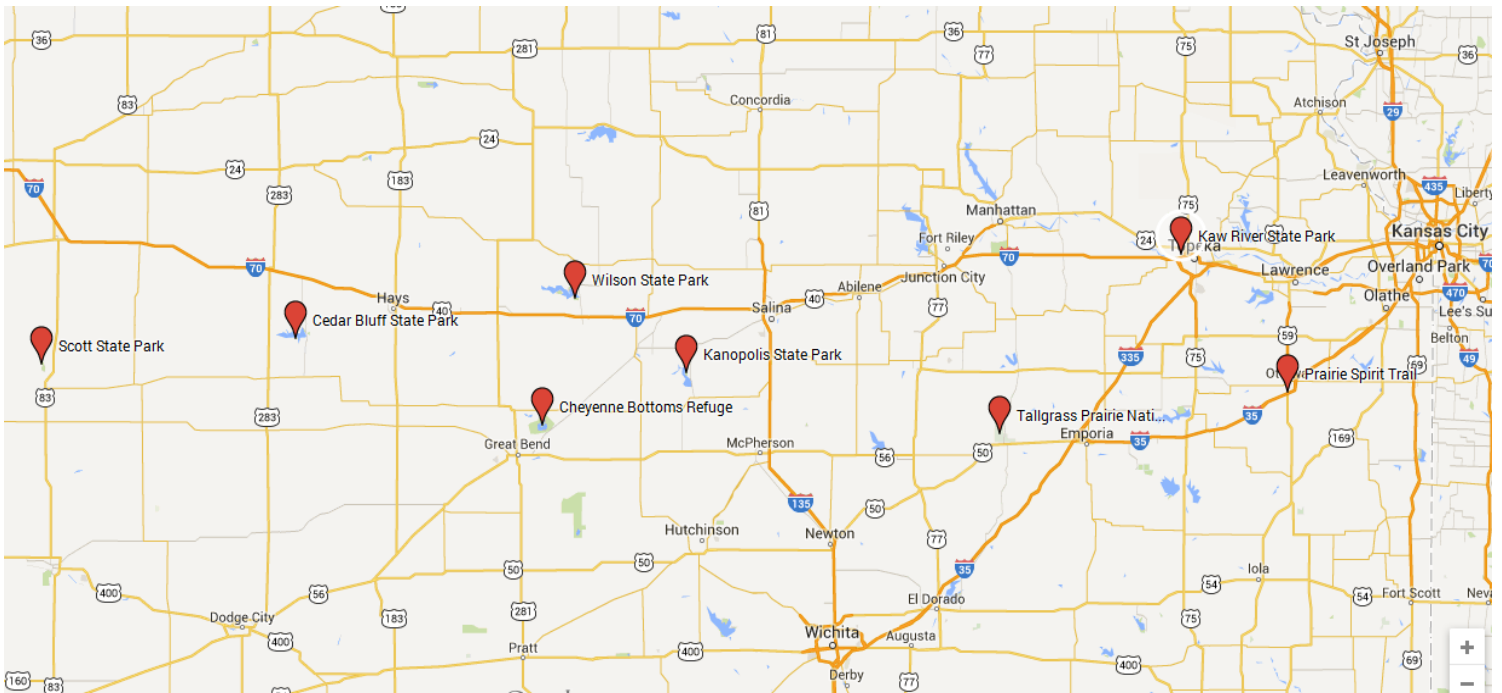




## Outdoor Yellow Brick Road Trip

The wild is calling. Answer it. Beyond the culture and history there exists an element of Kansas that, once experienced, will never be forgotten. Sweeping scenery stretching beyond the horizon; indigenous and migratory wildlife that captivates and bewilders; solitude and freedom only to be found on the untamed, open prairies. It's the heartland at its most magnificent, a treasure for those inclined to answer the call of the wild.

- 1. Kaw River State Park**  
5630 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Topeka  
(785) 273-6740  
[Website](#)
- 2. Prairie Spirit Trail\***  
(785) 448-6767  
[Website](#)
- 3. Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve\***  
2480 B Kansas Hwy 177, Strong City  
(620) 273-8494  
[Website](#)
- 4. Kanopolis State Park**  
200 Horsethief Rd, Marquette  
(785) 546-2565  
[Website](#)
- 5. Wilson State Park**  
#3 State Park Rd, Sylvan Grove  
(785) 658-2465  
[Website](#)
- 6. Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Refuge\***  
56 NE 40 Rd, Great Bend  
(620) 793-7730  
[Website](#)
- 7. Cedar Bluff State Park**  
32001 147 Hwy, Ellis  
(785) 726-3212  
[Website](#)
- 8. Scott State Park\***  
101 W. Scott Lake Dr, Scott City  
(620) 872-2061  
[Website](#)



Note: Attractions marked with an asterisk (\*) were recognized as part of the 8 Wonders of Kansas contests, sponsored by the [Kansas Sampler Foundation](#). Don't miss them!



## Topeka

### 1. Kaw River State Park

Kaw River is the only urban-type state park. It consists of 76 acres on the south bank of the Kansas River adjacent to MacLennan Park and Cedar Crest (the Kansas Governor's residence) to the east. Hiking and mountain-biking trails wind through an extensive oak-hickory forest on steep slopes with good views.

*Looking for more unique opportunities near Topeka? May we recommend:*

#### **Kansas River National Water Trail**

(913) 963-3460

[Website](#)

Plan a kayak or canoe trip down the Kansas River and immerse yourself in the natural Kansas experience.

#### **Landon Nature Trail**

[Website](#)

Nearly 40 miles of the former Missouri-Pacific Railroad rail corridor available for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.

## Ottawa

### 2. Prairie Spirit Trail\*

The Prairie Spirit Trail offers a peaceful and calm tranquility away from the hustle and bustle of big city life. The 51 mile trail is a linear park passing through three counties with eight pocket-parks along the way. It is a greenway and travel corridor open to pedestrians and bicyclists that traverses diverse ecosystems including tallgrass prairie, riparian areas, agricultural lands, and communities. [Click here to see a short video clip of the trail.](#)

*Looking for more unique opportunities near Ottawa? May we recommend:*

#### **Flint Hills Nature Trail**

[Website](#)

Hike, bike or ride horseback across the longest trail in Kansas, which follows part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

## Strong City

### 3. Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve\*

Nearly 11,000 acres of wide open space, beautiful vistas, seasonal wildflowers, wildlife, bison herd, and plenty of solitude. The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is the only unit in the National Park Service dedicated to preserving a rare remnant of tallgrass prairie. The preserve has over 40 miles of hiking and nature trails.

*Looking for more unique opportunities near Strong City? May we recommend:*

#### **Flint Hills National Scenic Byway**

[Website](#)

See the vistas of open spaces and undisturbed views of rolling hills covered with dense prairie grasses, wildflowers, and the endless sky that are the Tallgrass Prairie.

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### **Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge**

530 Maple, Hartford

(620) 392-5553

[Website](#)

Drive the roads, hike the landscape, hunt or fish, or just observe wildlife.

## **Marquette**

### **4. Kanopolis State Park**

This state park is situated amidst the striking Smoky Hills region of Kansas and is treasured for its 27.38 miles of trails that meander through canyons, prairies, and wooded creek bottoms. The sublime Dakota sandstone bluffs and craggy Horsethief Canyon decorate the park and its surrounding area presenting pristine views of what's considered some of Kansas' most stunning scenery.

*Looking for more unique opportunities near Marquette? May we recommend:*

#### **Marquette Pioneer Trail**

Harold St, Marquette

(785) 546-2205

[Website](#)

This 2.8-mile trail is suitable for hiking and biking.

#### **Mushroom Rock State Park\***

Ave K, Marquette

(785) 546-2565

[Website](#)

The smallest, but one of the most unique, state parks in Kansas. The park is only 5 acres but boasts some of the most unusual rock formations anywhere.

#### **Prairie Trail Scenic Byway**

[Website](#)

Experience Swedish culture and natural Kansas on this 56-mile route through McPherson and Ellsworth Counties.

## **Sylvan Grove**

### **5. Wilson State Park**

This 945-acre park is tucked away in the center of the Smoky Hills and is well attended for the scenery its location affords. Hiking trails offer unrivaled views of native Kansas prairie and the Wilson Reservoir, which features a rugged shoreline punctuated by scenic cliffs and rocky outcrops.

*Looking for more unique opportunities near Sylvan Grove? May we recommend:*

#### **Post Rock Scenic Byway\***

[Website](#)

Over the Smoky Hills of weathered bedrock, the Post Rock Scenic Byway winds through fields, pastures and prairie.

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### **Switchgrass Mountain Bike Trail**

#3 State Park Road, Sylvan Grove

(785) 623-8919

[Website](#)

Named an "Epic Trail" by the International Mountain Bicycling Association, this single-track mountain bike trail features 22 miles along scenic red sandstone rock formations.

## **Great Bend**

### **6. Cheyenne Bottoms\***

Cheyenne Bottoms is a complex of marshy basins in a 41,000-acre lowland area containing the largest system of wetlands in Kansas and is the richest wetland feeding grounds in the central flyway. Some 320 species of birds frequent Cheyenne Bottoms, including the Bald Eagle, Whooping Crane, Peregrine Falcon, Least Tern and Piping Plover.

*Looking for more unique opportunities near Great Bend? May we recommend:*

### **Arkansas River Hike & Bike Trail**

South Washington St, Great Bend

(620) 793-4111

[Website](#)

This hike/bike trail is about 6 miles long and is along the Arkansas River. Great for wildlife viewing while you exercise.

### **Kansas Wetlands Education Center**

592 NE K-156 Hwy, Great Bend

(620) 566-1456

[Website](#)

Discover the magnificence of the wetlands and the animals and plants living there.

### **Quivira National Wildlife Refuge\***

1434 NE 80<sup>th</sup> St, Stafford

(620) 486-2393

[Website](#)

Quivira has 22,135 acres to explore, including several miles of maintained hiking trails. Over 300 species of birds have been observed on the Refuge.

### **Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway**

[Website](#)

This 77-mile Byway connects two of the world's most significant natural wetlands.

## **Ellis**

### **7. Cedar Bluff State Park**

More than 14,000 acres of water and wildlife area make Cedar Bluff State Park an excellent destination for campers, hunters, anglers and year-round explorers. And, they don't call it Cedar Bluff for nothing! For a stunning view of the area, drive to the top of the 150-foot tall, cedar-covered limestone bluffs on the south side of the lake.

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*Looking for more unique opportunities near Ellis? May we recommend:*

**Castle Rock**

K Road, Quinter  
(785) 754-3538

[Website](#)

See what was deposited at the bottom of a great inland sea that covered most of North America during the later part of the Cretaceous Period, about 80 million years ago.

**Smoky Valley Scenic Byway**

[Website](#)

Named for their hazy, blue appearance at sunrise and sunset, the Smoky Hills divide the more easterly mixed-grass prairie from the shortgrass prairie of the Western Great Plains.

**Threshing Machine Canyon**

32001 147 Hwy, Ellis  
(785) 726-3212

[Website](#)

Site of a Native American attack on a wagon train bearing a threshing machine. You will find carvings dating back to the mid-1800s.

**Scott City**

**8. Scott State Park\***

Named to National Geographic's list of the country's 50 must-see state parks, this aptly named "stunning oasis" has everything you could want in a park. Spanning 1,020 acres, the natural features include wooded canyons, rugged bluffs and fresh springs. Lake Scott is large enough to accommodate boating and fishing and the extensive trail system allows horseback riding. With more than 26 archeological sites in the area, the remarkable features are more than just aesthetically pleasing.

*Looking for more unique opportunities near Scott City? May we recommend:*

**Monument Rocks\***

Jayhawk Rd, Oakley  
(785) 671-1000

[Website](#)

At a distance they maintain a stately elegance as they tower above the plains over 100 feet into the air. Silent...still...they bear a testimony to the ancient past of the inland sea that once covered them in water.

**Punished Woman's Fork/Battle Canyon**

Hwy 95, Scott City  
(620) 872-59125

[Website](#)

Travel to the place where the last Indian battle in Kansas was fought. Rifle pits the Cheyenne strategically positioned are still visible on the hilltops.

**Western Vistas Historic Byway**

[Website](#)

Visit a rugged landscape on a culturally and visually fascinating route through western Kansas.

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