

COUNTY	CONTACT
<b>1</b> <i>Washington</i>	Washington County Tourism 214 C St, Washington, KS 66968 washingtoncountyks.gov
<b>2</b> <i>Marshall</i>	Marshall County Visitors Center 101 North 10th St, PO Box 16, Marysville, KS 66508 marshallcoks.com
<b>3</b> <i>Clay</i>	Clay Center Area Chamber of Commerce 517 Court, Clay Center, KS 67432 claycenterkansas.org
<b>4</b> <i>Riley</i>	Visit Manhattan CVB 501 Poyntz, Manhattan, KS 66502 visitmanhattanks.org
<b>5</b> <i>Pottawatomie</i>	Pottawatomie Co Eco Devo Corp 1004 Lincoln, Wamego, KS 66547 ecodevo.com
<b>6</b> <i>Jackson</i>	Holton Jackson Co Chamber of Commerce 118 East 5th St, Suite 1, Holton, KS 66436 chamber@exploreholton.com
<b>7</b> <i>Dickinson</i>	Abilene CVB 201 NW 2nd, Abilene, KS 67410 abilenekansas.org
<b>8</b> <i>Geary</i>	Junction City/Geary Co CVB 222 West 6th St., Junction City, KS 66441 junctioncity.org
<b>9</b> <i>Wabaunsee</i>	Wabaunsee Co Eco Devo 226 Missouri Ave PO Box 5, Alma, KS 66401 wabaunsee.com
<b>10</b> <i>Shawnee</i>	Visit Topeka 120 S E 6th Ave #110, Topeka, KS 66603 visittopeka.com
<b>11</b> <i>Morris</i>	Council Grove/Morris Co Chamber 207 W Main, Council Grove, KS 66846 councilgrove.com
<b>12</b> <i>Marion</i>	Marion Co Eco Dev 230 E Main, Marion, KS 66861 growmarioncounty.com
<b>13</b> <i>Chase</i>	Chase County Chamber 318 Broadway, Cottonwood Falls, KS 66845 chasecountychamber.org
<b>14</b> <i>Lyon</i>	Emporia CVB 719 Commercial St., Emporia, KS 66801 visitemporia.com
<b>15</b> <i>Harvey</i>	Newton CVB 201 E Sixth St., Newton, KS 67114 newtonchamberks.org
<b>16</b> <i>Sedgwick</i>	Visit Wichita 350 West Douglas Ave., Wichita, KS 67202 visitwichita.com
<b>17</b> <i>Butler</i>	El Dorado Chamber of Commerce 201 East Central, El Dorado, KS 67402 eldoradochamber.com
<b>18</b> <i>Greenwood</i>	Eureka Chamber of Commerce 309 N Oak St., Eureka, KS 67405
<b>19</b> <i>Woodson</i>	Woodson Co Chamber of Com 110 N Main, Yates Center, KS 66738 woodsoncountychamber.com
<b>20</b> <i>Elk</i>	Moline Chamber of Commerce 124 Main Street, Moline KS 67353 Elkcountyks.org
<b>21</b> <i>Cowley</i>	Winfield Convention and Tourism 123 E 9th Avenue, Winfield, KS 67156 VisitWinfield.com
<b>22</b> <i>Chautauqua</i>	City of Sedan 111 East Cherokee St., Sedan, KS 67361 cityofsedan.com

# Like No Other Place On Earth

By Jim Hoy  
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Passed very ruff flint hills. My feet blistered and very sore. I stood on a hill and in one view below me saw buffalo, elk, deer, cabrie [pronghorn antelope] and panthers. Zebulon Pike, writing in his journal on 12 September 1806, after crossing somewhere between present day Bazaar and Cedar Point.

Beginning near the Nebraska border in Marshall and Washington Counties, the Flint Hills of Kansas extend South into Oklahoma, where they are called the Osage Hills. Not only is this area, sometimes referred to as the Bluestem Grazing Region, renowned throughout cattle country for its ability to pack pounds on stocker cattle, it is also the last remnant of a tallgrass prairie that once ranged from Canada to Texas, from western Ohio to central Kansas. Only about five percent of the original 100,000,000 acres of this prairie survives, and almost all of that is in the Flint Hills.

In addition to flint the two other types of rock found in abundance here are shale and limestone. There was even an attempt earlier on to call them the Limestone Hills or the Bluestem-Limestone Hills. Thankfully neither name caught on, for Flint Hills is a much more colorful appellation than either of those. Because a tallgrass prairie requires good rainfall, which is also a prerequisite for crop agriculture, the rest of America’s tallgrass prairie can now be seen in the rich farmland of Illinois and Iowa, where eons upon eons of the passing seasons have turned that grass into the deep rich soil that farmers love.

Dozens of different grasses can be found in the Flint Hills, but the four major species are Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indian Grass, and Switch Grass. During the late spring and continuing through mid to late summer, these grasses, whose roots can extend fifteen feet into the ground, take energy from the sun and transform it into protein in the leaves. Not only that, but limestone is a soluble rock and those long roots growing down around that stone carry the mineral to their leaves in the form of calcium. Steers grazing on Flint Hills bluestem are thus taking in both protein and calcium. Calcium makes their bones grow, and the bigger the skeletal structure, the more meat can be hung on it.



This combination of protein and calcium explains why young cattle turned into Flint Hills pastures in the spring will gain from two to well over three pounds of weight per day eating nothing but grass. The grass. Grass is key to successful ranching in the Flint Hills. A good rancher raises grass, not cattle. A ten-thousand-acre Flint Hills ranch can handle as many cattle as a hundred-thousand-acre ranch in West Texas or a million acres in the high desert of Nevada.

Long before white settlers arrived in Kansas Territory in 1854, the native peoples here, and throughout the Great Plains, had burned the prairie. One of the reasons for this aboriginal burning was the same as the reason today’s ranchers burn: bison were attracted to the fresh green grass of a newly burned prairie just as cattle are.

Interestingly, as strong opposition to annual burning increased from the time of settlement through mid-twentieth century from both the general public and among range scientists, the practice effectively ended everywhere in the Great Plains except in the Flint Hills. Here, despite advice against it, farmers and ranchers continued to burn.

Clovis spear points have been found in the Flint Hills, which means that humans have been here for 12,000 or more years. In historic times the Kanza Indian tribe occupied the northern part of the Flint Hills, while the Osage were active in the southern part. The modern history of the Flint Hills can be divided into three eras, based upon how cattle have been brought into the pastures here: the Open-range, Trail-drive Era, from the opening of the Kansas Territory in 1854 to approximately 1890; the Railroad Era, from around 1890 to the later 1960s; and the Trucking Era, from about the end of the 1960s to the present.

Artist and photographers have discovered the beauty of the Flint Hills. That beauty is subtle, not spectacular, calming, not exciting. It doesn’t so much overwhelm viewers as lead them into quiet contemplation and a sense of calm and oneness with the expanse of grass and sky. National Geographic photographer Jim Richardson, who published a pictorial feature in that magazine a few years back, compares the green of the Flint Hills to the emerald hues of Ireland.

We here in the Flint Hills do love grass, for we live in the largest expanse of tallgrass prairie existing anywhere in the world.





# *Flint Hills Visitor Guide*

