



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Tallgrass Prairie
National Preserve

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Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve News Release

August 26, 2015

For Immediate Release

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Now is a Great Time to Come Visit the Preserve



Now that some upgrades and repairs have been completed inside the historic Spring Hill Ranch house and on the bus tour road, this is a great time to give Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve another look. All are welcome to come out to the preserve and board one of the prairie bus tours, take a guided house tour, or experience the natural and cultural resources on your own via self-guiding tour maps and cell phone tours.

Now that the tour bus road has been repaired, visitors have the opportunity to enjoy the sweeping views and endless sky of the tallgrass prairie from the air-conditioned comfort of the preserve's 22-passenger, wheelchair accessible bus. During the approximate 6.4-mile bus tour, park rangers will discuss the prairie's intricate system of plants and animals, the geology that formed the Flint Hills, American Indians,

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bison, and the legacy of ranching. This daily ninety-minute prairie bus tour is given at 11 a.m. Monday through Friday and at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, running through October 25, 2015. A minimum of two passengers is required per bus trip. Advance reservations are recommended, but arrangements can be made on the day of the visit if space is available. Call 620-273-8494 (hit 0) to make your reservation. Rain or wet road conditions will cancel the tour. Bus tours and all activities are free of charge.

The historic Second Empire 1881 limestone Spring Hill Ranch house is open once again with 30-minute daily guided house tours provided at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. All levels of the house are now available for viewing with interpretive text and historic photos available throughout to explore its history.

If you prefer to visit the preserve on your own schedule, here are some options. Begin your visit at the visitor center with a 10-minute orientation film followed by viewing our new exhibits. Take a self-guiding brochure and map and guide your way through the historic buildings and nature trails. Hiking maps are available at the visitor center with additional subject specific brochures available for download via our website at <http://www.nps.gov/tapr/publications.htm>. We offer cell phone tours of the prairie and historic buildings via your own personal cell phone. The number is posted on the waysides or you may listen to the tour stops via our website at <http://www.nps.gov/tapr/learn/photosmultimedia/cell-phone-tours.htm>. All historic buildings are now open, including the Lower Fox Creek School just up the road from the visitor center.

The preserve has over 40 miles of hiking trails for you to explore the wide open spaces of the upland prairie or a riparian area in the bottomland along Fox Creek. With this year's additional moisture, the tallgrass prairie species have already reached over five feet in the upland prairie along the Scenic Overlook Trail and Two Section Trail. Take a free bus tour or hike the trails on your own to experience this phenomenon of nature. All trails are open 24/7 for you to enjoy wildlife viewing or the night sky. If hiking after dark, be sure to carry a flashlight for your safety and stay on the trails. If solitude and history are what you are looking for, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve has it all. Come "Find Your Park" at the preserve.

In celebration of the National Park Service 2016 Centennial, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve invites you to discover the meaning of national parks, how your park inspires you - both in personal connections and memorable experiences. Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is located two miles north of Strong City on Kansas State Highway 177 (the Flint Hills National Scenic Byway) and is a unique public/private partnership between the National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy. For more information, visit

the preserve's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/NPS.TallgrassPrairie> , website at www.nps.gov/tapr, email tapr_interpretation@nps.gov, or call the preserve at (620) 273-8494. To learn more about The Nature Conservancy in Kansas, visit the Conservancy's website at www.nature.org/Kansas or Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TNCKansas> .

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