



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Tallgrass Prairie
National Preserve

2480B Ks. Hwy 177
Strong City, KS 66869

620-273-8494 phone
620-273-8660 fax

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve News Release

April 18, 2014

For Immediate Release

Eric Patterson (620)-273-6034 ext. 242

Jeff Rundell (620)-273-8494 ext. 243

Let's Experience the Great Outdoors

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve invites you to experience educational activities in the great outdoors and an opportunity to participate in a Service Project on Saturday, April 26, 2014. To celebrate National Park Week, bring your family and favorite picnic lunch to the *Let's Experience the Great Outdoors* special event and join in a day of fun-filled activities designed for the whole family. In partnership with Backwoods of Wichita, a volunteer service project is planned that will spruce up the facilities that benefit all visitors. The Service Project begins at 8:00 a.m. If you get tired on the service project, take a break and join the fun educational activities and skills demonstrations throughout the day until 4:00 p.m., followed by a night hike from 9:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Please dress in clothes that are comfortable and won't be harmed in getting a little dirty. All activities are free and open to the public. RSVP is appreciated, but walk-ins are welcome. RSVP by calling 620-273-6034 x 222, Monday through Friday.

Fun family memories are often made by experiencing the great outdoors together and from learning new skills related to hiking, camping, star gazing, and just exploring the many wonders of nature. On-going demonstrations and programs will be given on a variety of topics – such as how to properly pack a backpack, what fibers constitute the best clothing for the adventure you are planning, tips on how to pick the best camp site, use of new camping technology, camp stove cooking, and much more.

The morning is filled with activities targeted for the kids, teaching the importance of recycling and the 7 Leave No Trace Outdoor Principles through a scavenger hunt and Jr. Ranger program. Kids earn a Jr. Ranger badge, patch, and certificate upon completion. Kids can have fun and create a beautiful landscape painting using soils of different colors. Finishing out the morning is

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

a children’s workshop called, Poets of the Air, where kids learn about birds and flight dynamics through making and flying paper airplanes. All materials are supplied. Appropriate clothing for painting or getting dirty is advisable.

In the afternoon, take a hike with a ranger and learn about the natural and cultural resources of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem. There is both a short and long hike option.

The prairie is also the perfect place to learn about the night sky. Begin by attending our indoor star program at 2:30 p.m. Learn some of the constellations and then put that knowledge to the test during the evening night hike from 9:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Complete the Junior Ranger Night Explorer booklet for a free patch.

Between the day activities and night hike, take a break and explore the communities of Strong City and Cottonwood Falls. There are several great places to eat, shop, and stay overnight. Want to camp? Try the Chase State Lake or Camp Wood. For a full listing of area services, inquire with Chase County Chamber of Commerce at 620-273-8469 or go to their website at <http://chasecountychamber.org/>.

Do you want to help make a difference in your national park? Be a volunteer and join the staff and Backwoods of Wichita in a National Park Week Service Project. This is the first of what may grow into a regular event for volunteers. There may be a variety of service projects to choose from, but the priority project is painting -- the metal pipe fence and trailhead information kiosks. An RSVP is helpful to gauge the amount of supplies needed for everyone to participate.

Schedule of Events for Let’s Experience the Great Outdoors – April 26, 2014

8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Volunteer Service Projects – Assist preserve staff with painting projects or weeding/ ground preparation for the historic garden. Please bring your own gloves if possible.
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Learn camping skills. On-going camping equipment demonstrations on a variety of topics throughout the day.
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Junior Ranger and Leave No Trace Program. Kids complete 5 activities of the Jr. Ranger booklet and the Leave No Trace Scavenger Hunt sheet for a badge and patch. Ranger also talks about the importance of recycling for the environment and leaving no trace.
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Painting With Soils art program – Kids use different colored soils to create a landscape picture and learn why soils are different colors.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

11:00 a.m. – noon	Poets of the Air and Paper Airplane Workshop – Kids learn about the dynamics of flight, while making paper airplanes. A fun and educational activity.
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Short hike along the Southwind Nature Trail with a Ranger. Distance 1.5 miles
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Longer hike into the preserve – Ranger takes group on a trek into the preserve, talking about bison, birds, tallgrass prairie, fire, and much more. Weather will determine route. Distance roughly 3 miles.
2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Starry, Starry Night – Stellarium program. Learn about the stars and constellations through an inside setting and virtual technology.
9:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Night hike on the Southwind Nature Trail to the prairie overlook area. RSVP appreciated. Please bring headlamp or flashlight and good hiking shoes.

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is located two miles north of Strong City on Kansas State Highway 177 (the Flint Hills National Scenic Byway). For more information or to make group reservations, visit the preserve’s website at www.nps.gov/tapr, email tapr_interpretation@nps.gov, go to our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NPS.TallgrassPrairie> or call the Visitor Center desk at (620) 273-8494 (dial 0 to speak to a ranger).

-NPS-