

# WALKING TRAILS NEAR LAWRENCE

**Outside for a Better Inside Trail (.5 mi one way).** This new paved path goes around a lovely lake with a small island. The West trailhead starts at the 1870s stone building which was part of the Walruff Brewery where families would enjoy the facilities and children would play croquet while fathers sipped beer. North of the lake is a recreated wetlands. The trail joins the Burcham-Constance Park Trail at 2<sup>nd</sup> & Indiana St. just over the railroad tracks. The West trailhead is located where Maine Street dead-ends north of the Lawrence Memorial Hospital. The east trailhead is located at near 2<sup>nd</sup> and Indiana Sts.

**Burcham-Constance Parks Trail (1 mile one way).** Although this trail is just a couple of blocks from downtown Lawrence, it is worlds away in terms of leaving the hustle and bustle of the city behind for a lush forest along the Kaw River. Trailheads are located in Burcham Park at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Indiana Streets and Contant Park at 6<sup>th</sup> and Kentucky Streets. Many people walk or jog along the trail in the early morning before they go to work and others have lunch along the riverbank under a willow. This trail is great for those who do not wish to travel far to enjoy nature. The trail traverses through a natural floodplain forest containing huge specimens of eastern cottonwood and sandbar willow trees. An interesting “swamp” is hidden two hundred yards West of the trail. Evidence of beaver can be seen along the river and, in winter, bald eagles are often seen flying above the river near the Mass. Street bridge. Giant wild grapevines climb profusely up the cottonwoods while several varieties of mushrooms spring up in the sandy soil after spring rains. The trail is concrete. Plans are to extend it east to the Burroughs Creek Trail. It connects with the Outside for a Better Inside Trail to the west in Sandra Shaw Park.

**Lawrence Nature Park Trails (2+ mi. loops).** These natural trails traverse wooded hills on the northwest edge of the city. Part of the park is protected by a conservation easement held by the Kansas Land Trust. The treadway is packed earth. A variety of trees, such as black walnut, paw-paw, bur oak, and hackberry, are present. Located on north Folks Road. Go north on Folks Road from 6<sup>th</sup> Street until just before it turns east.

**Burroughs Creek/Haskell Trails (2.5 mi. one way).** The Burroughs Creek Trail currently starts at 11<sup>th</sup> Street west of Haskell Ave. and goes south to 23<sup>rd</sup> St. where it links up with the Haskell Rail-Trail which was the first rail-trail in Kansas, established in 1991. To visit the noted Medicine Wheel or the Haskell-Baker Wetlands take a side trail just South of the KP &L workyard and go West past the Haskell Cemetery to Perimeter Road East. Then go South until reaching a gravel road and follow it South. The trails is not recommended after sunset. The City plans to extend the Burroughs Creek Trail north to the river and downtown and the Haskell Rail-Trail south to the SLT path. ECO2 plans call for extending the trail south to the Wakarusa River and calling the trail the Two Rivers or River to River Trail. The surface is now concrete all the way to 29<sup>th</sup> St.

**Kansas River Levee Trail (11 miles).** This trail overlooks both floodplain forest and open fields along the Kansas River. There are various trailheads, including just East of the Kansas River Bridge, 8<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Ramp (North Lawrence), and Riverfront Park (West of Teepee Junction, where U.S. 40 joins U.S. 24 in North Lawrence). The eastern route to Mud Creek Access Area is about 4.5 miles one way. This is the most scenic route. Northwest from the bridge, the levee lasts about 7.5 miles. The surface is crushed rock suitable for walking and road bikes. The forest contains large specimens of eastern cottonwood, hackberry, and sandbar willows. White-tailed deer and skunks may be seen at dusk occasionally. Fox and gray squirrels and river gulls are very common. Bald eagles may also be seen in winter. Some may choose to use the levee to travel to the Kaw River Trail or the Riverfront Trails. On the East side, a loop may be made by using the streets of North Lawrence for your return. Mosquitos and gnats can be a problem in late spring to fall. However, walks in late evening or early morning can be enjoyable when insect repellent is used. There are mountain biking and hiking trails along the riverbank going east from the 8<sup>th</sup> Street boat ramp. It has been said that these are some of the best mt. biking trails in the Midwest.

**Kaw River Trail (~ 3 mi. round-trip).** Located in Riverfront Park (West of Teepee Junction, where US 40 joins US 24). Formerly a national recreation trail, this path goes along the eastern shore of the Kansas River. The forest contains large specimens of eastern cottonwood, hackberry, and sandbar willows. White-tailed deer and skunks may be seen at dusk occasionally. Fox and gray squirrels and river gulls are very common. Bald eagles may also be seen in winter. A very pleasant trail in spring and fall.

**Landon Nature Trail (37 miles).** This is perhaps the most scenic *rail-trail* in the Sunflower State. Now under development by the Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy ([www.kanzatrails.org](http://www.kanzatrails.org)), it stretches Southeast between 15<sup>th</sup> near Monroe in Topeka to Lomax, near Pomona Lake. It follows the former Missouri Pacific Railroad corridor through the village of Berryton, crosses the Wakarusa River, follows scenic Camp Creek before intersecting the Santa Fe National Historic Trail near Overbrook and passes through Michigan Valley near Pomona Lake. The Landon Nature Trail forms a segment of the American Discovery Trail, the nation's first coast-to-coast trail. It is the only trail that links both the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. The rail-trail, railbanked in 1989 by the Sunflower Recreational Trails ([www.sunflowertrails.org](http://www.sunflowertrails.org)), is a good trail to take in the summer months due to its width and surface. The trail is complete from 17<sup>th</sup> & Monroe to the Clinton Wildlife Area. At 20<sup>th</sup> Street it intersects with the Shunga Trail at Kansas' first bike roundabout. There will soon be a 230-foot covered bridge over the Wakarusa River in the wildlife area. Another open section of trail is located at Overbrook. It extends south about 1.5 miles under a tree canopy past a small lake. The trailhead is located across the road from the grain elevator on South Maple Street in Overbrook.

**Latham Trail (4.5 mi loop).** The Latham Trail provides a near-wilderness experience close to Lawrence and meanders through forest and open fields above the shore of Clinton Lake. Located in Woodridge Park on the West side of the lake. Go 3.5 miles South of Stull ( U.S. 40 West, then DG 442 West) on DG 1023 (E 250 Rd.). Then go East (left) one mile on DG 2 and then North for .5 mi. The primary trailhead is located in the southeast corner of the main parking area. The national recreation trail can be hiked in about 2.5 hours. The trail is mainly packed earth and is maintained by the Kansas Trails Council and Corps of Engineers. Chestnut oak, black walnut, red cedar, hackberry, and shagbark hickory provide shelter for many birds. The trail can be backpacked and primitive camping is permitted 100 feet away from the trail and water sources. Blue blazes on trees mark the trail. Just off the trail is a grove of fruit trees and in the middle of the park lies a hill where one can enjoy a magnificent view of the lake.

**Naismith Valley Park Trail (2+ mi. one way).** There is a surprising variety of plant and wildlife along this trail in the heart of suburbia. The paved multipurpose path on the western boundary of the park which starts just south of Dillons on 23<sup>rd</sup> St. at 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Naismith and goes to 29<sup>th</sup> Terr. The trail is maintained by Lawrence Parks and Recreation Dept. and follows the creek South from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street through both woodlands and fields. Green ash, American sycamore, wild black cherry, honey locust and shagbark hickory line the banks of the creek. Wild raspberry and riverbank grape hide cottontail rabbits and red squirrels. There is a rare green heron nest and bobwhite and cardinals are common. The trail now extends south past a small lake to 31<sup>st</sup> Street.

**Heatherwood Trail (.5 mi. one way).** This short paved path goes from just east of Heatherwood Dr. at Clinton Parkway north for one-half mile. It meanders through woods along a scenic creek. Eventually, the trail will be extended to the west campus of KU. Many families use this trail on weekends.

**Baldwin Creek Trail (1.5 miles).** This paved trail is located on north Queens Road and will link up with cross country trails at Rock Chalk Park before continuing on to the SLT Hike and Bike Path. It winds along scenic Baldwin Creek. It will eventually become part of a 22-mile trail loop around the city.

**Northshore Trail (10 miles one way).** The Northshore Trail can be classified as a superior hiking trail because of its length, scenery and proximity to Lawrence. Trailheads at Clinton Overlook area and Lake Henry (south of the Clinton Park Headquarters on a gravel road). The latter trailhead (going West) is the most scenic, but one must buy a park pass first. Hikers and mountain bicyclists alike will enjoy the rolling wooded terrain along the shores of Clinton Lake. Follow the blue blazes (the white blazes wind back and forth off the blue trail). The trail ranges from smooth, easy grades to steep climbs and rocky stream crossings. The wooded hillside helps provide protection from the elements and a sense of solitude to hikers and birdwatchers. Watch out for fast mountain bikes—to ensure your safety step out of their way. There are lovely stands of oak-hickory upland forest. Other trees include American sycamore, red cedar, black walnut, and Osage orange. Bluebirds, bald eagle, and waterfowl can be seen on occasion. There is a resident herd of deer, and gray fox, beaver, and bobcat may also be seen at dusk. The well-used, earth-packed trail is maintained by the Kansas Trails Council and Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks. Backpacking with primitive camping is permitted in all but the first mile. This trail forms a leg of the American Discovery Trail, the nation's first coast-to-coast trail. There is a Skills Loop for bicycles at the far western end of the state park just north of the boat ramp. There is a daily or annual fee for cars entering Clinton State Park.

**Perry Lake Trail (30-mile loop).** This national recreation trail, primarily maintained by the Kansas Trails Council, traverses some of the most scenic and rugged territory in the area. Much of it meanders through oak-hickory forest containing a mixture of chestnut oak, shagbark hickory, black walnut, red cedar and Osage orange trees. Colorful redbuds along with dogwood are numerous underneath the canopy of trees. Small native animals such as rabbits and fox squirrels are seen almost with every hike. White-tailed deer, wild turkey and raccoons may be seen around sundown. Four excellent trailheads are listed below.

*Little Slough Creek (2.9 mi.).* Go 12 miles North of Perry on Ferguson Rd. (FAS 328). At the bottom of the hill, turn East (right) on 94th and go about 170 yards. On the left (North) will be blue blazes and/or ribbon on trees. This is the trailhead. Park on the road's shoulder. This is perhaps the most scenic stretch of the Perry Lake Trail. It winds high above Little Slough Creek along a heavily wooded ridge. After about 1.5 miles it crosses a small stream below the dam of a lake (private) nestled in the forested hills. There is evidence of beaver in this area. This is a good place to turn around or continue on to Kiowa Rd. (Co Rd 1029) and then re-trace your steps. There may be some noise from Ferguson Road and airplanes (on a fight pattern).

*Slough Creek (5.5 mi.).* Go 7 miles North of Perry on Ferguson Rd (FAS 328) and turn off left to the Slough Creek Public Use Area. This is the main trailhead. Hike North through a scenic valley to Old Parker Place Rd. Continue on to the Table Rocks area. These rocks are large, flat limestone boulders and make excellent benches for resting or having lunch. You can exit at the east Longview Entrance road, just South of Apple Valley Farm.

*Audubon Preserve (1.3 mi.).* Go 8.5 miles North of Perry on Ferguson Rd. (FAS 328) and turn right (East) at the fire station. Go about .5 mi to the preserve located on the North side of the road. Hike either North or South along the trail. Both directions are scenic. Waterfowl may be seen along the shore if you hike North through the preserve toward Jayhawk Boy Scout Camp. Re-trace your steps.

*Old Military Road (3.8 mi.).* 12 miles North of Perry on Ferguson Rd. (FAS 328). Near the bottom of the hill, turn West (left) to the parking area for the Old Military Road Campground. There is a trailhead on the Northern end of the parking area. Hike North about 75

yards to where the trail forks. Take the fork to the West toward the Old Quarry Road. This segment of the trail is quite scenic and rugged. There may be some noise from Ferguson Road and airplanes (on a flight pattern).

**Mary's Lake Trails (1.5 mi. loop).** These trails meanders through mature stands of red cedar around Mary's Lake and through the native prairie in Lawrence Prairie Park. The trailhead is located at the nature center at 29th & Harper. The trail around Mary's Lake is paved which the paths in the prairie park are mowed paths on the native tallgrass prairie allow one to view the wildflowers (mid-June is peak) and native grasses. The 20-acre prairie contains plants uncommon to Kansas, including Michigan lily, wild camasia, and nodding lady (orchid). Bluestem tallgrass, wild indigo, and switch grass grow profusely on this never-been-plowed land. The paved trail meanders through willows and through groves of wild black cherry, Osage orange, green ash and honey locust along the East shore of Mary's Lake and . The Lawrence Prairie Park is the closest native prairie to Lawrence and provides the hiker with a nearby prairie experience. An effort is being made to connect it to the multiuse path just below the Mary's Lake dam.

**Riverfront Park Trails (4+ miles one way).** A canopy of cottonwood trees forming a riparian forest along river covers the well-worn earth-packed trail. The trailhead is located on East side of parking area for the Kaw River 8<sup>th</sup> Street boat ramp in North Lawrence. Watch out for fast mountain bikers. The hard-packed trail provides some of the best biking in the Midwest. Although hikers have the right-of-way, step out of their way to be safe. The trail goes to the Mud Creek Access Area, a former Kansas Dept. Wildlife and Parks boat access area. Unfortunately, a lovely sandbar with sand dunes has been turned into a "mudbar" with out-of-place vegetation due to a new sand dredging operation just upstream.

**Sanders Mound Trail (0.5 mi. one way).** This short paved trail takes one to panoramic Sanders Mound. Also known as Faerie Mound, Sanders Mound protrudes into Clinton Lake near the dam. The trailhead is at the Overlook at Clinton Lake. Sanders Mound is a good place to sit on the park bench provided and watch the reflection of a sunset shimmering on the water. Due to the almost constant wind, flying a kite can also be an enjoyable pursuit.

**Barber School Trail (.5 mil one way).** This path starts in Clinton State Park and meanders through tallgrass prairie to the top of the hill which overlooks Barber School (1860s stone ruins). An excellent view of the lake and surrounding lands can be had on top of the hill. It is also a good place to fly kites. There is a daily or annual fee for cars entered Clinton State Park.

**Fitch Nature Trail (1.3 mi. loop).** This tree-lined nature trail is located on KU's 590-acre Fitch Natural History Reservation. Go North 2.5 miles from U.S. 40-24 (just past the airport) on 1600 E Rd (Grant School Road). Turn right and go onto the reservation for several hundred yards. The trailhead is located next to the kiosk abutting a small parking area. The treadway is packed earth. A variety of trees, such as black walnut, paw-paw, bur oak, plains cottonwood, sycamore and hackberry are labeled. There is a resident herd of deer and eastern wood rat and fox squirrels may be seen as well. The trail was established in 1997 in honor of Dr. Henry S. Fitch, KU professor emeritus, who has worked and lived on the preserve for 50 years. Across the road is another nature reserve which has a large network of trails and a scenic overlook.

**Suzanne Ecke McColl Nature Reserve Trails.** This preserve has a large network of trails including the Roth Trail and a scenic overlook. Located across the road from the Fitch Reservation (see directions above).

**SLT Hike and Bike Path (11 Mi.).** This paved path is officially known as the South Lawrence Trafficway Hike and Bike Path, but we prefer not to give any recognition to the "Road to Nowhere" which destroyed the Baker Wetlands. There are several trailheads along the path. One of the best trailheads is located at 33<sup>rd</sup> & Kasold. There are three parking areas: just North of the trail, North a few hundred yards, and on the SE corner of 31<sup>st</sup> Kasold. Walk East and enjoy one of the more scenic portions of the path away from the roadway. Another good trailhead is located at a parking lot (under construction) at Wakarusa Dr. and 26<sup>th</sup> Street (adjacent to the Adult Soft Ball Complex and the Arboretum). Walk West to the Clinton Dam Road and the Sanders Mound Trail. The path East from Clinton Dam could become part of the American Discovery Trail. The path is being extended East from Iowa Street.

**Baker Wetlands Trails (2+ miles).** There are various trails in the 927-acre Baker Wetlands. A map is available at the Wetlands Discovery Center located one-half mile south of 31<sup>st</sup> St. on the new Michigan St. There are still 45 acres of virgin wetland meadow and a Warbler Trail located on south Haskell Ave. on the East just before the Wakarusa River Bridge. Part of the site is a National Natural Landmark and provides breeding grounds for pintails, mallards and Canada geese. There is a 1.5-mile crushed limestone trail which runs from the Discovery Center parking lot to Haskell Ave. It traverses both some of the newly recreated wetlands and the old wetlands.

**Note:** Except for wide, surfaced trails, most area trails are not recommended from March through September due to ticks, spider webs, and poison ivy. Be sure to bring sturdy shoes/boots with ankle support, water, hat, long pants and insect repellent (March-September). The Kansas Trails Council (KTC) maintains many of the trails listed herein. Check out their website (with its membership form) at <http://www.terraworld.net/kansastrails/index.html> .