

WALKING TRAILS NEAR LAWRENCE

Outside for a Better Inside Trail (0.5 mi one way). This paved path goes around a lovely lake with a small island in Sandra Shaw Park. 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. The trail joins the Burcham-Constance Park Trail at 2nd & 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 2nd and Indiana Sts. Park on the gravel parking area in Sandra Shaw Community Park. Part of the trail forms a link of the the Lawrence Loop. Not recommended after sundown.

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 2nd and Indiana Streets and Contant Park at 6th 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. Not recommended after sunset.

Lawrence Nature Park Trails (2+ mi. loops). These natural single-track trails traverse rugged, 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. Steep sections with roots and rocks. Located on north Folks Road. Go north on Folks Road from 6th Street until just before it turns east. This is the wildest nature area within the city and is increasingly popular.

Burroughs Creek/Haskell Trails (2.5 mi. one way). The Burroughs Creek Trail currently starts at 8th and Delaware Sts. and goes south to 23rd St. where it links up with the Haskell Rail-Trail which was the first rail-trail in Kansas, established in 1991. There are historical markers along the Burroughs Creek Trail. The trails are not recommended after sunset. ECO2 plans call for extending the trail south to the Wakarusa River and calling the trail the Two Rivers or River to River Trail. Both trails compose sections of the 22-mile Lawrence Loop which encircles the city and is 85% completed (2024). The surface is concrete all the way to 29th St. The Haskell Rail Trail is the more scenic of the two.

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, 8th 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 extends for 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 8th 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. Sometimes it is not very well maintained and may prematurely dead-end. If one travels north far enough one will encounter a causeway to an island in the river. It was designated a National Recreation Trail by the National Park Service but this designation was allowed to lapse. A very pleasant trail in spring and fall. Camping and picnicking are allowed on sandbars and islands since they are owned by the people of Kansas. Not recommended after sunset.

Landon Trail (38 miles). This is one of the most scenic *rail-trails* in the Sunflower State. Now under development by the Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy (www.kanzatrails.org), it stretches Southeast between 17th near Monroe in Topeka to the Flint Hills Trail east of 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. It passes by Swissvale Waterfall in northern Osage County. It is the only trail that links both the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. The rail-trail, railbanked in 1989 by the Sunflower Rail-Trails Conservancy (www.kansastrails.org), is a good trail to take in the summer months due to its width and surface. Equestrians are allowed. The trail is complete from 17th & Monroe through the Clinton

Wildlife Area to Shawnee Heights Rd., a distance of 17 miles. At 20th Street it intersects with the Shunga Trail at Kansas' first bike roundabout. Popular trailheads are at 53rd St. and Adams and at Berryton. There is a 230-foot bridge over the Wakarusa River in the wildlife area. Another open section of trail is located at Overbrook. It extends south about 6.5 miles under a tree canopy past a small lake to Michigan Valley, which is only two miles from Pomona 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. However, to access immediately a particularly scenic section of the trail which is heavily wooded, use the northern trailhead north of the restrooms. The former 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. There are also designated campsites. 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. Ticks can be a problem during warm weather months.

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 and Natural Grocers on 23rd St. at 24th Street and Naismith and goes to 29th Terr. The trail is maintained by Lawrence Parks and Recreation Dept. and follows the creek South from 23rd 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 extends south past a small lake to 31st Street. Not recommended after sunset.

Heatherwood Trail (0.5 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 through the west campus of KU to Bob Billings Parkway. Many families use this trail on weekends. Park in the church parking lot west of the creek and trailhead.

Baldwin Creek Trail (1.5 miles). This paved trail links 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 which has clear water. American sycamore and bur oak line the banks of the creek. It will eventually become part of a 22-mile Lawrence Loop around the city. Go 1.3 miles north from 6th St. on Queens Road. Park on one of the packed-earth pullouts east of the road. This trail is becoming increasingly popular.

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, Lake Henry (south of the Clinton Park Headquarters) and the boat ramp at the far west end of the state park. The Lake Henry section (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. Ticks can be a problem during warm weather months. 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 one location but restrooms and campgrounds are not far from the 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. Ticks can be a problem during warm weather months. 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 which looks a bit like an Alpine lake. 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 Sanctuary (5 mi.). Go 8.5 miles North of Perry (US 24) on Ferguson Rd. (FAS 328) and turn right (East) at the fire station. Go about .5 mi to the preserve located on the east side of the road. Park on the pull-off in front of the sign. The trailhead for the best section is about 50 feet south. You then hike West (and then South) along the trail. Re-trace your steps. You will encounter Ozark-like terrain with boulders and rugged, heavily wooded hills. After about 1.25 miles you will come to a field and can then bushwhack down the hill to the Topeka School District camp and return via a camp gravel road. It is 5 miles to the Ferguson Rd. Trailhead from the Audubon Sanctuary.

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 (south end of the parking lot). The trail around Mary's Lake is paved while the paths in the prairie park are mowed paths on the native tallgrass prairie allow one to view the wildflowers (late May 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. The Lawrence Prairie Park is the closest native prairie to Lawrence and provides the hiker with a nearby prairie experience. It connects to the multiuse path just below the Mary's Lake dam. Many take the Mary's Lake Trail around the lake to the marked dirt single track trail which takes one through the prairie back to the nature center.

Lawrence River Trail (4+ miles one way). A canopy of cottonwood trees forming a riparian forest along the Kaw River covers the sandy treadway which does get muddy. The forest contains large specimens of eastern cottonwood, hackberry, and sandbar willows. The trailhead is located on East side of parking area for the Kaw River 8th Street boat ramp in North Lawrence. Watch out for fast mountain bikers who tend not to yield to pedestrians. 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. Camping and picnicking are allowed on sandbars and islands since they are owned by the people of Kansas.

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/Bunker Hill Trail (0.5 mi. one way). This mowed path starts 1.25 miles west of the Clinton State Park headquarters 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. Wildflowers peak in late May. Native prairie plants include purple cone flower, Michigan lily, wild camasia, and nodding lady (orchid). Bluestem tallgrass, wild indigo, and switch grass grow profusely on this never-been-plowed land. The trailhead is the parking lot for an RV dump station. There is a daily (\$5.00) or annual fee for cars entering 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). Park across the road at the McColl Reserve and walk into the reserve on the gravel access road. The trailhead is located next to the kiosk abutting The treadway is packed earth. A variety of trees, such as black walnut, paw-paw, bur oak, plains cottonwood, American 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 had worked and lived on the preserve for 50 years.

Suzanne Ecke McColl Nature Reserve Trails. This preserve has a large network of trails including the Roth Trail and a scenic overlook from which one can view the Kaw Valley and Mt. Oread. A steep trail winds through the hackberry, Osage orange, and honey locust trees to the top of the hill. Located across the road from the Fitch Reservation (see directions above). At the top of the hill there is a trailhead and paved path that goes to the scenic overlook.

SLT Hike and Bike Path (11 mi.). This paved path is officially known as the South Lawrence Trafficway Hike and Bike Path. There are several trailheads along the path. One of the best trailheads is located at 33rd & Kasold. There are three parking areas: just North of the trail, North a few hundred yards, and on the SE corner of 31st 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 at Wakarusa Dr. and 26th 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. It forms a large portion of the 22-mile Lawrence Loop which is 85% complete (2024).

Flint Hills Trail (118 mi.). Not only is it a state park but it is a National Recreation Trail stretching between Osawatomie and Herington. At 118 miles, the Flint Hills Trail is the longest trail in the Sunflower State and 8th longest rail-trail in the America. The western half follows the Santa Fe Trail and forms a component of the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail. It connects to the partially completed 38-mile Landon Trail west of Pomona town and the 52-mile Prairie Spirit Trail in Ottawa. The Council Grove to Herington section of the FHT should be completed by 2031. Equestrians are allowed. The FHT has three particularly scenic sections:

Ottawa to Osawatomie (18 mi.). This section follows the Marais Des Cygnes under a tree canopy lined with high bluffs and forests. The trailhead in Ottawa is on East 7th St. From Main St. go east on 7th Street until you reach the trailhead. The trailhead in Osawatomie is at the Cole Sports Complex located at 12th & Walnut on the on the west side of town.

Bushong to Council Grove (14 mi.). This section cuts through tallgrass-covered hills in the backcountry. It crosses on a 400-foot-long bridge over scenic, clear Rock Creek. The rail-trail connects with single-track trails at the Allegawaho Heritage Park, a 168-acre park owned by the Kaw Indians lying southeast of Council Grove. Free campsites and restrooms. Council Grove's trailhead is located at Walnut & Donnon Sts. To reach the Bushong trailhead, go one mile south from US 56 on Road F.

Pomona to Vassar (13 mi.). This section passes by a wetlands and Hobo Hill and near a cave. Two miles south of Pomona is Jesse James Cave. According to legend outlaw Jesse James and his gang would use this large rock overhang as a hideout in the 1860s and 1870s. On private land, but open to public. Located 2 miles south of Pomona on Colorado Rd., and .10 mi. west. The trail passes by Quenemo Wetlands which consists of 10 acres of re-created wetlands west of K-68 north of Quenemo is now privately owned. Water in the wetlands is seasonal. The old railroad bed makes the berm to hold the water. The trail also passes by Hobo Hill where hobos would board empty box cars pulled by steam trains when they slowed down while going up the hill. There is a large rock with names carved into it.

Prairie Spirit Trail (52 mi.) In eastern Kansas this rail-trail is a 52-mile-long path through small towns, scenic prairie and occasional wildlife. The trail of hard-packed limestone runs north/south between Ottawa and Iola. There are two scenic sections:

Garnett to Scipio (5 mi.). From Lake Garnett Park in north Garnett north 4.75 miles over Pottawatomie Creek and on to Scipio Rd. There is a tree canopy for much of the way. East of the trail at Scipio is the historic stone St. Boniface Church with its lovely stained glass windows. This is a very pleasant ride or walk. Garnett is about 45 minutes south of Lawrence on US 59.

Garnett to North of Welda (5 mi.) From Crystal Lake in south Garnett 4.75 miles south to E. 1300 Rd. There is a tree canopy for much of the way. Another three miles past E. 1300 Rd. is Welda and just two miles east of the village is The Nature Conservancy's Anderson County Preserve which has 1,050 acres of tallgrass prairie (open by appointment only). Total miles from Scipio to Welda is 15 miles, which includes two miles with the Garnett city limits.

Baker Wetlands Trails (8.25 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 31st St. on 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. The eastern section of the site is a National Natural Landmark and provides breeding grounds for pintails, mallards and Canada geese. River otters have been observed. There is a boardwalk and 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. The Diagonal Trail goes southeast from the Discovery Center to the Wakarusa River and east between woodland and wet prairie to the Mink Creek Trail. There is another boardwalk on the east side of the wetlands near the river.

Black Jack Prairie Trail (0.25 mi.). This short, winding trail traverses the 16-acre Ivan Boyd Prairie and features Santa Fe Trail swales or ruts. Thousands of wagon trains traveled through this area en route to Santa Fe thereby creating the ruts. Native prairie plants include Michigan lily, purple cone flower, wild camasia, and nodding lady (orchid). Bluestem tallgrass, wild indigo, and switch grass grow profusely on this never-been-plowed land. Wildflowers peak in late May/early June. The trailhead is in Black Jack Park on US 56 which has a log cabin. The surface is primarily chat. To the west and south E. 2000 Road lies the Battle of Black Jack National Historic Landmark. This park commemorates the 1856 battle between Abolitionist forces led by Captain John Brown and pro-slavery forces led by Captain Henry Pate during Bleeding Kansas. Many historians believe this was the first battle of the Civil War. There are several trails but ticks abound in season even on mowed paths. To reach the trailhead go east on US 56 from Baldwin for 3 miles and south on E. 2000 Rd.

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>. The Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy maintains the Landon Trail and helps the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks maintains the Flint Hills Trail. Check out their website at kansatrails.org. Rev'd 6-24