

MCCOOK NEBRASKA

CAPITAL OF THE

Buffalo Commons



ACTIVITY GUIDE

www.VisitMcCook.com

THE HIGH PLAINS ARE A SPECIAL PLACE.

The people who settled here, the people who are still here, have persevered through drought, booms, busts, good times, and hard times. Back in the 1980s, when times were tough, a couple of east coast academics proposed that the entire high plains should be depopulated and given back to the buffalo. They called their idea the "Buffalo Commons." They didn't account for the fierce love that people here have for their land and communities. They didn't account for the resourcefulness of our people. So to those academics, we say that we'll still be here, proudly showing visitors the history, outdoor recreation, and rural lifestyle that make McCook such a great place.

We're proudly standing as the
**CAPITAL OF THE
BUFFALO COMMONS**

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AGRITOURISM

For birders and people who appreciate nature, the area around McCook is a special place. The rare undisturbed native sand sage prairies of southwest Nebraska attract a remarkable variety of some of North America's most interesting birds. Our region is also on one of the principal routes of the Central Migration Flyway for waterfowl's annual trip between breeding and wintering areas. Thousands of acres of publicly accessible land around the area make McCook a bird-watching destination.

Check out some of the highlights:

BARNETT PARK

According to T.J. Walker, Nebraska Game and Parks biologist and an expert birder, Barnett Park, located on Highway 83 south of McCook, is "good for water birds when it is not too busy, and the trees along the river are a good place to look for migrating warblers and other songbirds."

PRAIRIE CHICKEN DANCE TOURS

Normally elusive, Southwest Nebraska's Greater Prairie Chickens strut their stuff during mating season each spring. From late March to late April, they are booming, and birders travel to McCook from all over the world to see the spectacle. For more information and to book your tour, go to PrairieChickenDanceTours.com.



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RED WILLOW STATE RECREATION AREA

Eleven miles north of McCook, this reservoir, as well as the 3 other reservoirs in the area, often hold large concentrations of water birds, such as grebes, ducks, geese, gulls, and others with occasional rarities like red-necked grebes. With some 4,320 acres of upland area to explore, you'll want to allow extra time for Red Willow's varied habitats. As T.J. Walker writes, "The reservoir and the roads around it can take a day to bird thoroughly due to the diversity of habitats present at the reservoir." Look for burrowing owls in the prairie dog town near Spring Park. A white-faced ibis nests in the wetlands on the west side of the reservoir, and barn owls have been spotted peering out of the holes in the clay banks above the reservoir. For more information, consult NebraskaBirdingTrails.com.



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KIPLINGER RODEO/ARENA

The Kiplinger Arena is southwest Nebraska's premier heated indoor arena. Located at the Red Willow County Fairgrounds, the Kiplinger hosts rodeo, western, and equestrian events throughout the year. The arena attracts over 30,000 participants and spectators each year. If you're looking to experience a little slice of our rural heritage, just head over to the Kiplinger on most weekends and poke your head in to watch riding, roping, auctions, and other fixtures of life on the high plains.

To see what events are coming up, check the schedule at **KiplingerArena.com**.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation is woven into the fabric of western Nebraska rural communities like McCook. Out here, nature is never more than a few minutes away. Great places for camping, hunting, and fishing are found throughout McCook and Red Willow County.

If your idea of outdoor recreation is more manicured greens than tent stakes and tree stands, there are great options here for you as well. There are several great golf courses in the area, but you won't want to miss Heritage Hills in McCook.



CAMPING

Several great camping areas are close to McCook that feature both modern and rustic sites as well as picnic areas, and in some cases, bathrooms and showers. If you're looking for the perfect camping getaway, come out to the high plains; come out to the Buffalo Commons.

The following parks have campsites:

- Karrer Park – East McCook
- Red Willow SRA – North of McCook
- Medicine Creek SRA – Near Cambridge
- Swanson SRA – Trenton
- Enders SRA – Enders

RV Campgrounds:

- Red Willow County Fair Grounds
1412 West 5th Street – 308.345.4650
- Karrer Park
1546-1798 East B Street



FISHING

At the various lakes around McCook, you'll find large and smallmouth bass, white bass, northern pike, walleye, and crappie.

These prairie lakes offer you a chance to get away and cast a line whether you're looking for dinner, a trophy, or your next tall tale:

- Red Willow SRA – North of McCook
- Medicine Creek SRA – Near Cambridge
- Swanson SRA – Trenton
- Enders SRA – Enders

HUNTING

Some of the best hunting ground in the country can be found in southwest Nebraska. It doesn't matter if you're searching for deer, small game, waterfowl, or pheasants, you can find them here. Combine that with our small-town hospitality and you have the perfect destination for your next hunting trip.

Public lands that allow hunting:

- Red Willow SRA – North of McCook
- Medicine Creek SRA – Near Cambridge
- Swanson SRA – Trenton
- Enders SRA – Enders
- Frenchman WMA – Palisade
- Red Willow Diversion Dam WMA
– NW of McCook
- CRP Management Access Program



GOLF

If you love golf and haven't swung through southwest Nebraska, you are missing out. While there are several good courses in the area, Heritage Hills is the crown jewel. Manicured fairways and greens are set among an amazing landscape that features drastic elevation changes over an 18-hole course that measures out at more than 7,000 yards.

GolfMcCook.com

KELLEY CREEK DISC GOLF COURSE

The course is an 18-hole, par 54 layout that is compact and uses the available space well. There are some longish holes, but the majority are reachable from the tee. Kelley Park is full of large hills, many mature trees, some thicker tree lines, and a couple of creeks. The course is designed to take advantage of the elevation changes and the trees demand accuracy, often creating low ceilings or shaping the fairway.

The course also features concrete tees, solid Mach baskets, tee signs at each tee, kiosks with course map, each hole map, info, and scorecards & maps. The course is broken up into different areas by the roads that run through the park and you end up with a few consecutive holes with a certain character. 1-7, 14 & 18 are in the main park area, 8-10 have subtle elevation and low ceilings, 11-13 are on a major hillside, and 15-17 play in or near a wooded gully.



That challenge is pretty manageable for players with some experience. The trees do shape the fairways, but there are few instances of demanding a specific line. There is some distance required on a few holes and definitely some tricky greens with lots of roll-away potential.

Parking and Course Access:

Kelley Park is located at
E. 3rd St. and M St. in McCook.



KELLEY CREEK WALKING TRAIL

The Kelley Creek Walking Trail is a 1.5 mile paved trail that links Kelley Park to Karrer Park. The popular Kelley Park also features picnic tables, playgrounds, volleyball courts, and parking. Exercise stations have been provided along the trail, which also passes by quiet residential areas and a golf course. At the southern end of the trail, Karrer Park features restrooms, free camping facilities, and picnic areas.

Parking and Trail Access:

Kelley Park is located at
E. 3rd St. and M St. in McCook.

Karrer Park is located at
1546-1798 E B St, McCook.

BOLLES CANYON SKATE PARK

Bolles Canyon Skate Park is a concrete skate park located in Kelley Park. The park was opened in 2015 thanks to funds raised by the Build McCook a Skatepark Committee, public monies, and a grant from the Tony Hawk Foundation.

The park is open to skateboards, rollerblades, scooters, and bikes. The park features a variety of ramps and obstacles, fun size transition and street section, and a bowl.

The park is open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Users of the park are urged to use caution and wear appropriate safety gear. Children under 10 years of age should be accompanied by an adult.

Bolles Canyon Skatepark is located in Kelley Park - E 3rd St McCook, NE 69001

308.345.2022

CityOfMcCook.com



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RED WILLOW COUNTY BIRDING CHALLENGE

For birders the area in and around McCook and Red Willow County is a special place. The native sand sage prairies of southwest Nebraska attract a remarkable variety of some of North America's most interesting birds. The region is also one of the principal routes of the Central Migration Flyway for waterfowl's annual trip between breeding and wintering areas. Find any 50 bird species in Red Willow County to complete the Challenge. Some species are common and found in many places, while others are rare and may be limited to specific habitat of part of Red Willow County. All finishers will earn a commemorative patch. For more information:

visitmccook.com/redwillow-county-birding-challenge



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HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS

McCook was established in 1882 as the result of an agreement between the Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company and the Lincoln Land Company to form a new railroad center halfway between Denver and Omaha. McCook was named for Alexander McDowell McCook; General McCook served the Union for 43 years.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S SUTTON HOUSE

The Sutton House at 602 Norris Ave. is one of Wright's few homes west of the Mississippi River, and the only one in Nebraska. This architectural marvel showcases Wright's distinctive Prairie Style. This house is currently a private residence.

SENATOR GEORGE W. NORRIS STATE HISTORICAL SITE

Senator Norris referred to the modest house at 706 Norris Ave. as his own "WPA project." It has been beautifully preserved, as it was when Mrs. Norris left it in 1967. Learn about the man that has so strongly impacted all of our lives through his four decades representing Nebraska in the House and Senate, including his efforts in establishing the Tennessee Valley Authority and Rural Electrification Act.

Open for tours:

Wednesday - Friday 1 - 4:30 p.m.

Saturday 1 - 3:30 p.m.

Tours by appointment: 308.345.8484



MUSEUM OF THE HIGH PLAINS AND CARNEGIE LIBRARY

Located at 421 Norris Ave., this is where you go to learn “the rest of the story” about McCook and southwest Nebraska’s settlement; the importance of Agriculture and Railroad to our development and future; our significant political heritage in being the home to Senators and Governors; and catch a glimpse of daily life of years gone by. Notable exhibits include Frank Lloyd Wright’s house plans for a home that was never built, D.A.R. display, quilts, and the area’s role in WWII by being the location of the McCook Army Air Base, as well as the Indianola German POW camp.

The historic Carnegie Library comprises a portion of the Museum complex. Built in the style of the Spanish Colonial Revival, the library was constructed with a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, opened to the public in 1908, and served in that capacity for over 60 years. It continues to serve as a place of education with its archives of scrapbooks, yearbooks, and a wealth of genealogical resources.

Open Tuesday - Saturday 1 - 5 p.m.

308.345.3661



HERITAGE SQUARE HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

Discover McCook’s beautiful historic district on this excursion. The tour spans a 10-block area near downtown displaying a variety of

architectural styles from the late 1800s and early 1900s. Start your tour by picking up a Historical Walking Tour brochure at the Keystone Business Center or the Museum of the High Plains. Then continue on to include the boyhood home of Sen. E. Benjamin Nelson, the original YMCA building and, other historical landmarks.



BEST OF MCCOOK

Where the locals would take you to eat.



Sehnert's Bakery & Bieroc Café

312 Norris Ave. • 308.345.6500

"There is no substitute for Sehnert's". Local Treasure with baked-from-scratch goodies and lunch specials.

Coppermill Steakhouse

N Hwy 83 & Coppermill St.
308.345.2296

"Aged to Perfection" steaks highlight a varied menu, excellent service, and the largest wine selection in Southwest Nebraska.



Mac's Drive In

809 W B St. • 308.345.2420

Family owned and operated McCook tradition. Dine in or delivered by a Carhop, Mac's is a "Can't Miss" experience.

Taste of Texas

112 W 11th St. • 308.345.1611

Genuine Slow-Cooked
BBQ says it all.



BEST OF MCCOOK

Where the locals would take you to eat.

Fuller's Family Restaurant

110 Norris Ave. • 308.777.2477

Homestyle cooking served in a unique setting with an extensive Cookie Jar collection.



Loop Brewing Co.

404 W A St. • 308.345.5198

Enjoy the historic building, unique atmosphere, fresh brick oven pizza and smooth craft beer. Don't forget to check out the "Stupid Pizza" of the week.

Citta' Deli

110 West 1st St. • 308.345.1515

Citta' Deli is a very unique Italian style deli and restaurant that offers fresh salads, soups, gourmet sandwiches, variety of pasta, Italian entrées, and a selection of beer & wine



Rocket Inn Pizza

117 4th St., Indianola, NE
308.364.9906

Family oriented restaurant specializing in pizza – which has been served there for over 60 years.

LODGING GUIDE



Quality Inn & Suites

901 North Hwy. 83
308.345.7115
ChoiceHotels.com



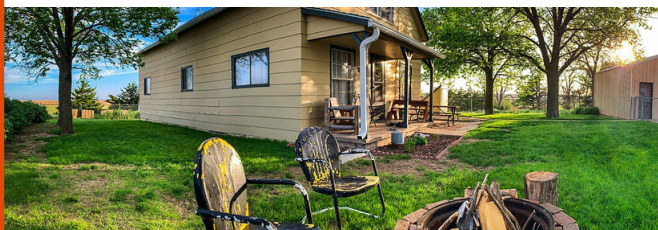
Coratel Inn & Suites

612 West B St.
308.777.2515
CoratelInn.com/mccook/



Horse Creek Inn

1 Bison Holiday Drive
888.463.3691
HorseCreekInnMcCook.com



Bobwhite Perch

72339 Drive 380
308.340.9663
BobwhitePerch.com



Cobblestone Inn

1301 N Hwy. 83
308.777.2000
StayCobblestone.com



Cedar Inn

1300 E C St.
308.345.7091
CedarInn4Less.com



Holiday Inn Express

711 North Hwy 83.
308.737.3005
IHG.com



Economy Inn

1103 E B St.
308.345.1141
MagnusonHotels.com

MAP



Historical Attractions

- 1 Frank Lloyd Wright House
- 2 Senator George W. Norris State Historical Site
- 3 Museum of the High Plains and Carnegie Library
- 4 Senator E. Ben Nelson Home
- 5 Governor Frank Morrison Home
- 6 Norris Bandshell
- 7 Historic Fox Theatre
- 8 Historic Downtown McCook

Helpful Info

- 1 Amtrak Train Depot
- 2 McCook Armed Forces Reserve Center
- 3 Cinema 3 Movie Theaters
- 4 City Auditorium
- 5 Keystone Business Center
- 6 McCook Community College
- 7 Kiplinger Arena

Lodging

- 1 Horse Creek Inn
- 2 Coratel Inn & Suites
- 3 Quality Inn & Suites
- 4 Cedar Inn
- 5 Economy Inn

Lodging

- 6 Cobblestone Inn
- 7 Holiday Inn Express

Featured Food

- 1 Sehnert's Bakery & Bieroc Café
- 2 Taste of Texas
- 3 Loop Brewing Co.
- 4 Coppermill Steakhouse
- 5 Mac's Drive In
- 6 Fuller's Family Restaurant
- 7 Citta' Deli

Recreational Activities

- 1 Elks Tennis Courts
- 2 Felling Field
- 3 Heritage Hills Golf Course
- 4 Kelley Creek Walking Trail
- 5 Kelley Park Disc Golf Course
- 6 Kelley Park Courts
- 7 Jaycee Ball Park Complex
- 8 Municipal Swimming Pool
- 9 TJ's Family Fun Center
- 10 YMCA
- 11 Bolles Canyon Skate Park

ANNUAL EVENTS

McCook offers a wide range of fun and fascinating events — from award-winning festivals to rough-stock rodeos, live music performances to downtown parades.

LIGHTHOUSE MARINA SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Great summer of music on the deck under the stars at Hugh Butler Lake, 11 miles north of McCook on Highway 83. For more information, like the Facebook page Lighthouse Marina.

Saturdays • Memorial Day to Labor Day

MNB HOT SUMMER NIGHTS

Live summer concert series in the Bandshell at Norris Park.

June-August • 308.345.4240

BUFFALO COMMONS STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

An award-winning festival featuring local and national talent, celebrating the traditional art of storytelling in spoken stories, poetry and song. Includes interactive workshops, cowboy poetry, kid's festival and live performances at the Historic Fox Theatre.

June • 800.657.2179 • BuffaloCommons.org

RED WILLOW COUNTY FAIR

Held in July, these five days of traditional county fair fun are sure to please. Animal exhibits, games, carnival rides, a live concert, tractor pull, and rodeo are among the highlights.

308.345.4650 • RedWillowCountyFair.com

OLD SETTLERS CELEBRATION

Held the second Saturday in August in Indianola, this family event includes a road race, parade, car show, kiddie carnival, craft fair, soapbox derby, horseshoes and more.

308.364.9281

HERITAGE DAYS CELEBRATION

Held the last full weekend in September, this is McCook's largest celebration. A full slate of activities for the entire family, great food, live entertainment and an impressive parade.

800.657.2179 • McCookChamber.org

MCCOOK FARM AND RANCH EXPO

Promoting the latest agricultural technology, research, and equipment with 350+ vendors at the Red Willow County Fairgrounds.

Mid November • 866.685.0989 • StarExpos.net

LIVE AT THE BIEROC

Regularly scheduled year-round shows feature live folk music and other performances by national artists in the "Listening Room" atmosphere of the Bieroc Café.

308.345.6500 • BierocCafe.com





McCOOK NEBRASKA

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★
BUFFALO COMMONS

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