

# Nebraska State Parks Centennial Lesson Plan

## Activity Title:

Park Profile

## Grade Level:

Upper elementary

Middle School

## Methods:

During this activity students will research Nebraska State Parks and narrate a tour of this state park for their classmates

## Materials:

Copy of Park Profile (page 3)

Use these three, on-line resources to complete Park Profile table:

1. For current information about Nebraska's eight State Parks-  
<http://outdoornebraska.gov/stateparks/>
2. For historic information about Nebraska's eight State Parks-  
<https://nebraskaland.unl.edu/>
3. For information about ecoregions and wildlife species-  
<http://outdoornebraska.gov/wildlifeguides/>

## State Standards:

SS 3.4.2.a; SS 4.3.1.a; SS 4.3.2.b; SS 5.3.1.a; SS 5.3.3.a

## Objectives:

Students will 1) locate a Nebraska State Park's geographical coordinates and determine the ecoregion the park is located in, 2) research and describe the physical characteristics of a state park, 3) research and describe the historical characteristics of a state park, 4) create a narrated "tour" of a specific Nebraska State Park to share with classmates.

## Background:

The Nebraska State Park system showcases the state's ecological diversity. Along the Missouri River Corridor in the northeast, Ponca State Park, and in the southeast, Indian Cave State Park, are home to bluffy oak woodlands and a river system rich in history. Just west into the tallgrass prairie, Platte River State Park and Eugene T. Mahoney State Park straddle the Platte River. North to the opposite side of the state is Niobrara State Park. Here, the Niobrara River meets the Missouri. Further west, through the breathtaking rolling Sandhills, is Smith Falls State Park, featuring waterfalls and ice age finds. Continuing even further west, Chadron State Park, Nebraska's first state park, showcases buttes, canyons and craggy outcroppings, not seen in



any other part of Nebraska. Just south, is Fort Robinson State Park, full of cowboy and wild west history of the Pine Ridge.

Nebraska State Parks are not only reservoirs for biological diversity they are also rich in history. From the historic cemetery at Indian Cave State Park to the building of our parks as part of the post Great Depression, New Deal program, Civilian Conservation Corp.

**Vocabulary:**

Ecoregion: a major ecosystem defined by distinctive geography and receiving uniform solar radiation and moisture

Coordinates: negotiate with others in order to work together effectively

**Step-By-Step Instructions:**

1. Divide students into small groups.
2. Assign each group a state park or allow each group to choose a state park from the website, <http://outdoornebraska.gov/stateparks/>.
3. Provide time for the students to use the three website resources to research their state park.
4. Students will use the 'Park Profile' table to organize their state park research.
5. After students have completed their tables, have them develop their own, state park Experience presentation.
6. Presentation format suggestions are, digital tools, oral presentation, visual presentation.

**Focus Questions:**

1. What did you learn about Nebraska State Parks?
2. What similarities and differences are there between the various state parks?
3. Why are Nebraska State Parks important?

# Park Profile

Organize your information using the following table.

What is the name of your State Park? \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Location</b>	
Ecoregion	
Coordinates	
<b>Physical Characteristics</b>	
Size of Park (acres)	
Dominant Vegetation	
Wildlife Highlights -Mammals -Birds -Insects -Amphibians and Reptiles	
Park Attractions	
<b>Historical Background</b>	
Year Park was built	

<p>Interesting Historical Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li><li>3.</li></ol>	
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