

## ARTHUR BOWRING SANDHILLS RANCH (SHP)

Located 1 ½ miles north and 2 east of Merriman in north central Nebraska, Arthur Bowring Sandhills Ranch State Historical Park preserves a working cattle ranch established at the turn of the 20th century, along with the legacy of pioneer rancher Arthur Bowring and his wife, Eve.



### THE RANCHING LEGACY

The story of the region and the role of Arthur and Eve Bowring began with the building of the Union Pacific Railroad west through Nebraska in 1867. Cattle from Texas arrived for shipment to eastern markets and to start herds to stock the empty grasslands.

For the first 10 years, the industry was confined to the Platte and Niobrara river valleys, as the Sandhills were believed to be inhospitable to man and beast. The first moves into the Sandhills were made out of necessity. After a devastating range fire in 1874, North Platte rancher John Bratt moved some of his cattle into the edges of the “hills” northwest of town.

Simultaneously, Nebraska’s most illustrious citizen, Buffalo Bill Cody, began his ranching operations on the Dismal River 65 miles into the Sandhills. By 1879, the edges of the hills were grazed, but the interior was still considered unsuitable. That winter, a severe blizzard drove thousands of cattle south from the E.S. Newman ranch east of Gordon, just a few miles from the present-day Bowring Ranch.

When weather permitted, Newman sent his cowboys into the hills hoping to find a few surviving strays. What they found were not only his cattle, but thousands of head from other ranches grazing fat and healthy on the lush meadowlands of the interior. This discovery created a boom in cattle operations, and since the Sandhills were public range, it meant free grass for all.

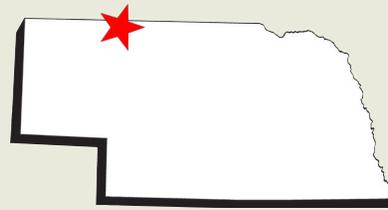
### MORE INFORMATION

A valid Nebraska Park Entry Permit is required for all vehicles entering the park. Permits can be purchased:

- At OutdoorNebraska.org
- At the park
- From Game and Parks permitting offices or permit vendors

### VISIT US ON THE WEB AT

OutdoorNebraska.org



### Arthur Bowring Sandhills Ranch (SHP)

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Any program that receives federal funding from the National Park Service, or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, marital status, national origin, age, disability or political affiliation. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, facility, or service, should contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lincoln, NE 402-471-0641, the Equal Opportunity Commission, Lincoln, NE 402-471-2024, TTY/TDD 402-471-4693; United States Fish Wildlife Service, Civil Rights Coordinator, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203; Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Mail Code 0008, Washington, D.C. 20240-0001.



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# BOWRING RANCH

## STATE HISTORICAL PARK



NEBRASKA  
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## NEBRASKA SANDHILLS

It's easy to be awestruck by the magnitude of the Nebraska Sandhills and its unspoiled natural condition. Covering 19,300 square miles in north-central Nebraska, the Sandhills Ecoregion includes the largest stabilized dune system in the Western Hemisphere and one of the largest intact native grasslands in North America. The Sandhills remain one of the last large vestiges of the Great American Plains. Visitors traveling to the Arthur Bowring Ranch will drive through this natural wonder and experience beauty as far as the eye can see.



## A CHERISHED GIFT

To preserve the 7,202-acre Barr 99 Ranch for future generations as a working ranch, one established at the beginning of Nebraska ranching history, Eve Bowring turned to the Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation and its chairman, Harold W. Andersen, to preserve the ranch as a state historical park.

## HISTORICAL PARK AND VISITOR CENTER

Arthur Bowring Sandhills Ranch State Historical Park documents the development of the cattle industry in Nebraska over the last century. The ranch house is virtually as it was at the time of Eve's death in 1985. Visitors to the Bowring Ranch can step back in time and see a working Sandhills cattle ranch with the original Hereford bloodline being kept as a historical living history museum. Visitors can tour the corrals, barns, bunkhouses and other buildings that are preserved as work places. The ranch house, outbuildings and the Eve Bowring Visitor Center contain displays devoted to the extraordinary lives and careers of Arthur and Eve Bowring, the history and geology of the Sandhills and the Nebraska cattle ranching industry.



## SPECIAL EVENTS

**Sod House Sunday:** Spend a Sunday in June at the Bowring Ranch and enjoy the Western hospitality of Sod House Sunday. Bring family and friends to enjoy a day of picnicking, old fashion games, live entertainment, food and team penning.

**Christmas at the Bowring:** Enjoy a ranch-style holiday dinner surrounded by all the beauty of the season

**Cowboy Poetry/Music Jam:** Cowboy poetry and live entertainment is held the third Sunday of January. Come hungry and show off your favorite dish at the pot luck supper.

Call the park or visit the [OutdoorNebraska.org/calendar](http://OutdoorNebraska.org/calendar) for exact dates of these fun events and a full listing of all the upcoming events at Nebraska state parks.



## CAMPING

Camping is available at nearby Cottonwood Lake State Recreation Area 30 miles south of Bowring Ranch. Cottonwood Lake is a Sandhills lake encompassing 60 acres with 180 acres of adjacent land. The area is partially shaded with primitive camping and offers power boating, picnicking, and a playground.

## CHERRY COUNTY ATTRACTIONS

- Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest
- Merritt Reservoir State Recreation Area
- Smith Falls State Park
- Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge
- Cowboy Trail

## VOLUNTEER

Do you want to make a difference? Give the Ranch a call and find out the opportunities we have to help volunteer at Bowring Ranch and Cottonwood State Recreation Area.

