

## SMITH FALLS

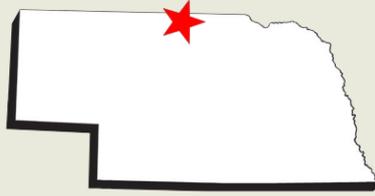
Scenic Smith Falls State Park is located 15 miles east of Valentine via Nebraska Hwy. 12. Smith Falls is Nebraska's highest waterfall.

## HISTORY

In 1896 Frederic Smith filed the first homestead patent on a parcel of land where a spring-fed creek tumbles 70 feet over a rock ledge to the Niobrara River Valley below. Smith Falls was named for him. Fred Krzyzanowski purchased the land that includes Smith Falls in 1941. He tried to accommodate swelling public interest by establishing a primitive campground and picnic area. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission recognized the biological and scenic significance of the falls and established the 250-acre state park in May 1992.

## A REMNANT OF ICE AGE NEBRASKA

The 30-mile stretch of Niobrara River in which Smith Falls is located is of great biological importance. As the last glacier retreated and Nebraska's climate became warmer and drier, spruce and birch forests that had covered the state began to die off. One exception was in the cool, wet canyons east of Valentine. To this day, remnants of Ice Age fauna and flora persist. The Niobrara River Valley represents the southernmost location in the Great Plains with native paper bark birch trees. This area is also home to an incredible diversity of animals.



### Smith Falls State Park

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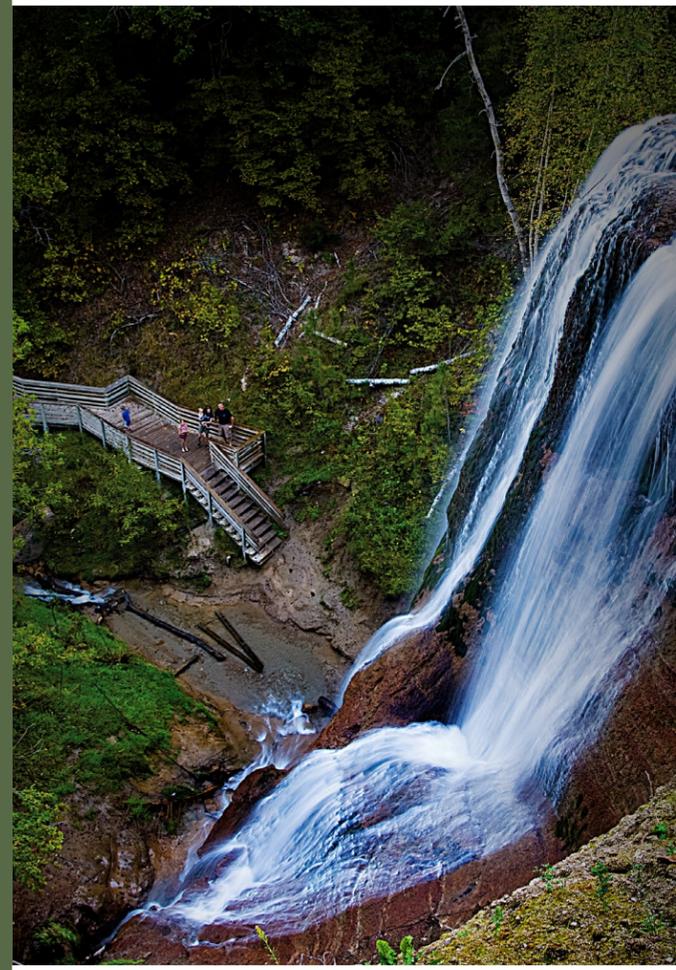
Any program that receives federal funding from the National Park Service, or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, marital status, national origin, age, disability or political affiliation. Any person who believes 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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# SMITH FALLS

## STATE PARK



NEBRASKA  
- GAME PARKS -

»OutdoorNebraska.org



The Falls

## A SCENIC RIVER

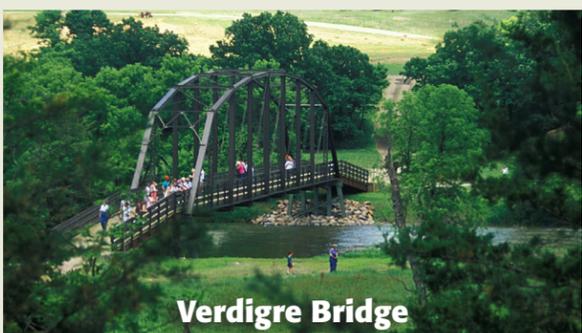
Because of the Niobrara's striking scenery, recreational use and biological significance, a 76-mile segment of the river east of Valentine was designated a National Scenic River in May 1991.

## VIEWING THE WATERFALL

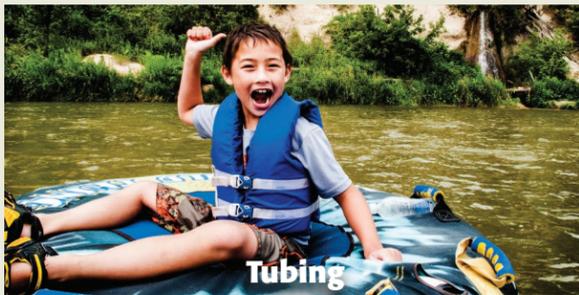
The south side of the river, where the falls are located, is maintained in a natural state. The only access to the falls is via a footbridge across the river from the north side of the park. Hiking to the falls is limited to established trails to prevent erosion and to protect rare plants.

## CAMPING

Tent camping is available along the north side of the river. The campground has picnic tables, restrooms, pay showers and a reservable group shelter. Many outfitters use the park as the take-out site for those renting canoes, kayaks or tubes, making it a convenient location to camp. Camping reservations are taken up to one year in advance of arrival.



Verdigris Bridge



Tubing

## THINGS TO DO

**Canoeing, Tubing and Kayaking** – The scenic Niobrara River is nationally acclaimed and boasts some of the best canoeing, tubing and kayaking you will find. For those who don't have their own watercraft, several outfitters in Valentine rent equipment and provide shuttle service. Customized float trips from 2-6 hours can be arranged.

**Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail** – The historic Chicago and Northwestern Railroad right-of-way, now the Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail, passes through spectacular Nebraska scenery as it travels 195 miles from Valentine east to Norfolk. This trail is great for biking, hiking and horseback riding. One of the most spectacular parts of the trail is the old train trestle that crosses the Niobrara River just outside of Valentine. It is a quarter of a mile long and towers 150 feet above the river. The parking lot to the train trestle bridge is east of Valentine 1½ miles on U.S. Hwy. 20.

**Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge** – This 19,131-acre refuge west of the park is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Bison, elk,



Camping

deer and prairie dogs can be seen along the 3.5-mile wildlife drive through the refuge. The more adventurous visitor can enjoy the Fort Niobrara Wilderness Area on foot and hike to Fort Falls.

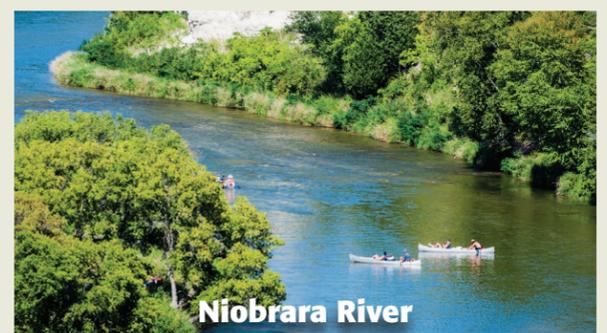
**Merritt Reservoir State Recreation Area** – Located 26 miles southwest of Valentine, this park is situated in a narrow, picturesque valley of the Snake River. The reservoir covers 2,906 surface acres and has 44 miles of shoreline. Camping, boating, fishing, water skiing, and other water-related activities are permitted.

**Fishing** – Area fishing opportunities include:

- Merritt Reservoir for panfish, walleye, large channel catfish and muskies
- Valentine National Wildlife Refuge lakes for panfish, northern pike and largemouth bass
- Long Pine Creek for trout
- Mill Pond in Valentine for panfish and largemouth bass
- Minnechaduzza Creek in the Valentine City Park for seasonally stocked rainbow trout

**Hunting** – Area hunting opportunities include:

- Borman Bridge Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Anderson Bridge WMA, Schlagel Creek WMA, Merritt Reservoir WMA and the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge in Cherry County for deer or turkey.
- Ballard's Marsh WMA in Cherry County for prairie grouse.



Niobrara River



	Water
	Camping
	Fishing
	Hiking Trails
	Main Canoe Landing
	Park Office/Information
	Picnic Area
	Picnic Shelter
	Pit Latrine
	Shower Restroom
	Cable Car Interpretive Area
	Wachiska Crossing
	Turkey Feather Falls
	Smith Falls



**Please — When Visiting the Falls**

- Stay on existing trails.
- Do not climb slopes or erosion-prone areas.
- Pack out trash and dispose of it properly.
- Open fires are prohibited. Use camp stoves or the fire rings or grills provided.
- Camping is not allowed south of the river.
- Stripping bark and picking or digging flowers and plants are prohibited.
- South (falls) side of river closes at dusk.

**SHOW RESPECT FOR NATURE!**