

Program & Activity Guide Winter 2014-2015

Neal Smith

National Wildlife Refuge



Special Events

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, January 3

8:00 am-12:00 pm

Please join us in helping collect important data about birds at Neal Smith NWR, as well as nationwide data, by participating in Audubon's annual bird count. Every year, thousands of people participate in Audubon's Christmas Bird Count. The data collected from these counts is used by scientists to study the health of bird populations.

A FREE lunch will be provided by the Friends of NSNWR.

Pre-registration is required by December 31, 2014.



Winter Photo Hike

Saturday, January 31

9:00 am - 10:30 am



Photographers of all skill levels and camera types are invited to photograph the beautiful winter prairie on a ranger-led walk. The program will begin with an overview of some things that might be seen on the winter prairie. Professionals and amateurs are welcome! All photographers will have the opportunity to exhibit their work later in the year in our art gallery. **Pre-registration is required.**

Visiting the Refuge in Winter

The Refuge has many different things to see and do in any season, and winter is no exception! Bring your family and friends and do some snowshoe hiking. Snowshoes are available for visitors to use at no cost! Hike the trails and see if you can spot birds that make the refuge their winter home.

Winter Visitor Center Hours (December 1-February 28):

Monday to Saturday, 9am-4pm; CLOSED Sundays



Photo Credit: Scott Fairbairn



For more information: (515) 994-3400 - http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal_Smith/

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Naturalist Programs

Saturday Nature Tots

Children ages 3-5 are invited to bring their favorite adult and join us as we read stories, go outside, make nature crafts, and much more! **Registration encouraged.**



Date	Time	Age	Topic
December 6	10:30 am—11:30 am	3Y to 5Y	Who's Been Here?
January 3	10:30 am—11:30 am	3Y to 5Y	Winter Birds
February 7	10:30 am—11:30 am	3Y to 5Y	Snowy Discoveries

Ranger-led Snowshoe Hikes

A ranger welcomes and leads visitors of all ages on snowshoe hikes. If there is no snow, a hike on foot will still occur. Snowshoe rental is free! **Registration encouraged.**



Date	Time	Age
December 20	2:00 pm—3:00 pm	All
January 24	2:00 pm—3:00 pm	All
February 14	2:00 pm—3:00 pm	All

Volunteer Opportunities

Second Saturday Stewardship

Interested in giving back to the environment and your community? Stewardship volunteer programs occur on the second Saturday of each month at the Refuge.

Date	Time	Age
December 13	9:00 am—12:00 pm	All
January 10	9:00 am—12:00 pm	All
February 14	9:00 am—12:00 pm	All

How to Register for All Programs!

1. Phone:

Call (515)994-3400

2. E-mail:

Megan_wandag@fws.gov



For more information: (515) 994-3400 http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal_Smith/

Self-Guided

Return to Wilderness Movie

15 minutes

Film presentation about Neal Smith NWR is shown every hour on the half hour, or upon request. No group is too small!

The Prairie

COME VISIT!

Learning Center and Visitor Center is open Monday through Saturday during winter months (Dec. 1-Feb. 28). The Visitor Center is **closed on federal holidays**. Hours are 9am-4pm, Monday—Saturday. Trails and Auto Tour are open daily from dawn to dusk.

Outdoor Scavenger Hunts

How many birds do you see? Can you identify their tracks? Borrow a copy of a seasonal scavenger hunt and ID sheets at the front desk of the Visitor Center to use while you hike.

Hiking Trails

Take a hike through the beautiful tallgrass prairie or oak savanna. Hiking trails are not maintained during the winter, but they are open. **Snowshoes are available to use for free on the trails, with a minimum 4 inches of snow.** Cross-country skiing is also permitted along firebreak trails. Brochures and maps are available at the Visitor Center.



Trail	Length	Surface	Habitat
Overlook Trail	1/2 mile	Paved— Accessible	Tallgrass Prairie
Tallgrass Trail	2 miles	Paved	Tallgrass Prairie
Oak Savanna Trail	1/2 mile	Gravel	Oak Savanna
Basswood Trail	1/2 mile	Grass	Woodland



Prairie Learning Center Exhibits

Come explore the interactive exhibits at the Prairie Learning Center! Exhibits include an underground maze, videos, drawing table, scavenger hunts, puppet theatre, and exploratory bison room.



LET'S CRUISE

Enjoy the Refuge from the comfort of your vehicle on the 4 mile Auto Tour. This is the best way to see bison or elk. Check out a narrated interpretive CD of the route for FREE at the Visitor Center.



All programs are FREE & open to the public!

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Dressing for Winter: The 3 W's

1. Wick

Wear a base layer that transfers sweat away from the body like tight fitting long underwear made of silk or other synthetic fabrics. Try to stay away from using cotton as a base layer because it tends to absorb sweat rather than release it.

2. Warm

Over the long underwear, put on an insulation layer. Fleece or wool sweaters as well as down jackets are great for staying warm. If you go outside and are still cold, add more layers of these materials to your clothing.

3. Wind/Wet

This is the outer most layer of your outfit so it needs to survive all weather conditions including wind, snow, and rain. A parka or shell jacket would be suitable for this layer. Typically, this layer is thin and has limited insulation or thermal benefits.



LET'S EXPLORE

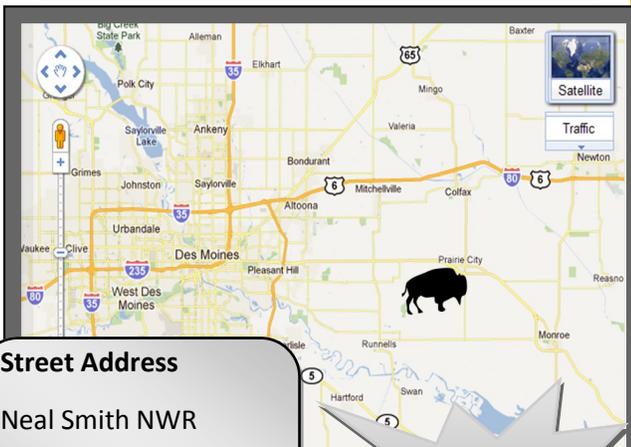
Come explore the natural wonders Neal Smith NWR has to offer! Check out snowshoes for FREE at the Visitor Center during normal business hours. Adult and child snowshoes are available.



Did you know....

The Northern cardinal has as many as 12 different songs? Few female songbirds sing, but the female cardinal does, often when sitting on the nest!

**Winter Visitor Center Hours, Dec. 1-Feb. 28:
Monday—Saturday, 9am-4pm**



Street Address

Neal Smith NWR
9981 Pacific Street
Prairie City, IA 50228

**25 miles from
Des Moines!**

DIRECTIONS TO THE REFUGE

Coming from the EAST on Interstate 80, take the Colfax exit and go south on Iowa HWY 117, about 7 miles to Prairie City. The paved entry road is located at the southwest corner of Prairie City at the Highway 163-Prairie City Interchange.

Coming from the WEST at the junction of Interstate 35 and 80, go east on Interstate 80 about 3 miles to the HWY 65 exit. Take HWY 65 south to Iowa HWY 163. At HWY 163 turn east and go about 15 miles to Prairie City. The paved entry road is located at the southwest corner of Prairie City at the Highway 163-Prairie City Interchange.



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