

# Story Ideas

## **Food and Beer -**

Loup County is home to Bootleg Brewers, a brewery nestled among the oasis of the Sandhills about 3 miles off the two-lane Highway 183. You'll get a taste of the Sandhills with ale and wheat brews like 'Cling On', 'Muddy Duck', 'Hoppy Homesteader IPA', 'Horned Hereford' and 'Naked Orange Stinger'. Signature foods can be found at the Lazy D Restaurant in Taylor and Creekside@Calamus West located on the western end of the Calamus Reservoir. Ferg's Chicken and The Zinger are popular sandwiches on the Lazy D menu as well as daily lunch & Saturday night specials. At Creekside you can always find the Farmyard Burger and Cowboy Beans on the menu along with daily lunch specials.

## **River Tanking -**

Tanking has been referred to as a Nebraska 'thing' but we think you'll enjoy drifting along the river on a summer day in a plastic stock tank made for livestock. Wooden boards for seating are added and you can attach additional tanks to each other or add some tubes to pull behind. The Calamus River has a relatively slow current and is shallow enough for all ages to enjoy. You'll enjoy the Nebraska Sandhills scenery from a new vantage point.

## **Sandhills Eco Region -**

The Nebraska Sandhills is considered to be one of three major grassland associations grouped as the tallgrass prairie. The Sandhills can be distinguished from other tallgrass and mixed grass ecoregions by a combination of physiography, soils, elevation, surface water characteristics, and natural vegetation. The irregular dunes and sandy soils of the Sandhills are so distinct within the Great Plains as to warrant elevation of the Nebraska Sandhills to its own ecoregion. Historically, fire and grazing by migratory herds of bison played a major role in shaping the landscape. Today, ranch management and conservation programs keep the Sandhills intact thanks to the efforts of the ranches and Wildlife Refuges that cover the ecoregion.

## **Taylor 'Villagers' -**

These life-size wooded figures will catch your attention as you drive through the small village of Taylor. At first glance you will wonder if you have been taken back in time to a village of another era, or if the figure you just saw was real. Created by local artist, Marah Sandoz, the wooden figures known as the Taylor 'Villagers' are increasing in population and may one day number as many as the population of Taylor.

## **Taylor Juniper -**

Allen Wilke, an outsider to the area, started noticing the unique forms of *Juniperus virginiana* growing in the area west of Taylor on his trips through the area in the 1950's when he traveled to purchase cattle for his farming operation. He was intrigued by what he noticed and kept observing the trees as he passed through. He wondered what might be causing these genetic mutations as he realized the

perfectly cone-shaped trees were neither pruned or manicured. After starting his own nursery business, Allen realized the potential this variation of tree had for midwest landscaping. He began to arrange for it to be propagated and once successful, this variation of the eastern red cedar became officially known as the 'Taylor' Juniper.

#### **Taylor Arboretum -**

The Taylor Community Arboretum sits at the Junction of Highways 91 & 183 on the west side of Highway 183 as you drive through Taylor heading north. It features over 50 varieties of trees and shrubs, including the 'Taylor' Juniper. The Arboretum was selected by the Nebraska Tourism Commission in 2018 as a Nebraska Passport site and also hosted the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum's "Summer in the Sandhills" fortieth anniversary celebration.

#### **Taylor Visitor Information Center -**

The Taylor Visitor Information Center is a restored gas station and it also sits at the Junction of Highways 91 & 183 on the east side of Highway 183. Local volunteers refinished the old gas station to it's original condition and continue to maintain it today. Inside the comfortable old station you will find memorabilia and pictures from the era when the gas station was in its prime along with maps, brochures, and information about lodging, attractions, and other points of interest in the area.

#### **Butterfly Garden -**

The Butterfly Garden is located south of the Taylor Visitor information Center and surrounds the old jalopy that draws many visitors to stop and explore. The Butterfly Garden is certified by the North American Butterfly Association and has been certified since 2011. A Butterfly Garden creates an environment for butterflies to thrive in and encourages habitat for pollinators. A few of the species of butterflies that have been sighted at the Taylor Butterfly Garden are Monarchs, Cabbage Butterflies, Painted Lady, Clouded Sulphur, and Blue Azure.

#### **Interesting Characters -**

Loup County and Taylor are no different than other destinations regarding stories about interesting local characters. However, the characters you hear about leading to the stories, can often lend itself to more interesting characters. Loup County's Sheriff George Brock was murdered by local ranchers October 16, 1940; the historic Pavilion Hotel, built in 1887, has seen many characters and businesses through it's doors over the years and is still standing today; the first county seat was temporarily situated at the once-thriving town of Kent but in a fierce battle Taylor won out over Kent, Almeria, & Clarke's Point for the county seat. The gems are found in the history of the residents in Loup County where in a county of 571 square miles, there are bound to be many more characters to learn about.