

Experience Nature on a Bike

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Experience Nature on a Bike, by Alex Duryea, Ecotourism Consultant, Nebraska Tourism Commission

A bike can take you places. Well yeah, they get you from point A to B, but I'm talking about mentally. When I'm maneuvering my Litespeed around the flowy singletrack of Lincoln's [Wilderness Park](#), I am in a different world. I am surrounded by nature.



The trusty steed waiting for me to catch my breath

My bike has taken me to so many unique places in Nebraska — it allows me to explore areas that just aren't accessible by car or would take too long to hike. Just southeast of Fremont, Neb., there's some singletrack that butts up next to the Platte River called [Calvin's Crest](#). The area is full of whitetail deer, bald eagles, and even owls. There's a section that runs right along the edge of the Platte; I like to stop there and just take it all in. I hear the wind rustling the leaves on old oak trees and listen to all the life surrounding me.



Crystal clear, spring-fed water flows down the Long Pine Creek.

Some might think that to experience ecotourism, one has to travel to some exotic country and stay in a bamboo shelter. That's ridiculous. There is so much incredible wildlife and diverse ecosystems right here in the [Great Plains](#) to explore. Ecotourism is all about letting yourself experience the nature around you. Honestly a lot of us are ecotourists and we don't even know it. I thought riding my bike around and stopping once in awhile to enjoy the natural sights and sounds around me was me just being a typical weird tree-hugging millennial, but I was ecstatic to find out that there's a word for it — ecotourism.

I think we should give the bike more credit. Sure it can be a great way to get some exercise and even have a little fun, but cycling is a becoming a viable form of ecotourism. More and more ecotourism destinations are starting to offer bicycle rentals and host cycling tours (including [Crane Trust](#)). Ecotourism

destinations are showing us how bicycles can be used to enhance the nature tourism experience. I hope others catch on to this trend and give it a shot, I really think it's a great way to get more people out there to experience all the Great Plains has to offer.



Picked up a hitchhiker on the [Cowboy Trail](#) near Norfolk.