

Geologically, the breaks are an exposure of three distinct geologic formations. The upper most strata is a thick mantle of tan to light brown loess, with a thickness approaching 100 feet in places. The second layer is composed of a thin remnant of the ash-gray Ogallala formation composed of sands and gravels partially cemented with calcium carbonate. The Ogallala Formation is Pliocene in age and is the main source of ground water in Cheyenne County. The lower formation is stratified, brown to yellowish-brown Pierre Shale of the late Cretaceous age. The thinly bedded Pierre Shale contains selenite crystals, bentonite seams and chalky layers.

### Devil's Gap

Devil's Gap is located in the extreme northwest corner of the county. It is the location from which the Indians who were camped at Cherry Creek passed through the breaks on their way to attack Old Julesburg on New Years Day, 1865.

The depths of the canyons at this point are breathtaking. The road through this point is narrow and steep. Travel on this road is discouraged during wet weather.

To reach Devil's Gap, travel north of St. Francis on K-27. A marker is placed at the turnoff, approximately 13 miles north of the K-27 and US-36 junction.

### Three Corners

Traveling on north from Devils Gap is the corner where the states of Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska meet. You may travel to that area by continuing north on the county road, turning west into private land at the red marker. Continue on the private road for 2 3/4 miles in a northwest direction following the signs. Please respect this property, we are fortunate to have a private land owner who will allow us access to his land.



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### ARIKAREE BREAKS:

On Kansas Top 70 Bucket List  
8 Wonders of Kansas Finalist  
One of 7 Wonders of KGCR Radio Listening Area



# ARIKAREE BREAKS

CHEYENNE COUNTY, KANSAS



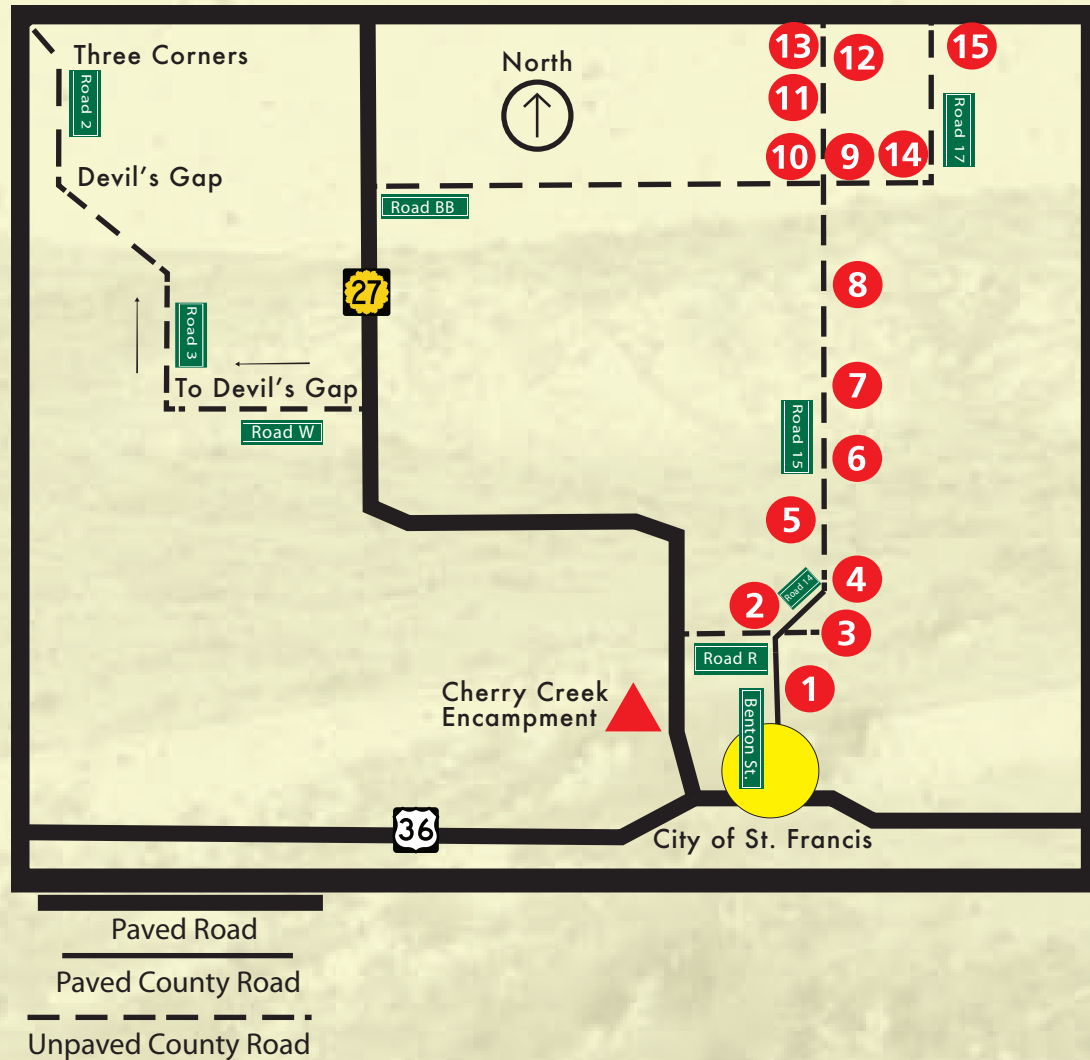
## A SELF-GUIDED DRIVING TOUR OF THE ARIKAREE BREAKS

The breaks are located on the extreme northern edge of Cheyenne County. This area of extremely rough terrain, with its deep ravines and gullies is a marked contrast to the plains generally associated with the area. The breaks were formed by wind deposited sand, silt and clay particles, called loess. After deposition, the loess has undergone spectacular processes of head cutting and side-wall cutting the advancing tributaries of the Arikaree River and the South Fork of the Republican River.

There is uncertainty about the age of the loess, possibly Holocene age, probably less than 9,000 years before present. Also, there is controversy about the source of the loess, possibly the Nebraska Sand Hills and/or the Platte River system. The Loess Breaks formed from the complex interactions involving stratigraphy, sedimentologic, erosion processes and climatic systems.

The breaks are 36 miles long and approximately two to three miles wide. They extend into Rawlins county and several miles into Colorado. There are few trees in the rough terrain. However, the pasture land has many yucca or soap weed as they are called by the natives. There are also two species of sage that grow in the breaks that grow no other place in Kansas and 16 native plants that are listed as "rare" in Kansas. The hills are covered with native grasses, excellent for cattle and wild life. Water is hard to find in some areas so area ranchers have built dams to water their livestock. Wells are often drilled many miles away from the livestock and then piped into the area. There are over 20 miles of plastic pipe lines in use.

There are several public roads through the breaks, giving visitors some outstanding viewing sites of this rugged wonder. Visitors are asked to please respect the land owners by remaining on the public roads.



Welcome to a driving tour of the Arikaree Breaks. The tour is on well maintained county roads and all roads should be passable in good weather. Please respect private property by staying on the county roads. When stopping to enjoy the view, please park at the roadside so others may pass safely.

**1** We begin our tour at the Republican River Bridge, one mile north of the Cheyenne County Courthouse. The courthouse is located at Benton and Main Street.

The Republican River divides the county nearly in half, flowing from southwest to northeast. At the bridge, pull your vehicle off on the turn-out and enjoy the quiet beauty.

**2** At this red sign, take the right hand fork of the road.

**3** G.A.R. Cemetery Turn east 1/4 mile. This cemetery was established in 1889. The east half was to be used exclusively for the burial of Grand Army of the Republic Comrades and their families. The west half was to be used for the burial of citizens and their families. No lots were to be sold; only a donation for the dead was taken. This provision was made to enable destitute Civil War veterans an honorable burial.

**4** Spring Creek This creek is the first of four spring fed creeks on this tour. Spring Creek was a popular homestead site for the county's early settlers.

**5** Stay on the main road, heading north.

**6** Plum Creek This spring fed creek has wild plums growing along its banks.

**7** Cleveland Run Creek was named after the township that it is in. It was also a popular homestead site with its running spring water.

**8** Hackberry Creek was the site of several Indian encampments. It is the longest of the creeks on this tour, starting one mile east of the Colorado border at the edge of the breaks.

**9** Turn east here to visit Horse Thief Cave. This drive is not recommended in wet weather.

**10** Continue north here to visit the breaks. Be ready for a breath taking view as the deep canyons fall away from the tabletop farm ground. Lookout Point. What a breathtaking view. The breaks offer stunning photographic possibilities, especially in the flat light of dawn and dusk.

**11** Lookout Point. What a breathtaking view. The breaks offer stunning photographic possibilities, especially in the flat light of dawn and dusk.

**12** Down the road less than 1/4 mile from Lookout Point is a parking area. Get out of your vehicle, stretch you legs and enjoy the view.

**13** Kansas-Nebraska State Line. You may continue north here, traveling to US 34, or retrace your route to St. Francis.

**14** Turn north two miles east of marker number 9 to travel down a narrow winding road to see Horse Thief Cave. This is a fair weather road only.

**15** Horse Thief Cave This is one of several caves in the breaks. Most of this cave has caved in over the years with only the entrance being left. This was a large two chamber cave used to hide stolen horses. The horses were kept in the large back chamber while the outlaws used the front chamber as their living quarters. This cave was last used in 1878.

Returning to sign post 9 and 10, turn south to return to St. Francis, or continue west to K-27. From there you can turn south, traveling 5 miles to the turn off to Devil's Gap another outstanding view of the breaks.