

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

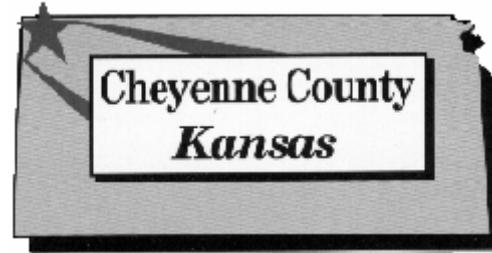
Devil's Gap is located in the extreme northwest corner of the county. It is the location from which the Indians who were camped at Cherry Creek passed through the breaks on their way to attack Old Julesburg on New Years Day, 1865.

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.



*The land of...
Open Spaces
and
Friendly Faces*

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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 from 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.

