

# Saline River (Kansas)

## Saline River

Ne Miskua<sup>[1]</sup>

Saline River near [Russell, Kansas](#)

Map of the Smoky Hill drainage basin including the Saline River

## Location

**Country** [United States](#)

**State** [Kansas](#)

## Physical characteristics

### Source confluence

- location [Sheridan County, Kansas](#)
- coordinates [39°09′38″N 100°42′50″W<sup>\[1\]</sup>](#)
- elevation 2,864 ft (873 m)

**Mouth** [Smoky Hill River](#)

- location [New Cambria, Kansas](#)
- coordinates [38°51′28″N 97°30′22″W<sup>\[1\]</sup>](#)
- elevation 1,171 ft (357 m)

**Length** 397 mi (639 km)

**Basin size** 3,419 sq mi (8,860 km<sup>2</sup>)

### Discharge

- location [USGS 06869500 at Tescott, KS<sup>\[2\]</sup>](#)
- average 214 cu ft/s (6.1 m<sup>3</sup>/s)
- minimum 0 cu ft/s (0 m<sup>3</sup>/s)
- maximum 47,600 cu ft/s (1,350 m<sup>3</sup>/s)

## Basin features

### Tributaries

- left North Fork Saline River
- right South Fork Saline River

**Watersheds** Saline-[Smoky Hill-Kansas-Missouri-Mississippi](#)

The **Saline River** is a 397-mile-long (639 km)<sup>[3]</sup> [tributary](#) of the [Smoky Hill River](#) in the central [Great Plains](#) of [North America](#). The entire river is in the [U.S. state](#) of [Kansas](#) in the northwest part of the state. The river got its name from the French translation of its [Native](#) name **Ne Miskua**. It refers to how salty the river is.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Geography

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The Saline River starts in the [High Plains](#) of northwestern [Kansas](#). The south tributary of the river rises near the [Sherman County-Thomas County](#) line. The north tributary rises in central Thomas County.<sup>[5][6][7]</sup> The [confluence](#) of the two rivers are in [Sheridan County](#) roughly 5 miles (8 km) northwest of [Grinnell, Kansas](#).<sup>[1]</sup> From this confluence, the Saline River goes east for 397 miles (639 km) through the [Smoky Hills](#) region of north-central Kansas. It joins the [Smoky Hill River](#) about 1 mile south of [New Cambria, Kansas](#) in [Saline County](#).<sup>[6][8]</sup> The Saline is slow and can't be used for transportation. It has no major tributaries. It has a [riverbed](#) of [sand](#) and [mud](#).<sup>[8][9]</sup>

The Saline River goes through these counties:

- [Thomas County, Kansas](#)
- [Sheridan County, Kansas](#)
- [Graham County, Kansas](#)
- [Trego County, Kansas](#)
- [Ellis County, Kansas](#)
- [Russell County, Kansas](#)
- [Lincoln County, Kansas](#)
- [Ottawa County, Kansas](#)
- [Saline County, Kansas](#)

## History

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The first recorded reference to the Saline River was on October 18, 1724, by [French](#) explorer [Etienne Venyard de Bourgmont](#). He wrote that he found a "small river where the water was briny."<sup>[8]</sup> Bourgmont was on his way to discuss a peace [treaty](#) with the [Padouca](#). Their "Grand Village" was on the Saline River's banks.<sup>[10][11]</sup> In 1806, an [American](#) journey led by [Zebulon Pike](#) crossed the river on its way to visit the [Pawnee](#). By 1817, the river was called the "Grand Saline."<sup>[8]</sup>

The Pawnee and the [Kansa](#), who used the area for hunting, had land along the Saline River. This was until the 1850s when American settlers started coming. The [Kansas-Nebraska Act](#) of 1854 created the [Kansas Territory](#), which included all of the Saline River. By 1873, the U.S. government had removed the Kansa to a reservation in the [Indian Territory](#) (now [Oklahoma](#)).<sup>[10]</sup>

In August 1867, [Cheyenne](#) warriors killed a group of [railroad](#) workers in [Ellis County](#). This led to a battle between the Cheyenne and [Buffalo Soldiers](#) from [Fort Hays](#). It became known as "The Battle of the Saline River."<sup>[12]</sup>

The Saline River [flooded](#) sometimes during the late 19th century. Particularly bad floods happening in 1858, 1867, and 1903.<sup>[8]</sup> In 1964, the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) dammed the river in eastern Russell County for flood control, creating Wilson Lake.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Related pages

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

- [Smoky Hill River](#)
- [Smoky Hills](#)
- [Wilson Lake \(Kansas\)](#)

## References

[[change](#) | [change source](#)]

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