

Panorama Point, NE, 5,424 ft. – May 29, 2015, HP #18: A Slight Rise on the Vast Plains

After months of hard work, in January 2015 we were able to move back into our home in Orem UT following the fire of April 2014. Notwithstanding, we still had a long “to do” list. By May I had made a dent in the list and having just installed the lawn irrigation system and laid the sod, I was at a good stopping point to take a much-needed break. As such I convinced my wife to join me on a highpointing road trip to Nebraska and the Dakotas.

May 29 Ana and I drove 500 plus miles to the southwest corner of the Nebraska panhandle where we stopped at the tristate corner of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming. A plaque there states, “corner common to Nebraska and Wyoming on the Colorado state boundary” – which seemed more correct to me then calling it a tristate corner. Additionally, the plaque states a surveyor “established this corner monument August 17, 1869 at the intersection of the forty-first parallel of north latitude with the twenty-seventh degree of west longitude (west of Washington, D.C.)” As a matter of interest, many US surveys of the 1800s were based on the Washington Meridian, which was officially abolished in favor of the Greenwich Meridian in 1912. The plaque also let us know the monument had been rehabilitated in 1981 and 1997.

Next to the plaque stands the preserved original monument; a white stone column about three feet tall, with a cadastral survey marker on top of it. The marker is fenced in protecting it from cattle. Legend has it the original monument actually missed the true mark but nevertheless became the legal official meeting point of the three states.



I had read the original marker had a new base, but it did not look very new with the paint peeling and rust showing. Nevertheless the “new” base labels the locations of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming with respect to the marker and to each other. Besides the plaque and the marker there really was nothing but prairie to see yet we found it intriguing to be able to be in three US states simultaneously.

From the tristate marker it is only a few miles to the highest natural point in Nebraska. However, the highpoint does not stand out and as such many have found it challenging to find. The entire area is mostly flat ranch land, with very few people around. In fact, the highpoint is privately owned and located on a Bison Ranch.

Our directions proved to be good. As such we had no trouble finding the correct gravel road where a large sign at the ranch entrance states, “Welcome to High Point Bison” and asks visitors to pay a highpoint entry fee. Attached to the bottom of the large “Welcome” sign we noticed a much smaller one declaring ranging bison reside in the area and warning they can be aggressive toward humans.

From the signs we traveled approximately a mile on another gravel/dirt road soon reaching the over one-mile-high top of Nebraska which is at best a slight rise on the vast plains. A monument in the middle of a field marks the highpoint. Without a monument we never would have recognized the spot as a highpoint. Nevertheless, the feeling of reaching a destination and the knowledge of being at the highest point of a state felt like an accomplishment.

The highpoint monument is a granite obelisk standing four feet tall supported on a concrete base. To us it sort of seemed out of place, yet more at home than the black painted piano like metal bench located next to it. To prevent the buffalo from rubbing up against the monument it is enclosed behind a handrail. The handrail made a nice place for me to climb up on for a triumphant highpoint pose with my arms extended toward the clouds above. Inside the metal bench we located the summit logbook, adding our names to it. To the right of both the monument and the metal bench the Highpointers club has placed one of their benches.



Despite the cloud-filled sky, we enjoyed extensive views of the prairie in all directions. Some claim on a clear day, with a keen eye, the distant Rocky Mountains can be seen, but that was not the case this day. As is common on the prairies the wind was blowing from the west. We did not see even a single bison roaming around.

From Panorama Point we drove north to the Black Hills where we spent the night at a motel in Hot Springs SD. Lots of miles this day, about 700, with another US state highpoint checked off.

Photo Album: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/Y2RyGkFdcMScbVWg6>