Top 10 Favorite Activities at the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge

Hey, kids! At Neal Smith NWR, there are so many exciting activities for you to do that you will never be bored! Are you wondering what they are? Great, because we wrote them down to share with you! Here is our **Top 10 Favorite Activities** at the Neal Smith NWR Refuge: ….. (Drum roll, please)….

1. **Check out a "Let's Go Outside" backpack:** It contains fun items like bug jars, binoculars, and magnifying lens. Just ask our volunteer at the front desk and you can use it during your visit for FREE!
2. **Watch the clouds go by:** Lay down on your back in the tall, tall grasses and look up the clouds. Describe their shapes and watch their shadows move across the prairie.
3. **Search for scents:** Act like a prairie animal and search for delicious scents on the prairie! Smell flowers, leaves and seeds. Can you find a plant that smells like mint, lemon, or sweet roses?
4. **Go on a buffalo hunt:** Have a special adult friend drive you around the 4 mile auto tour. Look for bison and elk and count how many you can find. What were they doing? Are they male or female? Did you see any babies?
5. **Play in the dirt:** Dig up prairie soil and find wiggly worms, black beetles, and daddy long legs. How does the soil feel? Is it wet or dry, or hard or soft? What color is it? How does it smell?
6. **Live underground:** Experience what it would be like to be a burrowing animal on the prairie by walking through our exhibits. Watch out for the giant badger that may stick its head into your home!
7. **Run or roll down a hill:** There are lots of hills on our prairie that are really fun to run down. The best one is just right outside our Visitor Center. What is it like at the top of the hill? Do you feel like you are as high as the birds flying around you? Can you see really far? How does it feel to charge down it? Was it scary or fun or exciting? What was it like at the bottom?
8. **Listen and sing a prairie song:** Sit down in the grass for 3 minutes. Do not make a peep. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. Are crickets chirping? Frogs calling? Birds singing? Wind blowing? After listening, join the choir. What is your sound? What song does the animal inside of you want to sing?
9. **Petting zoo:** No, we don't have animals for you to pet- prairie animals are wild! But we do have plants that need some love! Walk through the prairie and let your fingers dangle at your side. Feel all the different plants around you. Can you find one that is soft enough to sleep on? What about one that feels as rough as sand paper? Visit our oak savanna and touch the bark of trees. See if you can find a tree to hug.
10. **Share your discoveries:** Tell us what you found! We want to know! And let your friends know about the prairie by telling them a story, writing down your discoveries, or drawing a picture. In fact, we have a drawing table in our Visitor Center, with colored pencils and paper, so you will be able to write and draw a picture for us. We want to know exactly what you found just minutes after you discovered it!