



TAIL WAVE

away from the obstruction is a tailrace. On irrigated fields, the excess water that runs off into low spots or holding ponds is also called tail-water. SCOTT RUSSELL SANDERS

### **tail wave**

After a river plunges over the rocky debris of a rapid, it blasts out from the constriction and finishes in a series of high-momentum tail waves. The waves stand like glassy dunes, stationary in form even as the river flows through them toward stillness again. When their foamy crests roll over and slide partway down their face, like the archetypal wave in a Katsushika Hokusai woodblock print, they are sometimes known as curlers. ELLEN MELOY

### **tallgrass prairie**

The tallgrass prairie, extending from central Illinois through Iowa and Missouri into the eastern Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma—and benefited with more rainfall than the shortgrass prairie—was named after its upright bluestem, which can reach heights of six feet (switch and other shorter grasses form an intermediate layer, grama its base), causing travelers even on horseback sometimes to get lost. The drama of immigrant entry into its oceanic expanse—thus “prairie schooners,”