

## DOLLIVER STATE PARK RECREATION USE PLAN

In advance of the 100th anniversary of Iowa state parks in 2020, the Department of Natural Resources is developing plans for future recreation opportunities that are compatible with the resources of each state park.

### DOLLIVER STATE PARK - A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1917, the Iowa Legislature passed the landmark State Park Act, authorizing the new Board of Conservation to create an Iowa state park system that would begin to protect some of Iowa’s most significant and unique natural, scenic, and historic areas before they were lost forever.

The area that we now call Dolliver Memorial State Park was in the Board’s first tier of special places targeted for state acquisition. The site in Webster County on the Des Moines River that locals called “Boneyard Hollow” offered tremendous natural diversity, with its beautiful wooded river bottom and uplands, great variety of plant life, towering sandstone bluffs and unique copperas beds along scenic Prairie Creek, as well as evidence of hundreds of years of Native American presence. The initial 457 acre acquisition occurred in 1921. Formal dedication of Iowa’s fourth state park named in honor of the late Senator Jonathan P. Dolliver took place on June 28, 1925 at a ceremony attended by over 10,000 people. A bronze Dolliver memorial tablet by noted artist Loreda Taft was placed in the park and is still present.

During the first decade of Iowa state parks, emphasis was placed on the acquisition of such significant natural, scenic, and historic places as Dolliver. Formal outdoor recreation facilities in early state parks were typically few. This, however, began to change as increasing economic prosperity in the 1920’s created a demand for more active outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities in Iowa state parks. But, facility development lagged because of the Great Depression of 1929. However, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s

“New Deal” programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, the CCC, and the Works Progress Administration, the WPA, came onboard in 1933, the state park system experienced a great period of expansion as well as facility development.

Dolliver was fortunate in hosting both the CCC and the WPA. Two CCC camps built: two sandstone lodges, park maintenance building, north checking station and south entry portal, latrine, footbridges, stone steps and benches, trails, and the Dolliver Memorial. WPA facilities included: eight group camp cabins, a “leader’s cabin” and dining hall, and two stone family cabins near the campground.

At Dolliver, improvement efforts in recent decades have provided modern restroom and shower facilities at the campground and group camp as well as electrical service to 20 of 22 campsites. The popular but often troublesome ford on Prairie Creek was retained and an attractive bridge constructed just upstream. The CCC and WPA lodges and dining hall were the subject of major renovation, making them more “user friendly” while retaining their historic character. The boat ramp and parking area on the Des Moines River was upgraded and rip-rap added to protect the upstream shoreline. Significant trail work was done at the park as well as additional land acquisition bringing the total park acreage to 617.

### DOLLIVER STATE PARK - EXISTING FACILITIES

Existing Facilities	Quantity	Existing Facilities	Quantity
Amphitheater	1	Campground	
Lodge	2	Total Sites	23
Playground	1	Electric	21
Shelter	1	Non-electric	2
Boat Ramp	1	Cabins	
Trails	5.3 miles	Family	2
Restrooms		Camper	10
Seasonal (Flush)	2	Dining Hall	1
Year-round	2		

Table (above): Dolliver State Park’s Existing Facilities

## A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE OF DOLLIVER STATE PARK

### GOAL –

Enhance visitor outdoor recreation and education experiences by upgrading facilities and trails at Dolliver State Park. This will help to: promote visitor mental and physical health, enjoyment, and wellbeing; encourage family time and memory making; expand the availability of accessible facilities; protect natural resources for the future; and, generate economic activity in the region.

### OBJECTIVES –

#### HISTORIC STRUCTURES - MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE PARK'S HISTORIC STRUCTURES

The stone and log structures at Dolliver State Park were completed between 1933 and 1937 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the Iowa Board of Conservation. These structures are a legacy to be treasured and enrich the park visitor experience.

#### ISSUE:

- Historically significant structures require ongoing maintenance and periodic restoration efforts to preserve their integrity.

#### PROPOSALS:

- Restore the stone bridge and the gatehouse/check-in station.
- Continually monitor historic structures to identify necessary restoration efforts such as log rot replacement and tuck pointing.



Image (above): Center Lodge at Dolliver State Park

#### PARK ORIENTATION AND INTERPRETATION - INCREASE WAY-FINDING AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARK USERS

#### ISSUE:

- In a park filled with natural and cultural resources, there are prime locations where signage would provide interpretive and educational opportunities.

#### PROPOSALS:

- Construct 4-sided interpretive kiosks at the South Lodge and Center Lodge/campground area.
- Add trailhead orientation panels at Boneyard Hollow, Indian Mounds, Center Lodge, River Trail, and Butternut Picnic Area.

#### GROUP CAMP - RENOVATE, REPLACE, AND UPGRADE THIS POPULAR OVERNIGHT FACILITY

The group camp was originally constructed by the WPA from 1937 - 1938, and included a dining hall, eight group cabins, and a leader's cabin. Between 1940 and 1942, the Iowa Conservation Commission (ICC) erected two additional group cabins, giving the group camp a total of ten group cabins, one leader's cabin, and a dining hall.

#### ISSUES:

- The eight wood-framed cabins are in need of remodeling, however to do so may be cost prohibitive.
- The dining hall and shower building are dated.

#### PROPOSALS:

- Replacing the eight existing cabins is the most cost effective solution.
- Remodel the dining hall.
- Replace the shower building.
- Add playground with "nature-themed" elements near the group camp and the South Lodge.



Image (above): Existing entry portal at Dolliver State Park



Image (above): South Lodge at Dolliver State Park

## PICNIC AREAS - ENHANCE THE EXISTING PICNIC AREA FACILITIES

### ISSUES:

- Picnic areas and facilities park-wide are in need of updating.
- The Main Riverside Picnic Area is currently situated in an area prone to flooding.

### PROPOSALS:

- Butternut Picnic Area - Add a new timber-frame seasonal restroom (near the South Lodge), and a new medium-sized shelter.
- North Picnic Area - Replace the existing shelter and replace the existing year-round restroom with a seasonal restroom.
- Main Riverside Picnic Area - Relocate the existing picnic area to across the road on flood-free, "higher ground." Develop the new picnic area with new facilities including: a playground with "nature-themed" elements, small picnic shelter, year-round restroom, and short access road with ADA parking.



Image (above): New "Design Guide" picnic shelter

## PLAYGROUNDS - UPGRADE AND EXPAND PLAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PARK USERS

### ISSUE:

- Older playgrounds with traditional equipment typically provide limited, less challenging/creative, non-wheelchair accessible play environments.

### PROPOSALS:

- Replace and relocate new play equipment in the Riverside Picnic Area that includes enjoyable and challenging "nature-themed" elements such as climbing rocks, log/tree trunks, sand, vine tunnels, and tall grasses.
- Add playground with climbing rocks at the campground.
- Add playground near the group camp and South Lodge.



Image (above): "Nature-themed" play elements: climbing rocks

## FLOOD PREVENTION - STRATEGIC PLANNING TO REDUCE FUTURE FLOOD DAMAGE

Dolliver State Park occupies a portion of a valley along the Des Moines River. Prairie Creek flows east-west across the park to join it. This environment provides a relatively flat and narrow valley floor where all park facilities are situated, but also leaves these facilities and roads prone to flooding and closure.

### ISSUE:

- Dolliver State Park’s location in the river valley and the facilities associated with the park are prone to periodic flooding.

### PROPOSALS:

- Plan proactively to minimize flood damage with careful selection of locations and elevations for all new and replacement park facilities.
- Pave all parking lots prone to flooding.



Image (above): Scenic view of Des Moines River at Dolliver State Park

## RECREATION USE PLAN

Implementation of the Dolliver State Park Recreation Use Plan will help ensure that this classic Iowa state park remains a premier outdoor destination in the future. The draft plan was prepared with the input of park staff and will have review and input of current proposed park improvements from park visitors/regional stakeholders. It will be a detailed and practical blueprint for future action. All improvements will be completed with due regard for Dolliver’s unique natural resources and great scenic qualities.

The completion of a recreation use plan for each park will help determine the most effective allocation of funds on a project-by-project basis for the Iowa state park system as a whole. Dolliver State Park’s plan recommendations will be accomplished as necessary funding becomes available from ongoing sources as well as through partnering opportunities which may arise.

## DOLLIVER STATE PARK RECREATION USE PLAN PROJECT PRIORITIES

High Priority (1)	Cost Estimate
Replace (8) camper cabins - Group Camp	\$320,000
Remodel dining hall - Group Camp	TBD
Add seasonal restroom - South Lodge	\$60,000
Add (2) 4-sided interpretive kiosks	\$60,000
Add (5) orientation panels - Trailheads	\$20,000
<b>High Priority Total:</b>	<b>\$TBD</b>
<b>Medium Priority (2)</b>	
Relocate riverside playground	\$25,000
Add small shelter - Riverside Play Area	\$50,000
Add shelter - medium - Butternut Picnic Area	\$125,000
Add playground - Group Camp and South Lodge Area	\$80,000
New check-in station - Campground	\$30,000
New equipment storage building - Park Headquarters	\$110,000
Update water/electric - Park-wide	TBD
Pave flood-prone parking lots - Park-wide	TBD
<b>Medium Priority Total:</b>	<b>\$TBD</b>
<b>Low Priority (3)</b>	
Replace shower building - Group Camp	\$310,000
Replace shelter - North Picnic Area	\$160,000
Replace restroom with seasonal restroom - North Picnic Area	\$60,000
<b>Low Priority Total:</b>	<b>\$530,000</b>

Table (above): Dolliver State Park’s Project Priorities



Image (above): Fishing at Dolliver State Park

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DOLLIVER

