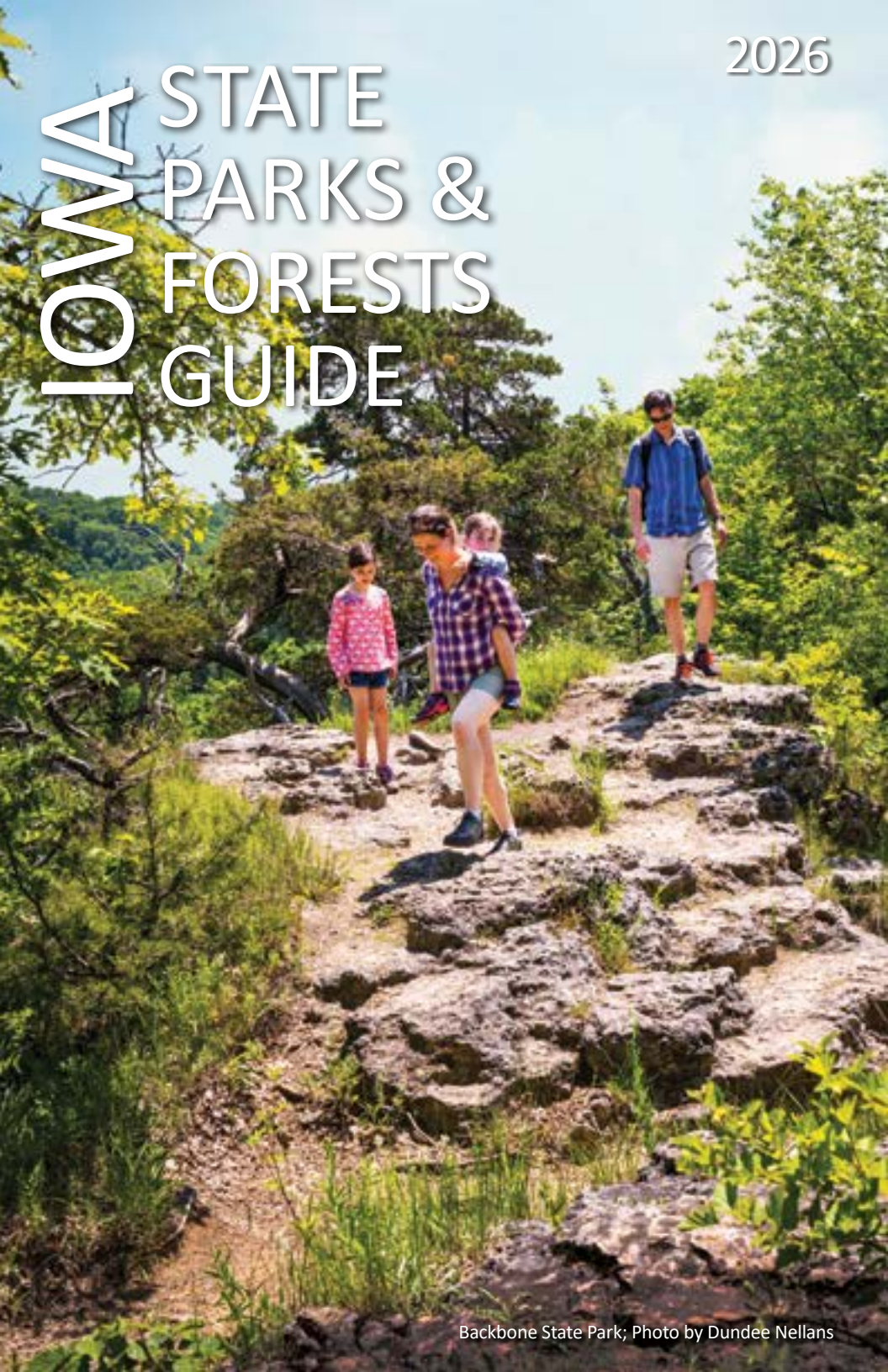


2026

IOWA STATE PARKS & FORESTS GUIDE



PLAN YOUR ADVENTURE

Ready to explore Iowa state parks and forests? Your journey starts at iowadnr.gov/stateparks. Use the site to scout locations, map your experience and secure your spot. Whether you're looking for backpacking sites or modern amenities, you'll find every park's unique features online.

RESERVATIONS— MADE SIMPLE

From outdoor getaways to family celebrations, Iowa's state parks and forests offer the perfect backdrop. Book your stay online at iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com or by calling (877) 427-2757.

CABINS & YURTS: Choose from more than 90 options, ranging from cozy, year-round cabins with full kitchens to "get-back-to-basics" rustic yurts.

Note: Summer stays typically require a **one-week minimum**, while off-season visits offer more flexibility with **two-night minimums**.

LODGES & SHELTERS: Hosting a crowd? Our **enclosed lodges** offer a touch of history alongside modern comforts like electricity, water and full kitchens. For a day-use gathering, reserve an **open-air shelter** for the perfect afternoon BBQ.

Red Haw State Park



MAKE YOUR RESERVATION TODAY!
IOWASTATEPARKS.RESERVEAMERICA.COM

Lake Darling State Park



CAMPsites: Whether you're pitching a tent or leveling an RV, we have a spot for you.

RESERVATIONS: All Iowa state park campsites can be booked through the reservation system up to **three months in advance**. Sites are available in real-time, and reservations can be made, or changed, even on the day of arrival.

THE SETUP: While every park is unique, most sites include a fire ring and picnic table. Many campgrounds also feature **full RV hook-ups**, pull-through sites and modern shower facilities. Other unique campsites include hike-in, equestrian and youth group sites.

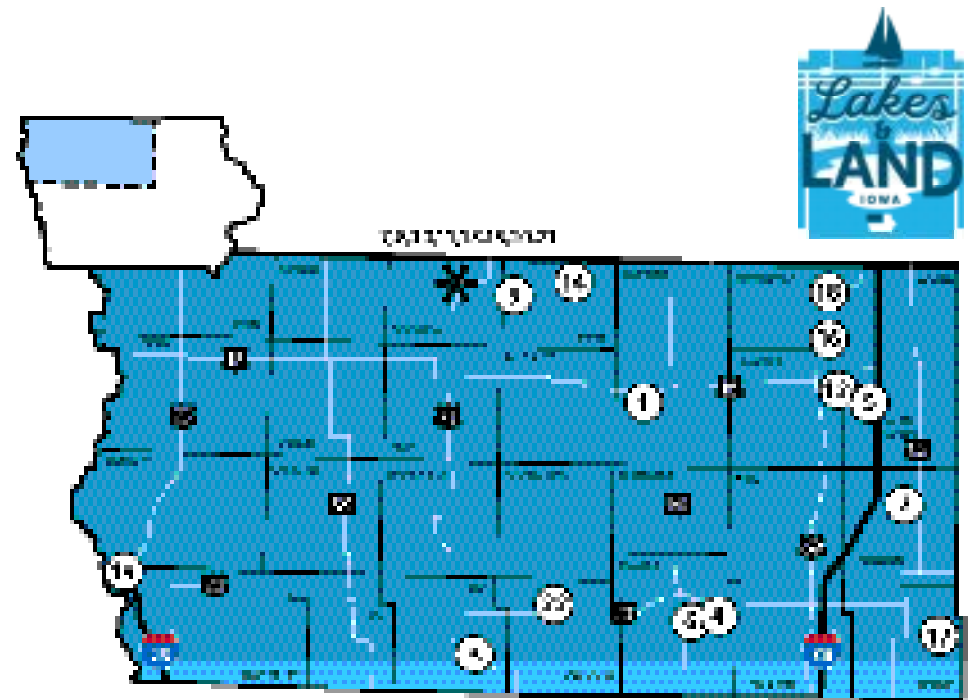
Backbone State Park



LAKES & LAND



Clear Lake State Park



Explore Iowa's Lakes and Land region, home to several state parks and recreation areas full of hidden gems and geological discoveries. Start at **Gull Point State Park** on the shore of the glacier-formed West Lake Okoboji. It is one of several state park areas in the Great Lakes region. Venture to **Clear Lake State Park** or **McIntosh Woods State Park** for a day of boating,

fishing or biking in Iowa's northern prairie region. Climb a CCC-era tower at **Pilot Knob State Park** to take in 360-degree views of Iowa countryside. End your adventure at **Brushy Creek State Recreation Area**, offering 45 miles of multi-use trails, or **Dolliver Memorial State Park**, home to a box canyon with Native American lore called Boneyard Hollow. Adventure awaits!



Pine Lake State Park



Dolliver Memorial State Park



Modern Camping
Non-modern Camping
Equestrian Camping
Hike-in Camping
Youth Camping
Full Hook-Up Sites
Cabin Rental (X) Seasonal Yurt (G) Group (S) Seasonal (Y) Year-Round
Day-Use Lodge
Open Picnic Shelters
Trails Hiking
Trails Multipurpose (B) Paved/Rock Bike (C)X-Country Skiing (S) Snowmobile (M) Mt. Bike (Y) Year-Round
Trails Equestrian (B) Swimming Beach (P) Playground
Lake Acreage (N) Natural (R) Federal Reservoir (A) Artificial
Hunting (B) Boat Rental (Designated Areas)

1	Ambrose A. Call (130 acres) Algona. 641-581-4835	●							○		●	C		P				
2	Beeds Lake (319 acres) Hampton. 641-456-2047	●			●			●	2	●	B,C		B,P	●	99A	R		
3	Black Hawk (86 acres) Lake View. 712-657-8712	●			●	1	1Y		5	●	B,C,S		B,P	●	957N	R		
4	Brushy Creek (6500 acres) Lehigh. 515-543-8298	●	●		●	50			7	●	C,M,S	●	B,P	●	690A	R	●	
5	Clear Lake (55 acres) Clear Lake. 641-357-4212	●				13		○	1	●			B,P	●	3684N			
6	Dolliver Memorial (600 acres) Lehigh. 515-359-2539	●			●			●	1	●			P	●		R		
7	Elinor Bedell (80 acres) Spirit Lake. 712-337-3211	●	●			7			1	●	B		P	●	1823N			
8	Emerson Bay & Lighthouse (12 acres) W Okoboji. 712-337-3211	●				23			1	●	B		B,P	●	3847N	R	●	
9	Fort Defiance (221 acres) Estherville. 712-337-3211	●						○	1	●		●						

LAKES & LAND

10	Gull Point (195 acres) Milford. 712-337-3211	●						○	2	●	C		B,P	●	3847N			
11	Marble Beach (64 acres) Orleans. 712-337-3211	●				66				●	B,M		B	●	4169N	R	●	
12	McIntosh Woods (62 acres) Ventura. 641-829-3847	●					1X 1X		5	●	B,C		B,P	●	3684N	R	●	
13	Mini-Wakan (20 acres) Spirit Lake. 712-337-3211							○						●	4169N	R		
14	Okamanpedan (19 acres) Dolliver. 712-337-3211								2					●	981N	R		
15	Pikes Point (15 acres) Spirit Lake. 712-337-3211								1				B,P	●	3847N			
16	Pilot Knob (528 acres) Forest City. 641-581-4835	●			●				2	●	C,M,S	●	P	●	15A			
17	Pine Lake (654 acres) Eldora. 641-858-5832	●			●	2	1Y, 3Y	○	2	○	B		B,P	●	69-50A	R		
18	Rice Lake (15 acres) Lake Mills. 641-581-4835								1					●	900N			
19	Stone (1595 acres) Sioux City. 712-255-4698	●		●	●		3S	●	3	●	C,M,S	●	P	●	3A			
20	Templar (10 acres) Spirit Lake. 712-337-3211								3					●	4169N	R		
21	Trappers Bay (57 acres) Lake Park. 712-337-3211													●	1041N			
22	Twin Lakes (15 acres) Rockwell City. 712-657-8712								3	○			B,P	●	569N	R		

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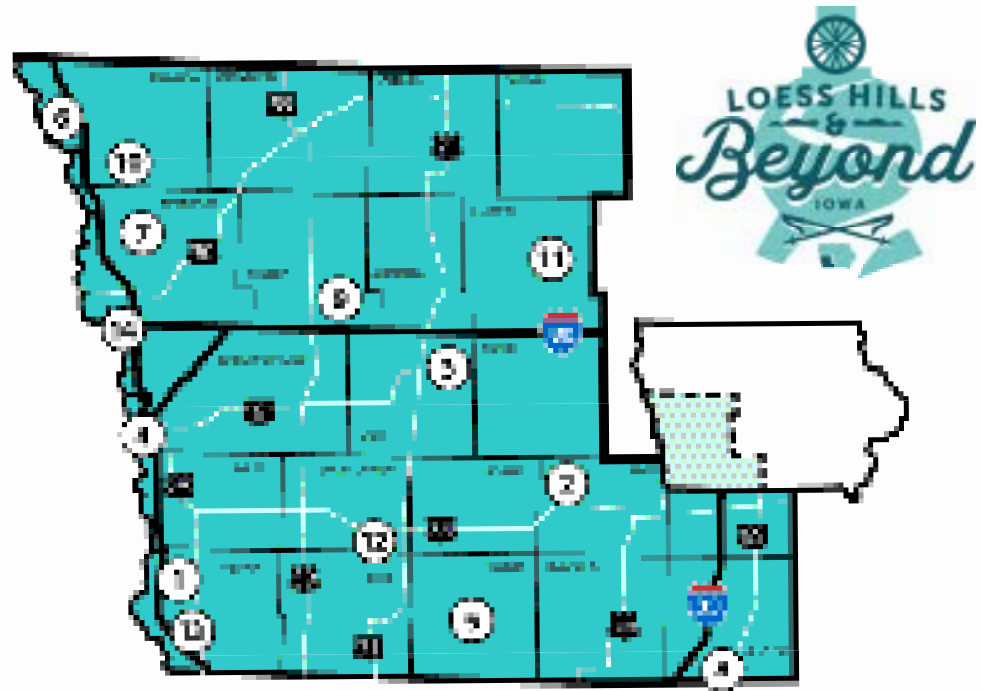
LOESS HILLS & BEYOND



Waubonsie State Park

With 200 miles of windblown hills along Iowa's western border, the Loess Hills offer unique experiences full of natural history. Start exploring at **Loess Hills State Forest** and **Preparation Canyon State Park**. Continue your Loess Hill tour with majestic views and a vast trail system at **Waubonsie State Park**. For a bit of history, head to **Lewis and Clark State Park**, a site on the famed trail, or

enjoy the highly popular **Lake Manawa State Park** for a day on the beach, boat or the accessible Dream Playground. In southwest Iowa, go fishing and boating at hidden gems like **Viking Lake State Park**, **Green Valley State Park** and **Lake of Three Fires State Park**. Visit the geographically diverse **Springbrook State Park**, with rocky outcrops and diverse terrain. Discover all the natural wonders of this region.



Prairie Rose State Park



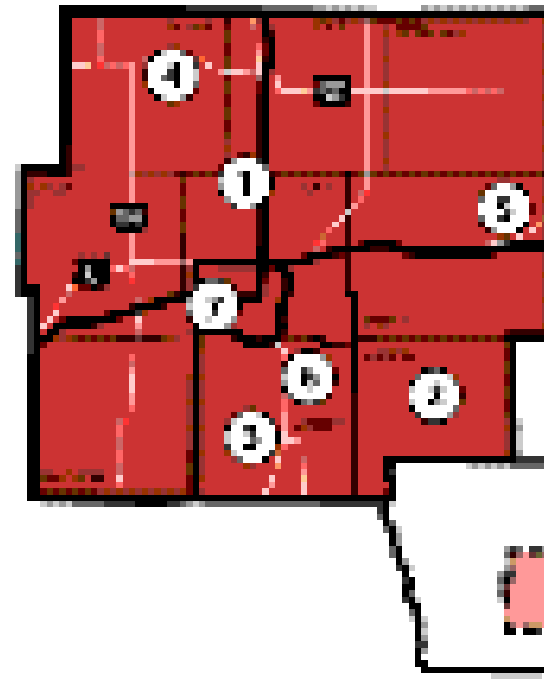
Nine Eagles State Park



CAPITAL COUNTRY



Walnut Woods State Park



In central Iowa, Capital Country is full of immersive outdoor experiences and adventure. Visit the scenic overviews of one of Iowa's most iconic parks, **Ledges State Park**, with sandstone ledges towering 100 feet above the Des Moines River. Soak up the sun at **Big Creek State Park's** famed beach, or rent a pontoon to enjoy the lake. Head to **Banner Lakes at Sunset State Park**—a quarry-turned-state-park with more than

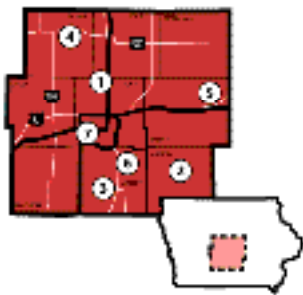
12 miles of multi-use trails. For a bit of natural history, camp and launch your boat at **Elk Rock State Park**, named for an unusual rock formation on the shore of Lake Red Rock, Iowa's largest lake. Near the Des Moines metro, explore **Walnut Woods State Park**, a lovely enclave near the Raccoon River, or visit **Lake Ahquabi State Park** near Indianola, a tranquil area named after the Sauk and Fox word meaning "resting place."



Elk Rock State Park



Big Creek State Park



Modern Camping
Non-modern Camping
Equestrian Camping
Hike-in Camping
Youth Camping
Full Hook-Up Sites
Cabin Rental (A)Seasonal Yurt
 (G)Group (S)Seasonal (Y)Year-Round
Day-Use Lodge
Open Picnic Shelters
Trails Hiking
Trails Multipurpose (B)Paved/Rock Bike
 (C)X-Country Skiing (M)Mt. Bike (S)Snowmobile
Trails Equestrian
 (B)Swimming Beach (P)Playground
Lake Acreage
 (N)Natural (R)Federal Reservoir (A)Artificial
Hunting (B)Boat Rental
 (Designated Areas)

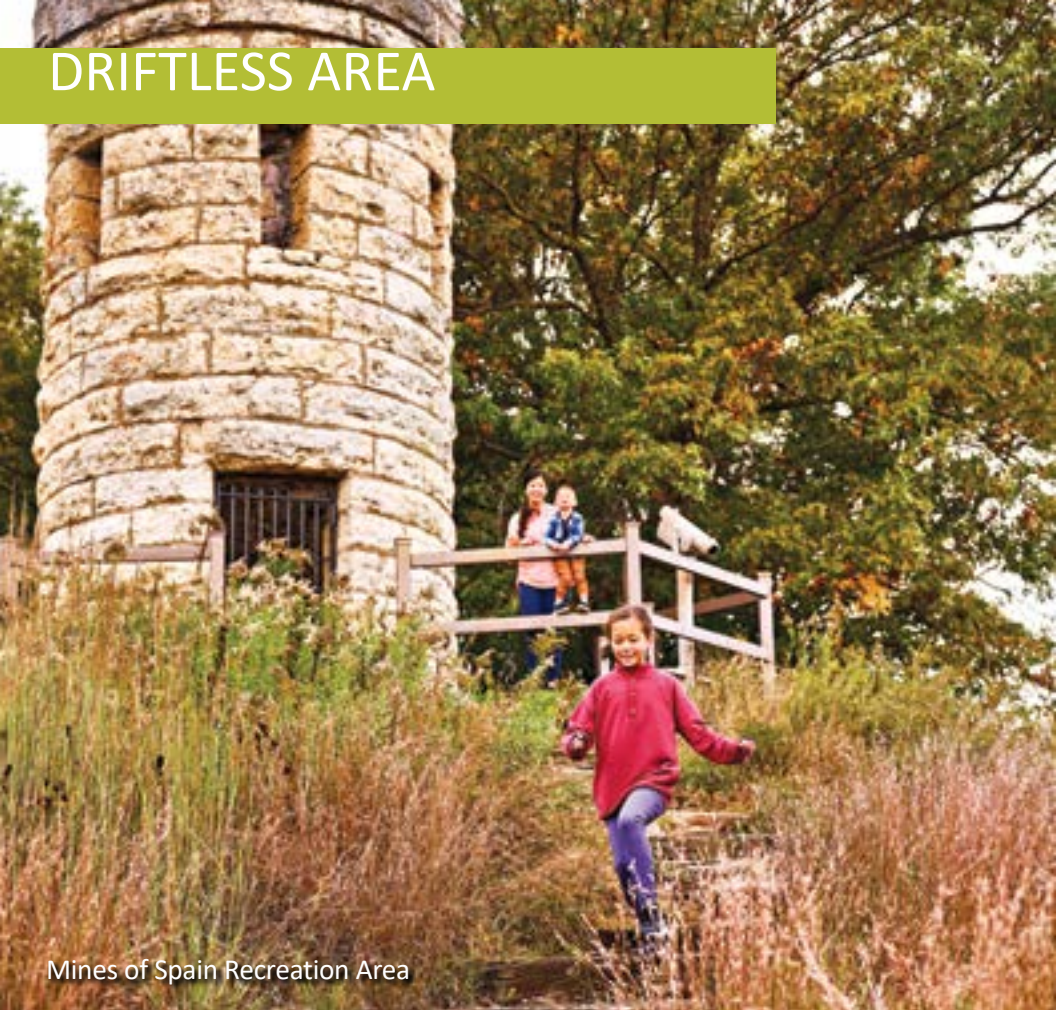
	Modern Camping	Non-modern Camping	Equestrian Camping	Hike-in Camping	Youth Camping	# Full Hook-Up Sites	Cabin Rental	Day-Use Lodge	Open Picnic Shelters	Trails Hiking	Trails Multipurpose	Trails Equestrian	Swimming Beach	Lake Acreage	Hunting	Boat Rental
1 Big Creek (3550 acres) Polk City. 515-984-6473									19	●	B,C,S	B,P	●	866A	B,R	●
2 Elk Rock (850 acres) Knoxville. 641-842-6008	●	●	●						1	●	M,S	●	P	●	19,000R	R
3 Lake Ahquabi (770 acres) Indianola. 515-961-7101	●			●	52	●			3	●	C,M,S	B	●	115A	B,R	
4 Ledges (1100 acres) Boone. 515-432-1852	●			●	●	16			2	○	C		P	●		R
5 Rock Creek (1697 acres) Kellogg. 641-236-3722	●			●					3	●	C,M,S	●	B,P	●	602A	B,R
6 Summerset (222 acres) Des Moines. 515-961-7101										●	B,M			●	80AP	R
7 Walnut Woods (250 acres) West Des Moines. 515-285-4502	●			●		8	○			●	B,C	●	P	●		R

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CAPITAL COUNTRY



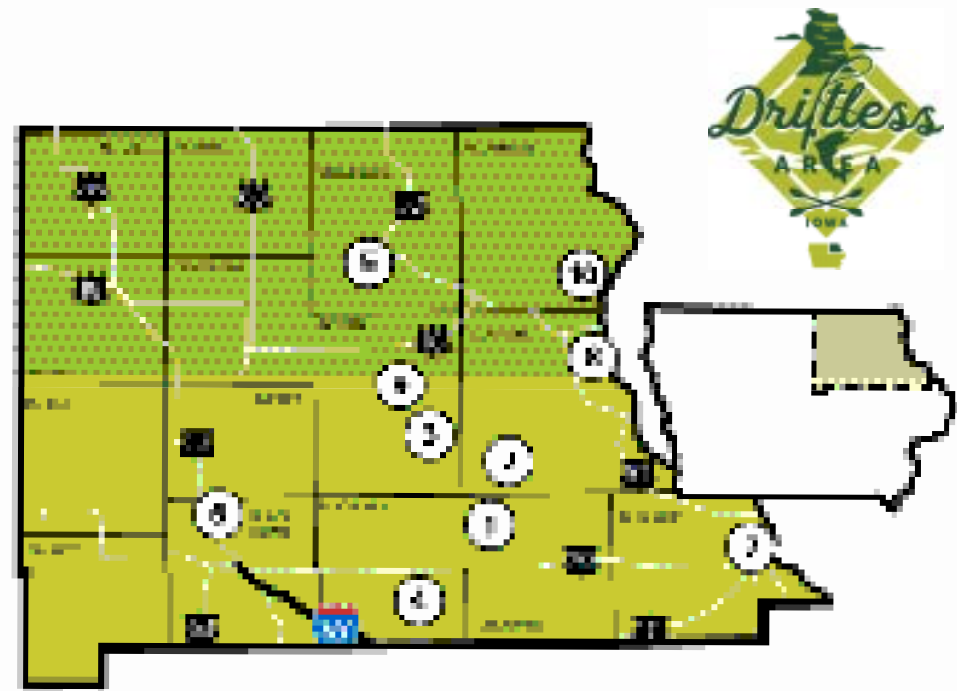
DRIFTLESS AREA



Mines of Spain Recreation Area

Scenic byways, stunning views and natural wonders mark the state parks and forests of northeast Iowa. Visit **Backbone State Park**, Iowa's oldest state park, featuring trout streams, 21 miles of multi-use trails, and historic CCC-era structures. Meander to **Pikes Peak State Park** for breathtaking views of the Mississippi River. Enjoy some of the best hiking in Iowa at **Mines of**

Spain State Recreation Area near Dubuque, stopping along the way at Horseshoe Bluff. Visit Iowa's only fire tower at **Yellow River State Forest**, or visit **Volga River State Recreation Area**, often referred to as "Little Switzerland" due to its rugged topography. For a bit of Iowa culture, stop at **Cedar Rock State Park** to tour a historic estate designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.



Cedar Rock

STORIED & SCENIC

Maquoketa Caves State Park



The Storied and Scenic area is home to some of Iowa’s oldest and most scenic parks and forests. **Lacey-Keosauqua State Park** is the site of a river crossing on the Mormon Trek, and has ample forests and trails to explore. At **Wildcat Den State Park**, tour the oldest-running grist mill west of the Mississippi River, along with breathtaking trail experiences. Travel to **Lake Darling State Park** to cozy

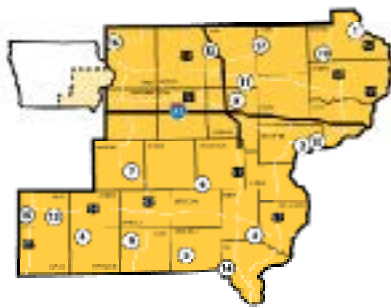
up in a year-round, ADA-accessible cabin. Visit **Lake Wapello State Park’s** CCC-era beach house, featuring unique pueblo-style architecture. Get lost in the woods in **Stephens and Shimek State Forests**, offering trails and more rustic outdoor adventures. Explore one of the gems of the park system, **Maquoketa Caves State Park**, showcasing the 1,100-foot “Dancehall Cave” and Iowa’s largest cave system.

Lacey-Keosauqua State Park



Bellevue State Park





Modern Camping
Non-modern Camping
Equestrian Camping
Hike-in Camping
Youth Camping
Full Hook-Up Sites
Cabin Rental (X)Seasonal Yurt
 (G)Group (S)Seasonal (Y)Year-Round
Day-Use Lodge
Open Picnic Shelters
Trails Hiking
Trails Multipurpose (B)Paved/Rock Bike
 (C)X-Country Skiing (N)Mt. Bike (S)Snowmobile
Trails Equestrian
Fishing
Lake Access
 (N)Natural (R)Federal Reservoir (A)Artificial
(P)Boat Ramp (B)Boat Rental
Hunting
 (Designated Areas)

1	Bellevue (770 acres) Bellevue. 563-872-4019	●					●			●	4	●	B		P	●		R	●
2	Fairport (17 acres) Muscatine. 563-263-3197	●													P	●		R	
3	Geode (1641 acres) Danville. 319-392-4601	●				●	14			4	●	M		B,P	●	200A		R	
4	Honey Creek (828 acres) Moravia. 641-724-3739	●				●	17	4S		2	●	S				●	11,000R	R	
5	Lacey-Keosauqua (1662 acres) Keosauqua. 319-293-3502	●				●	12	1S, 5S	○	2	●	B, C		B,P	●	22A		R	
6	Lake Darling (1387 acres) Brighton. 319-694-2323	●				●	14	6Y, 5S	○	2	●	B,C, M,S		B,P	●	299A		B,R	
7	Lake Keomah (366 acres) Oskaloosa. 641-673-6975	●								●	2	●	C,S		B	●	84A	R	
8	Lake Macbride (2180 acres) Solon. 319-624-2200	●	●			●	10		○	3	●	B,M,S		B,P	●	812A		B,R	

STORIED & SCENIC

9	Lake Wapello (1150 acres) Drakesville. 641-722-3371	●				●	13	1Y, 1Y, 11S	●	2	●	C,S		B,P	●	289A		B,R	
10	Maquoketa Caves (323 acres) Maquoketa. 563-652-5833	●			●	●				2	●			P					
11	Palisades-Kepler (850 acres) Mt. Vernon. 319-895-6039	●	●			●		1S, 3S	○	2	●					●		R	
12	Pleasant Creek (1927 acres) Palo. 319-436-7716	●				●		4S		3	●	C,M,S	●	B,P	●	410A		R	●
13	Red Haw (649 acres) Chariton. 641-774-5632	●								3	●	B,S		B,P	●	72A		R	
14	Shimek Forest Camp (9000 acres) Farmington. 319-878-3811		●	●	●						●	C,M	●		●	20A		R	●
15	Stephens Forest Camp (15,000 acres) Lucas. 641-774-5632		●	●	●	●					●	M	●		●	10A			●
16	Union Grove (282 acres) Gladbrook. 641-473-2556	●					7	2Y		1	●	S		B,P	●	110A		R	
17	Wapsipinicon (390 acres) Anamosa. 319-462-2761	●				●			○	2	●	C,S		P	●			R	●
18	Wildcat Den (423 acres) Muscatine. 563-263-4337		●			●				2	●			P					

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ACCESSIBLE OUTDOORS

Iowa state parks and forests are committed to being welcoming destinations for people of all abilities by providing accessible outdoor opportunities and amenities.



Lake Manawa State Park
photo by: Darren Budd

EXPLORE ACCESSIBLE EXPERIENCES

From adaptive equipment to accessible fishing piers, hiking trails, picnic shelters and campsites, Iowa's state parks and forests provide many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Examples of accessible experiences include:

- Track Chair at **Big Creek State Park**, which can be checked out for free on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - Accessible playgrounds, including one of Iowa's largest at **Lake Manawa State Park**.
 - Trout fishing paths for wheelchair access at **Yellow River State Forest** and **Backbone State Park**.
 - Overnight stays at accessible campsites and cabins.
 - And many more!
- To learn more about accessibility in the outdoors, visit iowadnr.gov/accessible. If you need special accommodations for your next visit, please contact your local park office for assistance.



Little Paint Creek accessible trout fishing trail at **Yellow River State Forest**.



Track chair in action at **Big Creek State Park**.



Ready to make memories on the water? Take the tackle along when you visit an Iowa State Park. Buy your license and get fishing tips at iowadnr.gov

SHARE THE TRAIL

Many of us love to hit the trail—whether on foot, by bike or on horseback.

You can help make the day enjoyable by following a few tips to share the trail:

- If you see a horseback rider:
 - Stop and move to the side.
 - Give plenty of space because horses can be unpredictable.
 - Say hello and communicate so the horse knows you're there.
 - Let the horse and rider pass by before you start to move again.
- Bikers, remember to slow down,



give space and communicate your presence when passing other bikers and hikers.

- And of course, everyone should stay on designated trails, carry out trash and be respectful of surroundings.
- Let's share the trail and make it fun for everyone!



Lake of Three Fires State Park



TOP PICKS FOR FUN AND ADVENTURE

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TRAVEL IOWA

If you're looking for a list of ultimate places to enjoy Iowa's outdoor activities, Travel Iowa has selected a few top picks showcasing many Iowa state parks. See the full list at and many more outdoor destinations at: traveliowa.com/things-to-do/outdoor-adventure.

MOST SURPRISING VIEW: Beeds Lake State Park

The dam at **Beeds Lake State Park**, constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, is said to be the most photographed dam in the Midwest. Located near Hampton, water from the lake plunges 40 feet down along the 170-foot-long horizontal layers of limestone. Don't forget to pack your camera!



Beeds Lake State Park

BEST CAMPING: Backbone State Park

Iowa's oldest state park offers so many different adventures, there is no way to get through all of them without spending the night. Bring your tent along to "rough it" in one of two campgrounds, or rent a modern cabin for a more comfortable stay.

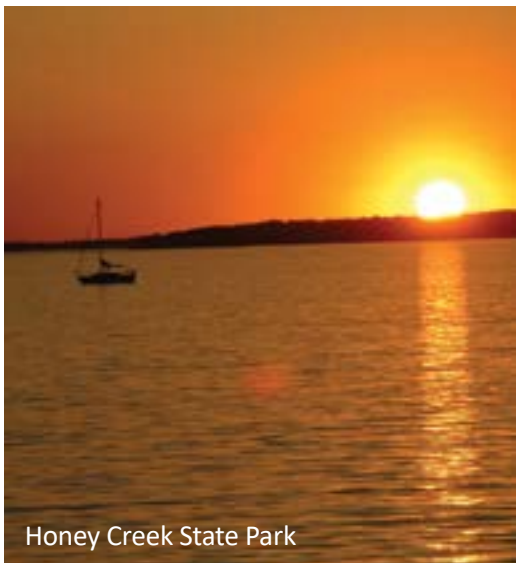


Backbone State Park

BEST BOATING:

Honey Creek State Park

Whether you plan to bring your own boat or rent one at a local marina, you are destined for a day packed full of fun on Lake Rathbun. This massive body of water (more than 11,000 acres) provides the perfect playground for more than a dozen boating styles from pontoon and speed boats, to paddling, kayaks and jet skis. **Honey Creek State Park** has one of the largest boat ramps on the lake, and features a beautiful campground, camping cabins and trails.



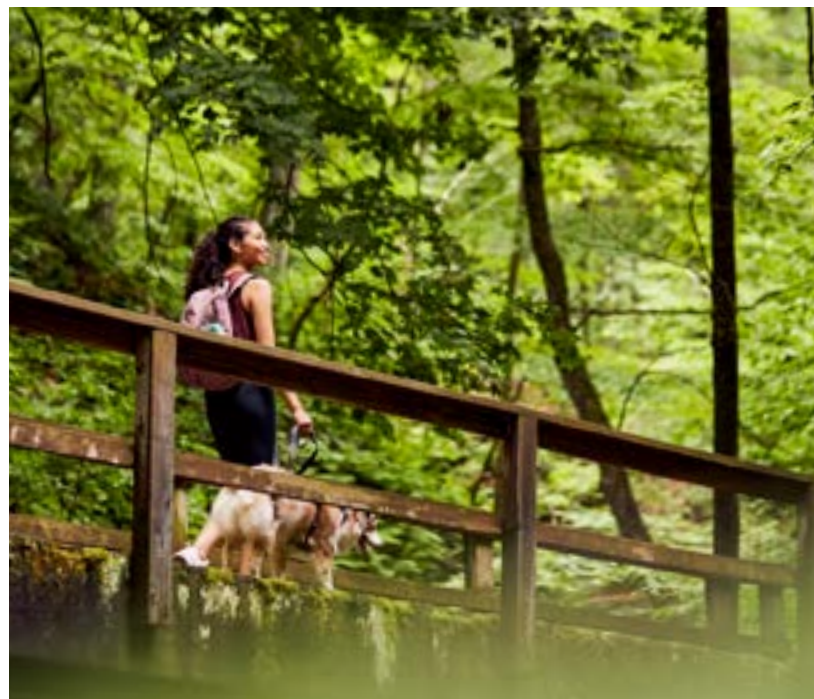
Honey Creek State Park

BEST HIKE: Maquoketa Caves State Park

Most of Iowa's state parks offer hiking, but not many offer hiking underground! At **Maquoketa Caves State Park**, you'll encounter wooded areas, fielded surroundings and caves that are several feet tall. Crawling might be required to navigate some caves. Be extra prepared for cave exploration by wearing clothes that can get dirty and bring a flashlight.



Maquoketa Caves State Park



GIVE IT *time*

From hike time to bike time, deep breath time to big adventure time — **the more time you give Iowa, the more you'll get back in return.** Let the Iowa outdoors work its magic and watch what happens.

traveliowa.com





Yellow River State Forest
photo by Brian Gibbs



iowadnr.gov/stateparks

iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com

1-877-PARKS (427-2757)