

The background of the cover is a photograph of a forest. The trees have vibrant yellow and orange autumn leaves. A person is visible in the lower right, standing on a trail with a metal railing. The text is overlaid on the image.

Iowa

January/February 1995

CONSERVATIONIST

Department of Natural Resources

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF
IOWA STATE PARKS

DEAR IOWANS AND VISITORS,

As Director of the Department of Natural Resources, I take special pride in 1995 as the Iowa system of state parks celebrates its 75th anniversary. These kinds of milestones provide us all an opportunity to both reflect on the past and to look forward to the future.

By the time Backbone State Park in Delaware County was officially dedicated on May 28, 1920, the long, hard work of many dedicated Iowans had become a reality as several more parks were added to the system in the 1920s. Think of our park system, and you likely think of one of the earliest parks -- Ledges in Boone County, Wildcat Den in Muscatine County, Lacey-Keosauqua in Van Buren County, Waubonsie in Fremont County, Maquoketa Caves in Jackson County, Dolliver in Webster County -- these and several others were added to the system before 1930.

The public resolve to buy and protect a system of state parks in the 1920s was followed by an unequalled public works effort of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s. This effort left Iowans a unique legacy of parks, natural areas and recreation facilities. In more recent times, the recreational lakes program of the 1960s and recent open space protection programs such as REAP, the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act, carry on the tradition and enhance the legacy for future generations.

Visit your state parks in 1995. Appreciate the beauty; admire the handiwork of the CCC; enjoy the fishing, camping, hiking and relaxation to be found there. Perhaps most importantly, be grateful for the commitment and imagination of those who founded the system, and to the hundreds of Iowans who have worked so hard over 75 years to protect and to manage that system for your enjoyment.

There will be several special events scheduled in recognition of the 75th anniversary. It is our goal to have each state park at its best. I encourage you to become involved with a state park near you. We can always use the help of volunteers. Each park will have an open house sometime during the first two weeks of May. We're hosting these open houses to let you get acquainted with our parks, and to provide you an opportunity to learn about them. Watch your local newspapers for announcements on dates and times.

Enjoy your state parks, and come celebrate these "places of quiet beauty" with us.

Larry J. Wilson



Robert J. Naisbitt

▲ The grist mill at Wildcat Den State Park is a long-time favorite.

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Front -- Maquoketa Caves by Ken Formanek.
Back -- Fort Defiance lodge, built approximately 1931. DNR photo.



IOWA STATE PARKS SUSTAINING A VISION FROM 1895 TO 1995

by Rebecca Conard

Lake Macbride, Pammel and Margo Frankel Woods state parks, Lake Darling Recreation Area, Shimek State Forest, Hayden Prairie State Preserve, and Whitley Forest -- Many visitors to these places probably know who they are named after, or at least find out in the course of their stay, but how many Iowans know how much history these namesakes really signify? Who were Thomas Macbride, Louis Pammel, Cora Call Whitley, Jay N. Darling, Margo Frankel, Bohumil Shimek and Ada Hayden? And why have their names been memorialized in our state parks, recreation areas, preserves and forests? The names of "Backbone" and "Ledges" state parks are easy to decode once you have seen the spine-like ridge surrounded by the Maquoketa River in Delaware County or the limestone ledges near Boone, but Pammel? Macbride? And where is Whitley Forest anyway? It's not even on the map.

With the 75th anniversary of the state park system upon us, perhaps it is fitting we should recall and reclaim some of this history. "Reclaim" may seem an odd word to use, but reclaim is just what Macbride, Pammel, Whitley, Darling, Frankel, Shimek and Hayden wanted to do. They were leaders among many in Iowa who worked to reclaim a portion of Iowa's natural and cultural heritage by protecting places of scientific, scenic, historic and recreational value within a state park system. In retrospect, it was a monumental task, one that could only have been accomplished over time and with the commitment of many hearts and minds.

May 28, 1995 will mark the 75th anniversary Iowa's first state park. On that date in 1920, Backbone State Park was formally dedicated. It took a long time, however, to get to that dedication ceremony. The history of Iowa's state parks actually begins 100 years ago, in 1895, with Thomas Macbride. The name Macbride is still familiar around the University of Iowa, where Thomas H. Macbride had a distinguished 40-year career as professor of botany and president. His colleagues also considered him the "father" of conservation in Iowa. Macbride began to earn this title

in 1895, when he addressed the members of the Iowa Academy of Science on the need for "county" or "rural" parks, terms he used to distinguish his idea from the more formal, landscaped parks that were beginning to appear in towns and cities. What he had in mind was setting aside places outside city boundaries where people could go to experience "primeval nature" -- in his words, places of "quiet beauty."

Macbride saw rural parks as a means to preserve a portion of Iowa's natural history for future generations. But he was not just another "nature lover" with a sentimental vision. He, and others,



DNR photo

▲
Maquoketa Caves -- one of Macbride's "rural" parks where people could go and experience "primeval nature" -- a place of "quiet beauty."

were concerned about clear streams turned muddy and fouled, eroded hillsides once covered with timber, the diminishing sounds of songbirds, prairies drained and plowed up, and fast-disappearing species of flora and fauna. Macbride envisioned parks serving a multiple mission. They would be a vehicle for resource conservation, promote public health and happiness, and serve as outdoor laboratories for educating the next generations about Iowa -- its geology; its native trees, birds, flowers, and wildlife; its past inhabitants and early settlers.

The Iowa Park and Forestry Association, founded in 1901 by Macbride, Pammel, Shimek and a handful of others, was established to promote rural parks and forestry conservation. Success, however, came hard. First, the IPFA had to build a grassroots constituency -- a task that took years. It was not until about 1915 that momentum for parks began to build. The Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, Audubon societies, the

State Horticultural Society, and the Iowa Academy of Science all joined with the IPFA (renamed the Iowa Conservation Association) in order to muster the support needed to pass state legislation. The State Park Act of 1917 not only authorized the expenditure of funds to acquire state parks, it also authorized a new entity, the State Board of Conservation, to investigate and select park lands. Its passage followed the 1916 National Park Act by one year and placed Iowa among the first states to enact state park legislation.

During his lifetime, Macbride rebuffed all attempts to honor him with a name place, including an attempt to change the name of Iowa

Lakeside Laboratory, another manifestation of his legacy. His death in 1934, however, effectively ended his say in matters. It also coincided with the dedication of a new area four miles west of Solon, near Iowa City -- Lake Macbride State Park.

If Macbride provided the inspiration for state parks, Louis Pammel was the pragmatist who gave that vision form. During the last 12 years of his life, Pammel's name was nearly synonymous with state parks. Head of the botany department at Iowa State College, now Iowa State University, Pammel instigated the Iowa Park and Forestry Association and helped to draft the 1917 State Park Act. His major contributions, however, would come over the next several years. From late 1918 until 1927, he served as chairman of the Board of Conservation. During his tenure, the state park system began to take shape, and the board's mandate expanded to encompass jurisdiction over natural lakes and streams.

The 1920s constituted a crucial decade for Iowa's state parks, and Pammel guided the Board of Conservation through some dark valleys and rough waters in his quest to create a system of parks that represented the great diversity of Iowa's natural and cultural heritage. Among other things, the Board of Conservation had to establish a smooth working relationship with the Fish and Game Department, an agency that stretched all the way back to 1874. By virtue of the 1917 State Park Act, the Fish and Game Warden was included in the process of establishing and maintaining state parks, although that office remained separate from the new Board of Conservation. The board also had to fend off countless proposals for commercial and private use of the lands and waters in state parks.

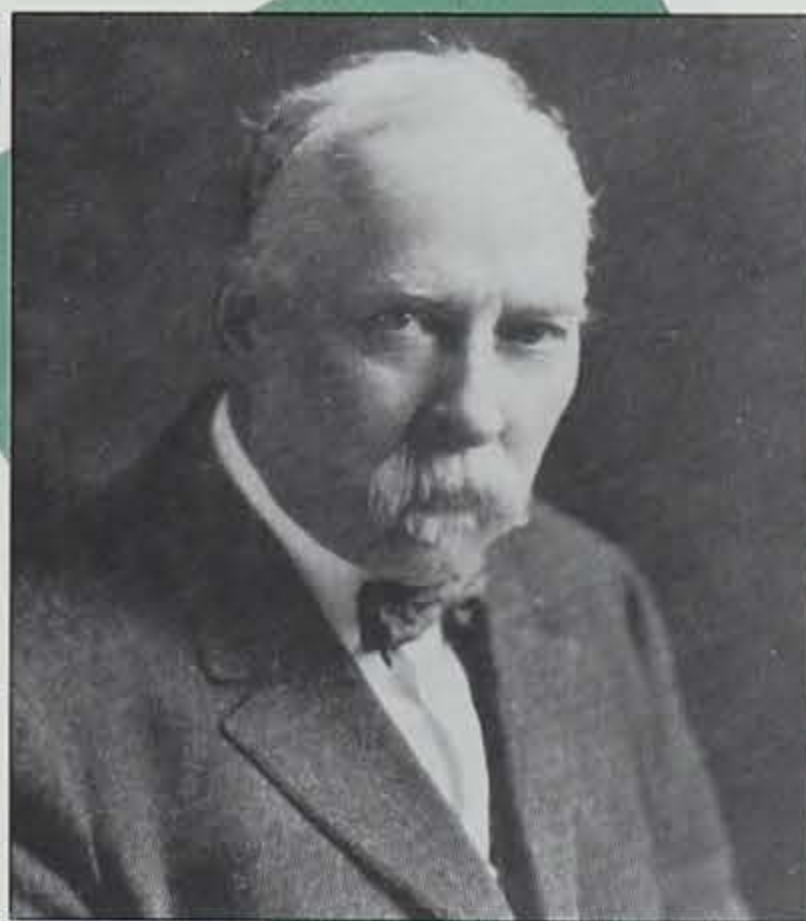
There were some notable defeats as well as major victories. For instance, Pammel and G.B. MacDonald, professor of forestry at Iowa State College, tried to establish a forestry program within the state parks. Commercial nurserymen, however, stopped every

Des Moines Public Library



Thomas H. Macbride

DNR photo



Louis Pammel



G.B. MacDonald

Iowa State University Forestry Department

attempt. More successful were the board's efforts to work with the State Highway Commission in order to build roads and bridges that respected the contour of the land, and with landscape architects at Iowa State College to design plans for park improvements that blended with the natural surroundings. Even so, Lacey-Keosauqua State Park considered to be the quintessential "conservation park," was laid out with a golf course. Although Iowa's state park system had its origins in the conservation movement, a swiftly increasing number of visitors (thanks to the dawn of the automobile age) came to parks seeking outdoor recreation.

Under Pammel's chairmanship, the Board of Conservation concentrated its budget and its attention on land acquisition. This tactic effectively delayed having to confront the dilemma of balancing recreational use with resource protection, although when Pammel retired from the board in 1927, he knew that decision was just around the corner. Nonetheless, he could with justifiable pride point to one of the finest state parks systems in the country. Iowa's park numbered 38 in 1927, and they *did* represent remarkable diversity. When the "Devil's Backbone" area of Madison County was formally dedicated as a state park a few years later, its name became Pammel State Park in honor of the man who had so expertly negotiated the Board of Conservation, and state parks, through some difficult political terrain.

Pammel, of course, did not create the initial park system by himself. Several members of the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs also played key roles in establishing Iowa's state parks. None of them was more important than Cora Call Whitley of Wester City, who, as president of the Iowa Federation from 1915 to 1917, offered up the services of "17,000 well-organized club women" to aid the cause. She thus helped to bring club women into the conservation constituency at a time (before universal suffrage) when women's clubs provided the means for women to become involved in politics and social reform.

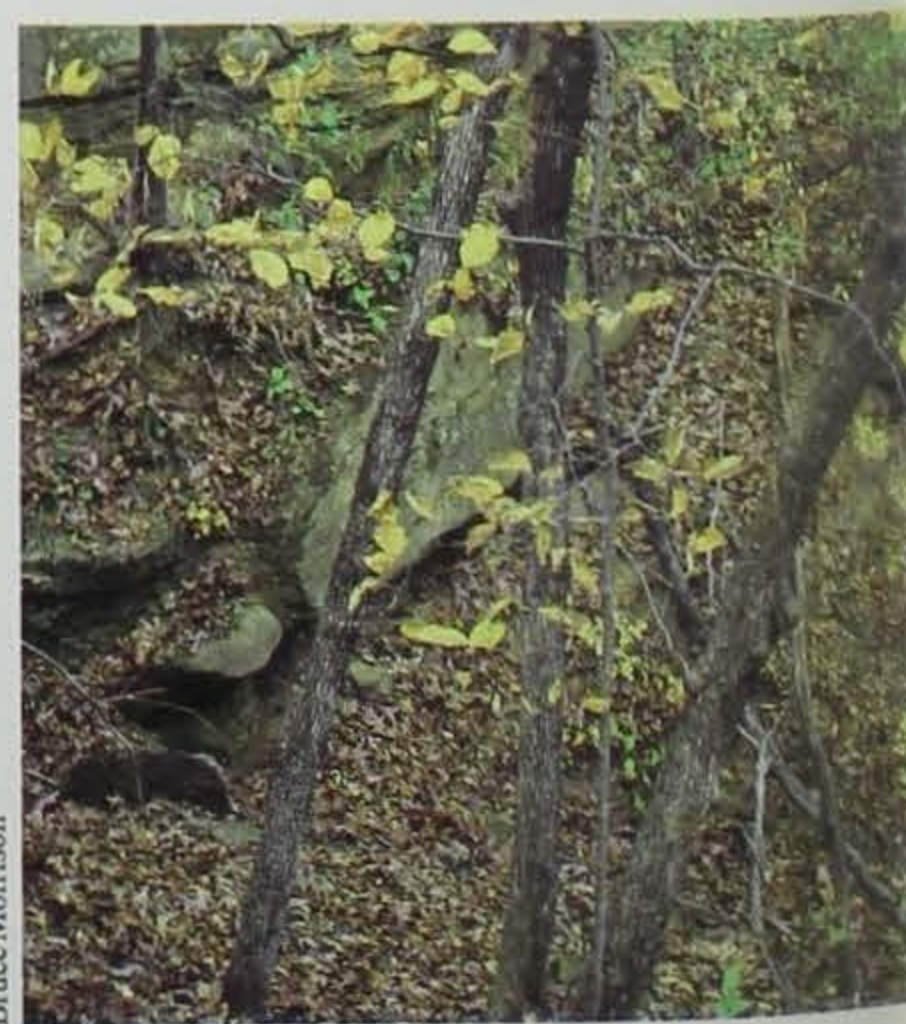
Conservation education and the preservation of natural scenery were two of Whitley's principal concerns. She promoted both through the Iowa Federation and the General Federation of Women's clubs. To combat the careless destruction of nature that came with the hordes of tourists and day-trippers who began pouring into state and national parks in the 1920s, she launched a nationwide "Outdoor Good Manners" campaign through the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Famed conservationist "Ding" Darling lent assistance by contributing one of his typical to-the-point editorial cartoons.

During the 1930s, the General Federation undertook another nationwide project to establish a "chain" of Federation Forests in every state, commemorating the farsightedness of club women and their efforts on behalf of conservation. To honor the woman who had led the way in Iowa, the state federation donated the trees to plant Whitley Forest at Lake Ahquabi State Park in Warren County. The Daughters of the American Revolution also contributed to reforestation efforts in several state parks. The DAR, for instance, donated a stand of 6,000 white pines in Backbone State Park and



Cora Call Whitley

Photo courtesy of Martin E. Nass



Bruce Morrison

▲ In 1928, the Board of Conservation established Woodman Hollow as the first "preserve" within the state park system.

established the George Washington Memorial Forest at Lake Arrowhead in Black Hawk State Park.

Whitely helped to bring women into the conservation movement. Other prominent members of the Iowa Federation continued that alliance throughout the 1920s and 1930s with service on the Board of Conservation. May McMider of Charles City and Mary C. Armstrong of Fort Dodge, both of whom were on the board in the 1920s, were tenacious in their efforts to keep power companies from building hydroelectric dams and generating stations in or near state parks. One such proposal threatened to inundate what is now Woodman Hollow State Preserve, near Dolliver Memorial State Park. In 1928, after conservationists had defeated the dam project, the Board of Conservation declared Woodman Hollow to be a "reserve for the full protection of plant and animal life therein," thus establishing the first "preserve" within the state park system.

Margo Frankel of Des Moines, who

joined the board when Pammel retired in 1927, took a special interest in landscape architecture and the aesthetics of park improvements. During the intensive park-improvement program of the 1930s, she oversaw the preparation of landscape and building plans.

Louise Parker, who succeeded Frankel, became the voice of conscience and continuity when the Board of Conservation became the State Conservation Commission in 1935. Among these, and other, important women, only Margo Frankel has been memorialized with a state park in her honor. After the Greater Des Moines Committee purchased Saylor Woods near Polk City and turned it over to the state in 1945 for a state park, the State Conservation Commission renamed the area Margo Frankel Woods.

The person behind the 1935 organization that resulted in the State Conservation Commission was Jan N. "Ding" Darling. More than any other individual of his time, Darling stirred public awareness of

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Margo Frankel



Look Out, Here Come The Nature Lovers

DNR photo



J.N. "Ding" Darling



Bohumil Shimek

Des Moines Public Library

environmental degradation. Through the pages of the *Des Moines Register*, the *New York Tribune*, and every other newspaper that picked up his syndicated editorial cartoons, his biting wit reached even those who could not read. By 1930, he had become an articulate spokesman for resource conservation, especially the protection of wildlife. He also had an idea for more effective management of all natural resources in Iowa. In 1930, he presented his idea to both the Board of Conservation and the Fish and Game Commission, whose mandates overlapped. Iowa should survey its natural resources, assess its resource restoration and outdoor recreational needs for the coming decades, and come up with a long-term comprehensive plan for conservation.

In 1931, the state legislature appropriated money to do just that. As a member of the Fish and Game Commission, Darling guided much of the survey effort, even calling on Aldo Leopold, the "father" of modern wildlife management, to conduct the first systematic survey of game in Iowa. Out of this massive effort came the *Twenty-five-Year Conservation Plan for Iowa*, completed in 1933. One of its principal recommendations was to merge the functions of the Board of Conservation and the Fish and Game Commission into a new agency with more comprehensive authority over natural resources. In 1935, the State Conservation Commission came into being, organized with three main divisions: administration, fish and game, and lands and waters.

The 25-Year Plan placed Iowa in an excellent position to take full advantage of federal relief programs during the Great Depression, since federal regulations required applicant states to submit a planning document. By 1938, more than half of the recommendations contained in the 25-Year Plan had been carried out under the auspices of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and related New Deal programs.

G.B. MacDonald, who had been designated State Forester in 1920s,

wore yet another hat during the 1930s. As director of Emergency Conservation Work in Iowa, he coordinated project planning and implementation, no small task considering the volume of construction that took place. Between 1933 and 1942, hundreds of buildings and other improvements were constructed in state parks -- staff housing, maintenance buildings, picnic shelters, fireboxes, lodges, overlooks, overnight cabins, latrines, bathhouses, boathouses, piers, dams, bridges, water systems, trails, roads and fences. CCC enrollees and WPA workers also excavated fish rearing ponds and artificial lakes, planted trees, constructed drainage levees and carried out other soil conservation projects.

The New Deal building era gave parks a new look. The Central Design Office, still located at Iowa State College, provided technical support in engineering, architecture and landscape architecture to design buildings and structures that harmonized with their natural environment. Rustic park architecture, a style developed in the 1920s and widely used by the National Park Service, flowered in the 1930s. The New Deal building program also vastly enhanced the recreational potential of Iowa's parks. As a result, the State Conservation Commission would now squarely face the issue of public access versus resource protection.

Federal aid also gave G.B. MacDonald an opportunity he had been trying to create for at least a decade. Under his direction, Iowa began to work with the U.S. Forest Service to purchase distressed lands for reforestation. Eventually, the State of Iowa would spend more money on forestry reserves than the federal government, but MacDonald's plan nonetheless went forward -- slowly. By the early 1940s, Iowa had the beginnings of forest reserves in three areas of the state -- several thousand acres of reserves that were intended for multiple use as timber-producing forests and as wildlife habitats.

In 1950, the reserve units in Van Buren and Lee counties were designated as Shimek State Forest to honor Bohumil Shimek, whose academic career in botany at the University of Iowa rivaled that of



Ada Hayden

From Proceedings of Iowa Academy of Science, 1951

his colleague, Thomas Macbride. Shimek's botanical research contributed greatly to the understanding of plant ecology in several of Iowa's regions, particularly the ecology of the prairies and the loess hills. Passed over for a seat on the Board of Conservation in the late 1920s because he was considered too old (he was then in his 70s), Shimek never got the public attention he deserved during his lifetime for his role in the conservation and parks movement. MacDonald acknowledged his role posthumously (Shimek died in 1937) by naming Iowa's largest state forest after him. MacDonald's own contributions, however, have never been so recognized.

World War II brought an end to New Deal relief and conservation programs. As construction started to wind down in 1941, the State Conservation Commission took stock of the changes that had occurred during the 1930s and reclassified its holdings on the basis of their inherent characteristics or their function. The new reclassification scheme called into serious question the meaning of the term "park," for clearly this generic term was no longer sufficient to convey the complex mandate of the State Conservation Commission or the system under its jurisdiction. Iowa now had 73 parks, preserves, recreation reserves, historic and archaeological sites, wayside parks, and forests -- well above the nationwide average of 29 park units per state.

Although World War II halted the flow of federal funds during the 1940s, "the system" nonetheless expanded to include prairie preserves during that decade. No person played a greater role in this effort than Ada Hayden, professor of botany at Iowa State College. Her study of prairie plants and prairie conservation was long-standing and well-known, dating back to her days as a doctoral student under Louis Pammel. In 1940, supported by a \$100 grant (no, there are no zeros missing!) from the Iowa Academy of Science, Hayden began to survey prairie remnants and to make recommendations for their preservation. Acting on her recommendations, the

Roger A. Hill



Ken Formanek

▲
In 1940, Ada Hayden began to survey prairie remnants and to make recommendations for their preservation.

◀
Lodge at Dolliver State Park. Between 1933 and 1942, hundreds of buildings and other improvements were constructed in state parks, thanks to the CCC and WPA.

first prairie preserves were acquired in the late 1940s. The largest of these preserves, a 240-acre site in Howard County, was named Hayden Prairie in her honor after she died in 1950.

During the 1950s and 1960s, state parks began to assume a more distinct identity as outdoor recreation areas. In part, this was because a new generation of parks was especially dedicated to serve growing urban populations and areas of the state lacking in outdoor recreation opportunities. The 1950 dedication of Lake Darling State Park, named for "Ding" Darling, signaled this trend, as did the establishment of Viking Lake, Lake Anita and Prairie Rose state parks. These were followed by large "state recreation areas" including Brushy Creek, Volga River, Pleasant Creek and Badger Creek, designed to provide an even greater range of outdoor opportunities such as hunting and 24-hour access.

In the 1960s the Conservation Commission also began to divest the state of some smaller state park areas. Landmark state legislation authorizing county conservation boards, created an opportunity to transfer management, and sometimes ownership, of many parks to the local level. Additionally, in 1965, the Legislature officially recognized the need for "preserves" as distinct from state parks and recreation areas. In order to maintain natural conditions as nearly as possible in areas that have special scientific or educational value, the Legislature authorized a separate body to oversee the acquisition and management of preserves -- the State Preserves Advisory Board.

As we look back on what has been accomplished and because of Iowa's state parks, let me share some words that "Ding" Darling spoke at the Lakes Region Planning Institute in 1936:

They talk about me being a conservationist and what I have done for conservation. Nobody has done anything for conservation. If they had, we wouldn't have less and less every year instead of more and more. . . . All I have succeeded in doing is to utter a warning against continuation of our wasteful policies, but as to constructive conservation and real restoration there has been so little that all of it put together is practically negligible.

If he were here to assess how far Iowa has come in the last six decades, would he still utter such despairing remarks? If he did, a host of other voices from the past would raise in protest. No, Darling would certainly acknowledge that

we have cleaner lakes, more abundant wildlife, some thriving woodlands; that we are making progress on restoring prairie remnants and wetlands; that we have managed to protect for several generations, now, many "places of quiet beauty." He would also, no doubt, acknowledge the need for redoubled efforts to ensure that these resources remain available for generations to come. Most important, I think he also would acknowledge the central role that the state parks have played in resource conservation in Iowa. Then, of course, he would admonish us all to go out and do more. So would Thomas Macbride, Louis Pammel, Cora Call Whitley, Margo Frankel, Bohumil Shimek, G.B. MacDonald, and Ada Hayden.

Rebecca Conard is an assistant professor of history at Wichita State University.



Jim Sherman

▲
Dedication of Lake Darling in 1950. "Ding" Darling is seated just right of the speaker.



DNR Photo

OLD
and **NEW**

**PARK CARETAKER
GEORGE DURHAM'S LOG
HOME IN BACKBONE
STATE PARK.**

BACKBONE State Park

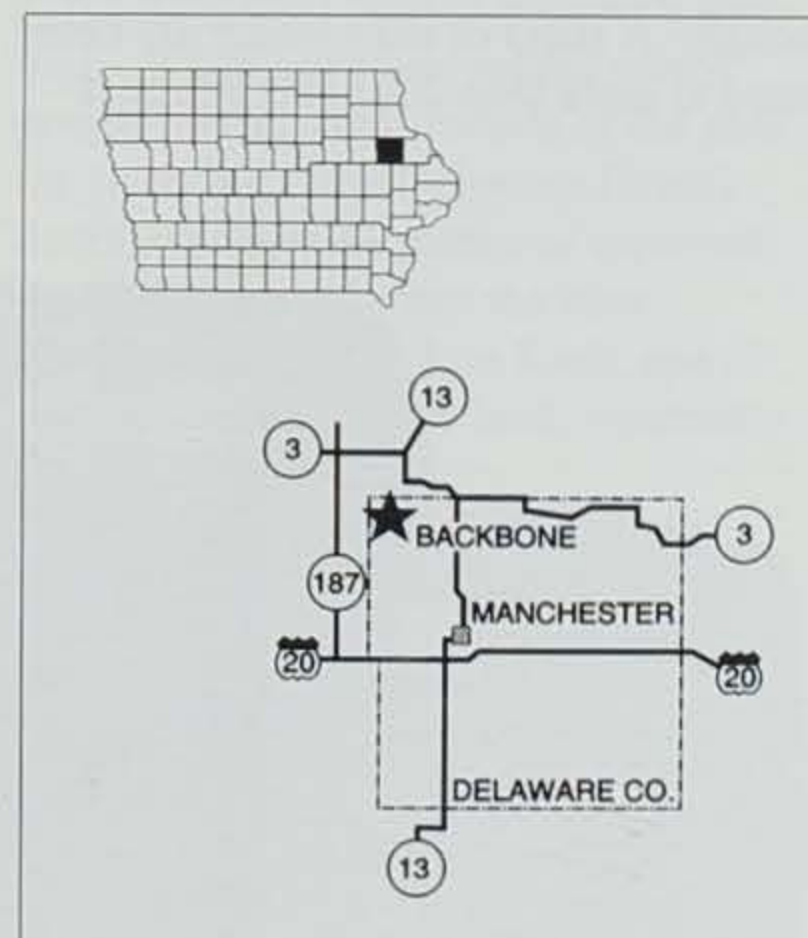
by Bob Schaut

Backbone State Park. Many readers have no doubt been there at one time or another. The name conjures up images of high limestone bluffs, wooded valleys and Civilian Conservation Corps construction completed more than 50 years ago. Backbone is also Iowa's first state park. Visitors to Backbone find it easy to see that it is one of Iowa's treasures with many scenic opportunities. But, what was Backbone like before it was a state park, and who were those insightful Iowans that preserved this area for us to enjoy today? Let's take a look at Backbone from a different perspective -- its past history.

Backbone State Park is one of Iowa's most picturesque parks. The Maquoketa River winds through the park cutting its way through the solid

dolomite rock -- a type of limestone. The dolomite limestone at Backbone was formed millions of years ago when much of Iowa was covered by an ancient sea. This sea extended into Canada and as far east as New York. Many ancient calcium deposits were changed by the chemical action of the sea waters and converted to magnesium carbonate, an extremely hard limestone which we refer to as dolomite. Softer limestones have eroded away leaving the rocky formations within Backbone. The park gets its name from a particular formation -- a high, rugged spine of rock surrounded on three sides by river. Local folks called the formation the "devil's backbone."

Many of the stream tributaries entering the Maquoketa River within the park have cut additional valleys making the area quite rugged. The valley sides



have steep cliffs of dolomite, and due to weathering, irregular crags and huge blocks of separated stone are present. If you look closely at these dolomite outcroppings, fossil imprints stand out for inspection.

Not all of the softer limestones which have dissolved are apparent from the surface. If we go underground, water-carrying crevices may be found. Richmond Springs, located at the north end of the park, is a good example of one such underground river coming to the surface. Richmond Springs typically flows at a rate of 2,300 gallons a minute and feeds the trout stream within the park.

The park gets its name from a particular formation -- a high, rugged spine of rock surrounded on three sides by river. Local folks called the formation the "devil's backbone."

Many of the white pine trees standing tall within the forest tower near the Backbone Trail and blend with rock outcroppings. Some of these pines are more than 150 years old. These are not the oldest known trees within the park, though. A stand of oaks which has been dated to more than 200 years of age is

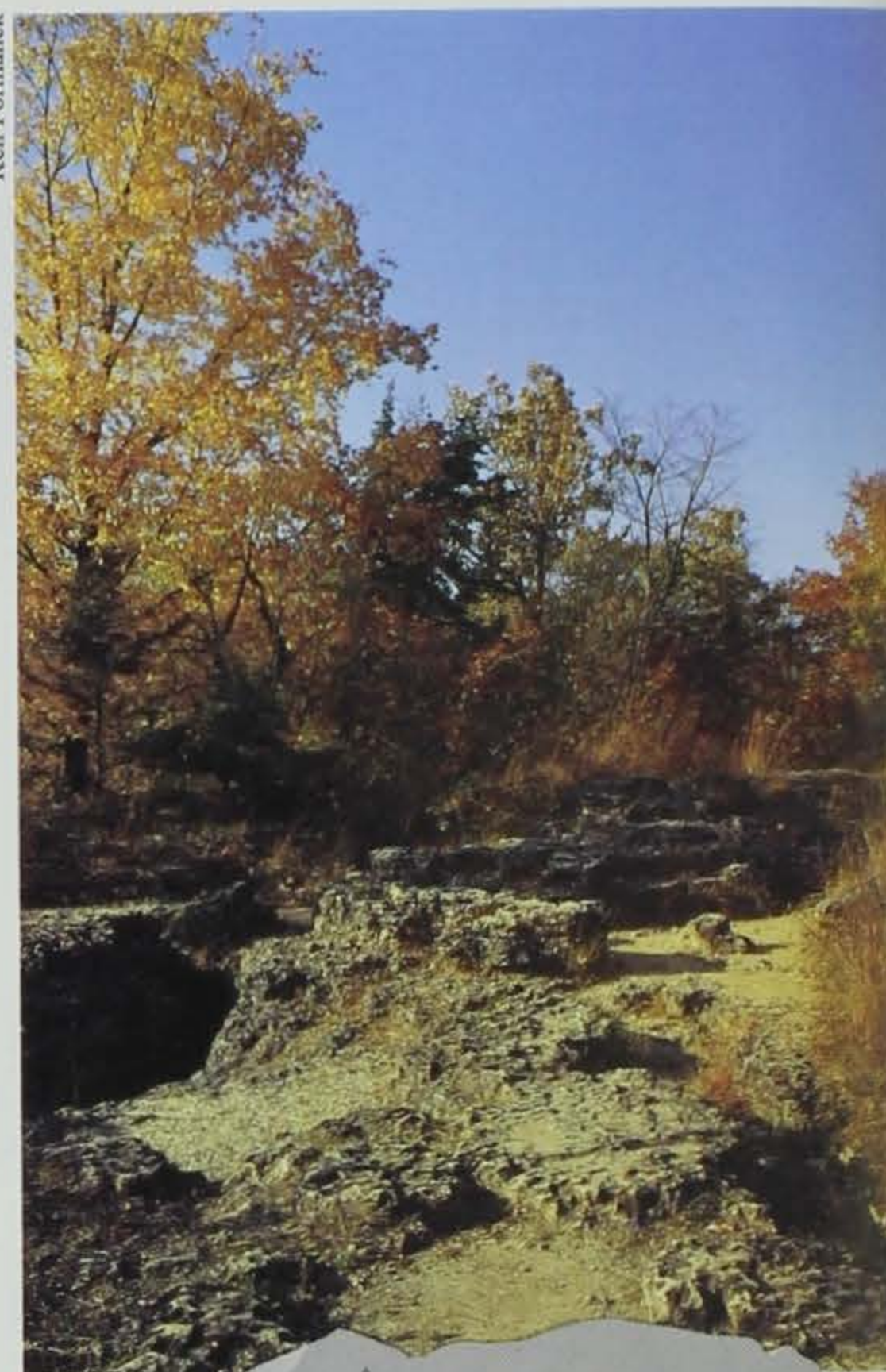
located near Richmond Springs. These mighty oaks would have been seedlings when the first European settlers arrived on the continent.

Tales of the past are strong with many of the old timers in the area. Cattle rustlers, horse thieves, bank robbers and the like all may have used the Backbone to hide from the law when the area was a young territory. The people who frequented the Backbone during these days, as well as the numerous bobcats, timber wolves and bears may have contributed to the devil's backbone legend.

Not much is known about the use of the area by Native Americans. Burial mounds were known to exist in the areas of white pines along the Backbone Trail. Many of the burial mounds were destroyed by looters long ago, with only one still believed to exist. The area was probably as unique to the Native Americans as it is to all visitors today.

During the spring of 1917, the 37th Iowa General Assembly passed an act to establish a system of state parks

Ken Formanek



A TELLING VIEW OF THE "DEVIL'S BACKBONE" TRAIL THAT GIVES THE PARK ITS NAME.



TRAILHEAD LEADING TO THE PARK'S MOST FAMOUS FEATURE.



Ken Formanek

administered by the new Board of Conservation. The dedication of Backbone as a state park initially grew out of a picnic gathering of the Travel Club of Manchester held on September 18, 1918 at the location of Devil's Backbone. Dr. L.H. Pammel, a botanist who later became chairman of the Board of Conservation, was invited during the meeting to deliver a speech. Dr. Pammel was very interested in the plant life of the area. He described the park in the following way:

"The trees and timber of the region are of interest. White pine -- the white pine are among the largest and oldest native white pine in the state. I saw a stump there which was nearly four feet in diameter and I should judge that these trees go back to the time when Iowa belonged to France. The Indians protected these trees and why should we not do the same."

A committee was appointed to work with the citizens of Manchester, Strawberry Point, Lamont and the adjacent area with the objective of establishing a state park here. Members of the committee were, Mrs. E.B. Dunham, Mrs. A.R. Stearns, Mrs. Jennie Leroy, E.M. Carr and B.W. Newberry.

The State Executive Council met on December 27, 1918 in special session for the purpose of conferring with the newly created Board of Conservation about the adoption of the general policy of purchasing and improving park areas. Due to the work of the Manchester Travel Club and local committee, Backbone was approved for establishment as Iowa's first state park.

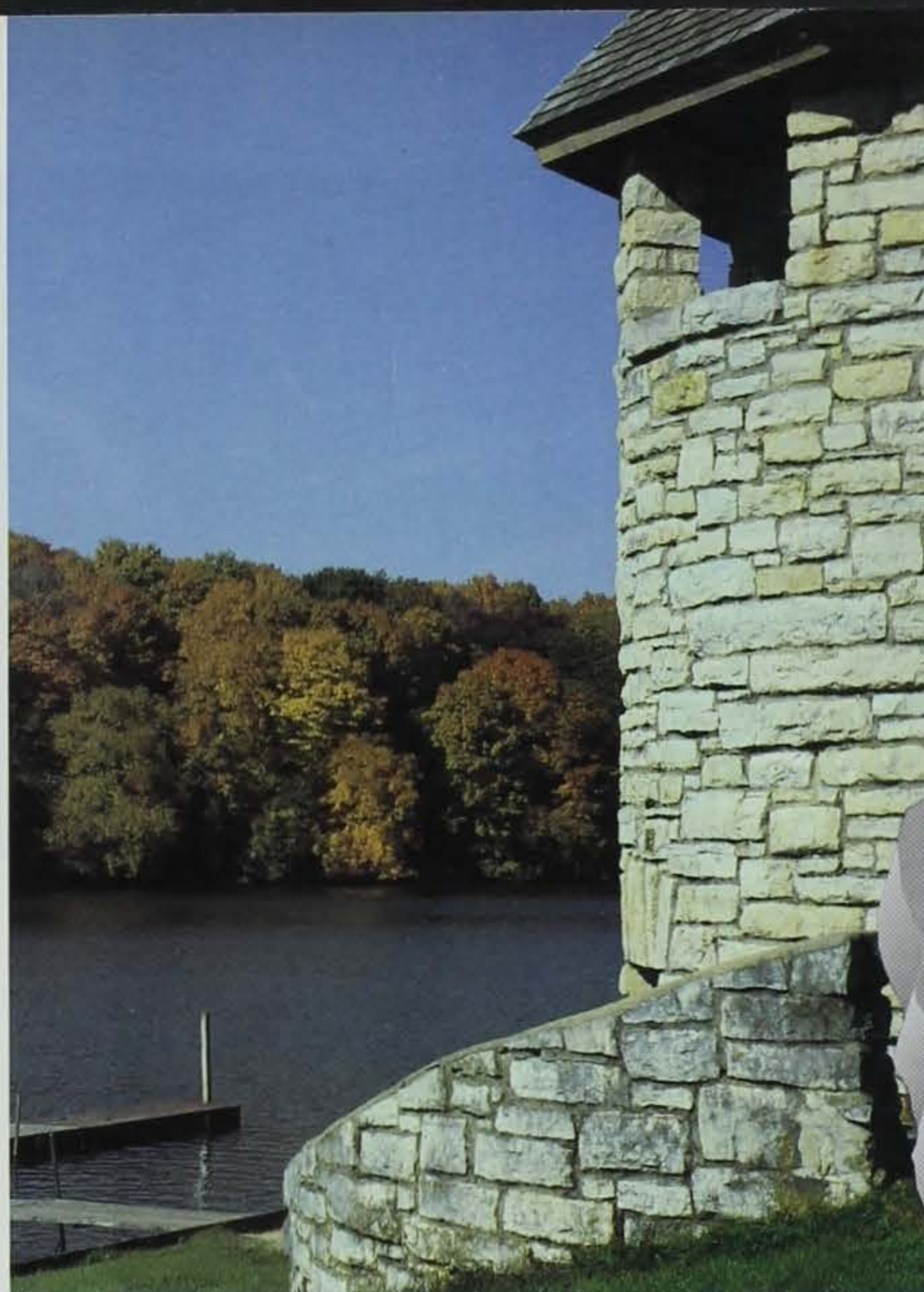
Appraisers of the land appointed by then Governor Harding were George W. Dunham of Manchester, B.W. Newberry of Strawberry Point, and W.A. Abbott of Lamont. E.H. Hoyt, State Treasurer at the time, worked with the appraisers and was final authority in land purchases. On the work of these men, Dr. Pammel stated:

"The matter of purchasing the land has certainly been put in the hands of a

most trustworthy man, Mr. Hoyt, who not only knows every foot of the land but the many springs and desirable features. He has performed his duties in an eminently and highly satisfactory way. When the land is too high, three appraisers, Senator Newberry of Strawberry Point, Judge Dunham of Manchester, and Mr. Abbott of Lamont have appraised the land. The eminent fairness of these men and their good judgement puts the matter in such shape

that the state will be greatly benefited by their wise judgement."

It should be noted that probably not everyone was overjoyed at the state purchasing their land to become a state park. When Iowa was settled many people owned small parcels of the park for pasturing. The Delaware County courthouse lists 44 names of recorded property owners before the state purchased the land. Lou Kash, one of those forced to sell his land, reportedly



Ken Formanek



**A STONE TOWER
ADJOINS THE
BOATHOUSE AND
OVERLOOKS THE
LAKE.**



Ken Formanek



**BACKBONE BOASTS FOUR
NEW, FULLY ACCESSIBLE
MODERN CABINS FOR
YEAR-ROUND CAMPING.**

**THE BOATHOUSE
AND BATHHOUSE AS
THEY LOOKED
NEWLY ERECTED
75 YEARS AGO.**

DNR Photo



never cashed his check for the sale of the land to the state.

Before the park was dedicated, George Durham of Lamont was hired as caretaker. Durham lived in a log cabin in the park. He stated that on one Sunday in August 1919, 131 autos, 11 teams and 800 people were in the park.

Governor Harding accepted the Backbone property for the state of Iowa as a public property to be "a park for us and our children, while the commonwealth

**"The trees and timber of
the region are of interest.
... the Indians protected
these trees and why should
we not do the same."**

endures." The park land purchased consisted of 1,200 acres at the time.

A planning meeting for the dedication of Backbone was held on September 19, 1919 at the park. During the meeting, the committee decided that no food would be allowed by venders but that a picnic lunch would be more appropriate with everyone providing their own. The date for the dedication of the park was set for October 1, 1919.

Fall rains were heavy during 1919 and the dedication of the park was postponed until October 7. This dedication date also had to be postponed due to continued rains which washed out bridges and trails within the low areas of

the park. Mud and silt also covered most of the prime picnic spots.

The dedication was eventually scheduled for May 28, 1920. The only passable road into the park was from Lamont. Plans were set for the dedication and the citizens of Lamont hosted visitors with a complimentary breakfast. Officials from Des Moines came by train in a Pullman car which was left in Lamont for the day. The weather finally cooperated, and a large crowd enjoyed the picnic lunch in the park.

The dedication program, presided over by Senator Newberry, was held on the natural platform beneath the shell of rock below the west-facing Backbone

**BACKBONE'S 85-ACRE
LAKE WAS CREATED BY
A DAM BUILT BY CCC
WORKERS IN THE 1930s.**

DNR Photo



Trail. An estimated 5,000 people gathered for the dedication of the park. The Manchester Band played music, Rev. C.H. True gave the invocation, and E.M. Carr gave the welcoming address. Presentation of the park was done by Dr. Pammel, and acceptance and dedication by Governor Harding.

With the dedication completed, W.A. Abbott was hired as the first full-time park custodian. Abbott resided in what is currently the Iowa Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Museum. During the 1930s, two CCC camps built many park structures including the dam creating Backbone Lake. Their legacy of hard work and craftsmanship lives on today. In the following decades, new facilities such as four year-round cabins and new campground shower facilities have been added.

Many have visited Backbone since the park was dedicated, enjoying the beauty and diversity that several Iowans had the foresight to preserve. Thanks to them, we can walk and explore Backbone today and see the same hidden treasures that inspired them.

Bob Schaut is the park ranger at Backbone State Park.



DNR Photo

←
ORIGINALLY A BATHHOUSE, THIS BUILDING NOW PROVIDES RESTROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS, AS WELL AS CONCESSIONS.



DNR Photo

↑
NOW A CCC MUSEUM, THIS BUILDING WAS ONCE OCCUPIED BY THE PARK'S FIRST CUSTODIAN, W.A. ABBOTT.



DNR Photo

←
THE OFFICIAL DEDICATION OF BACKBONE AS IOWA'S FIRST STATE PARK WAS HELD ON MAY 28, 1920.

A LEGACY MEANT TO LAST

Following is a short pictorial featuring just a sample of the work done in Iowa by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The legacy left by the group remains invaluable to Iowa's state park system. Thirty-nine of Iowa's current state parks have "gifts" left by this Depression-era work program, ranging from trail work, installation of sewer systems and erosion-control measures to beautiful stone lodges and picnic shelters.

▼ Pine Lake State Park lodge shortly after construction in 1935 and the way it appears today. The lodge was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps



DNR photo



Ken Formanek



West entrance portal of Stone State Park. CCC camp at an unknown location in Iowa.

Only single men between 18 and 25, from families on relief, were eligible to join the CCC as it was initially organized. In return for signing up for a six-month hitch, an enrollee received room and board, clothing, training and a monthly allotment of \$30 (of which \$25 was sent home to his family).

DNR photo



DNR photo

CRUMBLING DOWN

by Tim Yancey

Many of Iowa's finest state park buildings were built during the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The buildings were typically constructed of native materials available from local sources. Consequently, each has its own character, depending on where the construction materials were obtained. While individual in character, these CCC structures represent the very essence of an Iowa State Park in many people's eyes.

As these buildings recently passed their 50th birthday, it is apparent the years of exposure to Iowa climate are beginning to take their toll. In some cases, the limestone used was very hard and has shown little wear; in other cases, the stone used was softer and is deteriorating more rapidly. Winter freezing and thawing have contributed to loosening of stones in walls, and unevenness of limestone walkways and patios. Similarly, some of the wood used for heavy support beams is beginning to show its age.

The CCC structures were well-built, and maintenance over the 50 years has been generally excellent. But just as with the homes we live in, we periodically reach a point where required maintenance becomes something more than "routine." And as with our homes, it is critical that these major projects be done, or we face much greater problems and expenses in the near future.

Problems in undertaking major

renovations of these one-of-a-kind buildings are of several types. In some cases, the availability of materials makes it difficult to duplicate the structure as it was originally built. Such is the case with the large wooden beams in most CCC structures. In other cases, if materials are available, it is difficult to locate a contractor with the desire and the skills to undertake these labor-intensive restoration projects. Third, such renovations are very costly because of the first two reasons mentioned.

The beach house at Lake Wapello State Park provides an example of the types of issues encountered in numerous other state parks. The original plan for total restoration of the facility carried a cost estimate of \$750,000 several years ago. The building is a CCC "classic," and at one time housed a popular restaurant overlooking the lake. Today, the restaurant is closed, many walls are deteriorating, roofs leak, and electrical systems have become dangerous. The changing area for swimmers has loose

Backbone State Park was the site of two CCC camps, as well as the location of the largest concentration of CCC facilities in a state park. In 1990, after renovation, the old keepers lodge at Backbone State Park was dedicated as the new Civilian Conservation Corps museum. The museum, located just inside the west entrance to the park, is open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, May through October. Visitors are encouraged to call for an appointment. Admission is free of charge. The facility houses display materials and artifacts that tell the story of the CCC in Iowa. The DNR worked closely with the Iowa Historical Society in designing a professional exhibit for the museum.



Keepers Lodge. Backbone State Park.

DNR photo



Ron Johnson

stones falling out of the walls, creating a serious safety hazard. Sidewalks and steps have cracked and heaved. In many places, supporting timbers are severely deteriorated.

As with any building, once deterioration begins, the rate accelerates, and the time for major decisions on restoration becomes crucial or the decisions are made for us when restoration becomes physically and economically infeasible. The current general line of thinking regarding the Lake Wapello beach facility is that the core portion of the building should be stabilized and restored, and portions of the building should be removed. In this way, a representative and useful portion of the original building could be saved.

The Lake Wapello State Park beach house is just an example of buildings in need of extensive restoration or complete replacement. The cash required for these undertakings is massive in relation to the DNR's total budget and other urgent funding needs. In some

cases, local support from service clubs and individuals has helped to make badly needed repairs. In other cases, the scope of the problem far exceeds the ability to conduct major repairs or restorations on a volunteer basis. The fact that many of these structures are on the National Register of Historic Places is testimony to the unique qualities and values they possess. This stature also places legitimate demands on the Parks Division to make sure that all repairs and renovations are conducted in a manner that is in accord with preservation of the buildings' historic integrity.

Some of this may begin to sound pessimistic, and it is easy to become overwhelmed by the apparent enormity of the situation. However, there is also good news to share. The CCC shelter at Red Haw State Park was in serious trouble a few years ago. Main support beams were giving way, and the stone work was decaying. A complete renovation was done using new construction techniques. An epoxy

resin was used to seal and fill deteriorated wood beams, thereby avoiding the need for replacement at this time. The stone work was repaired and the old stone cleaned. The shelter was made accessible for all users by adding a concrete walkway and special tables. A rededication ceremony was held and the shelter is now the centerpiece of the park, instead of a decaying eyesore.

A similar effort took place at several other state parks in the last several years. Renovations have been completed on picnic shelters at Backbone State Park, family cabins at Pine Lake State Park and a shelter at Black Hawk Lake State Park. The process is slow, and not every building can be returned to its original condition; but progress is being made to preserve the significant historical architecture in Iowa's state parks.

Tim Yancey is a parks district supervisor located at Lake Darling near Brighton.



Jerry Leonard

◀ Beeds Lake dam was constructed in the 1930s by the CCC. In the 1980s, federal regulations required raising of the spillway and dam. This was accomplished with materials and a manner closely resembling that of the original. Necessary stone came from the same nearby quarry used by the CCC.



DNR photo



Ken Formanek



▲ Interior of the newly renovated cabins at Pine Lake State Park.

◀ In serious trouble a few years ago, the CCC shelter at Red Haw State Park underwent complete renovation using new construction techniques.

Ken Formanek



DNR photo

By June 1933, Iowa had 16 CCC camps in operation. Five thousand men had been enrolled in the Iowa companies by August 1933, and by the end of the year there were 22 Iowa CCC companies with an aggregate enrollment of approximately 7,500 men.. What the CCC offered to Iowa (and the rest of the country) was action -- a visible, popular self-help program which offered at least some relief from both the terrors of the Depression and the problems of natural resource depletion.



DNR photo

With sheer physical labor and very little heavy equipment, CCC workers built dams, roads, trails, bridges and buildings such as the rest room facility at Backbone State Park (top) and the entrance to Dolliver State Park (above). If calculated in 1995 dollars, the value of work done by the CCC in Iowa would be astronomical.

▼ From the simple picnic table (below) once located at Springbrook State Park to the beautiful picnic shelter still standing at Lacey-Keosauqua State Park (bottom), the CCC left its mark on 39 state parks around Iowa. In addition to the work done in Iowa's parks and preserves, the CCC planted several million trees for reforestation and erosion control, established two tree nurseries for the state, built game bird and fish hatcheries at a number of locations, built flood control structures and completed an immense amount of soil erosion control work on Iowa's farmlands.



DNR photo

Between 1933 and 1937, the Iowa Conservation Commission, with funding and labor furnished by the CCC, accomplished nearly 70 percent of the park and preserve development recommended in the agency's *Twenty-Five Year Plan*. By 1942, when the last CCC camp in Iowa was abandoned, even more had been accomplished. Not only did the CCC provide a major contribution to the conservation and recreation needs of Iowa, they left a legacy of work to be treasured.

Excerpts have been taken from the CCC museum exhibit "script" written by Annie Grieshop.



DNR photo

REMEMBER

by Nancy Exline-Downing

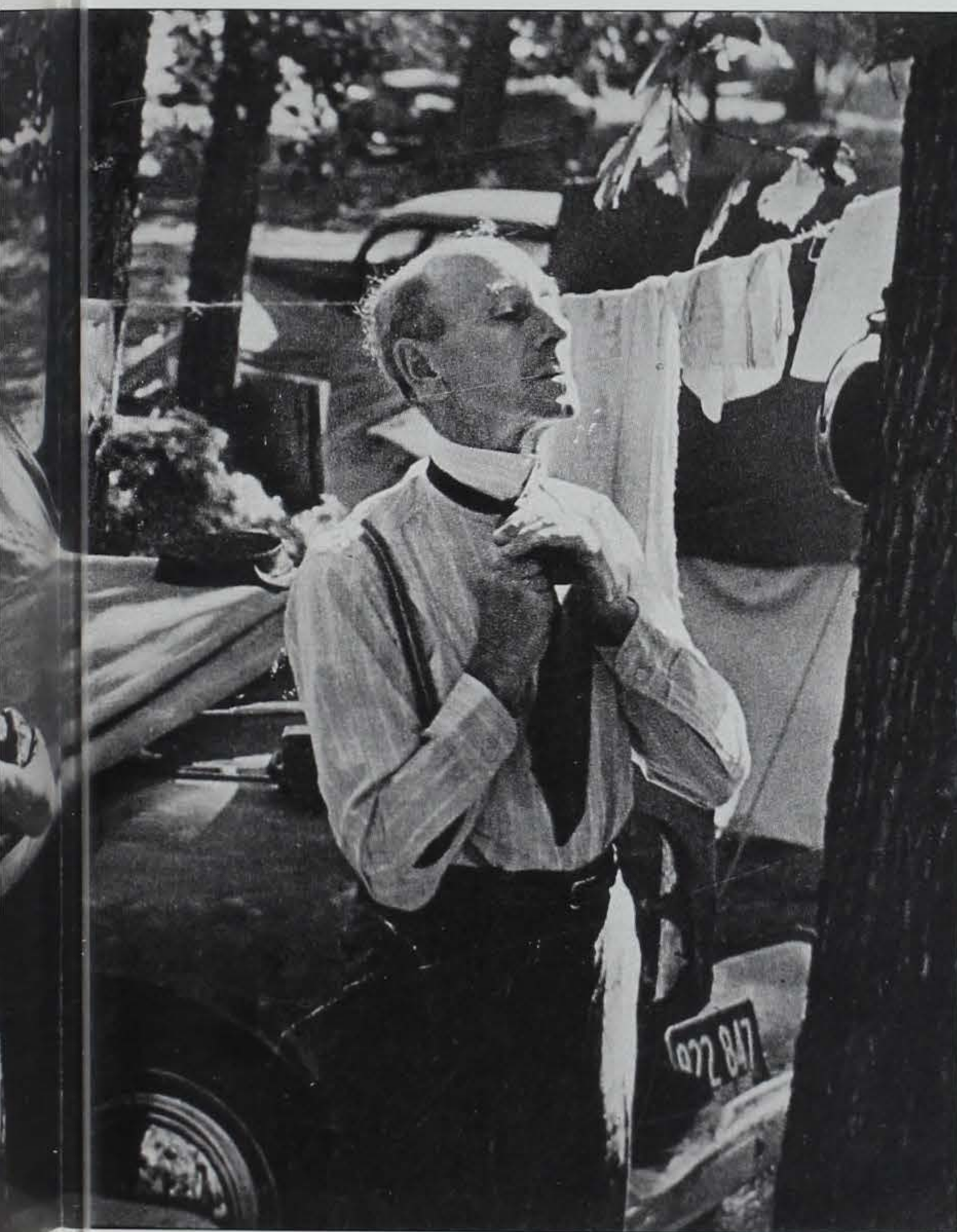
"D o you remember -- if you do you are much older than I." These lines from an old song may apply to some of the things mentioned hereafter. Some are from personal memory. Others come from sources that may not want to be revealed because it would enable others to determine their age. Still, others come from old publications or photos because it is not possible for anyone alive today to remember them -- we think.

You may or may not know that Ledges State Park exists on both sides of the Des Moines River. Prior to 1946 there was a bridge across the river in the park that allowed visitors to cross the river from the main part of the park, and fish or hike in the undeveloped portion on the other side. The bridge was closed in 1946 because it was damaged by an overloaded truck and subsequently demolished.

Many state parks had toboggan runs in the winter, some were curving, cleared areas through the timber and some had timber structures constructed to allow sharper curves and higher speeds. According to some accounts, you could reach



R WHEN?



Boone County Historical Society



▲ Bridge connecting the two segments of Ledges State Park. The bridge no longer exists, damaged by an overloaded truck in the 1940s.

◀ Camping in one of Iowa's state parks in the 1940s.

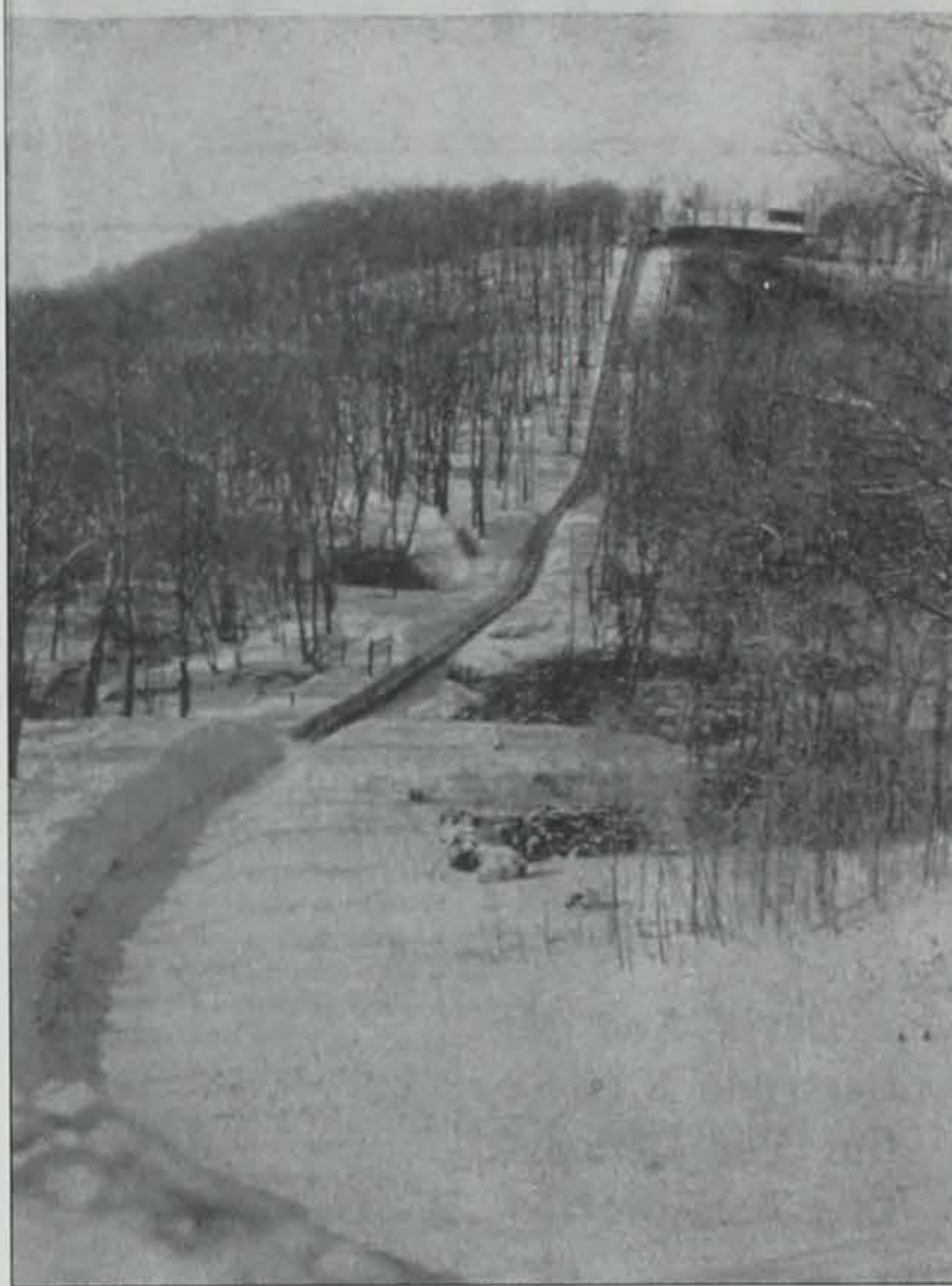
speeds of up to 80 miles per hour on the run at Fort Defiance State Park. Most parks had a sledding hill -- particularly those where Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps had been located, since the boys working in the camp always constructed or cleared a sledding hill for their own amusement. Large areas were shoveled or plowed clear of snow on many of the state park lakes for use as skating rinks in the winter. In 1959, there was an actual ski run at Palisades-Kepler State Park -- complete with a lodge, two tow ropes and lights for night skiing. By 1964, Pilot Knob had the only remaining ski run.

Dancing has been an item of discussion even before some areas were designated as parks. In the area of Maquoketa Caves State Park, a dance platform was constructed in the 1870s which eventually developed into a dancehall structure. In the summer, when it was too hot in the building, the dances would be held in what is known as Dancehall Cave, to take advantage of the natural air conditioning. There was even a road under the natural bridge leading to the dance hall. In 1939, a person interested in operating the concession at Lacey-Keosauqua State Park asked if public dances could be held in the lodge. The answer probably made sense then, but is a bit confusing now -- "public dances could not be allowed in state park lodges, but that there would be no objection to people dancing to the music of a nickelodeon."

Equipment used in the maintenance of parks has, of course, changed drastically over the years but not without controversy. When the custodian at Pilot Knob State Park began using his car almost exclusively for work and asked that the two state-owned horses be sold, he was reminded by the director of the Board of Conservation that there were certain things for which the horses were necessary. There were even lively debates over the merits of mules versus horses.

Camping in state areas began by allowing vehicles to remain in parking lots for a period of time. Some areas were restricted to overnight stays only. These were primarily in the Iowa Great

IOWA'S LARGEST AND FASTEST TOBOGGAN SLIDE



In Fort Defiance State Park

Estherville, Ia.

This slide was built by the Conservation Commission and is being used for the first time this winter (1938 and 1939).

The slide is twelve hundred feet in length. It has a drop of 127 feet in the first 700 feet. At one point there is a drop of 40 feet in 100 feet.

It takes an average of 1.5 seconds to make the trip. At times a faster speed is attained. At one point the slide clocked a speed of 8 miles per hour.

The slide is open to the public and there is no charge for its use. Toboggans can be rented at the slide.

It is estimated that 25,000 people have visited the slide since it was opened this winter. They represented many cities and states.

Lakes area and other locations which today are considered to be prime locations for two-week vacations. The campground at Gull Point State Park was not constructed until 1960. That year was also the year the first shower building was constructed in a state park. An important feature of the building was the wash tub provided for campers to use in "soaking their socks."

Did you ever think of going to your nearby state park to play a game of golf? At one time there were seven state parks that contained golf courses, at least according to information contained in a 1949 issue of the *Iowa Conservationist*. Since, in 1923, the Board of Conservation had determined they would not appropriate state funds for golf course operation most were operated by nearby communities or concessionaires. If you paid the appropriate green fee you could slice your way through courses at Lacey-Keosauqua, Wapsipinicon, Bellevue,

Kearny, Lake Manawa, Mill Creek and Rice Lake state parks. The course at Wapsipinicon is the only one still operating.

In fact, at Bellevue State Park a parcel of privately owned property separating two portions of the park was rented by the State for \$75 per year from 1935 to 1945 so the public could have road access to a part of the park. It was being used as a golf course and it seems the private club operating the course could not afford to pay the land owner so they convinced the State to pay the rent, using the argument that if the land was not rented, public access to the park would be discontinued. This was eventually resolved by the State buying the land. The course at Bellevue is now a restored prairie and forest area and contains one of the best known features of the park -- the butterfly garden.

Nancy Exline-Downing is an executive officer with the Parks, Recreation and Preserves Division in Des Moines.

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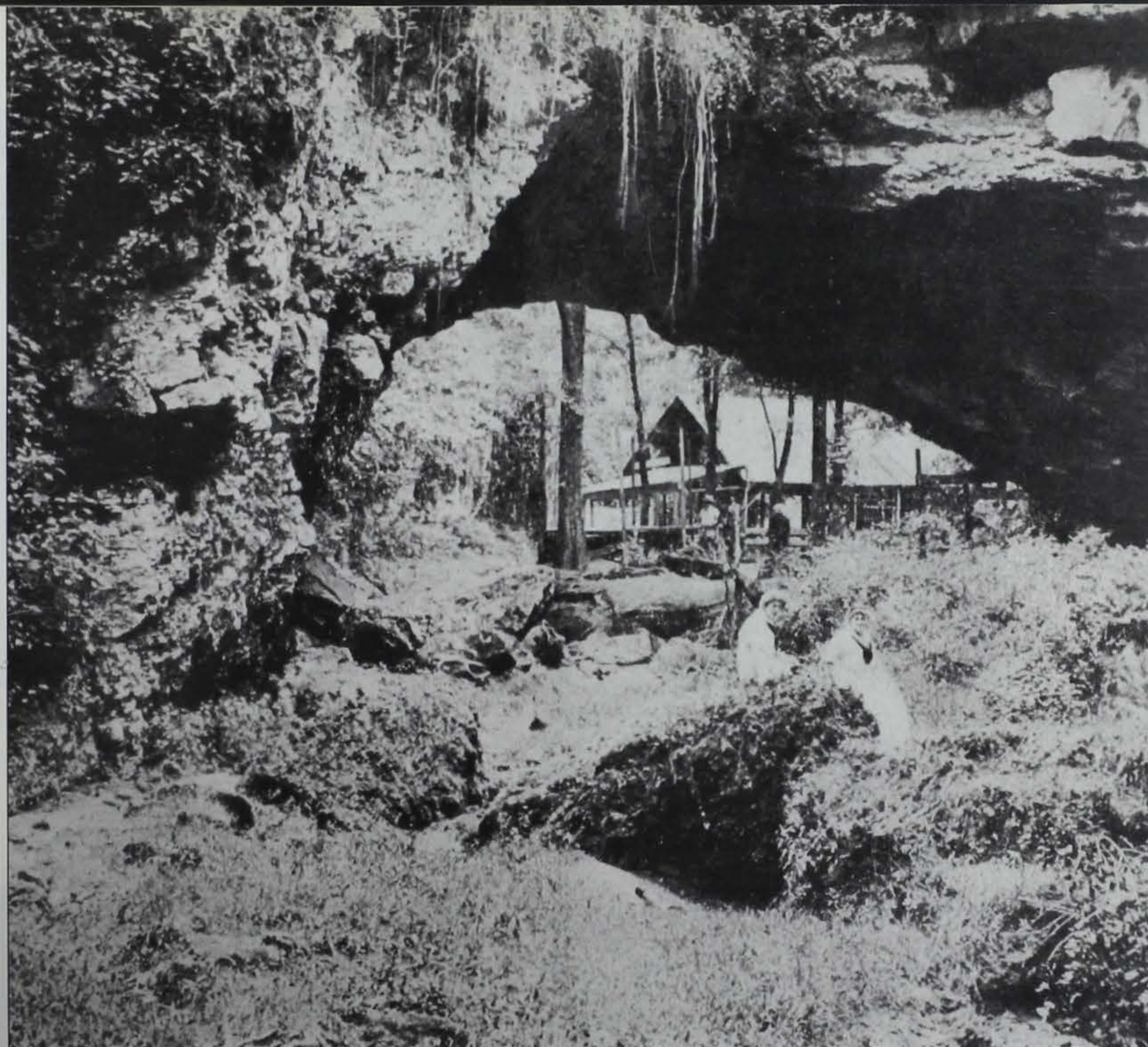
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DNR photo

◀ (opposite page)

Fort Defiance apparently had the largest and fastest toboggan slide in the state (at least in 1938), according to this newspaper clipping.

▲

Dancehall, seen through the natural bridge at Maquoketa Caves State Park.

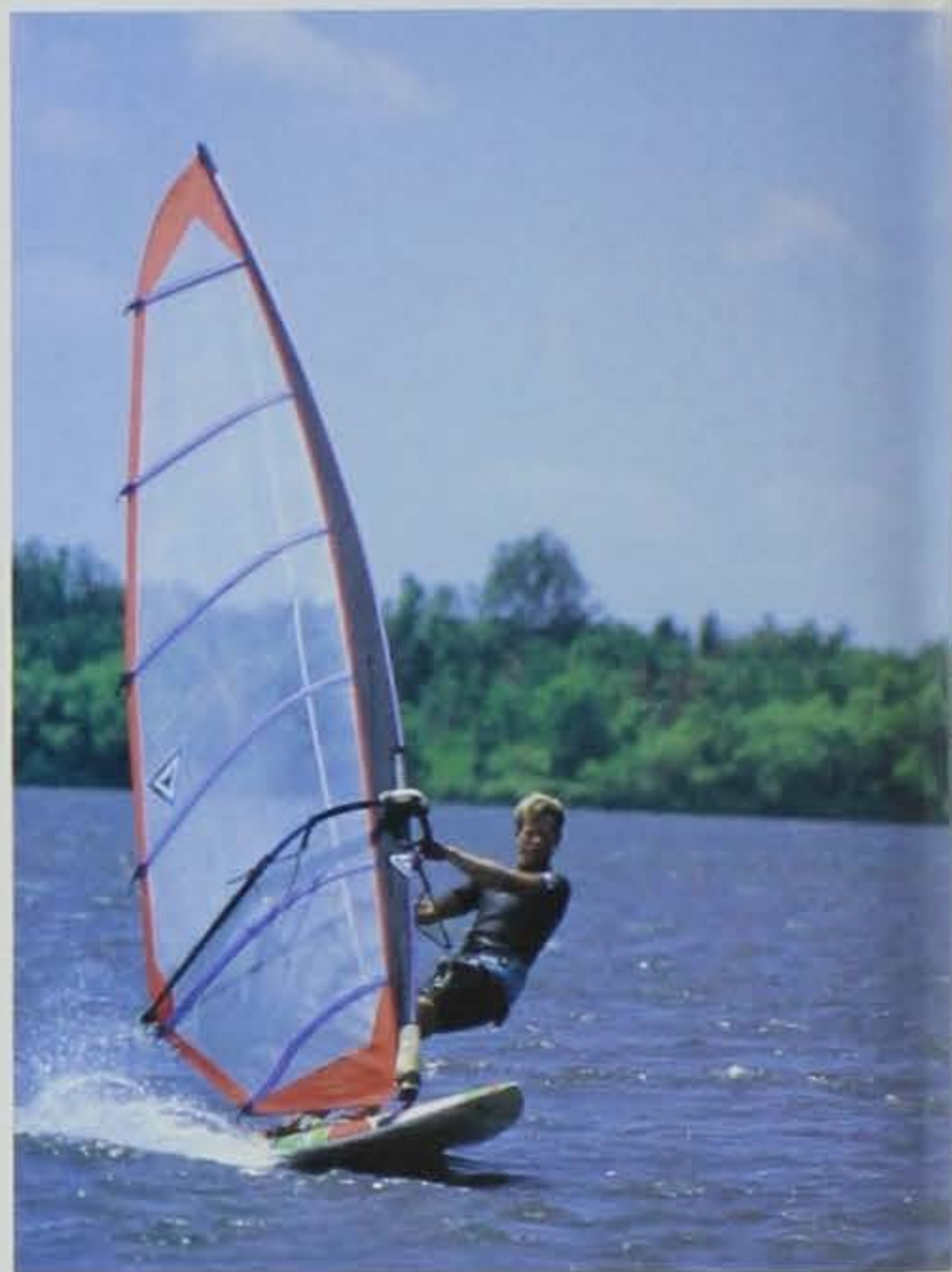
◀

As cars became more popular, some park workers had to be reminded that "there were certain things for which horses were necessary."

STATE PARK CONCESSIONS OLD AND NEW

by Nancy Exline-Downing

Ken Formanek



As early as 1932, private business was flourishing in Iowa's state parks. It was possible to obtain permission from the Board of Conservation to provide specified services to the public. However, concessionaires didn't bother asking to rent boats, as they were still

not allowed on many of the park lakes. Food service was the big item in those days and that could include operation of a very formal dining room. In 1934, it was decided that it would be all right for the Army to operate beer concessions in Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps in state parks "if it is

their request to operate special concessions was denied.

As time passed and it became more and more difficult to find entrepreneurs to operate the concessions, as well as more difficult to collect the required fees, the Board of Conservation determined that good service could be rendered if the State operated the concessions themselves through the employees in the park. Contracts were then let to the park custodians who were willing and "acceptable" for the operation of the concession in their park. The changing of philosophy regarding private versus State operation has taken place several times in the ensuing decades. Currently, private business operations are providing services in 17 parks.

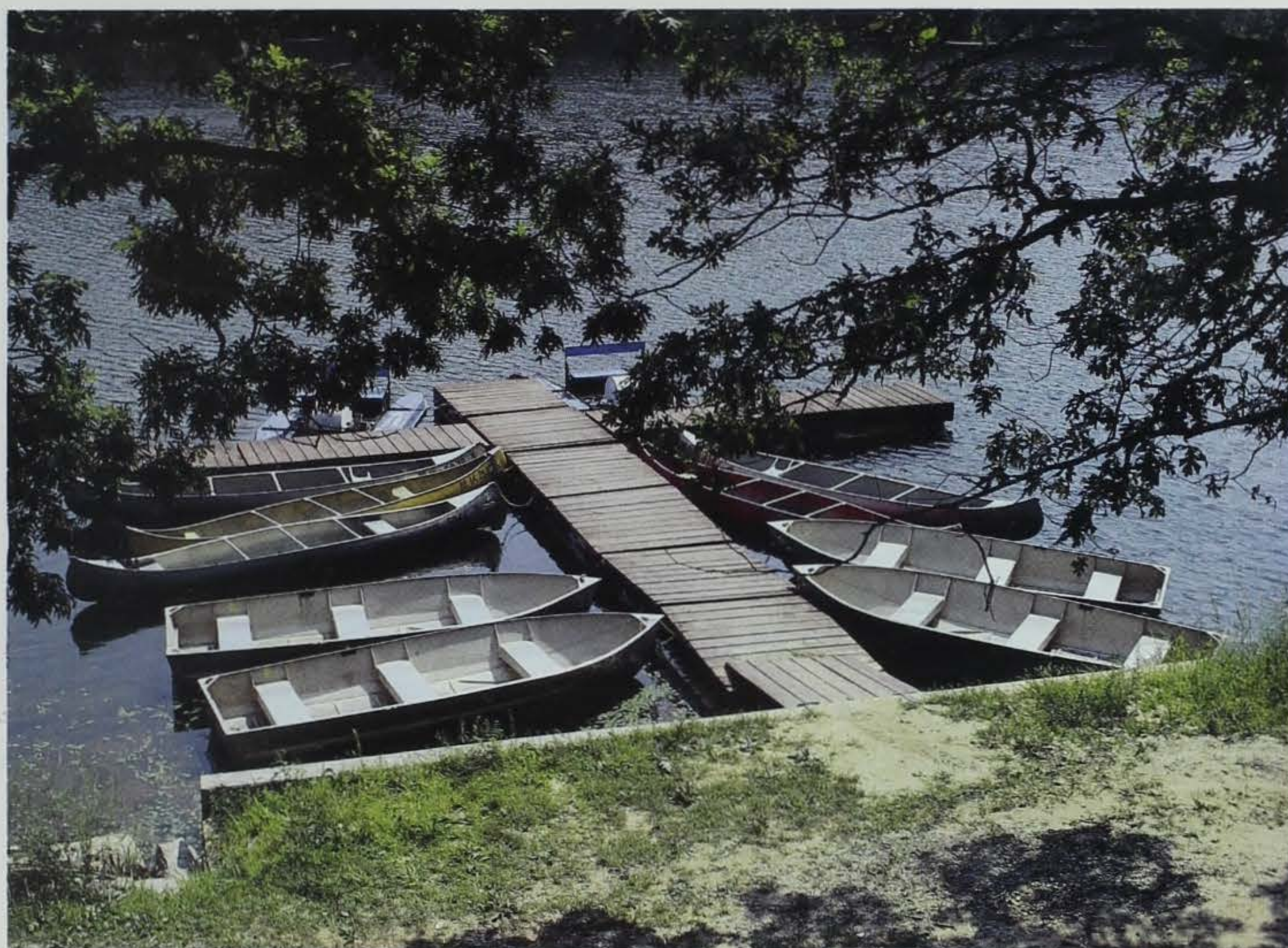
Services provided have also changed greatly over the years. The formal dining rooms, with waiters or waitresses, have been replaced by snack food service with picnic tables, or if you prefer, you can have your family or company picnic catered, near the beach, by the concessionaire. "Bathing" areas have changed to beaches, with or without lifeguards, and the diving platforms or tall waterslides have been removed from most areas. Admission to the beach



DNR photo

▲
Park store at Backbone State Park, 1938.

found to be an advantage in regulating the conduct of the CCC boys when they are outside the Camp." However, in early 1935, the Congregational Christian Conference of Iowa was holding encampments in various state parks and



Ron Johnson



Ken Formanek

▲ At state parks such as Big Creek and Lake Macbride, concessionaires rent wind surfing equipment and may offer lessons. Otherwise, the more traditional forms of water transportation are available.



Ken Formanek

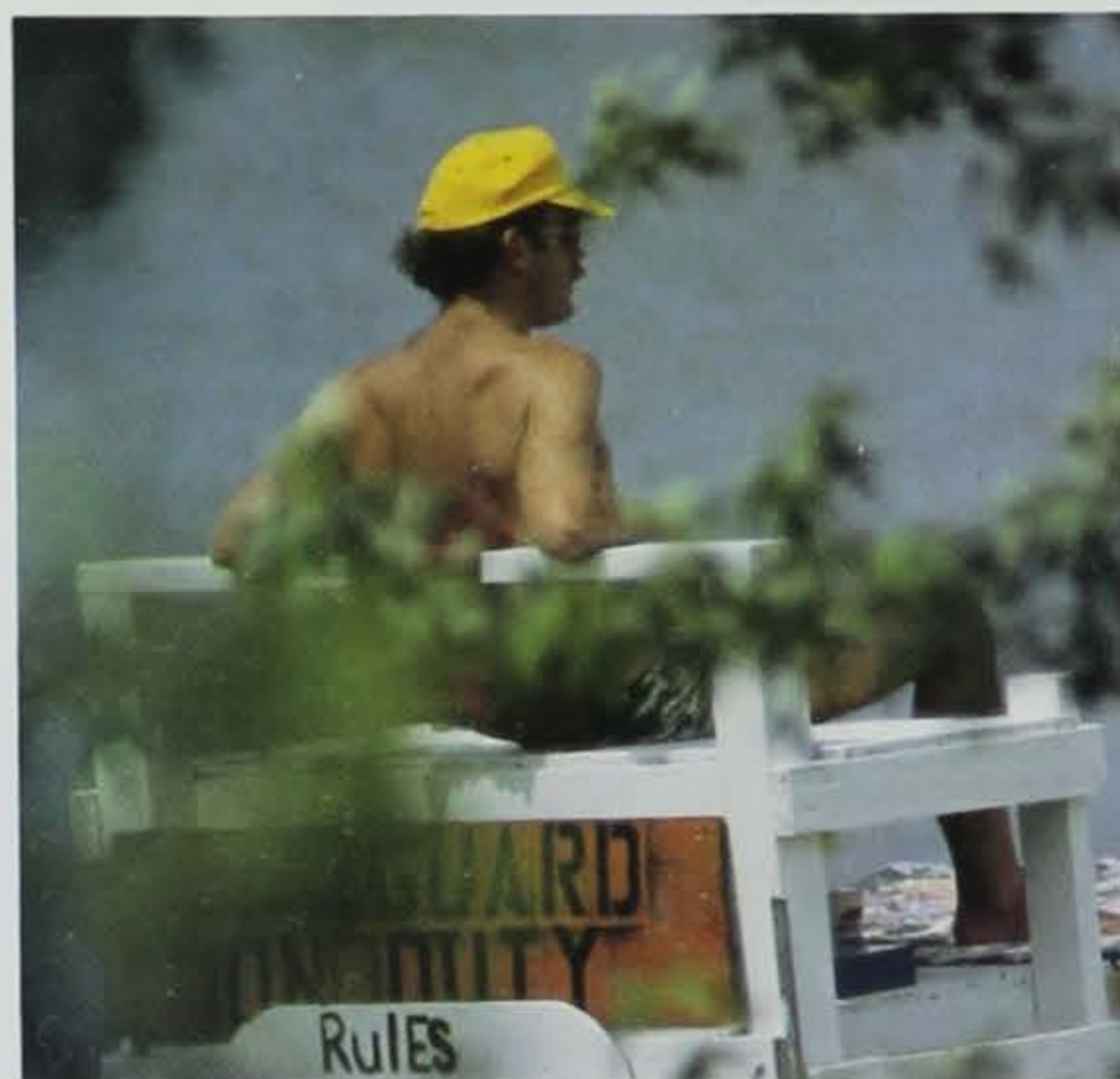
▲ While ordering snacks Big Creek's newly built concession building, you get the feeling of standing underwater looking up at the bottom of waves and a boat.

will probably cost more than 21 cents, and you probably won't be able to rent a suit and towel for 55 cents or a towel for only 10 cents. Now you can not only rent a rowboat or paddle boat, but in some areas you can now get a pontoon boat with a grill and toilet facilities on board for an hour or a day. If you want to rent the heated and air conditioned cabins in Backbone State Park during the winter, you can contact the concessionaire and even use your charge card to pay for the reservation. We are sorry to say the "ski lodge" no longer exists at Palisades-Kepler State Park.

The customers have changed too. Generally, people no longer arrive at



Ken Formanek



Jerry Leonard



Today's park concessions offer a wide array of items and services -- from the typical summer snacks, bait and firewood to boat and cabin rentals and lifeguards.



Contrasting Big Creek's modern concession building is Lake Ahquabi State Park's CCC-vintage beach house.

the beach in suit coat and tie or Sunday-go-to-meeting dresses. Consequently, the large open-roofed changing rooms with wooden partitions and check-in baskets for these good clothes have been replaced by food service areas with rest rooms attached -- today's beach concession facility in Iowa's state parks. Many of the large elaborate stone structures constructed by the CCC boys remain on site but chances are they have been remodeled and the wire clothing baskets have long since disappeared. The design of the most recently constructed concession building at Big Creek State Recreation Area gives the feeling of standing underwater looking up at the bottom of the waves and a boat while waiting to order snacks.

There is no such thing as a "typical" concession operation today. The services provided can range from simply selling firewood to campers to a full-service operation with snack food, catering, boat or bicycle rental, lifeguards on the beach, fishing bait or tackle, and souvenirs for park visitors. People patronizing a concession facility in a state park may think the people working there are state employees -- they are not. However, they do a great job of representing the state in their business ventures. Your visit to Iowa's state parks would not be nearly as pleasurable nor convenient, were it not for the services offered by these entrepreneurs -- state park concessionaires.



Ken Formanek

FOR MANY REASONS

by James Zohrer

▼
Backbone State Park trout stream, Richmond Springs.

Iowa state parks and recreation areas were initially acquired and developed for a variety of reasons. In 1918 the Iowa Legislature authorized the establishment of public parks and the creation of a Board of Conservation. The Board of Conservation held its first meeting on December 27, 1918. During that meeting the board further clarified the reasons for establishing state parks in Iowa. The following excerpts from the report of that meeting testify to the foresight exhibited by the founders of our state park system.

"Our examination of the many proposed park sites and

reserves has impressed us with the belief that the time has arrived for the great State of Iowa to take a decisive stand to protect and conserve for future generations some of the many beauty spots of the state, as well as preserve in its original form a portion, at least, of what is left that indicates the original natural condition of our prairies, forests and waters with their wealth of varied plant life as well as wild animal and bird life native to them. . . .

Summing up our report, we do not

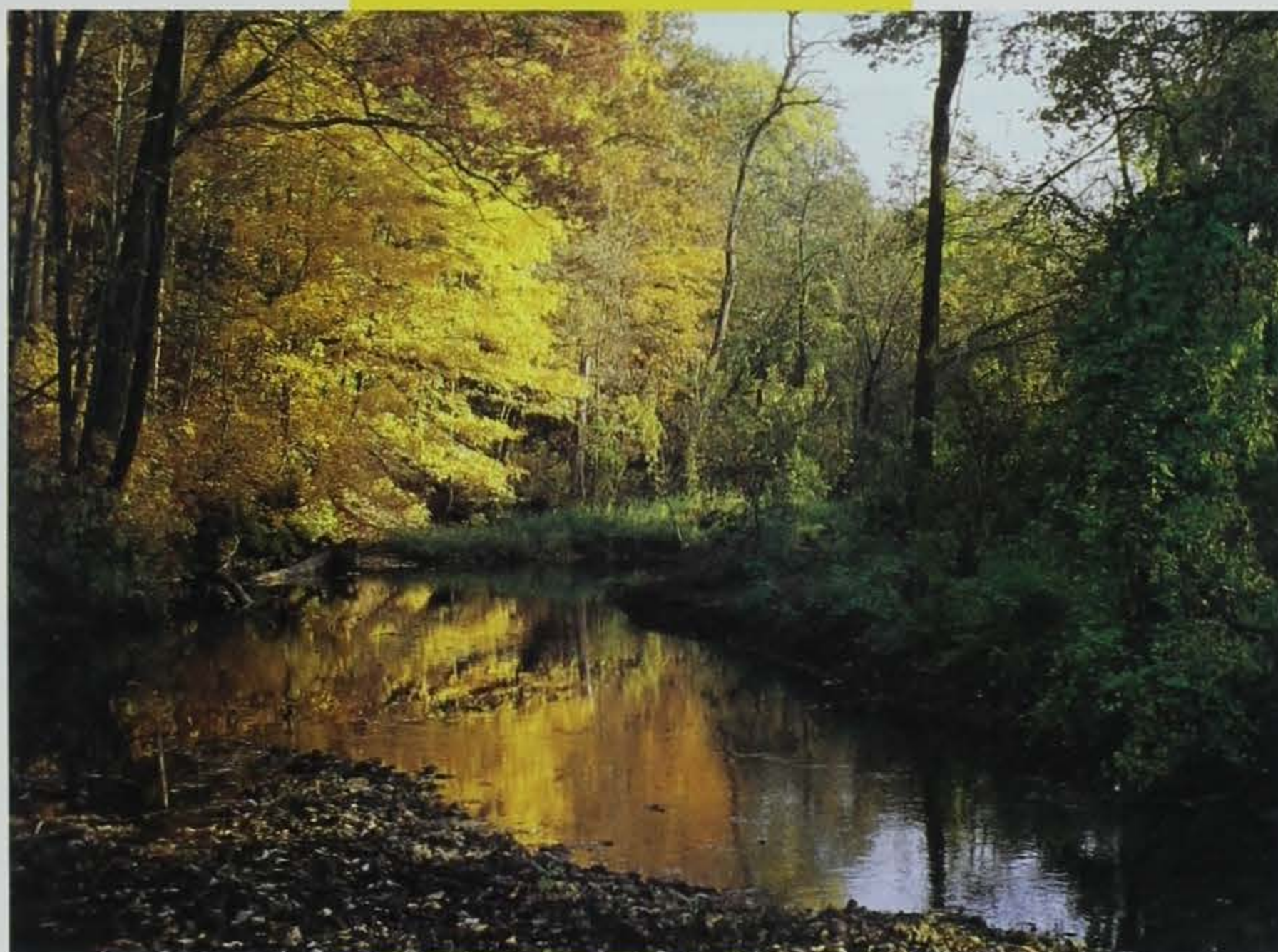
hesitate to say that Iowa has within its borders many of the rarest places of historical and scientific interest that might be conserved to the general good of its people, that the opportunity of combining comfort and recreation, with

the knowledge to be obtained from a study of plant life, natural beauty and resources still exists and that we should avail ourselves of the opportunity of acquiring them for all of the people of our state for all time."

The Board of Conservation, from its inception, recognized the need to preserve and protect our natural areas

while at the same time providing for the recreational demands of our park users. These principles have been incorporated into the current effort initiated by the DNR to prepare long-term management plans for our state park and recreation areas.

An "ecosystem management" approach has been used in preparing these plans. This approach recognizes that plant and animal communities and individuals interact with each other and with their physical environment. Consid-



Ken Formanek

State parks were developed to provide for the demands of many users, as well as protect and preserve the natural resources which made them so attractive in the first place.

(bottom) ▼ ►
 Prescribed prairie burns and planting seedlings are just part of the ecosystem management approach undertaken by Iowa state parks.



DNR photo



erations for the management of one component of an ecosystem can not be made without considering the impacts that a recommended management practice may have on other components of that system. Humans are members of this system, and their influence from both within and from outside the boundaries of a park are considerable and must be taken into account. The ecosystem management approach also recognizes that natural systems are not static, that changes are inevitable, and that natural succession is a primary driving force for these changes.

The DNR's long-range planning effort for each state park or recreation area begins with the formation of a committee representing interests in forestry, wildlife management, park recreation management and community ecology as well as knowledge of long-term public input in the management of our park resources. Each committee is working under the guidance of a long-range goal which reads . . . "To protect and manage state park and recreation area plant and animal communities in order to enhance and perpetuate the natural diversity of the area while considering the educational benefits, and the aesthetic needs and compatible recreational demands of the area user."

Each management plan is made up of several components including:



Ken Formanek



DNR photo



Ken Formanek

1. A detailed vegetation management plan for each recognizable unit within the park;
2. Management activity records which will be used to maintain a historical account of management activities;
3. Wildlife management recommendations;
4. Watershed management recommendations;
5. A discussion of outside detrimental influences on the park; and

6. A discussion of park expansion if, and when, funds and willing sellers should become available.

Long-range plans are being prepared for six state parks or recreation areas at the present time. These plans recognize that each area is unique and that specific management recommendations will differ for each park. In some cases, very active management must be carried out in order to maintain a park in the desired condition. One example would be

◀ (opposite page) ▼

Protecting plant and animal communities to enhance natural diversity is the first part of a park's long-range goal. Considering the educational benefits, aesthetic needs and recreational demands of the user is the second part of the goal.

trying to maintain existing prairie remnants in our parks in the loess hills of western Iowa. Prior to European settlement, the northern reaches of these hills were nearly treeless prairie-covered formations. Early settlers were concerned with wild fires, and their control of these fires permitted trees to get a foothold and eventually take over most of the original prairie vegetation. Today only scattered openings of the original prairie vegetation remain. In order to maintain these native prairie remnants, along with their remaining animal components, these areas must be periodically burned and young trees cut to keep woody vegetation from taking over.

Other parks are prized because of their large "old growth" stand of trees. Even this type of forest community must be managed to some degree to insure that there will always be "old" trees standing in the future. We must all remember that preserving a natural ecosystem does not just mean leaving it alone. Humans' influence on the natural world is so extensive that in almost every case some form of management must be carried out to insure that what we are trying to preserve will be there for many years to come.

The DNR's long-range planning effort is a never ending process. New plans will be prepared in future years and old plans will be reviewed and brought up to date. Public input is always welcome. These park and recreation areas belong to all of us and it is up to all of us to insure that these parks exist 50, 100, 200 years from now to preserve "in its original form a portion of our prairies, forests and waters with their wealth of varied plant life as well as wild animal and bird life native to them . . ." as envisioned by the original Board of Conservation some 75 years ago.

Jim Zohrer is an executive assistant with the Parks, Recreation and Preserves Division.

T

here are many categories of conservation lands in Iowa, including parks, recreation areas, wildlife areas, forests and preserves. They are physically associated in complex ways -- sometimes separate, sometimes adjacent and sometimes even contained within each other. These contrasting classifications represent attempts to accommodate diverse, sometimes incompatible uses, including hiking, horseback riding, camping, picnicking, boating and hunting. Following is an attempt to unravel some of the relationships in four well-known places -- Stone State Park, Pilot Knob State Park, the Mines of Spain Recreation Area, and Bixby State Park.

by John Pearson and
Daryl Howell

First, a brief explanation of the differences between parks, recreation areas, and preserves is in order. *State parks and state recreation areas* are

lands owned by the State of Iowa which are managed with the goal of providing outdoor recreational opportunities to the public. Many parks and recreation areas also contain significant natural and cultural features such as bluffs, mature forests, native prairies and ancient Indian mounds which are protected for their intrinsic values. Parks are legally differentiated from recreation areas by having restricted visiting hours (4 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.) and fewer allowable uses (no hunting or trapping). Recreation areas are open 24 hours per day and allow hunting and trapping.

State preserves are lands which are recognized for outstanding natural or cultural features. Despite the word "state" in its name, a state preserve is not necessarily owned by the State of Iowa. Many are owned by counties, cities, private conservation organizations, or private individuals. What they all have in common, however, is the legal dedication by their owners as a "preserve" under state law. This means that preservation of their natural or cultural features takes precedence over any other competing use. Conversion to another use which degrades or destroys the primary features of a preserve is forbidden without the concurrence of the State Preserves Advisory Board, the Governor and the Legislature.

Stone State Park is a 1,085-acre park located in the northwest corner of Woodbury County and an adjacent part of Plymouth County in northwest Iowa. Most of the park is contained within the official limits of Sioux City. The park contains a large complex of bur oak forest and native prairie on rugged topography of the northern Loess Hills. High grassy ridges overlooking forested valleys offer many scenic vistas both of the park and of the adjacent plains of Nebraska and South Dakota. Fires set under controlled conditions by park managers to maintain the prairie communities also provide a spectacular display of flame and smoke each spring.

The original part of park was acquired by the state from the city of Sioux City in 1935. The city had previously acquired the park as a donation from the estate of Thomas Jefferson Stone, after whom the park was

PARKS WITH A LITTLE EXTRA

Unravelling the Relationship Between Parks and Preserves

named. Additions to the state park were completed in the 1970s, including summer camps formerly used by the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts of America. As in many other Iowa state parks, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) constructed many shelters, lodges and trails in Stone Park during the late 1930s. In the 1980s, botanists and ecologists concerned with the preservation of native prairie in Iowa were attracted by the size and quality of the prairie remnants in Stone State Park. The best prairie tracts were identified in the northern end of the park and were the basis for the state preserve dedication of a 90-acre area in 1989. The area now known as the **Mt. Talbot State Preserve** is still part of Stone State Park, but now has the additional distinction of preserve status.

Pilot Knob State Park in Hancock and Winnebago counties contains a hilly, forested landscape dotted with small wetlands. A stone observation tower in the park sits on a hilltop which is the second-highest point in Iowa. This hill and its surrounding landscape mark the southernmost extension of the last glacier to enter and retreat from Iowa during the Ice Age. The forests, cloaking the ridges and hillsides, are dominated by bur oak with pockets of red oak and basswood in the moister valleys. Part of Deadman's Lake, one of the numerous small wetlands in the park, is a sphagnum bog (more technically classified as a "nutrient-poor fen" by some botanists). It contains several rare plants including the sundew, a species which entraps insects with sticky hairs on its leaves.

The park is part of a 530-acre complex of state land that includes a recreation area and a state preserve. The first 370 acres were acquired in the 1920s and 1930s and dedicated as a state park. In 1968, three blocks of land within the park totaling some 230 acres (approximately 60 percent of the park) were dedicated as the **Pilot Knob State Preserve**. The preserve includes Deadman's Lake and most of the undeveloped land in the park. It excludes the campground, picnic areas, observation tower, roads and other developed areas. In 1980, another 160

acres was added to the northeast side of the park and was designated as the **Pilot Knob Recreation Area**, also known locally as the "wilderness area" or the "McGrady tract," this area is open to hunting.

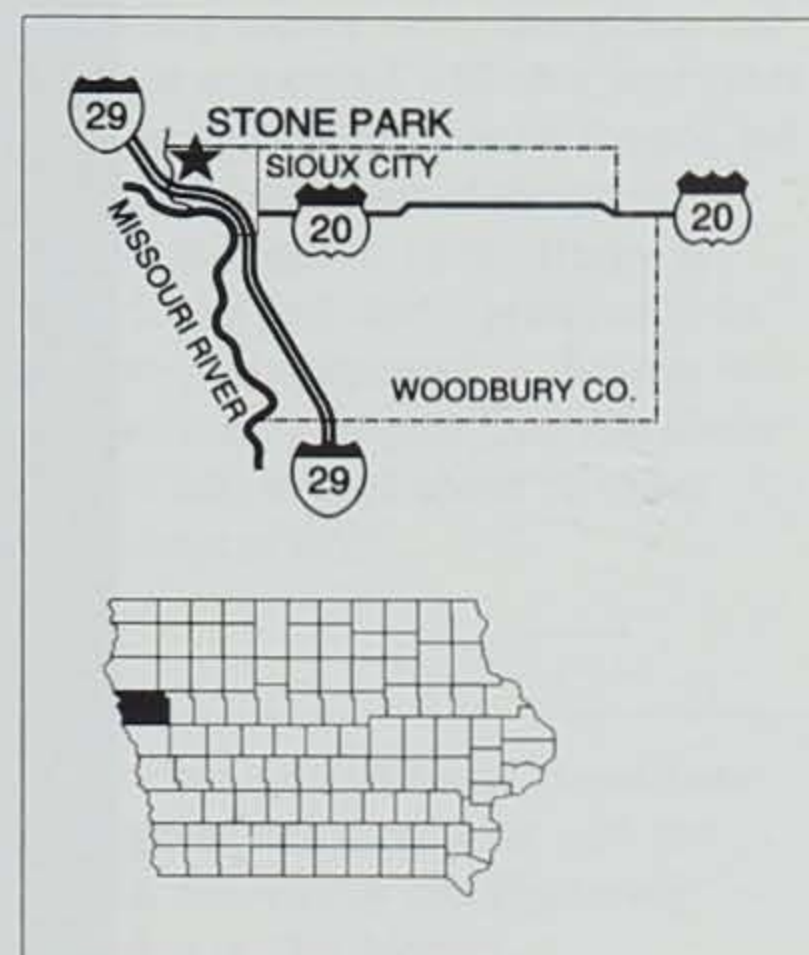
The **Mines of Spain Recreation Area** is a 1,300-acre area containing a three-mile long reach of forested bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River in Dubuque County. In addition to its scenic

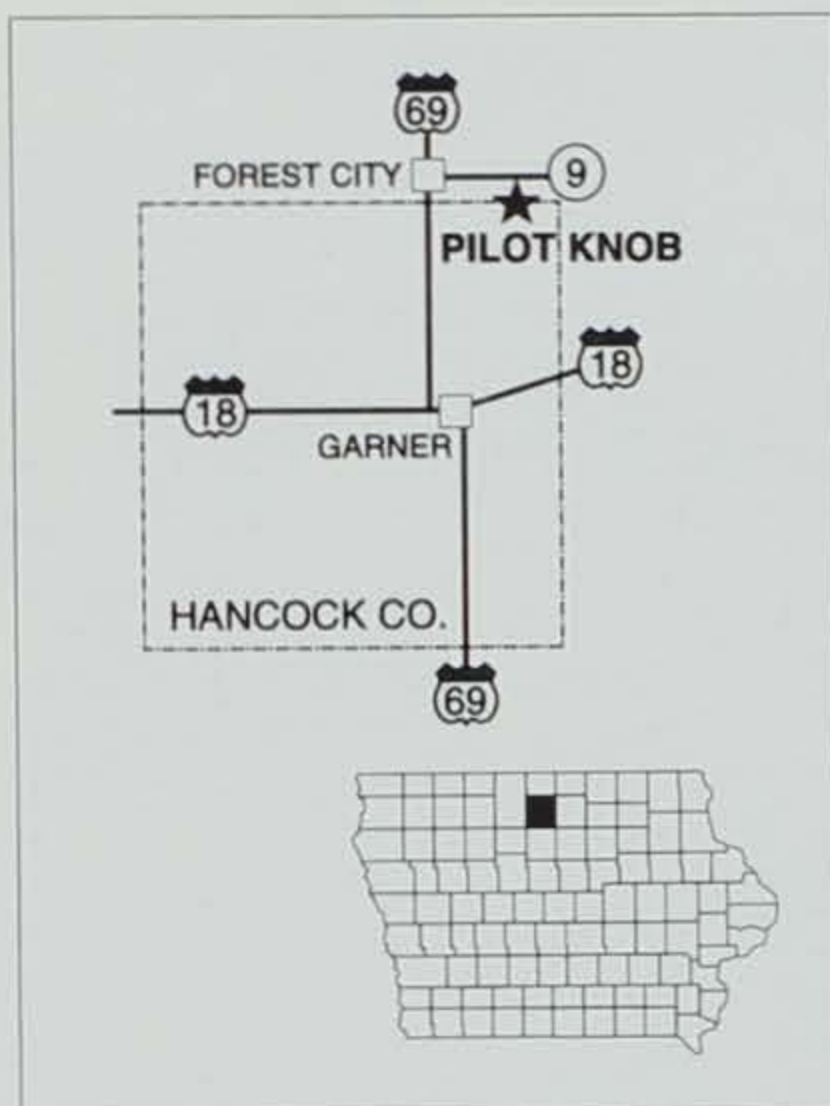
qualities, the Mines of Spain area is known for its historical, archaeological and geological significance. Evidence of early Native American settlement of the area is provided by ancient campsites, rock shelters and earth mounds -- some as much as 8,000 years old. Shallow deposits of lead in the limestone bedrock of the Mines of Spain area have been mined by a succession of Native American, European and Euro-American people for hundreds of years. In the late 1700s, this area was part of a large Spanish land grant to Julien Dubuque, a French miner, settler and founder of the city that now bears his name. After 1830, lead mining became more intensive as pits, shafts and adits (enlarged fissures) reached for deeper deposits. The most obvious relicts of this era in the Mines of Spain today are



Jerry Leonard

▲
Stone is one state park hosting a state preserve within its boundaries -- Mt. Talbot State Preserve.



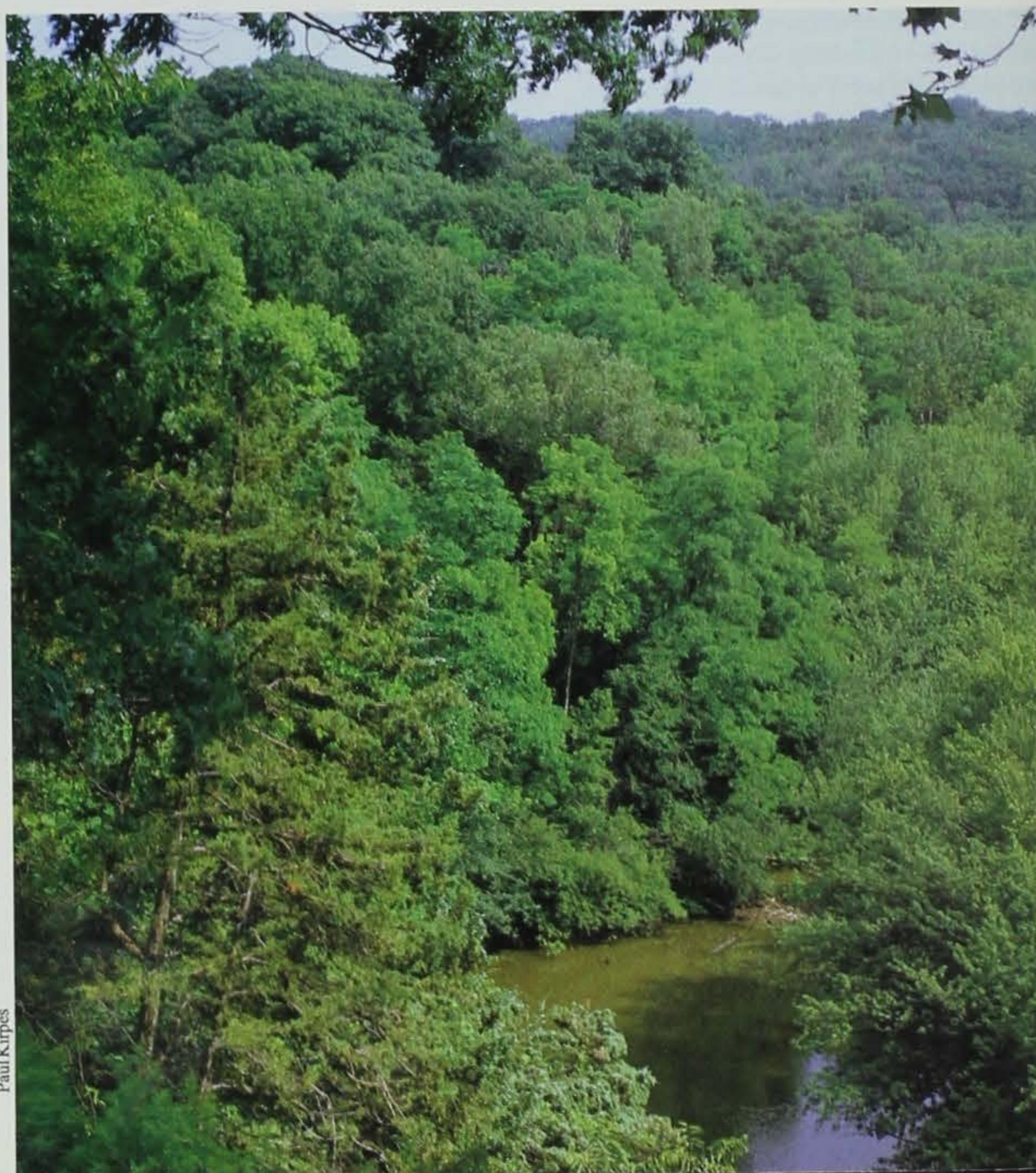


John Pearson



► The best prairie tracts of Stone State Park were identified in the northern end of the park and were dedicated as Mt. Talbot State Preserve.

► Catfish Creek State Preserve, part of the Mines of Spain Recreation Area is named for the stream which flows through it and into the Mississippi River. The vicinity around the mouth of Catfish Creek is thought to have been the headquarters of Julien Dubuque's mining enterprise as well as the location of a large Mesquakie village until about 1830.



Paul Kirpes

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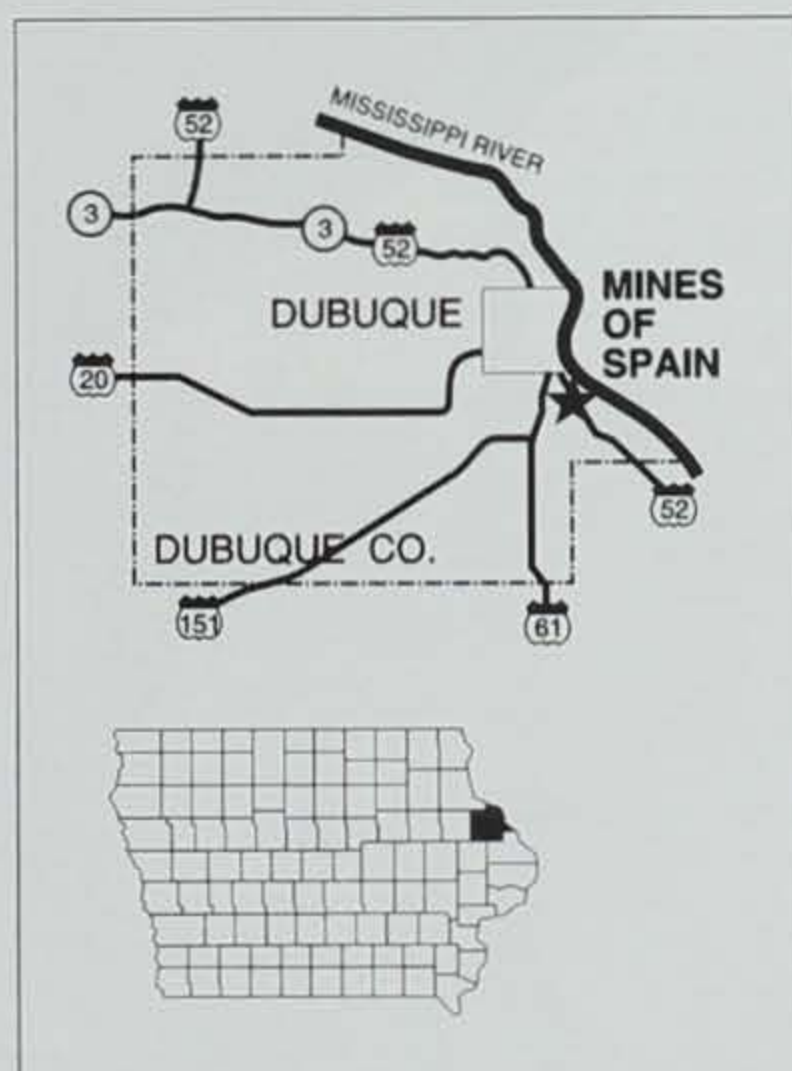
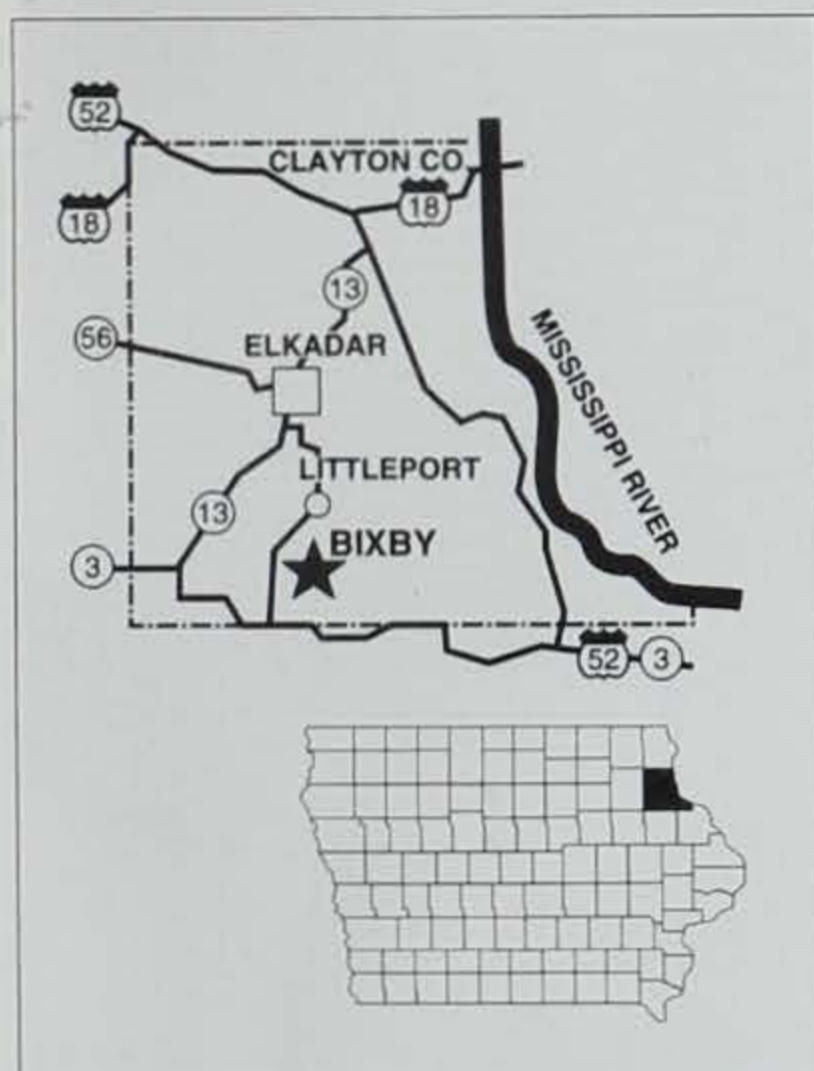


Daryl Howell

Daryl Howell



◀ ▼
Bixby is both a park and a preserve in its entirety. The "ice cave" (left) with its strong outflow of cold, humid air creates an environment for rare plants and animals.



hundreds of small, shallow pits overgrown by recovering forests.

The Mines of Spain area was acquired by the state in the 1980s and subsequently designated as a recreation area. In 1991, approximately 600 acres in the northern half of the recreation area were dedicated as the **Catfish Creek State Preserve**, named for the stream which flows through this area and into the Mississippi River. The vicinity around the mouth of Catfish Creek is thought to have been the headquarters of Julien Dubuque's mining enterprise as well as the location of a large Mesquakie village until about 1830. The preserve contains the grave and former cabin site of

Julien Dubuque, the Mesquakie village site, a large concentration of pit mines, and a former adit mine -- the "Fessler mine."

Bixby State Park is a 184-acre park located in Clayton County just north of the town of Edgewood in northeast Iowa. It contains a rugged forested area along the valley of Bear Creek and is best known for the "ice cave," -- a natural fissure in the limestone bedrock with a strong outward flow of cold, humid air. This natural fissure was reportedly enlarged in the late 1800s by miners prospecting for lead. No lead was found, but a large deposit of ice developed in the enlarged opening due to condensation and

freezing of moist air issuing from the "cave." Some time later, the entrance was reconstructed and a steel barrier gate was installed to prevent people from going deeper in the cave. The large ice deposit subsequently shrank in size and no longer extrudes out of the entrance, however, some ice is still visible to visitors who peer into the cave with a flashlight. A strong flow of cold air still issues from the fissure and often creates a low-lying fog in front of the cave.

The original tract of land containing the ice cave was acquired as a state park in 1926 and an addition in 1978 enlarged the park to its present 184 acres. Recreational facilities include a picnic area with a stone shelter built by the CCC in the 1930s. Recognition of the area's exceptional natural features, including the ice cave, rare plants and animals associated with this, and other cold air slopes, and mature forests, led to the establishment of the preserve within the park in 1979. Bixby is therefore a park and a preserve in its entirety. Management of the area is carried out by rangers from Backbone State Park, located about 10 miles southwest of Bixby.

John Pearson and Daryl Howell are environmental specialists with the Parks, Recreation and Preserves Division in Des Moines.

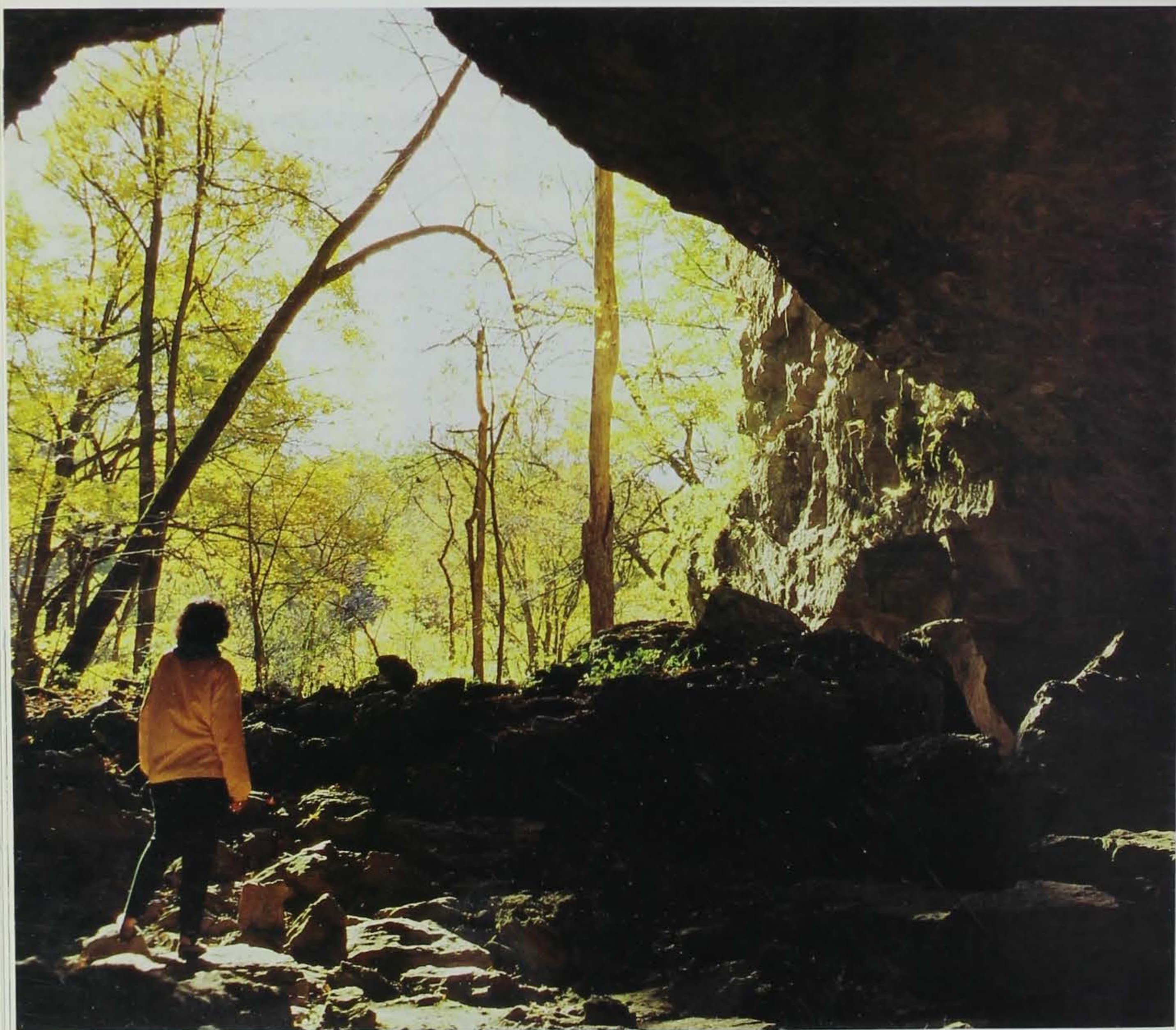
DNR photo



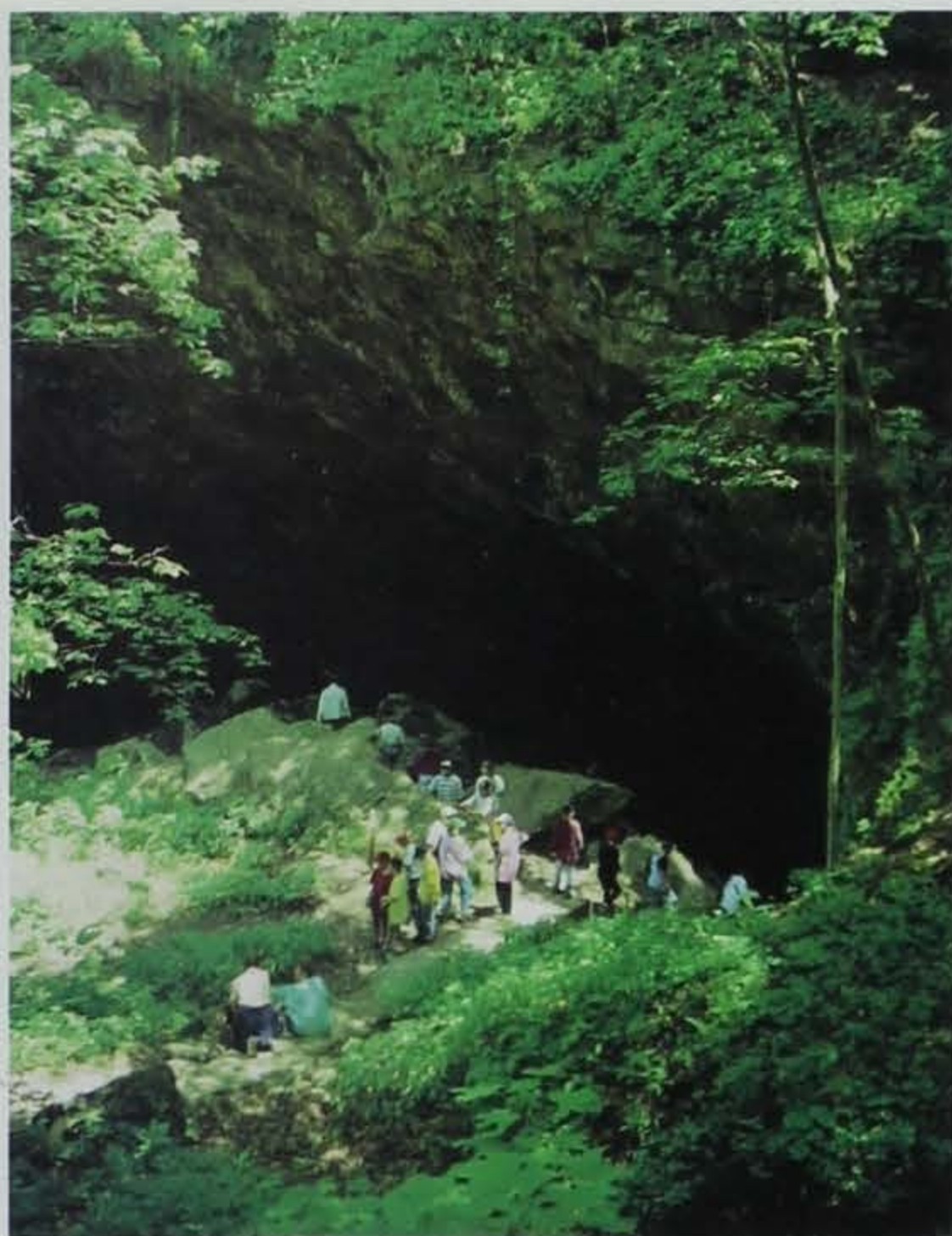
MAQUOKETA CAVES

by Angela Corio

Recent renovations improve one of Iowa's oldest and most beautiful state parks.



Ken Formanek



Maquoketa Caves may be Iowa's most beautiful state park. Purchased in 1921 as a 17-acre area, Maquoketa Caves is one of the oldest state parks. Today you will find a 272-acre park long known for its numerous caves, limestone outcroppings, lush plant growth and spectacular scenery. Most of the facilities were constructed in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) -- Depression-era federal employment programs. Native stone and timber were used to construct the concession/lodge, hexagonal picnic shelters, trails, cave improvements, toilets, "picnic circle," original ranger residence and entrance sign. The remarkable skill and craftsmanship of these work crews can still be seen today.

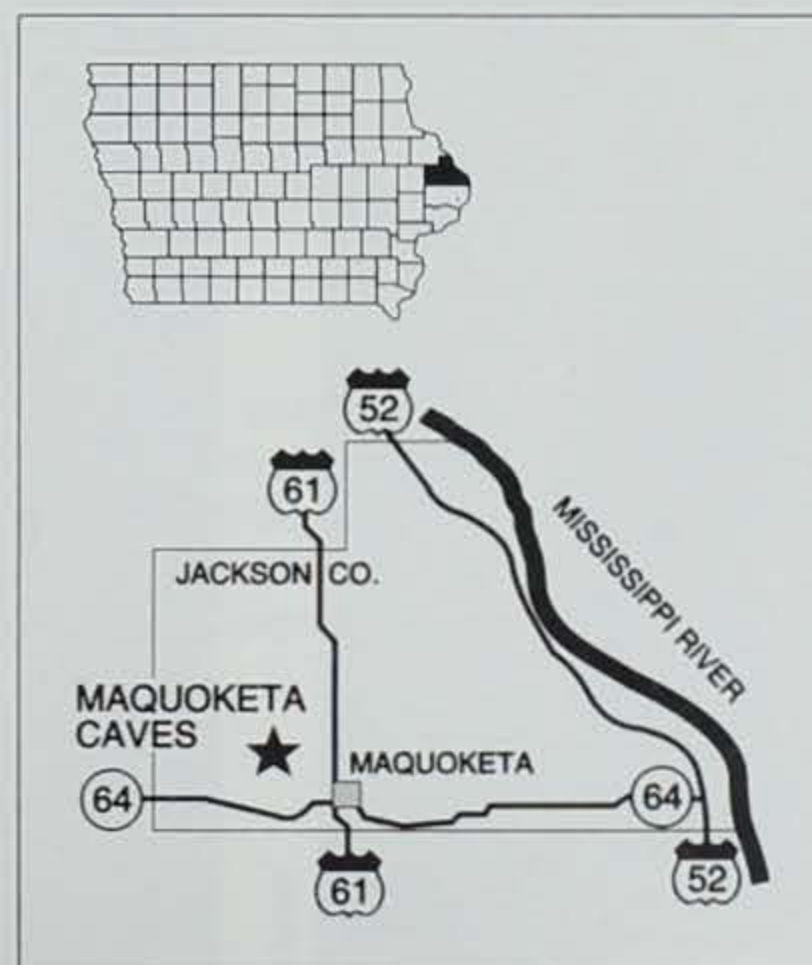
As the number of park visitors increased and facilities aged over the years, the need arose to renovate these older facilities and update them for modern-day uses. Renovating the trails, converting the old stone concession into a modern rest room, providing a shower building in the campground and building a new play structure are included as just a few of the improvements. Making these improvements accessible for everyone is a goal throughout.

The improved facilities noted in the following pages will add to the enjoyment of this special place. Come see the new look of the area, and lose yourself in the cool, moist, lush green magic of Maquoketa Caves State Park.

Ken Formanick



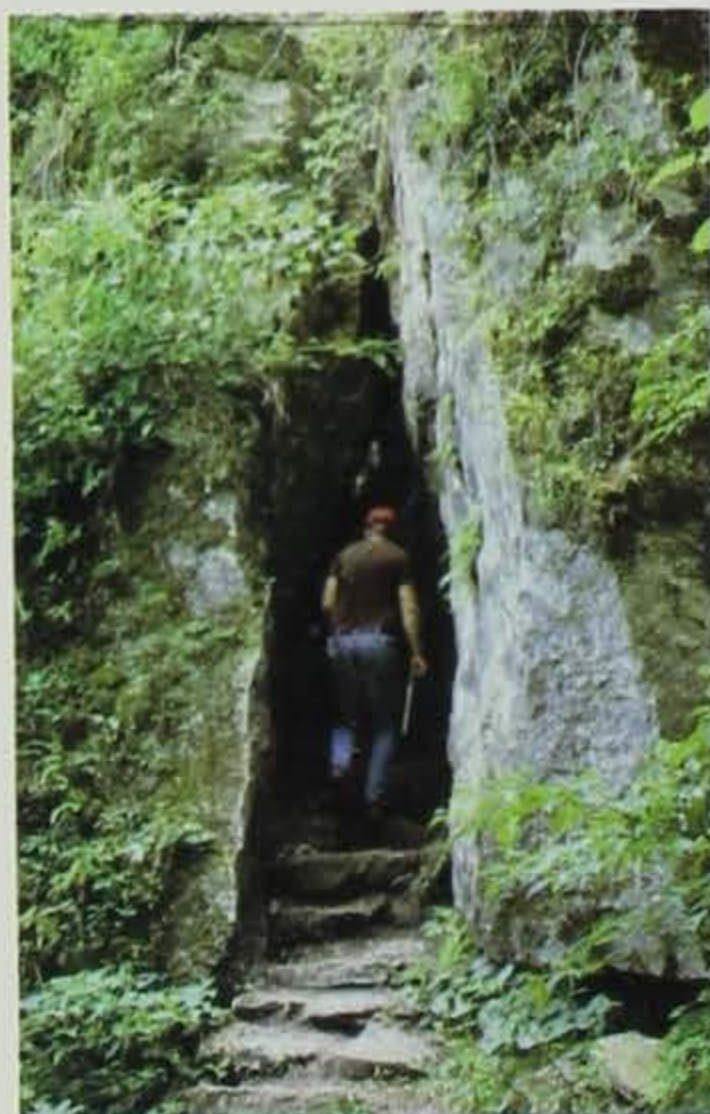
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▲ The 14 natural caves found at the park are both solutional and mechanical. The mechanical caves were created by large blocks of stone sliding down the face of rock walls. The largest, Dancehall Cave (above), is an example of a solutional cave -- created by millions of years of water working to dissolve the limestone. More than 800 feet long, this cave is large enough to easily walk through on the paved and lighted boardwalk.

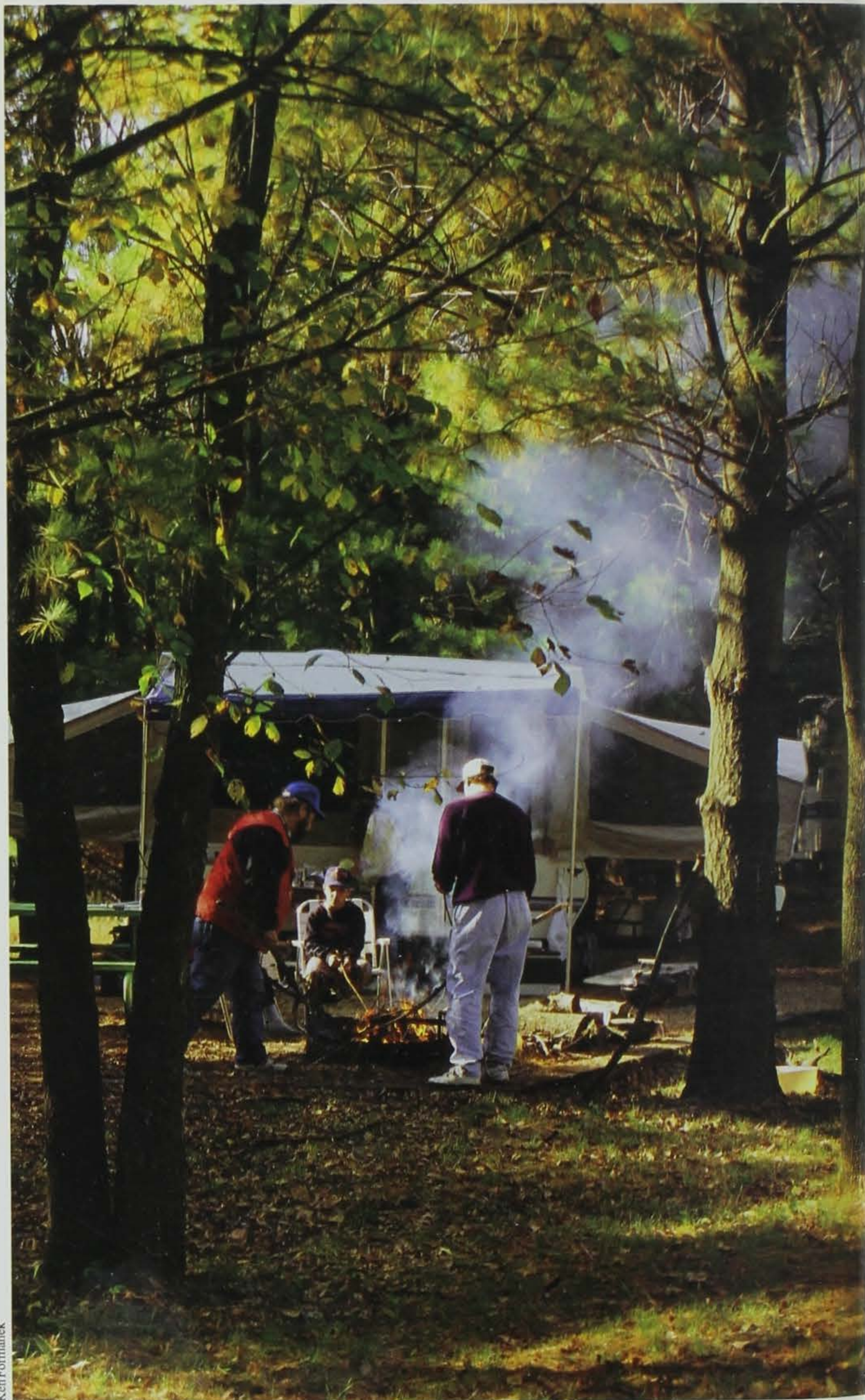


The campground was
 expanded and
 relocated into a pine
 forest, complete with
 a shower building -- a
 facility badly needed
 after a day of cave
 exploration.



DNR photo

Ken Formanek



Ken Formanek



Ken Formanek

◀ The history of how the caves were formed can be found on the new stone kiosk located near the "picnic circle."

▼ For family enjoyment, a play structure has been added in the picnic area which is also close to the campground.



Ken Formanek



Ken Formanek

◀ Plans are underway for a new visitor center at the former Sager's Museum building. The center will contain a variety of displays on the natural features, archeology and history of the park.



▶ Wooden trail decking has been constructed to provide safe and easy hiking for park visitors as well as protect the fragile soils and plants.

Mark Edwards



Ken Formanek

▲ The stonework has been restored and new grills added in the "picnic circle" just above the entrance to Dancehall Cave.

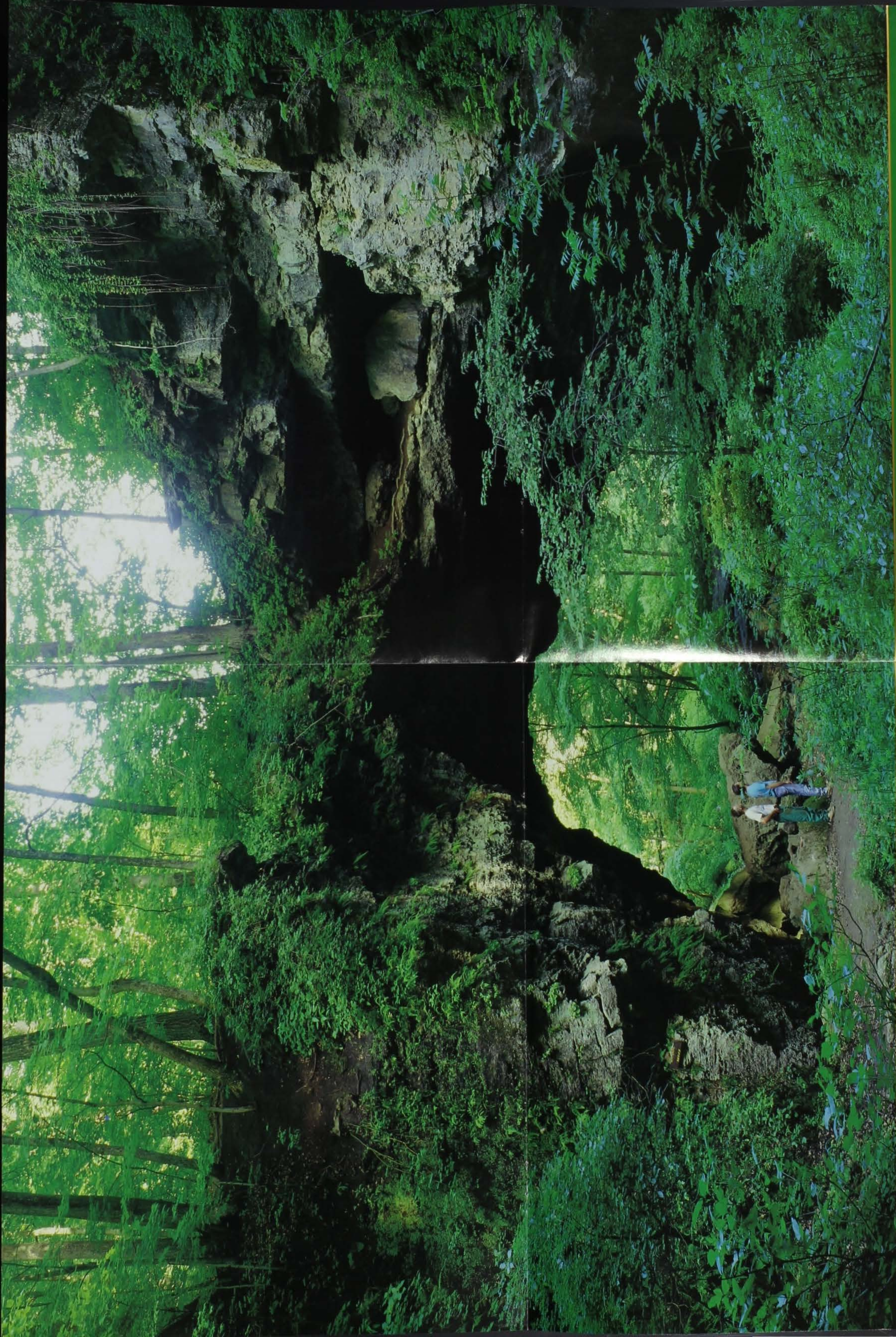


7 ANNUAL GREAT RIVER ROAD RACE -
PIKES PEAK

13/14, } HAUNTED FOREST WALK -
20/21, } WALNUT WOODS
26-30

14/15 FOREST CRAFTS FESTIVAL -
LACEY-KEOSAUQUA

NOTE: Items appearing in burgandy indicate facilities accessible to the mobility impaired. Fully accessible camp sites may not be available. Contact park for details.



IOWA STATE PARKS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

C E L E B R A T E !

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Ken Formanek

BIKE

IOWA STATE PARKS

by Angela Corio

Iowa is the land between two rivers and just happens to have the perfect countryside for bicycling. You can't imagine how breathtakingly beautiful the Iowa landscape is from the seat of a bicycle, where you can feel each hill and valley. Traveling at 10 to 20 miles per hour is the perfect speed to fully appreciate its subtle beauty. Along with scenery, the friendliness and generosity of Iowa people is also something to experience. Known for a strong work ethic, rural Iowans may think bicyclists crazy, but they nevertheless respect the physical effort required in long-distance cycling.

Iowa has developed a reputation as a "bicycling state," with 22 years of the *Register's* Great Annual Bike Ride Across Iowa, or RAGBRAI, as well as being one of the leading states in the nation for miles of railroad beds converted into recreational trails. Iowa also has a superb secondary road system which is generally lightly traveled with good-to-excellent paved surfaces. It is on these secondary county roads, along with several bike trails, that





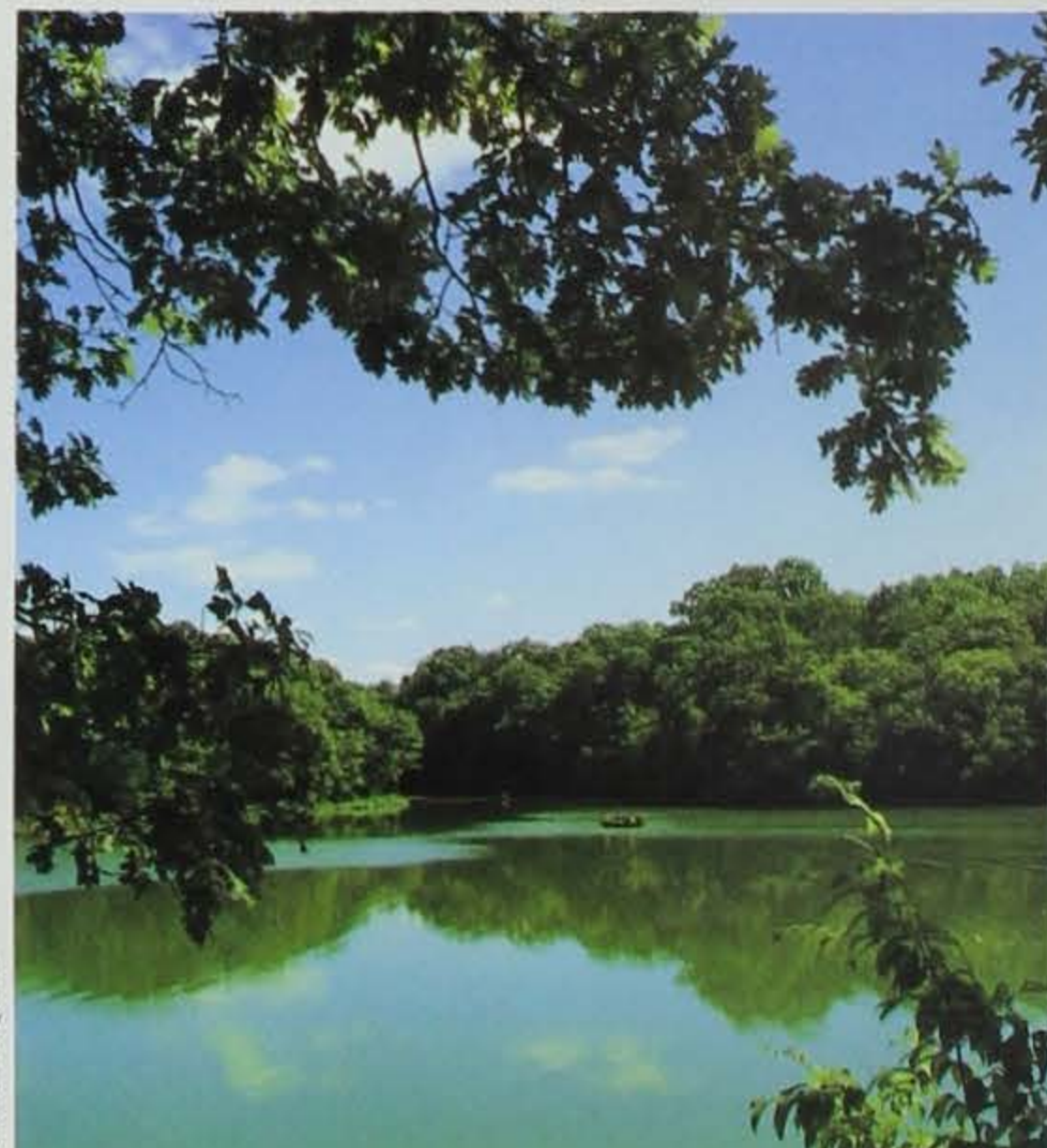
- ▲ Fall at Backbone State Park.
- ▼ Lake Geode in the summer.
- (far right) ► Cold weather shouldn't stop the avid biker. Newly renovated cabins at Pine Lake are open year-round.



you are invited to ride a bicycle from state park to state park.

The Department of Natural Resources has developed four bicycle routes which connect from two to four state parks. Take a weekend trip, an extended weekend, or travel for the whole week, there is much to see and do. Carry your own gear, camp in the parks and enjoy these "places of quiet beauty." Don't want to carry all that stuff on your bicycle or "rough it" in a campground? Seek a gear shuttle service and enjoy the comforts of the local bed and breakfast establishments or any of the motels along the way. Gear shuttle services may be available for a nominal charge from the park concessionaire,

Christine Quinn



motels, or bed and breakfast establishments. Reservations for this service must be requested in advance.

Brochures with detailed route information will be available from the Department of Natural Resources, as well as the individual parks. The brochures will include a mileage chart, a list of services and facilities available along the route, as well as highlighting other points of interest. Bikers may use the information to embark on the whole route or a shorter version, depending upon the amount of time one may have.

The distances vary between the state parks and towns. If you haven't done any long-distance biking, the best way to look at an adventure like this is to think of a 60-mile day, not as a 60-mile ride, but six 10-mile rides considering that you will probably stop in every town along the way. After all, you have all day to get to your destination.

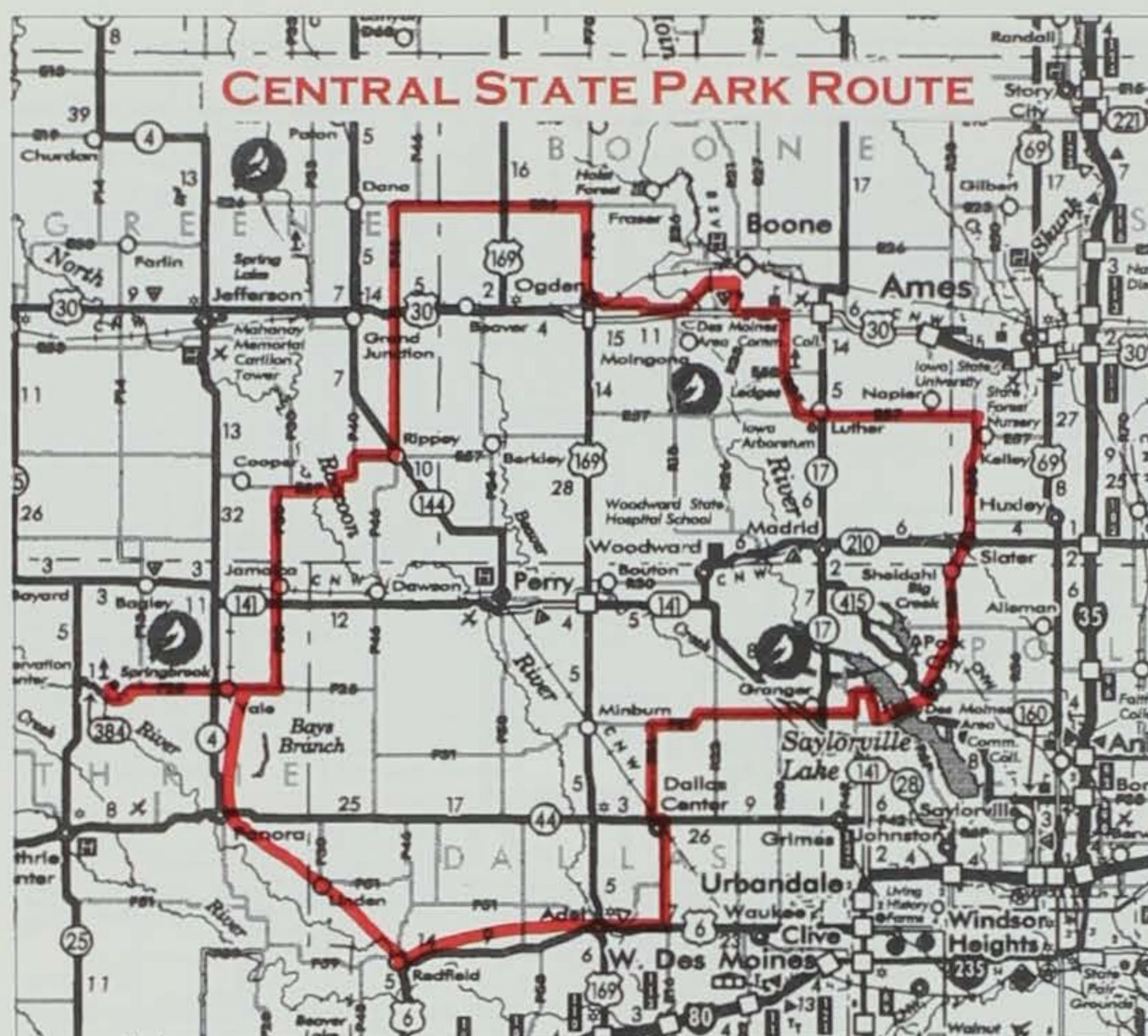
The four routes are:

Northeast State Park Route connects Wapsipinicon, Pleasant Creek,



Ken Formanek





▼ Ledges State Park serviceberry.



Ken Formanek

and Backbone state parks and the Cedar Rock historic site.

Southeast State Park Route links Geode and Lacey-Keosauqua state parks.

Central State Park Route connects Big Creek, Ledges and Springbrook state parks.

North-Central State Park Route links Pine Lake, McIntosh Woods, Clear Lake and A.A. Call state parks.

We invite you to embark on a bicycling adventure in Iowa, see the countryside, meet friendly folks along the way and explore the natural wonders of Iowa's state parks. May you have a tail wind the whole way and remember that, "the joy is in the journey."

Angela Corio is a landscape architect for the Parks, Recreation and Preserves Division in Des Moines.

Big Creek	4	14	27	35	45	51	57	69	75	82	93	118	128	134	139	152	160
Polk City	10	23	31	41	47	53	65	71	78	89	114	124	130	135	148	156	
Granger	13	21	31	37	43	55	61	68	79	104	114	120	125	138	146		
Dallas Center	8	18	24	30	42	48	55	66	91	101	107	112	125	133			
Adel	10	16	22	34	40	47	58	83	93	99	104	117	125				
Redfield	6	12	24	30	37	48	73	83	89	94	107	115					
Linden	6	18	24	31	42	67	77	83	88	101	109						
Panora	12	18	25	36	61	71	77	83	96	104							
Springbrook	6	13	24	49	59	65	70	83	91								
Yale	7	18	43	53	59	64	77	85									
Jamaica	11	36	46	52	57	70	78										
Rippey	25	35	41	46	59	67											
Ogden	10	16	21	34	42												
Boone	6	11	24	32													
Ledges	5	18	26														
Luther	13	21															
Slater	8																
Big Creek																	

Central State Park Bike Route

Facilities and Service Available

	Restroom	Food	Restaurants	Drinking Water	Camping	Lodging	Gear Storage by Park Concessionaire
Big Creek State Park	X	X		X			X
Slater	X	X	X	X			
Luther	X	X		X			
Ledges State Park	X			X	X		
Boone	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ogden	X	X	X	X			
Rippey	X	X		X			
Jamaica	X	X		X			
Yale	X	X		X			
Springbrook State Park	X			X	X		
Panora	X	X	X	X		X	
Linden	X			X			
Redfield	X			X			
Adel	X	X	X	X		X	
Dallas Center	X	X		X			
Granger	X	X		X			
Polk City	X	X	X	X			
Big Creek State Park	X	X		X			X

▲ Mileage shown illustrates the Central State Park Bike Route, which is a 160-mile ride in its entirety, starting at Big Creek State Park and ending at Big Creek State Park.



Fishing Iowa's State Parks **FAVORITE FISHING HOLES**

by Martin Konrad

During the past 75 years, park visitors have become very familiar with the lake settings found in many of the state parks. In fact, in many instances the park and lake names are synonymous. The most nostalgic state parks with lakes were developed in the 1930s. These parks can be readily identified by their rustic sandstone or limestone beach houses, ranger houses and shelter houses. Probably the most notable of these parks are Gull Point, Wapello, Lacey-Keosauqua, Beeds and Ahquabi. In the 50s and 60s came a resurgence in park and lake development. From this more recent era came Prairie Rose Lake, Lake Anita, Volga Lake, Lake Macbride, Green Valley Lake, Rock Creek Lake and Pleasant Creek Lake.

Lakes in or surrounding Iowa state parks offer many types of recreational opportunities. Of those opportunities, fishing ranks first in the reason why people visit a state park. Some of the best fishing opportunities in the state are found in these park lakes. The lakes of northern Iowa parks offer the most diverse opportunities that can range from a leisure afternoon of shore



Ron Johnson

Lakes in or surrounding Iowa state parks offer many types of recreational opportunities. . . . fishing ranks first in the reason why people visit a state park. Some of the best fishing opportunities in the state are found in these park lakes.



Ron Johnson



Whether in pursuit of the elusive musky or the abundant bullhead, Iowa parks offer excitement for any age group.

fishing for bullheads to a quest for the elusive musky. Spirit Lake, East and West Okoboji lakes are traditionally known for excellent walleye, bullhead and yellow perch fishing. These lakes also provide good fishing for musky, smallmouth bass, channel catfish and bluegill. Black Hawk Lake and Clear Lake are other northern lakes noted for good channel catfish, bullhead and walleye fishing.

Many state parks nestled in the rolling hills of southern and eastern Iowa have lakes that provide excellent fishing for largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie and channel catfish. Big Creek, Green Valley, Macbride and Pleasant Creek lakes all have excellent bass populations. Green Valley Lake is worth special mention for the large number of trophy-sized bass that cruise its shores. When bluegill are mentioned, Red Haw Lake is the first lake that pops into one's mind. Year in and year out, this lake produces the largest gills of any state park lake. Viking, Prairie Rose, Geode, Volga, Keomah and George Wyth are other excellent bluegill lakes.

Crappies are one of the most common fish caught by Iowa anglers.

Big Creek, Viking, Anita, Green Valley and Macbride are well-known lakes by crappie anglers. But the best-known crappie fishing lake in the state in terms of number and size is Lake Rathbun. Each spring, thousands of angler visits are made to Honey Creek State Park just for Rathbun's slab crappies. In an average year alone, more than 200,000 crappies will be harvested from the lake.

In recent years, anglers have also found that channel catfish fishing in Rathbun is second to no other lake in Iowa -- especially from late April to early May. All park lakes have good channel catfish fishing, but Lake Darling in particular is known for its fine channel cats.

Many park visits are made by families seeking a multitude of activities -- fishing, swimming, boating, picnicking, hiking and camping are the most common. It has long been known that good fishing is responsible for increasing the number of park visits. Over the years, the DNR has made major strides to maintain, enhance, create and restore fishing opportunities for park visitors. These strides have been directed toward public use

(far right) ►
Lake Geode in Henry
County is just one of Iowa's excellent
bluegill lakes.

Jerry Leonard



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Robert Naisbitt



Ron Johnson



Fish cleaning stations have been constructed to benefit park visitors. These facilities allow anglers to properly care for their catch.



Fishing piers provide easy access to anglers who use wheelchairs or have difficulty in walking.



Ron Johnson

facilities and lake restoration efforts.

Fishing jetties and piers, and fish cleaning facilities have been constructed to benefit park visitors. These facilities have been welcomed and receive high use. Fishing jetties and piers are effective in making the lake shore accessible. Piers, especially, provide easy access to anglers who use wheelchairs or have difficulty in walking. Jetties have been constructed at Green Valley, Upper Pine, Darling, Anita, Wapello, Macbride, and Big Creek lakes. Fishing piers are present at George Wyth, Black Hawk, Spirit, Big Creek, Manawa, Pleasant Creek, Green Valley, Wapello, and Ahquabi lakes. Fish cleaning facilities allow anglers to properly care for their catch and are present at Spirit, Big

Creek, Macbride, Pleasant Creek, Black Hawk and Clear lakes.

DNR fisheries biologists are continually managing lakes associated with state parks with methods to sustain healthy fish populations. In all cases, healthy fish populations mean more angling opportunities and more fish to catch. The installation of winter or summer aeration systems have been a very effected means to sustain

lake fisheries. Winter aeration systems at Clear Lake and Black Hawk Lake have virtually eliminated fish kills caused by low oxygen concentrations. The installation of a summer aeration system at Viking Lake has helped to sustain a healthy fish population.

The placement of fish habitat in lake areas void of habitat is the most effective method biologist use to increase angler catches. Reefs, trees and stake beds are the most common habitat types placed in lakes. These are very effective fish concentrators and are highly sought after by anglers. Habitat has been placed in many park lakes, but the most extensive habitat restoration projects have occurred at Lake Darling, Lake Anita, Lake Wapello and Lake Ahquabi.

Major restoration activities have been or are being undertaken at Union Grove Lake, Black Hawk Lake, Upper



Ken Formanek



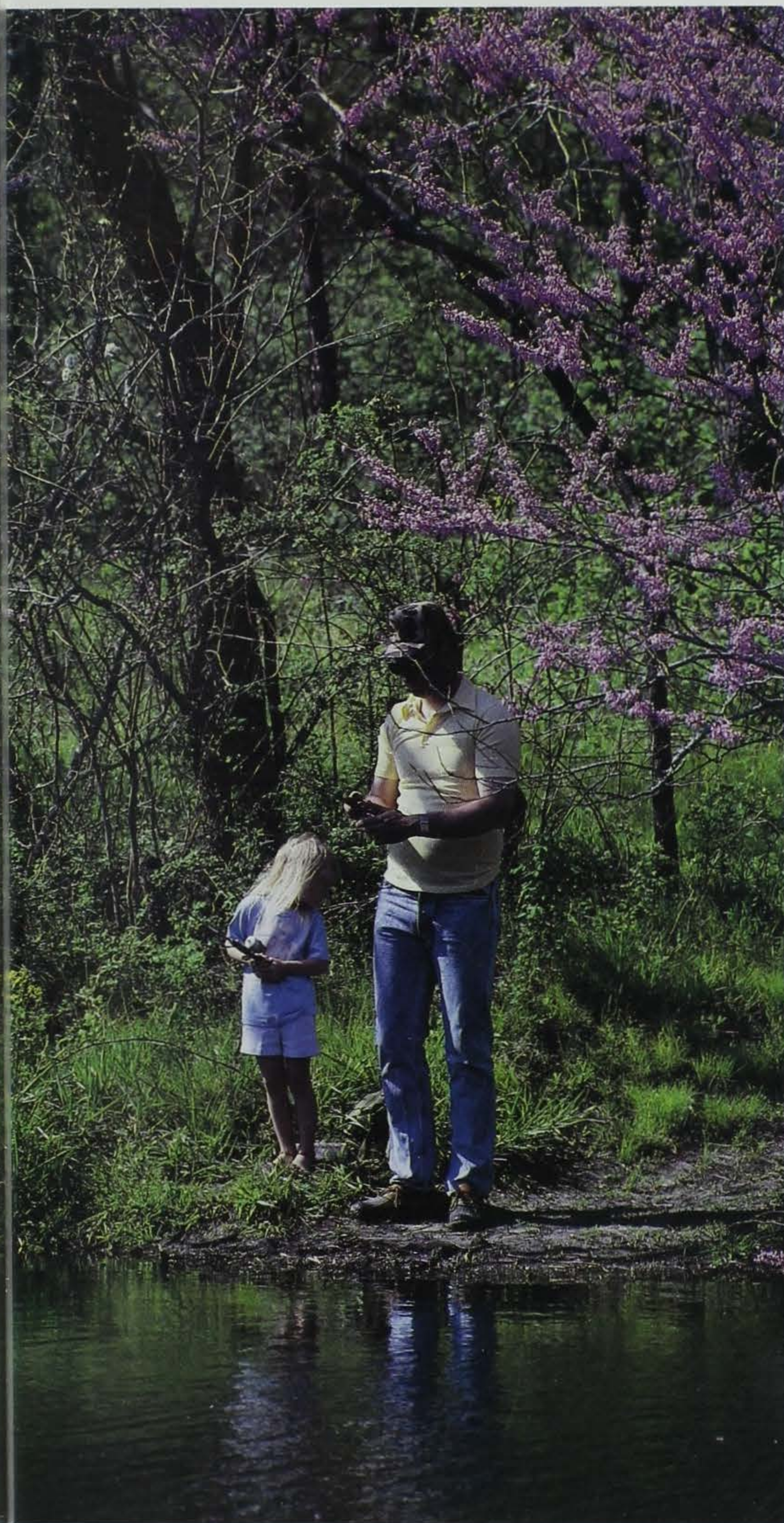
▲ Various funding sources, including sport fish restoration funds, are used to sustain the good fishing found in state park lakes.

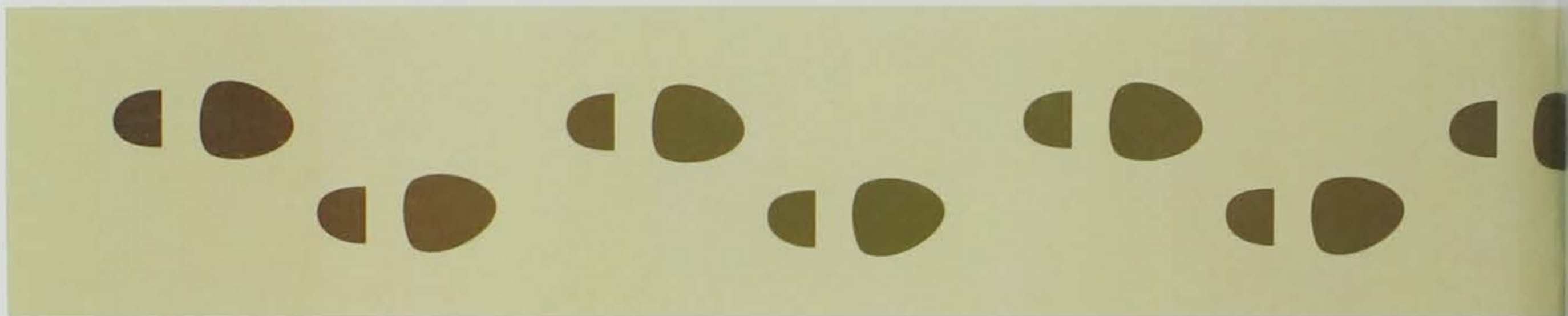
Pine Lake, Lake Wapello and Lake Ahquabi. In all cases, these restorations have been initiated to correct the impact of years of sediment and nutrient accumulation. This impact has caused a significant loss in fish habitat, water quality and recreational use of the lake. Except for Lake Wapello, lake dredging has been an essential restoration component. Dredging deepens a lake to increase water volume and prevent the re-suspension of sediments in shallow water areas. At Lake Wapello and Lake Ahquabi small basins at the upper ends of the lakes were constructed to collect the sediment and nutrient particles that are escaping from their watersheds. The armoring of eroded lake shore areas has been a measure incorporated with dredging and basin construction to maintain water quality, fish habitat and fishing opportunities.

Various funding sources are used to sustain the good fishing found in state park lakes. Anglers and boaters especially should be proud of their contributions through the purchase of fishing licenses and state taxes paid on marine fuel. The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) fund is also an important source of money used to sustain good fishing. Sport Fish Restoration and the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Lake funds are important federal sources the DNR uses to maintain visitor enjoyment of state park lakes.

Martin Konrad is an executive officer for the department's fisheries bureau in Des Moines.

Ron Johnson





DNR photo

HAPPY TRAILS

by Mark Edwards

▲ Trail building at Ledges State Park. The "trail boss" is Carl Fritz Henning, first ranger at Ledges State Park.

Imagine yourself traveling down a trail, any trail, your favorite trail. It is only by placing yourself into the landscape that you can appreciate its beauty and want to insure its future.

Trails are the connection between people and place. They unite our state's past with the present for all to enjoy. This relationship has continued to grow into a monumental love affair with Iowa's state parks.

Our state parks and recreation areas total 55,000 acres. They range individually in size from a few hundred acres to 6,100. Totally, they account for less than two-tenths of one percent of Iowa's 36 million acres. If all were assembled together in one place they would form a square less than 10 miles on a side. Within that square we have more than 400 miles of trails.

These areas have more than 12 million day users per year. There is an ever-increasing demand by people on skis, bicycles, wheelchairs, mountain bikes, horses, snowmobiles and on foot. This enchantment with many of our state parks is straining the trail system infrastructure and its surroundings.

The Iowa DNR is investing more time and money into trail improvements. Thanks to labor by park personnel, summer employees, prison inmates, user volunteers and school groups we have accomplished a lot. This work will provide access while insuring visitor safety and resource protection.

Park paths have lead our families and friends for generations to the "heart" of Iowa. They have shown us Iowa's quiet beauty and enduring nature. For this to continue we must spend time with our inheritance to feel the mystery, romance and beauty of our state parks. Happy trails!



Mark Edwards



Mark Edwards



Mark Edwards

▲
Possibly the premier example of state park trail renovations, the Pikes Peak State Park overlook provides a spectacular view of the Mississippi River.

◀
Before and after shots of one of Ledges State Park's many trail improvements.



Robert Naisbitt

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(clo
Park,
work

Mark Edwards

Within the state park system, more than 400 miles of trails exist.

◀
Trail head from Ledges' stone shelter -- main trail on south side of canyon.

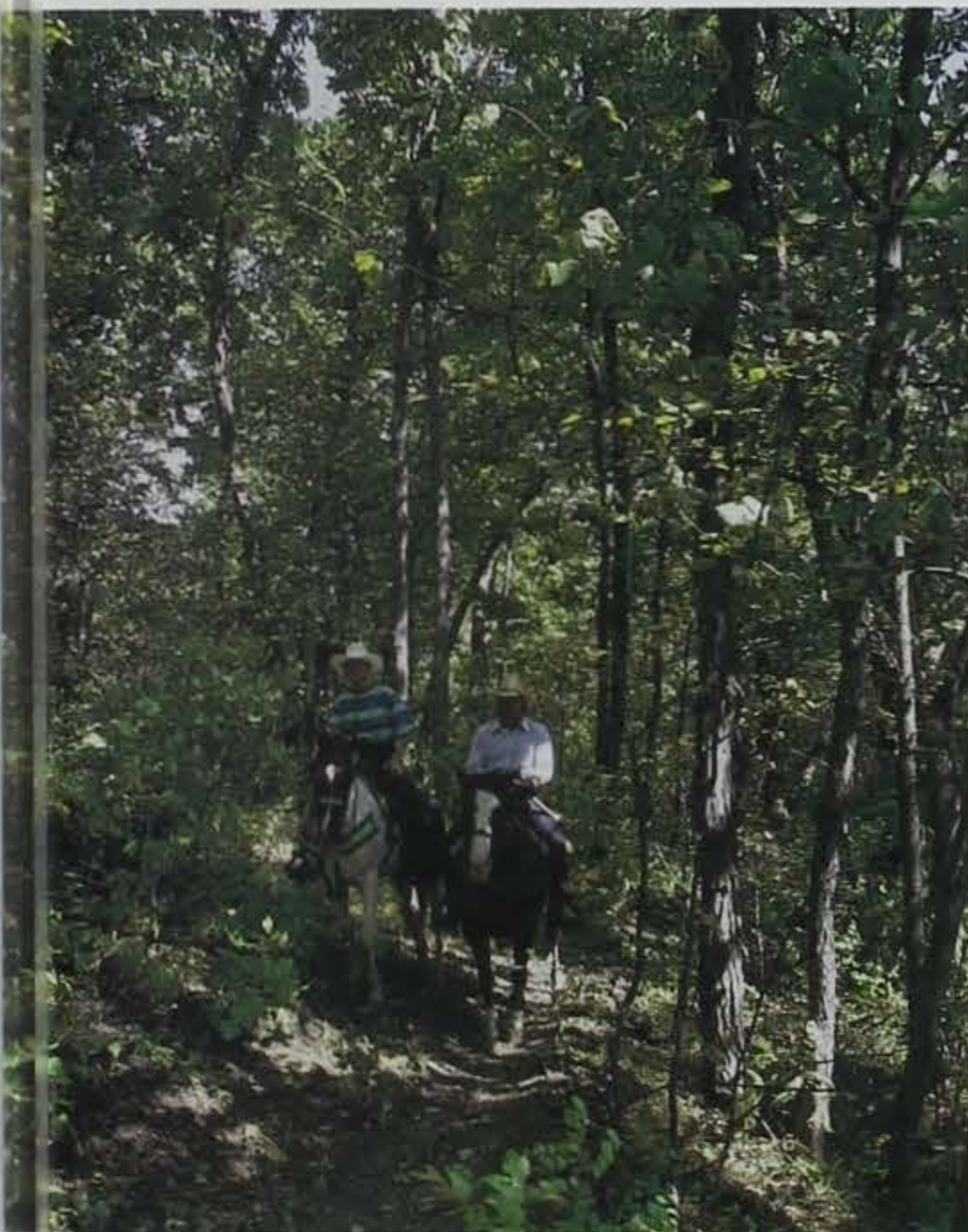
▶
(clockwise) Pine Lake State Park, Ledges State Park, sandstone trail marker carved by CCC workers and Brushy Creek State Park.



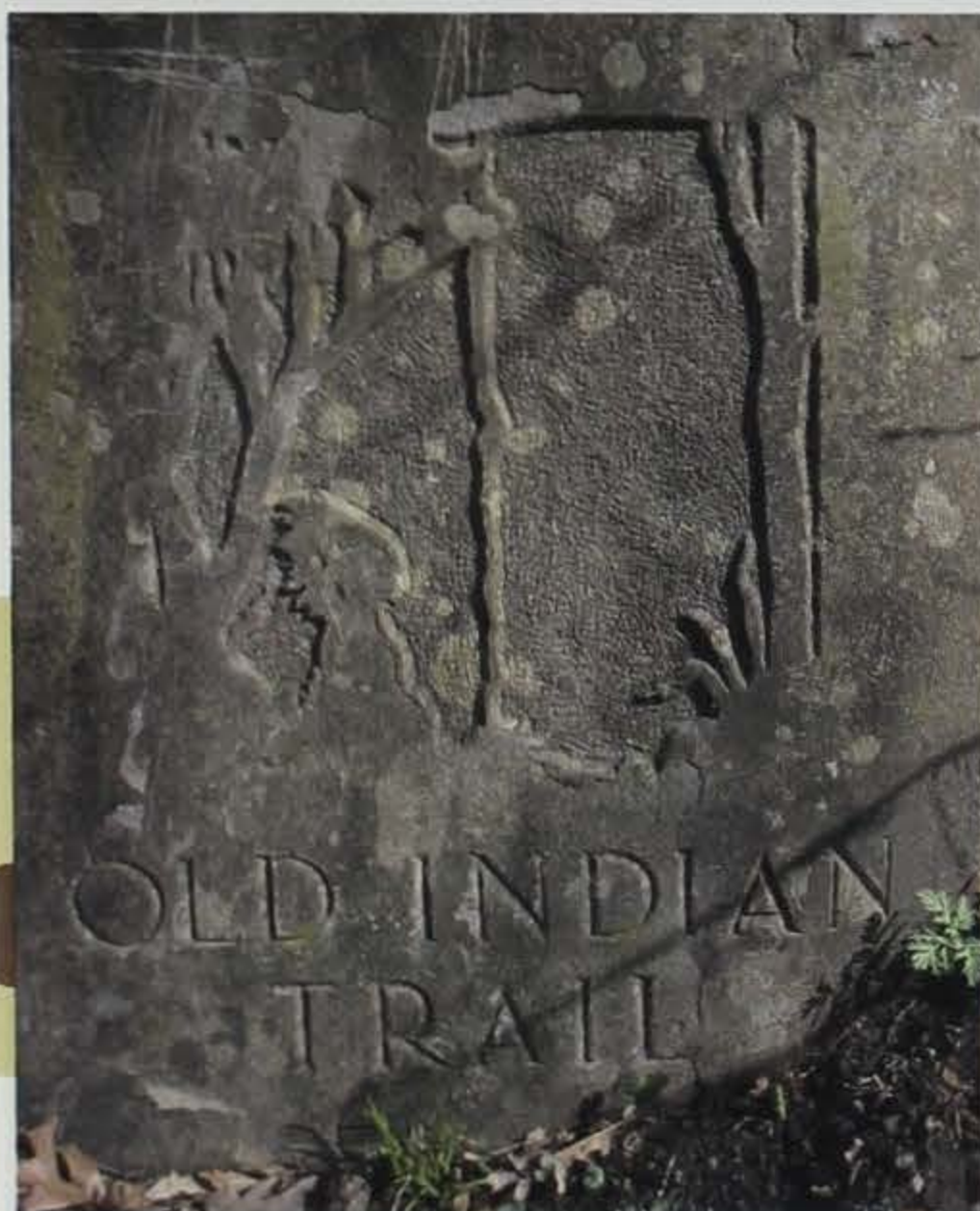
Mark Edwards



Mark Edwards



Mark Edwards





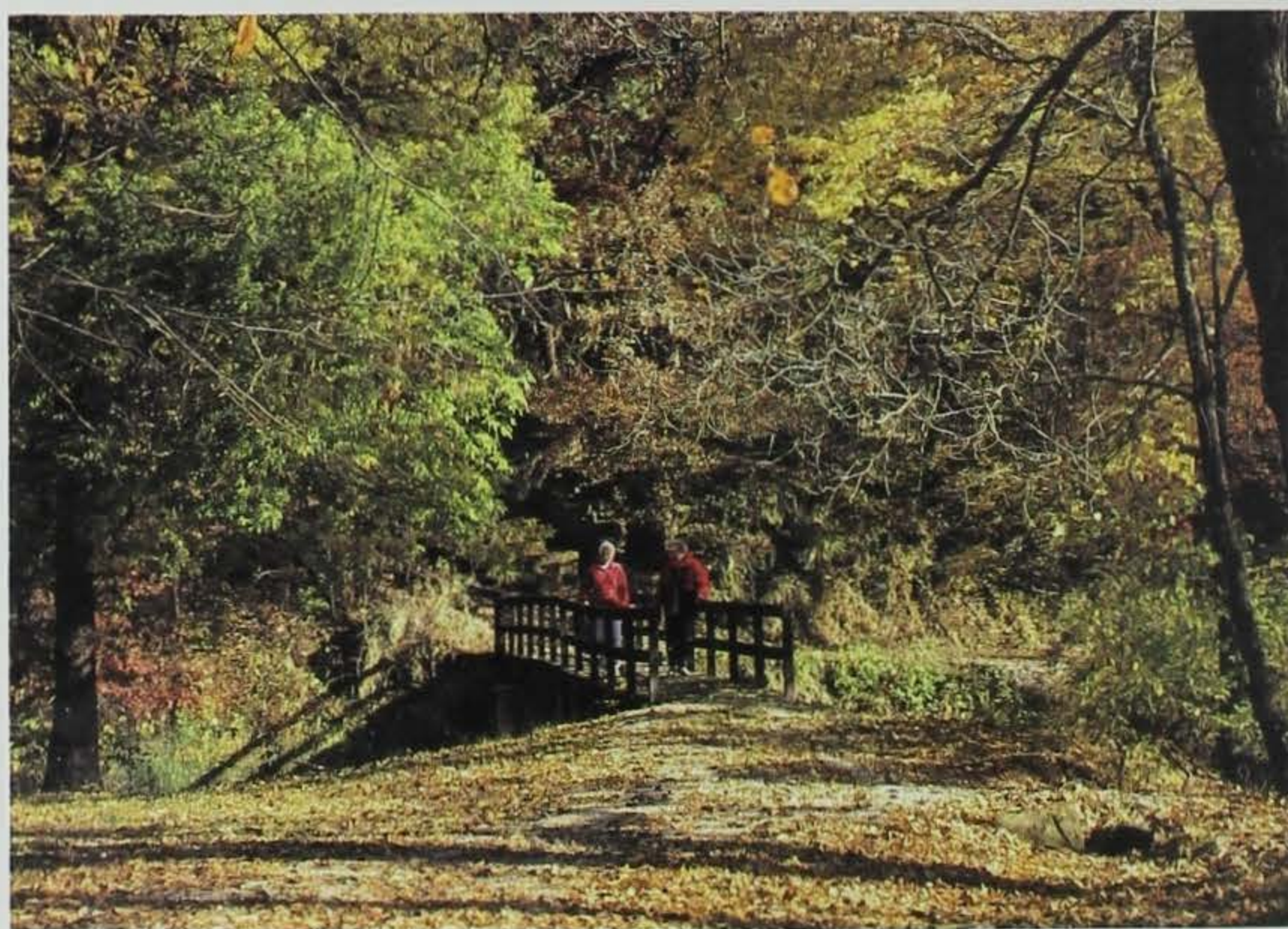
Ron Johnson



Mark Edwards

There is an increasing demand on state park trails by people on skis, skates, bicycles, wheelchairs, horses, snowmobiles and on foot.

Mark Edwards is a trail construction supervisor with the department's Parks, Recreation and Preserves Division.



Robert Naisbitt



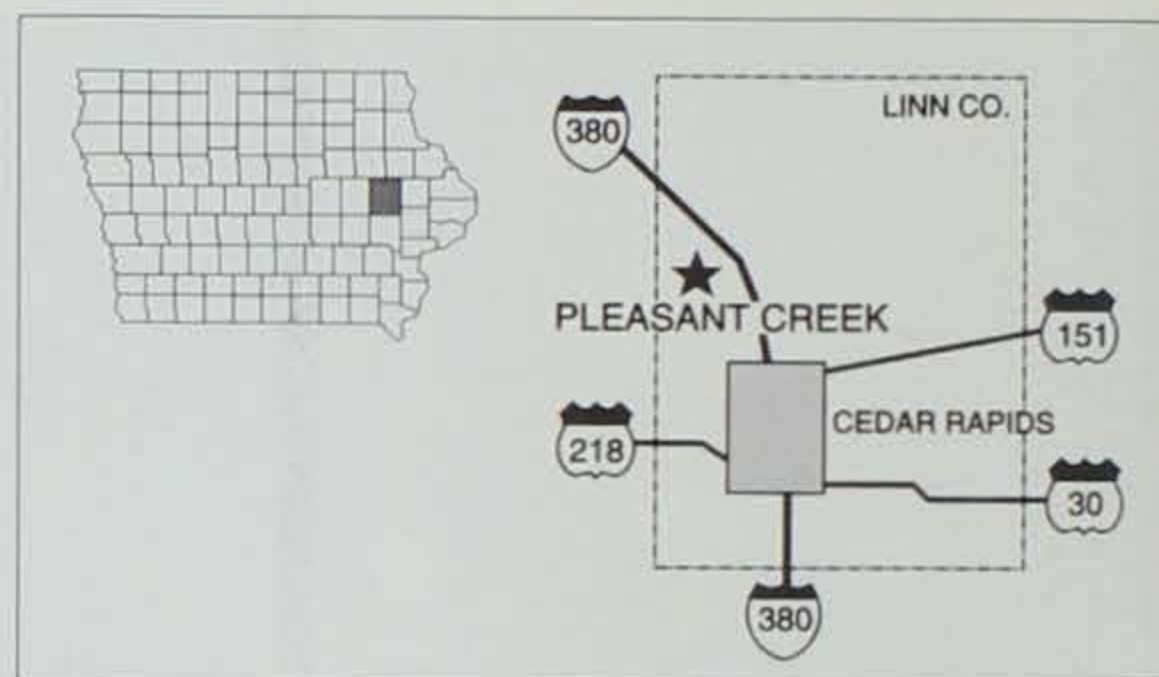
Ken Formanek

With more than 12 million day users in state parks each year, a strain is placed on the infrastructure of park trails. Trail renovation is important in maintaining our connection with Iowa's quiet beauty.



PARKS PROFILE

OLD
and **NEW**



Angela Corio



ITS BEAUTIFUL
BEACH AND
OTHER FACILITIES
MAKE PLEASANT
CREEK ONE OF
IOWA'S MOST
POPULAR STATE
PARKS.

PLEASANT CREEK Recreation Area

Iowans with a family tradition of state park outings probably have a mental image that includes large forested tracts, old stone lodges and other rustic Civilian Conservation Corps structures of the 1930s. For our "old line" state parks, such images are right on target. Truly, there are no finer parks to be found anywhere in the country.

However, Iowa state park and recreation area development did not

cease in the 1930s. Some truly outstanding areas were developed in later decades, including several state recreation areas initiated in the late 1960s and designed to offer a wider range of year-round outdoor recreation opportunities than the "traditional" state park. These "old line" areas of tomorrow include the Brushy Creek, Volga River, Mines of Spain and Pleasant Creek state recreation areas.

Pleasant Creek was the first state

By Arnie Sohn



Jim Scheffler

DESIGNED AS A YEAR-ROUND RECREATION AREA, VISITORS CAN ENJOY EVERYTHING FROM SAND VOLLEYBALL TO SLEDDING.

recreation area to be completed. Its boundaries cover almost 2,000 acres including its popular 410-acre lake. A unique partnership exists between the DNR and the nearby Duane Arnold Energy Center, Iowa's only nuclear power plant. The plant houses a 565-megawatt boiling water reactor, operated by the Iowa Electric Light and Power Company in partnership with Central Iowa Power Cooperative and Cornbelt Power Cooperative.

The nuclear power plant must be assured of adequate water for cooling

purposes. Normally, the nearby Cedar River provides all the water needed, but occasionally river flows are low enough that a supplemental water source is required. Enter Pleasant Creek Lake, developed with funding assistance provided by the Iowa Electric Light and Power Company and the federal government. Only twice since the plant began operations in 1974 has water been released from Pleasant Creek Lake into the Cedar River to provide cooling water for the power plant. In

each case, the water level in the lake dropped only a few inches with no effects on aquatic life or outdoor recreation opportunities.


Pleasant Creek is located near a major population center, the Cedar Rapids metropolitan area, and residents have discovered its high quality outdoor recreation opportunities including fishing, boating, swimming, camping, hiking, horseback riding and hunting. Water quality in Pleasant Creek Lake is excellent, making such activities as swimming, fishing and boating espe-

Jim Scheffler



LOCATED NEAR CEDAR RAPIDS, THE PARK HAS BECOME A FAVORITE SITE FOR FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND CAMPING TRIPS.

Ron Johnson



**ANGLERS ENJOY
SPENDING THE
DAY AT THEIR
FAVORITE FISHING
HOLES ON
PLEASANT CREEK.**



cially enjoyable. A full range of modern facilities have been developed in recent years to accommodate park users. Some of this development, such as an enclosed shelter, was cost-shared with local user groups like the Cedar Rapids Bass Masters. The bulk of the funding has come from REAP, the Resource Enhancement and Protection Fund, supported by the Iowa Lottery and legislative appropriations.

One REAP-funded project currently planned for Pleasant Creek is the

Ron Johnson

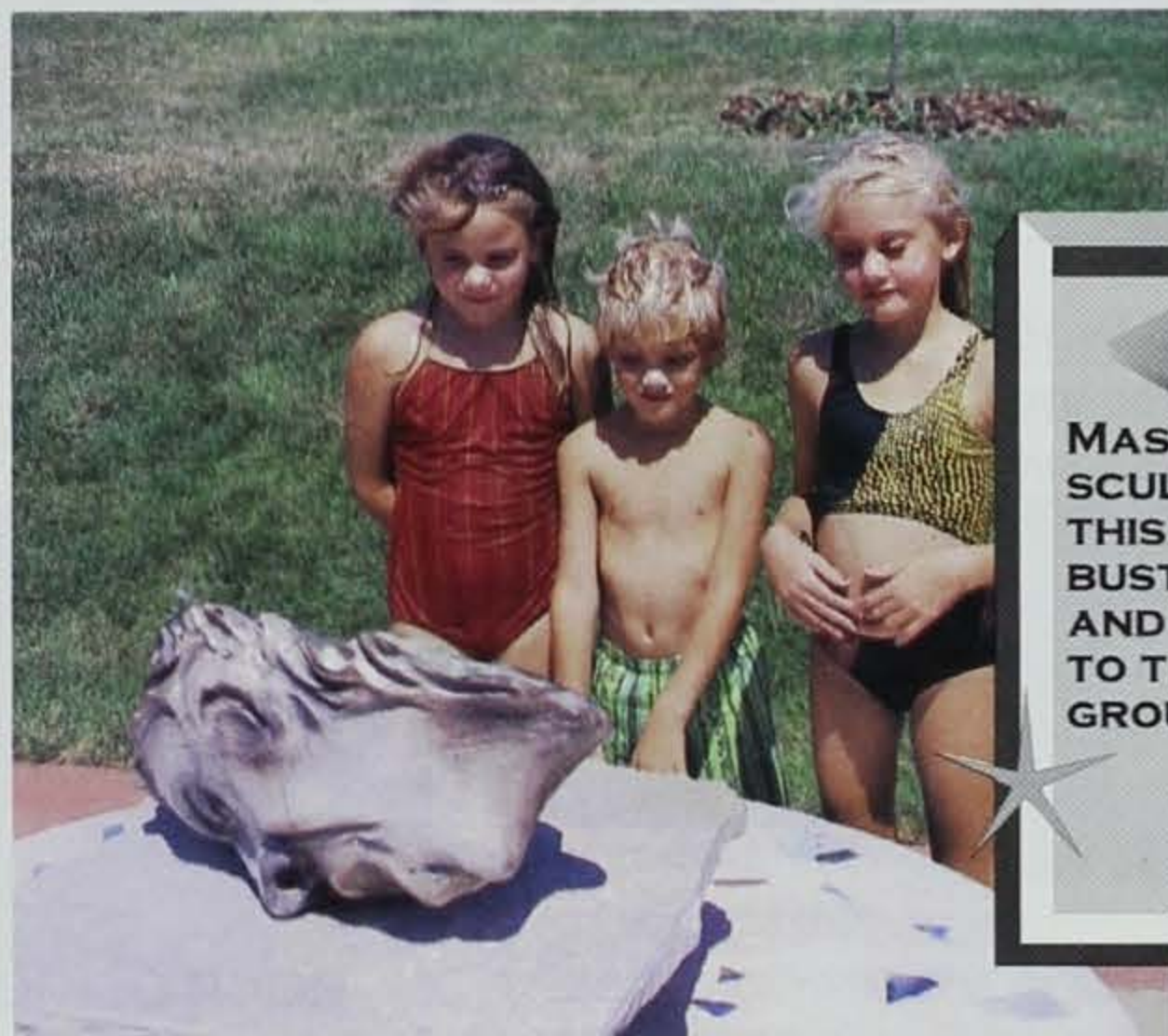

**NEWLY CONSTRUCTED
PARK FEATURES INCLUDE
THIS GAZEBO AND AN
ENCLOSED SHELTER
DESIGNED WITH INPUT
FROM AREA RESIDENTS.**





construction of four low-cost camping cabins. These permanent structures will have cots, be heated and air conditioned, but will have no running water. They will be located in the camping area so that users will have access to showers and restrooms.

The last thing anyone would suggest is that Iowa's first generation



Angela Corio

←
**MASONARY
SCULPTURES, LIKE
THIS ABSTRACT
BUST, ADD BEAUTY
AND CHARACTER
TO THE PARK
GROUNDS.**

state parks such as Backbone, Lacey-Keosauqua and Stone have lost their appeal or usefulness. These older parks have a unique charm all their own and

**Iowa's state recreation
areas are desinged to offer
a wider range of year-
round outdoor recreation
opportunities than the
"traditional" state park.**

Iowans owe it to themselves to take advantage of the outstanding scenery and natural wonders they offer. However, for a change of pace that provides many of the same types of outdoor activities in a different setting, try Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area. We think you'll enjoy it!

Arnie Sohn is chief of the program administration bureau for the department's Parks, Recreation and Preserves Division.



Randy Edwards

←
**SUNRISE AT
PLEASANT CREEK.**



WHERE DO YOU STAND ON ... STATE PARKS?

1. Named by settlers who used the area's landscape as a marker on their way westward, this north-central Iowa park contains many unique botanical features, and is the second-highest point in Iowa.



2. This large recreation area contains the site of one of the area's first farmsteads. The building to the right is the only original intact structure left from the era.



3. Dramatic bluffs along the banks of the Cedar River gave rise to the namesake of this eastern Iowa park.



4. Located near Hampton, this park boasts a unique feature constructed by Civilian Conservation Corps workers in the 1930s. Quite an engineering feat!



Test your "stance" on Iowa's state park system with this pictorial quiz. Try to correctly identify which state park you would be standing in to view each of these 14 photos. All are landmarks or distinguishing park features from around the state.

by Jason Rutten

5. Sporting a structure built in 1847 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this eastern Iowa park is as educational as it is beautiful.



6.



A beautiful example of the uniqueness of northeast Iowa's terrain, this park has become a favorite with Iowa vacationers.

7.

In May, beautiful redbuds bloom throughout this park located near Chariton.

However, the park is named after a hawthorn tree, not the redbud.



11.

Facilities at this area provide

Iowans with year-round recreation opportunities. In addition, it serves a vital role in providing power through an association with Iowa Electric Light and Power.



8.

Known for its incredible sandstone

formations, this popular park lies along the Des Moines River in central Iowa.



12.

Recent development has brought renewed popularity to this eastern Iowa park, one of Iowa's most unique.



9.

An example of how parks and communities can cooperate to create beautiful public areas, this park, along the Mississippi, maintains the largest butterfly garden in the Midwest.



13.

Dedicated in 1920, Iowa's first state park contains many structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, such as this unique boat house.



10.

This state preserve

was home to U.S. Army dragoons in the 1840s. It is now the site of an annual celebration commemorating its history.

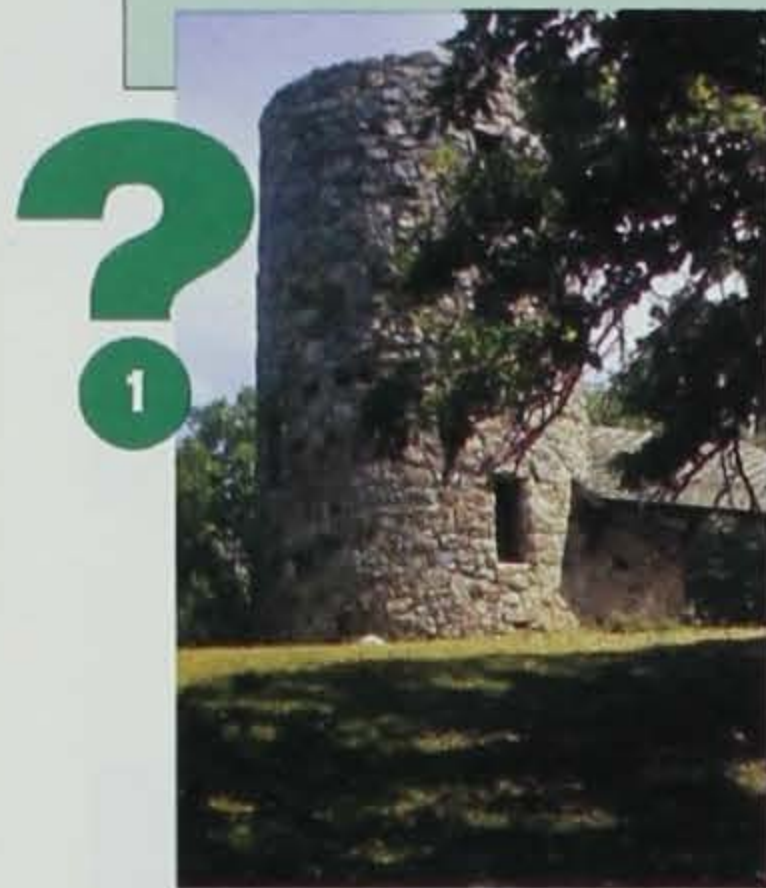


14.

Designed by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, this residence and grounds are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Tours are available from May through October.



**STONE TOWER - -
PILOT KNOB STATE PARK AND PRESERVE**



Jerry Leonard

**SPILLWAY - -
BEEDS LAKE STATE PARK**



Ken Formanek

**PINE CHAPEL - -
MINES OF SPAIN STATE RECREATION AREA**



Ron Johnson

**PINE CREEK GRIST MILL - -
WILDCAT DEN STATE PARK**



Ron Johnson

**SCENIC OVERLOOK - -
PIKES PEAK STATE PARK**



Mark Edwards

**THE PALISADES - -
PALISADES - KEPLER STATE PARK**



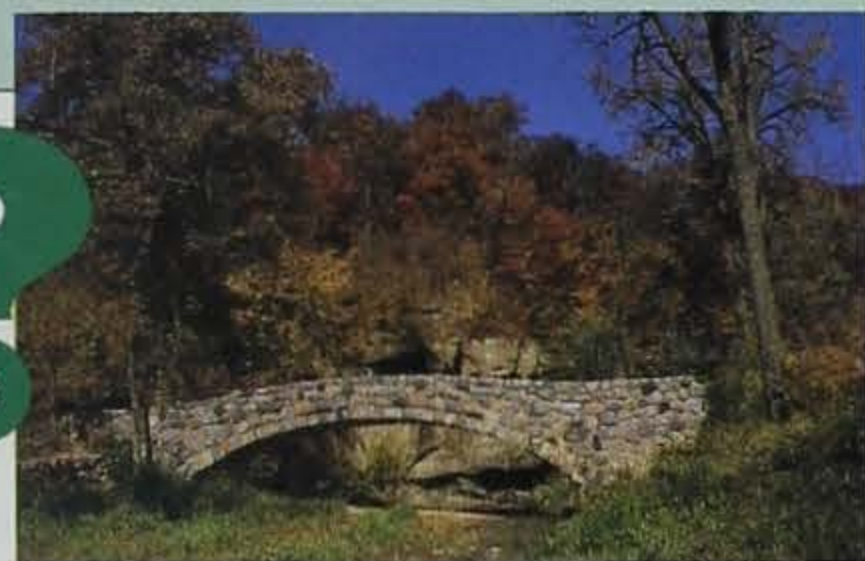
Ron Johnson

**REDBUD TREES IN BLOOM - -
RED HAW STATE PARK**



Ken Formanek

**SCENIC BRIDGE --
LEDGES STATE PARK**



Robert J. Naisbitt

**NATURAL BRIDGE --
MAQUOKETA CAVES STATE PARK**



Ken Formanek

**BUTTERFLY GARDEN --
BELLEVUE STATE PARK**



Christine Quinn

**OVERLOOK TOWER AND LAKE --
BACKBONE STATE PARK**



Ken Formanek

**FORT ATKINSON RENDEZVOUS --
FORT ATKINSON STATE PRESERVE**



Ken Formanek

**CEDAR ROCK RESIDENCE --
CEDAR ROCK HISTORIC AREA**



Ken Formanek

**BEACH AREA --
PLEASANT CREEK STATE REC. AREA**



Angela Corio

IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO

by Jim Scheffler

Consider what your answer might be to the question below if you were hard of hearing, confined to a wheelchair, blind or possessed another type of physical or learning disability.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 -- ADA -- helps ensure that the programs, activities, and services of not only public agencies like the DNR but also private enterprises are available and accessible to everyone.

The DNR, like other public agencies, has been carefully examining the way it does business to make sure that folks coming to its offices, writing or calling in for information are properly served. In some cases, office doors have been modified or ramps installed. Large-sized print brochures are available upon request and the DNR central office has a Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) system to help better serve persons with hearing impairments. (Iowa also has a special telephone relay system to assist callers with hearing impairments.)

Each of the hundreds of DNR parks, recreation areas, wildlife areas and forests has been evaluated to see how well it serves the public. Can a person who walks with a cane or uses a wheelchair conveniently picnic, camp, fish or hunt there?

Many DNR facilities were constructed in the 30s and 40s. In rustic lodges or cabins constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, doorways may be too narrow or reachable only by



DNR photo

There is an accessible picnic area and fishing pier at Big Creek State Park.

The park office entrance at George Wyth State Park has been modified.



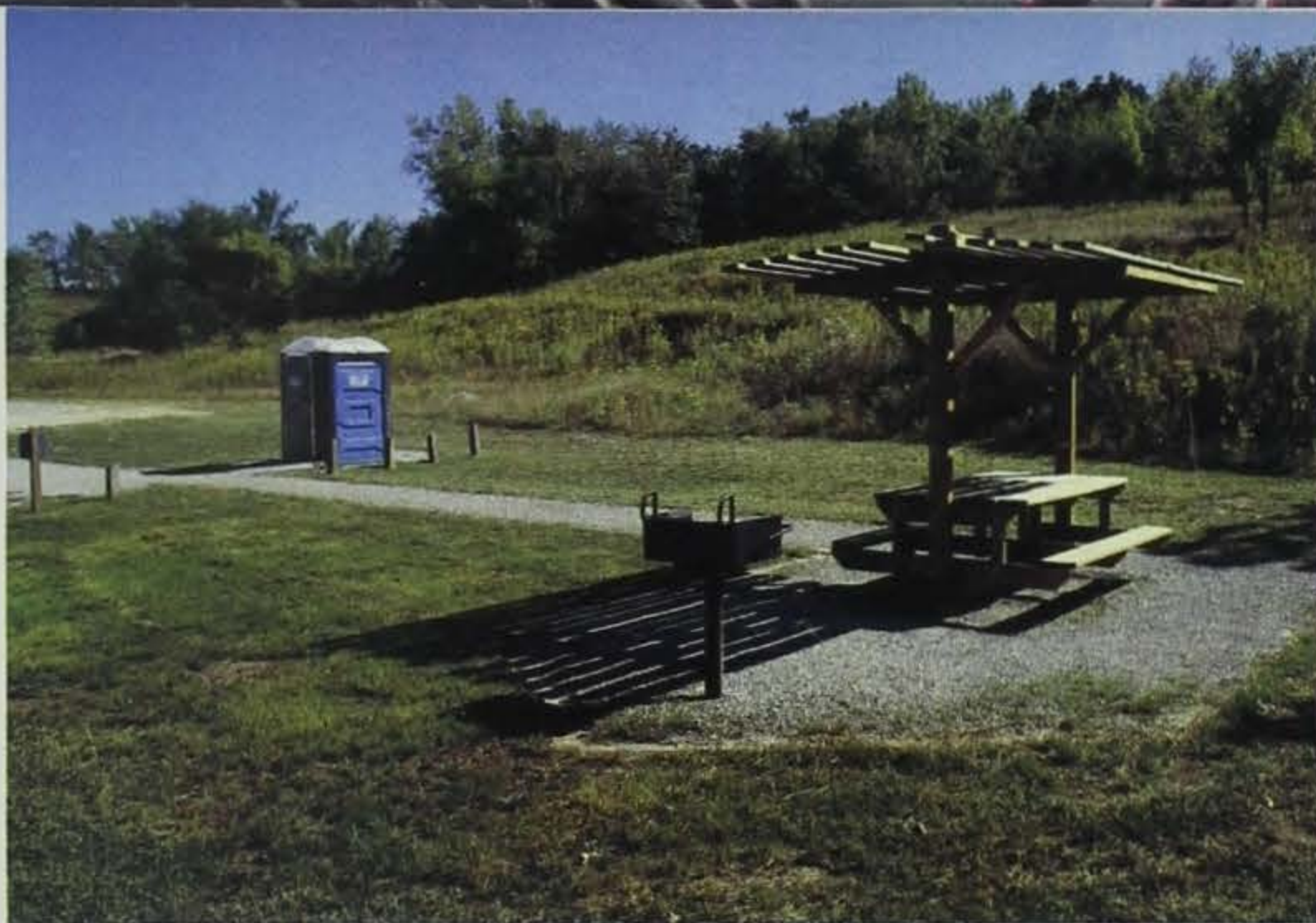
DNR photo

**ASK YOURSELF --
HOW EASILY CAN I BUY
A FISHING LICENSE,
RECEIVE A PARK
BROCHURE, OR ENJOY A
CAMPING OR FISHING
EXPERIENCE?**



DNR photo

Renovations at Ledges State Park include the accessible Lost Lake Nature Trail.



DNR photo



Ken Formanek

steps. Restroom facilities may not be readily usable by persons in wheelchairs. In some instances, buildings themselves may be in steep locations making access for many difficult at best, or usable parking facilities may not be present.

The DNR is working to identify and address its top accessibility priorities. Using funds provided by the park user permit (1986-89) and now REAP, a significant number of accessible new park facilities have been constructed in recent years, and existing ones have been renovated. Making these accessible has been a top design priority. Many new shower and restroom buildings have been constructed, historic Civilian Conservation Corps-built lodges and picnic shelters renovated, and trails improved.



DNR photo

▲ Certain camping sites are set aside only for vehicles that display the wheelchair emblem.

Ambitious redevelopment projects, with accessibility in mind, have taken place in a number of parks such as Maquoketa Caves, Lake Manawa and Pikes Peak. In addition, many high-quality, accessible fishing piers and jetties have been constructed on public lakes using funding from the federal Sport Fish Restoration Program.

In state parks, one of the primary efforts has been making park offices accessible. Doorways have been modified, ramps poured and parking areas provided. In some cases, it has not been practical to physically modify buildings. Instead, other methods have been used such as special signing, providing directions on how to contact staff for assistance.

Picnicking and camping are two of the most popular "traditional" state park activities. Since 1994, park staff have been at work constructing fully accessible camping and picnic sites in selected areas. Employing some of the techniques learned in DNR trail renovation, sites have been built using railroad ties and compacted limestone. The first "crop" of picnic areas and campsites have been targeted for the highest-use parks. In future years, sites will be constructed in other parks and recreation areas on a priority basis. Wherever possible, other accessibility improvements will be made.

The DNR is committed to providing high-quality service to everyone.

▲ Other accessible areas at Ledges State Park include a compacted limestone picnic area.

◀ (left) Viking Lake State Park has an accessible picnic area and restroom.

Accessibility is important, not just because it's the law, but because it truly is the right thing to do!

Jim Scheffler is an executive officer with the department's Parks' Recreation and Preserves Division.



DNR photo

▲ The accessible walkway at Pikes Peak State Park with its spectacular view, is popular with everyone.

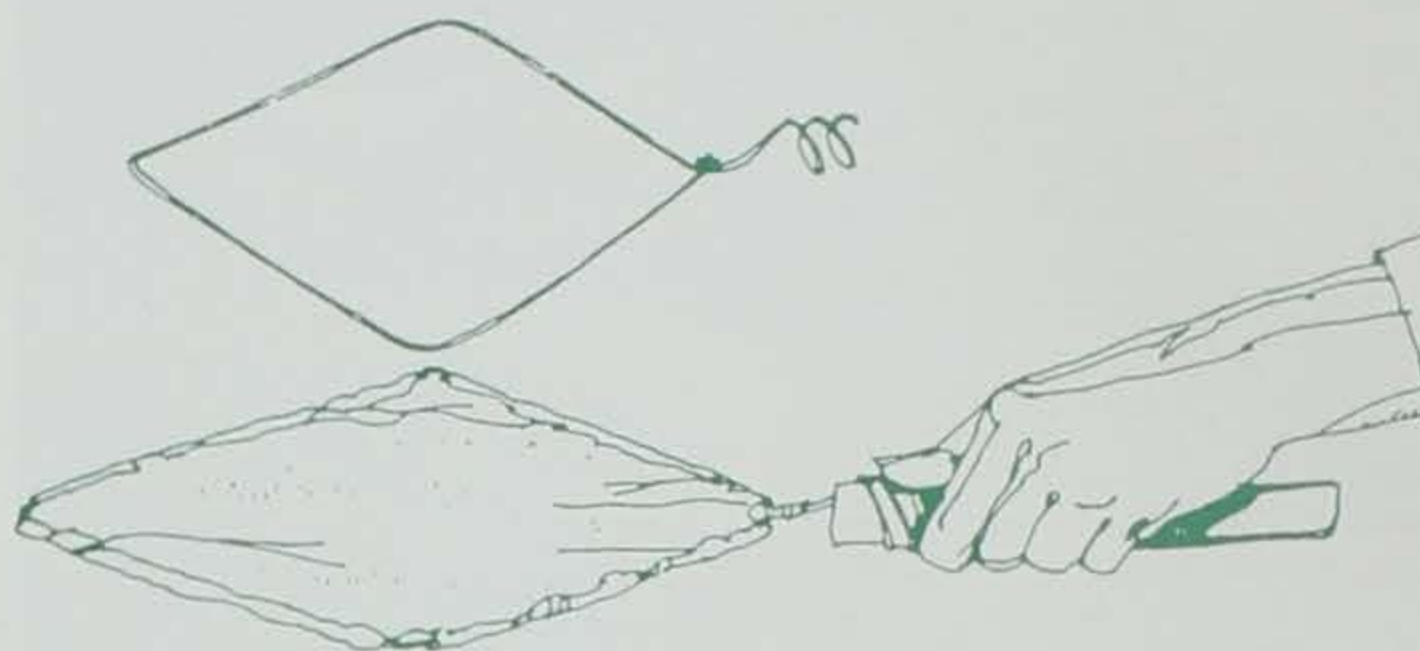
THE PRACTICAL CONSERVATIONIST

Cooking outdoors can be a treat and not a chore. It is one of the many ways to further enjoy Iowa's state parks. Most cooking done outdoors is done over coals -- either coals from your fire or charcoal briquettes. The length of time the coals last will vary with the type of wood you use. Hardwoods make longer lasting coals than softwoods (such as pine), for an extended cooking time. Remember in state parks and recreation areas only dead and already downed wood can be gathered for fires.

Learning the cooking time for foods becomes easier with experience but in general, foods cooked outdoors take about the same amount of time as those cooked indoors. Cooking foods slowly lets you "adjust as you go" rather than cooking too fast so that foods are either crisped beyond edibility or raw on the inside and crispy on the outside. Fire coal temperatures are usually measured by the "open hand thermometer." Hold your open palm one or two inches above the coals. If you cannot hold it there at all the fire is too hot for cooking. If you can hold it there one or two seconds the fire is considered "very hot" which is the temperature called for when searing or crisping are listed in recipe directions. If you can hold your hand there two to three seconds the fire is "hot" suitable for most outdoor cooking. The coals will be covered with a fine whitish-grey ash. If you can hold your hand there for more than five seconds the fire is too cold and needs to be hotter to cook anything.

Another way to do this without the benefit of the second hand on your watch is to hold your hand in the same position over the coals and see if you can hold it there while spelling out "M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I" out loud. If you can, the fire is at the preferred, two to three second, "hot" cooking temperature.

Measuring at home and premixing dry ingredients such as breading or spices and sealing them in plastic bags



Foil-wire frying pan

makes cooking outdoors even easier. A recycled plastic bottle with a pop-up top, such as a syrup bottle, is handy for carrying cooking oil. Paper sacks and heavy duty aluminum foil (regular strength is not strong enough) are always useful and a metal pancake turner can be used not only to turn items but to stir fry, mix, toss, blend and separate. You can fashion serving bowls out of foil and in a pinch even fashion a frying pan out of a metal coat hanger and foil. (See diagram above.) Foil can also be used to make a shallow pan deeper. Decide how deep you want the pan to be. Press a large piece of foil into the pan and bring it up the sides, extending the foil as high as you want above the top of the pan. Leave enough foil at the top so that you can use the extended pan as the serving container and, when done can seal the leftovers and pop it in the cooler.

You can improvise many implements. Use a small can for a rolling pin, a larger one a punch to cut out biscuits, cookies or meat patties. (Make a small hole in the bottom of the can so that air can pass through.) A large can such as a #10 will work as a dishpan in a pinch and a clean stick can serve as a stirring spoon.

Dutch ovens are one of the most versatile cooking utensils for outdoor meals. They come in a variety of sizes and are very useful for almost any outdoor cooking duty. Almost any recipe that is baked, fried, boiled or steamed can be cooked in a dutch oven but the following recipes will get you

started and give an overview of dutch oven cooking techniques. Look in the *Warden's Cookbook*, available from the DNR, for other recipe ideas and suggestions.

Stuffed Trout

Here is a great way to cook all those trout you caught.

At home: (per person) Mix 1/2 tablespoon parsley flakes, 1/2 teaspoon dill and a dash of salt in a plastic bag. Place 1/4 cup instant wild rice, or bulgur mix (per person) in a separate plastic bag. Store sliced lemons and dabs of butter in a third plastic bag.

At your site: Bring one-half cup (for each serving) of water to a boil, add the rice or bulgur, cover and set aside. After 15 minutes, drain any excess water, add the seasoning package and one tablespoon butter per serving and mix.

Place each trout on a large piece of foil. Stuff each fish with the grain mixture and scatter any extra around the fish. Bring one-half inch water to a simmer in the dutch oven. Dot the fish with butter and the lemon slices. Seal the foil with the seam on top, place the foil packages in the water, cover the oven and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes, until the fish is tender. (This depends on the size of your catch and the thickness of your fish so judge accordingly!) The packets can also be cooked directly on the coals but be careful not to crisp the fish.

Outdoor Oven Chicken

1/4 cut up frying chicken per person cooking oil

brown paper bag (with 1/4 teaspoon salt, and enough flour to cover chicken)

Heat one-half inch of oil in oven.

Dredge chicken with flour and fry chicken in oven until golden brown. Brown three to four pieces of chicken at a time.

Remove the oven from the fire and place all the browned chicken inside. Slowly pour 3/4 cup water into the dutch oven. Place the lid tightly on the oven and replace the oven on the fire for 20-25 minutes to steam and reheat the chicken.

Warm and Easy Chili Pie

Combine two pounds ground beef, turkey or venison, one tablespoon butter and one medium chopped onion in the dutch oven. Brown the meat and then add one 15-ounce can chili beans, 1/2-1 teaspoon chili powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt and an 8-ounce can of tomato sauce. Stir, cover and cook 15 minutes. Mix two packages (6-ounce size) cornbread mix as directed on the package. Pour on top of the meat mixture, place lid on oven and cook an additional 20 - 30 minutes until the cornbread is done.

Baked Apples

Core six apples (or at least one per person). Melt 1/3 cup butter in dutch oven. Add 1/3 cup brown sugar, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon and 1/4 cup water. Place apples in the oven and spoon brown sugar mixture over them. Cover and simmer/bake apples 20 minutes or until tender.

Dump Cake

Line the oven with foil and pour in one 29-ounce can sliced peaches with juice. Dump one white or yellow cake mix evenly over the peaches and stir enough to moisten cake. Dot the top with 1/4 pound butter or margarine. Place the coals on the top and bottom of the oven and bake for 45 minutes to one hour. You can also use pineapple, cherries, apples or

other fruit in place of peaches and you can sprinkle pecans, walnuts or almonds on top.

Beverage

Bring premixed instant apple cider, hot chocolate, instant tea or coffee and boil water for individual beverages. You can also bring apple cider and a tea ball or muslin bag of spices (cinnamon, allspice, cloves and brown sugar) and mull the cider in a large dutch oven. Adjust the number of coals or briquettes so that it simmers slowly while the rest of your meal cooks.

Using dutch ovens allows you to cook in any weather and to keep all parts of your meal warm while the others are being prepared.

Grilling over coals is another outdoor favorite however, that can be done at any time of the year. Here are two simple "grills" neither of which requires you to carry in an actual grill.

Individual Breakfast In a Sack

- 2 strips bacon
- 1 or 2 eggs
- small brown or white paper sack, (without ink or printing on it)
- 3-foot long stick

Note: The fire for this recipe is ready when you can hold your hand over the coals for three to four seconds.

Put the bacon in a sack and skewer the sack on a stick so that the bag can be held over the fire (at a height of 6 to 10 inches) until the bacon is almost done. The paper will absorb the grease. When the bacon is almost done crack the egg and drop it in the bag on top of the bacon and cook another 12 minutes or so until the egg is done. Rip open the sack and eat out of the bag for easy cleanup.

Campfire Drumsticks

(Serves 3 to 4)

At home: Premix one pound

hamburger, one cup crushed cornflakes, one egg, one small chopped onion, one teaspoon salt, 1/8 teaspoon pepper and one teaspoon mustard and store the mixture in a plastic bag.

At the site: Divide the meat mixture into six or seven portions. Wrap a small amount of the meat mixture around a long clean stick and form a "drumstick." Wrap foil around the meat drumstick and place the drumstick over a bed of coals turning it frequently so it cooks slowly and evenly. They will take 15 to 20 minutes to cook.

And finally, a great old-time favorite at any time of the year, updated and waiting for your campfire or coals -- s'mores.

S'Mores

Cut four slits in a large marshmallow and put one milk chocolate chip in each slit. Slide two filled marshmallows on a stick to toast them. Sandwich the cooked, golden brown marshmallows between two graham crackers and enjoy.

Come out to one of Iowa's many great state parks and after an afternoon of fishing, birdwatching, or even ice-skating or cross-country skiing, prepare an outdoor meal everyone will enjoy.



Julie Sparks

CONSERVATION UPDATE

Iowa Tree Farmer of the Year

Since 1955, the Iowa Committee of the National Tree Farm System annually selects a "Tree Farmer of the Year." This year's husband and wife team of David and Andrea Sparks exemplifies both the appreciation many Iowans feel toward their woodlands and the belief that they can be managed for multiple benefits. Read the Sparks' own words on how they have come to treasure and manage an Iowa woodland:

We've owned 817 acres near the Mississippi River in Allamakee County since 1986. We had been coming to the Lansing area to camp and fish since the early 1980s, heard of this place, and needed only one look to know we wanted it.

We've lived and worked in Waterloo for the past 25 years. David is vice president of investments in the local office of Piper Jaffray and I am a sign language interpreter for Area VII Education Agency. We've been married 20 years and have no children. Consequently we have plenty of time and energy for the outdoors!

We first purchased the farm as a combination investment and weekend getaway. It had been heavily logged by the previous owner so we started to learn what we could do to improve the woodlands. This led us to contact DNR district forester Janet Ott.



DNR photo

▲ This year's "Tree Farmer of the Year," the husband and wife team of David and Andrea Sparks, discuss a tree planting with district forester Janet Ott.

She helped us develop a forest management plan which has guided our steps for the past six years. We were pleased to discover that there is no single, set approach we would be obliged to follow. A forest management plan can be written on a custom basis to accommodate individual owners' objectives.

Our objectives have always been three: enhance and enjoy wildlife, including hunting; bring out the natural beauty of the woods; and realize the economic potential of timber production. As we intend this to be our permanent vacation home site and eventual retirement location, whatever we do to accomplish economic return must not diminish the pleasurable aspects of the woods. Our experience to date leads us to

believe these different objectives can be accomplished in harmony.

Some things we have done to promote the growth of trees on our farm in the past six years include:

- Timber Stand Improvement -- identifying, marking and cataloging specific 'crop' trees on 109 acres, plus taking steps to enhance their rate of growth.
- Forest Reserve -- choosing not to graze cattle on the woodlands, and placing these acres under the financial incentives and protection of this property tax status.
- Reforestation -- planting 20 acres of new tree seedlings on highly erodible farmland, a total of 16,000 trees planted in the last two years.
- Clean-up -- removing for recycling, with Lansing's

Kee High seniors' help, 1,700 tires from an old dump on the farm. We will continue hauling away artificial "artifacts" we find in the woods until only footprints remain.

Some things we've done to promote forestry in general include:

- Master Woodland Manager Program -- both of us graduated from this intensive and highly beneficial course offered by ISU Forestry Extension Service and the DNR Forestry Division. We are repaying the value of our schooling by donating time to help people with their woodlands. We welcome inquiries by anyone who would like to know more.
- Tree Farm Program -- we enrolled in the Tree Farm Program, a nationwide registry of landowners who

are making an organized effort to manage their woodlands.

- Northeast Iowa Forestry Advisory Council -- David is currently chair of this informal group of landowners who meet periodically to advise the Forestry Division and other governmental agencies on the needs and preferences of woodland owners.

- Educational Programs -- we prepared a slide show and talk on forest management to present at Hartman Reserve in Black Hawk County and are in the process of turning it into a self-playing, recorded program.

We consider ourselves "conservationists" in the traditional sense. Our view is that people and nature can coexist, and both can benefit when people approach nature thoughtfully. In the long run, the best way we can encourage others to improve and increase Iowa's woodlands is by our own example -- to demonstrate that it is economically rewarding to do so.

We enjoy being in the woods at every season. Forest management is hard work, but always satisfying. Trees truly are a renewable resource. We have been delighted by the speed with which ours have grown since we came on the scene. With care, and good planning, we look forward to an occasional harvest of marketable logs, while gradually

improving the overall beauty and wildlife value of the woods.

One other thing, the farm has brought us closer to Lansing and the great people who live there. We have found lifelong friends among many of our neighbors. From them, as well as from the solace of the woods, though we've yet to sell any timber, we've already gained a valuable harvest in our hearts.

State Fair Drawings, Highway Map, Symposium and Other Events Mark 75th Anniversary

A special state fair drawing last August helped kick off Iowa state parks' 75th anniversary celebration. Jim Nixon of Van Meter won the grand prize -- an Old Town canoe, presented by Canoe Sport Outfitters of Indianola.



Ken Formanek

▲ Jim Nixon of Van Meter won the Old Town canoe, donated by Canoe Sport Outfitters of Indianola, in the Parks, Recreation and Preserves Division 1994 State Fair drawing.



▲ The 75th anniversary logo was designed by Tabor and Associates of Des Moines.

Other prizes included coupon books for camping at state parks and recreation areas, each valued at \$189. Each book contained coupons for 21 nights of camping.

The 75th anniversary logo, designed by Tabor and Associates of Des Moines, is being used to highlight events throughout the anniversary. The logo portrays people sampling the treasures found in state parks -- the "places of quiet beauty."

The 1995 Iowa Transportation Map will feature a tribute to the parks' 75th anniversary on the back, with all of Iowa's state parks newly highlighted on the front. Each park will be marked by a goldfinch inside a brown circle.



▲ This symbol will highlight each state park on the 1995 Iowa Transportation Map.

A State Park Symposium will be held in conjunction with the Iowa Academy of Science meeting at Wartburg College on April 20-21.

State park open houses and meetings are scheduled for May. Commemorative pins, patches and collector trucks/banks are also being developed, either by the DNR or by private interests.

Become involved in the celebration by taking part in any of the special events and programs designed to commemorate 75 years of state parks in Iowa. Contact the local ranger for information on special events at a state park near you and see other events on the back of the pull out section in this issue.

CONSERVATION UPDATE

Leopold Education Project -- *Striving for a Land Ethic*

Conservation education for our young people is paramount in this period of increasing urbanization and loss of human-land relations. As complexities over our resource use continue to grow, it is imperative that we provide young people with the skills and information necessary to make responsible choices based on a land ethic. The Leopold Education Project (LEP) strives to do this by bringing today's youngsters in direct contact with the land.

The LEP is an interdisciplinary conservation ethics curriculum targeted for grades 6-12, with an elementary curriculum currently in progress. The LEP increases students awareness of the land, and informs them of how to make responsible choices for our planet.

Pheasants Forever, Inc. (PF) with its structure of local chapters, has the unique ability to distribute the LEP curriculum nation wide. This

chapter network strategy also provides for a beneficial relationship between local conservation efforts, the school and the community.

With a number of workshops already held in ten different states, more than 680 educators and facilitators have been trained to use and facilitate the LEP curriculum in their local schools and communities.

Pheasants Forever will be conducting a LEP facilitator workshop in Iowa Jan. 28-30 at the Springbrook Conservation Education Center, in Guthrie Center.

For further information about the LEP contact Ann McCarthy at the national office of Pheasants Forever, 612/481-7142 or PF field reps Matt O'Connor at 319/352-0318 or Jim Wooley at 515/774-2238.

Iowa's LEP is partially funded with an educational grant from the Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP).



Aldo Leopold

Off-season Price Break at State Parks

Campers can take advantage of the off-season rates in state parks and recreation areas. The reduced rates are \$4 per night for a non-modern site and \$6 for a modern site. It is an additional \$3 per night for an electrical site and a limited number of parks have water and sewer hookups for an additional \$2 per night.

(Check with the individual park office to see if water and restroom facilities are available during the cold weather season.)

Winter can be a great time to enjoy one of Iowa's state parks you might have missed last summer. Some state parks have scheduled winter activities and programs.

Only Honey Creek State Park features a heated shower and toilet building for winter camping comfort. Once water facilities are turned off (in mid- to late October until mid-April) all campsites except those in Honey Creek, are available without restroom facilities for the \$4 per night rate.

Your Guide to Iowa State Parks and Recreation Areas is available at all parks and the DNR central office or by calling the DNR 24-hour information system at (515)281-5145 and requesting the brochure.



Iowa Pheasants Forever chapters are working with farmers and landowners to establish wildlife habitat.

The goal of **Pheasants Forever** is to restore pheasant populations through quality habitat. PF is paying landowners to plant food plots, nesting cover, shelterbelts and other habitat, for game and nongame wildlife.

Iowa currently has 97 chapters throughout the state looking to work with local farmers and landowners for the benefit of all upland and wetland wildlife.

For help planting wildlife habitat or more information about **Pheasants Forever**, contact Jim Wooley (S. Iowa) at 515/774-2238 or Matt O'Connor (N. Iowa) at 319/352-0318, or write to 1205 Ilion Ave, Chariton, Iowa 50049

**Think
Habitat!**

Bald Eagle Days

Celebrate Iowa's important role in providing habitat for wintering bald eagles by attending one of this winter's bald eagle days. In 1995, the following events will be held along the Mississippi and Des Moines rivers at selected locations:

◆ Jan. 21-22, Lock and Dam 19 at Keokuk, contact the Lee County Conservation Board at 319-463-7673 for more information.

◆ Jan. 28-29, Lock and Dam 14 at the Quad Cities Expo Center in Rock Island, contact the Quad City Conservation Alliance for more info at 309-788-5912.

◆ March 4-5, Red Rock Reservoir at the Pella Community Center, contact the Corps of engineers at 515-828-7522 for more information.



▲ Lee Gladfelter was a valued asset to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, its Fish and Wildlife Division and the state of Iowa.

Lee Gladfelter

On Friday, September 30, 1994, while enroute to bow hunt for deer, Lee Gladfelter was killed in an automobile accident just north of Kirksville, Missouri. Gladfelter was a valued asset to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and its Fish and Wildlife Division. He provided insight and direction to deer and turkey programs, management of public lands and designing of projects and programs. Gladfelter was a quality professional and very well respected by those who had the opportunity to work with him. His career has been starred by numerous accomplishments, particularly in deer management and wetland protection.

Gladfelter began his professional career in March 1969 as deer research biologist with the Iowa Conservation Commission and was best

known for his contributions to white-tailed deer research and management. The success of Iowa's deer program and the great recreational opportunities provided to Iowans is largely attributed to Gladfelter's expertise and guidance.

In 1989 he became special projects coordinator for the wildlife bureau in Des Moines. Since that time, Gladfelter was a guiding force in Iowa's portion of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV), which is a working group of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. From 1989 to 1994, he helped secure funding and guide the acquisition of 5,300 acres for wetland and upland restoration and protection.

Additionally, Gladfelter served as coordinator for the national big game trophy measuring clubs of Pope and Young and Boone and

Crockett, roadside management liaison between the DNR and the Department of Transportation, and DNR representative for National Wildlife Disease Control Program. Gladfelter also represented Iowa on the implementation committee of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture as well as served as chairman for the state coordinating committee of the PPJV.

Gladfelter's family, who has always been a strong supporter of his profession and ideals, has created a memorial to acknowledge his recent accomplishments in wetland protection. In conjunction with the Eagle Lake Wetland Project, in Hancock County, a wetland will be restored and named in his honor. The Eagle Lake Wetland Project was selected for funding under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. It ranked in the top three out of numerous projects submitted from across the U.S. This was a major accomplishment and Gladfelter was the author of this proposal. This million-dollar project will receive \$500,000 in federal funds and the other half from state and private donations. The main objective of this project is acquisition and restoration of wetlands. Memorial contributions can be made to the Eagle Lake Wetlands Restoration Project, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace Building, Des Moines 50319-0034, attention Terry Little.

CONSERVATION UPDATE

Upcoming NRC, EPC and Preserves Board Meetings

The dates and locations have been set for the following meetings of the Natural Resource Commission, Environmental Protection Commission and the Preserves Advisory Board of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Agendas for these meetings are set approximately 10 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

For additional information, contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034.

Natural Resource Commission:

- No January meeting
- February 9, Des Moines
- March 9, Des Moines
- No April meeting

Environmental Protection Commission:

- January 17 (Tuesday), Des Moines
- February 20, Des Moines
- March 20, Des Moines
- April 17, Des Moines

State Preserves Advisory Board:

- March 1995



Lowell Washburn

▲ This photo of trumpeter swans appears on this year's wildlife diversity/nongame poster, available from local tax preparers with a donation to the Fish and Wildlife Protection Fund. The trumpeter swan is the world's largest waterfowl species. The snow white adults may weight up to 35 pounds and attain a wingspan or more than seven feet. Historically, wild trumpeter swans nested across the state, but had disappeared by the late 1800s. The DNR hopes to reestablish a nesting population of the birds to Iowa wetlands by the year 2003.

Iowa Swan Program Receives \$100,000 Boost

The DNR has received a gift of \$100,000 to aid in its effort to restore a wild, nesting population of trumpeter swans to the state.

According to DNR wildlife biologist, Ron Andrews, the memorial gift was donated by the family of David A. and Robert Luglan Sampson, formerly of Webster City, Iowa. Robert Sampson died in 1994, and his son David died in 1985. Both were avid outdoorsmen and enjoyed hunting and fishing.

"There is no doubt that this gift will greatly accelerate the pace of our trumpeter swan

restoration," said Andrews. "This represents the largest gift that the DNR has ever received to be used toward a specific project, and we are obviously excited about it," he added. "Considering the family's ties to the out-of-doors, this will be a very fitting living memorial."

The DNR's goal is to reestablish a breeding and migratory population of at least 15 pairs of wild trumpeter swans by the year 2003. The last wild swans to nest in Iowa occurred in Hancock County in 1893.

So far, the DNR has placed five breeding pairs

of captive-reared trumpeter swans at scattered sites around the state. The first production is expected next spring.

The Sampson family donation will be used to purchase additional swans, fencing, other project equipment, and for development of educational materials on trumpeter swans and wetland conservation. Also, during this past summer, the Sampson family donated a pair of breeding swans to the Hamilton County Conservation Board.

"As active hunters and fishermen, David and Robert appreciated nature and our natural resources," said family spokesperson Shelly Sampson Gordon. "They would want us to give back to the land in the form of something important for perpetuity," she added. "Our family is hopeful that this will make a difference."

This donation puts us at about the halfway point for the money needed to bring wild swans back to Iowa," said Andrews. "We continue to seek support and donations from additional wetland sites, swan caretakers and equipment needs," he added. "I'm very optimistic that the public will get behind this project, and that future generations will be thrilled at the sight and sound of these majestic birds nesting on Iowa's natural wetlands."

For more information on Iowa's trumpeter swan restoration effort, contact Ron Andrews, Iowa DNR, 1203 North Shore Drive, Clear Lake, Iowa, 50428-1297, phone: 515/357-3517.

CLASSROOM CORNER

by Linda Perkins

Somebunny Needs a Brush Pile

Many schools are incorporating service projects into their curriculum. The intrinsic value of contributing something to one's community is widely recognized. Brush piles are useful in many areas and are found in most state parks and recreation areas. If you are interested in doing a project for a park near you, contact the park headquarters. The following project, adapted from the Program File at Springbrook Conservation Education Center, is a viable option for completing such a project. It combines educational, environmental and social elements. The original activity is titled, *Building Brush Piles*.

Background:

Wildlife management is the science of managing wildlife, habitat and human impact for the mutual benefit of all living things. Maintaining suitable habitat is the key. Without the proper habitat, wildlife cannot survive. Sometimes humans are responsible for damaging habitat, and sometimes the very animals that live there are responsible. In several locations around the state, but perhaps most notably in the Springbrook Recreation Area, deer have significantly reduced the amount of natural cover. Steps have been taken to control the deer population, but it will be some time before the undergrowth recovers from the effect of over browsing. Wildlife management techniques can intervene to provide the cover which has been lost. By building brush piles, we can help reverse the damage done by the deer. Rabbit populations would respond to such an effort almost immediately.

Small animals are an important part of our state's wildlife diversity, and like all of us, have certain basic needs for survival. The five primary needs of all species are food, water, shelter, space and the arrangement of these elements. The term shelter can be extended to include cover.

Cover is classified according to its function. It is necessary for nesting, denning, brooding, travel and resting. Not all species use each function, but a single shelter can be used by a variety of animals to fulfill each animal's individual needs.

Cover is essential for the survival of many birds and small mammals. Lacking the means to fight off an attack, they rely heavily upon camouflage, their senses and hiding places as means of escaping predators. Brush piles provide excellent cover for eastern cottontail rabbits, and nesting sights for many kinds of birds, including wild turkeys. Pheasants use them for shelter during winter storms.

Living brush piles are known as thickets. When properly constructed, brush piles made by people can develop into thickets over a period of time. As the brush pile slowly decays, it leaves behind a tangle of grass, vines, small woody plants and newly sprouted trees.

The location of the brush pile is crucial. Eastern cottontails prefer to live in border areas referred to as "the edge." This is the point where two or more types of a habitat join. Cottontails prefer to live near grassy areas which join a woodland, marsh or field. The brush pile should be built adjacent to this edge.

Age:

Grades 6 - Adult

Objectives:

By researching the primary needs of the Eastern cottontail rabbit, the students will discover that brush piles provide cover which is essential to survival. They will demonstrate their understanding of the animal's primary needs by constructing a brush pile in an appropriate location. Further, the students will gain experience in conducting a conservation service project.

Materials:

Permission and instructions from local conservation personnel.

Bow saws, snippers and work gloves provided by the workers.

Resource Material:

Brush Piles Improve Habitat, rpt. Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program; Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Leopold, Aldo, *Game Management*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1986.

National Audubon Society, *Wildlife Habitat Improvement*, 1974.

Schemnitz, Sanford D., ed. *Wildlife Management Techniques*, 4th ed. Ref., The Wildlife Society, Washington, D.C., 1980.

Extensions:

1. The students could investigate an existing brush pile, documenting the wildlife and insects they observe. They would then draw a food web showing interrelationships.

2. It would be desirable for the class to return to the brush pile they constructed at a later date to observe how it has been incorporated into the habitat. They could note if vegetative growth is emerging within the pile, plant additional native shrubs around the pile, or build another one near by.

The *carrying capacity* of a habitat can be increased by adding shelter, especially when that shelter serves the dual purpose of increasing food supplies. The *carrying capacity* is the number of animals of the same species that an area can support. As the thicket develops, the rabbits can feed upon young shoots.

Brush piles placed at the head of low profile ravine, can also act as a deterrent to erosion. If the brush pile is elongated, it makes an excellent travel lane.

The completed brush pile should be approximately three to six feet high, and 25-30 feet long. It should be dense enough to keep dogs or coyotes out and stout enough to withstand wind. If built in a park, it is wise to keep it well away from any area where visitors might search for firewood.

Failure to build a proper foundation can shorten the life of a brush pile to only a few years. The pile can be built over an existing pile of rocks, a fallen tree, a criss-cross of fallen logs or at the base of a tree. Mulberry and cedar trees provide good vertical cover. Another method of building brush piles is to half cut a living tree. (*See note below.*) This is done by selecting a tree, possibly a cedar or mulberry, which is leaning. The trunk is cut only half way through at a height of about three feet, and allowed to fall over. The resulting hinge of bark keeps the tree elevated and alive. If the tree is well branched, no additional work is needed.

Procedure:

1. The students will research Eastern cottontail rabbits, noting how brush piles improve existing habitat, and how the rabbits use the piles. Construction techniques and location recommendations should also be noted.

2. Meet with a local conservation official or landowner, to confer with that person about a specific location, materials to be used, and the overall size of the pile to be constructed.

Note: Recently cut materials take longer to decay, but under no circumstance should anything be cut down without specific permission. Generally there is an ample supply of fallen material which can be piled to benefit the habitat.

3. The students will fill out and return permission slips, complete with a list of hand tools they can bring from home. Few students will need tools, as the task requires mostly hand labor. Power tools are not recommended. Remind the students to dress in long sleeves, old shoes and jeans.

4. A student photographer may be assigned to document the project.

5. Once at the sight, the students need to survey the area for available materials. The base should be constructed first. Its purpose is to keep the other materials from direct contact with the ground, and yet needs to be open enough to allow the cottontails to move around under the pile.

6. Progressively lighter materials should be added to the pile.

7. When the brush pile has been finished, some heavier limbs are placed across the top to anchor the structure against high winds.

8. The conservation personnel or landowner should be contacted to let them know that the project has been completed.



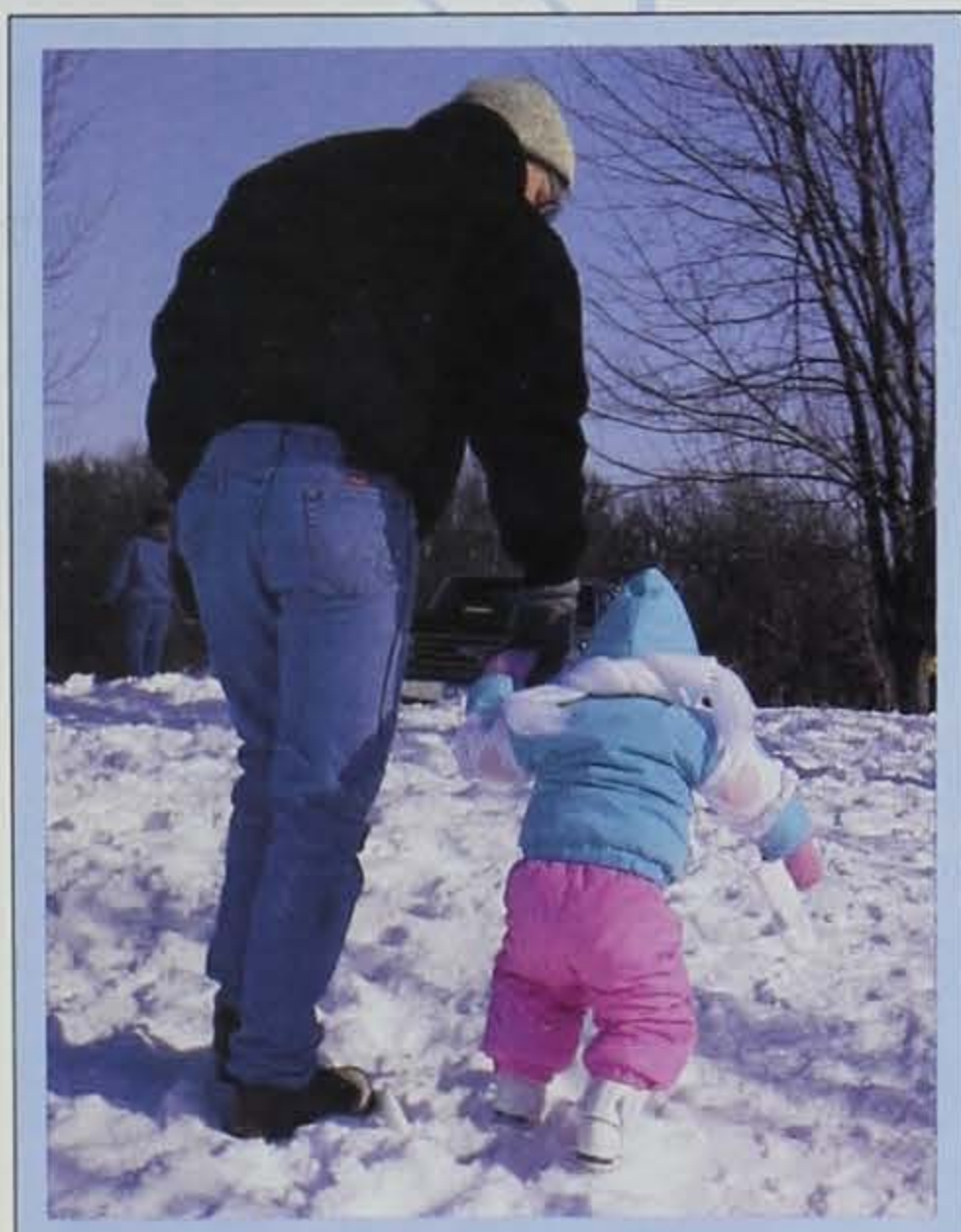
DNR photo

▲ Brush pile at Springbrook

Linda Perkins is an environmental educator at the department's Springbrook Conservation Education Center in Guthrie County.

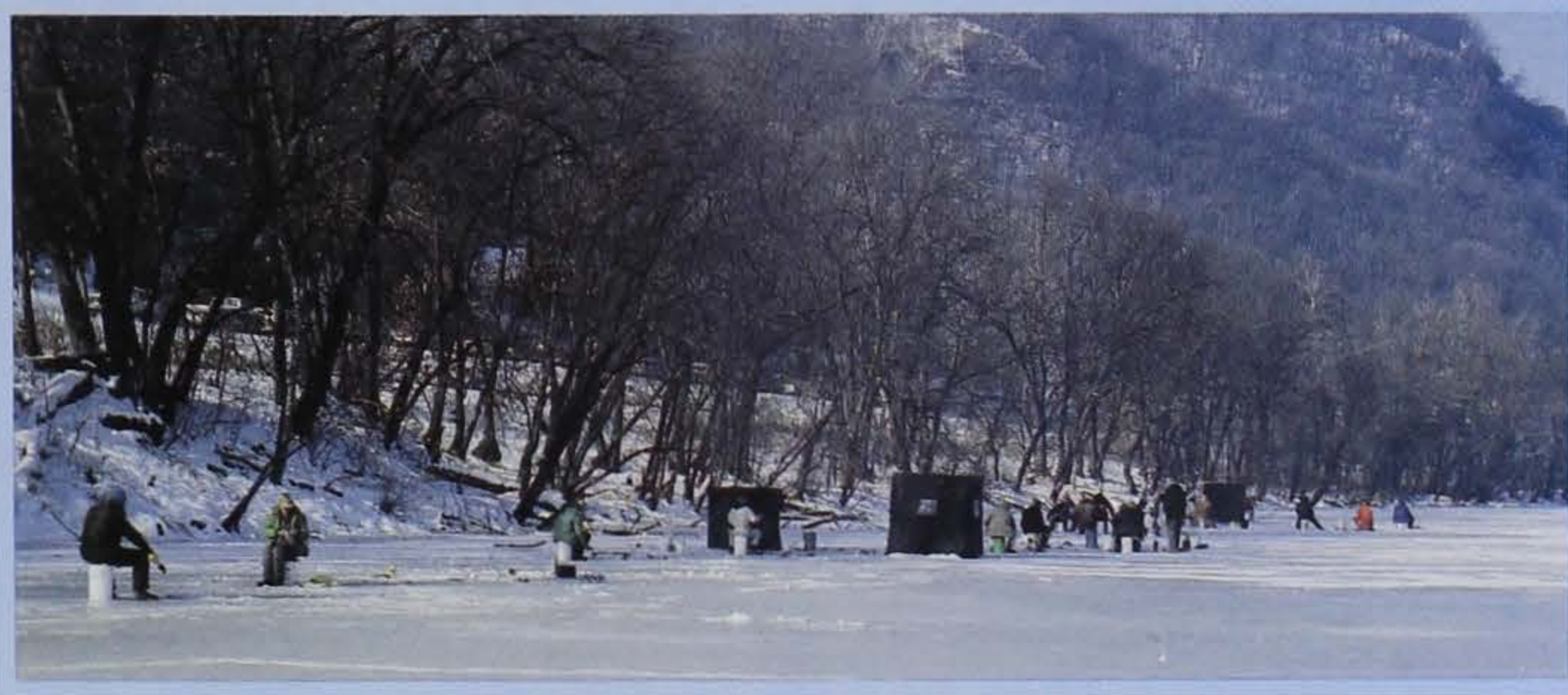
LET IT SNOW LET IT SNOW

by Angela Corio



Ken Formanek

Frosty breath and eyelashes,
SNOW
rosy red cheeks,
SNOW
the crisp stillness of the chilled air,
SNOW
state parks are the perfect place
SNOW
to play when the winter blanket of
SNOW
white covers us.



Ron Johnson



Ken Formanek

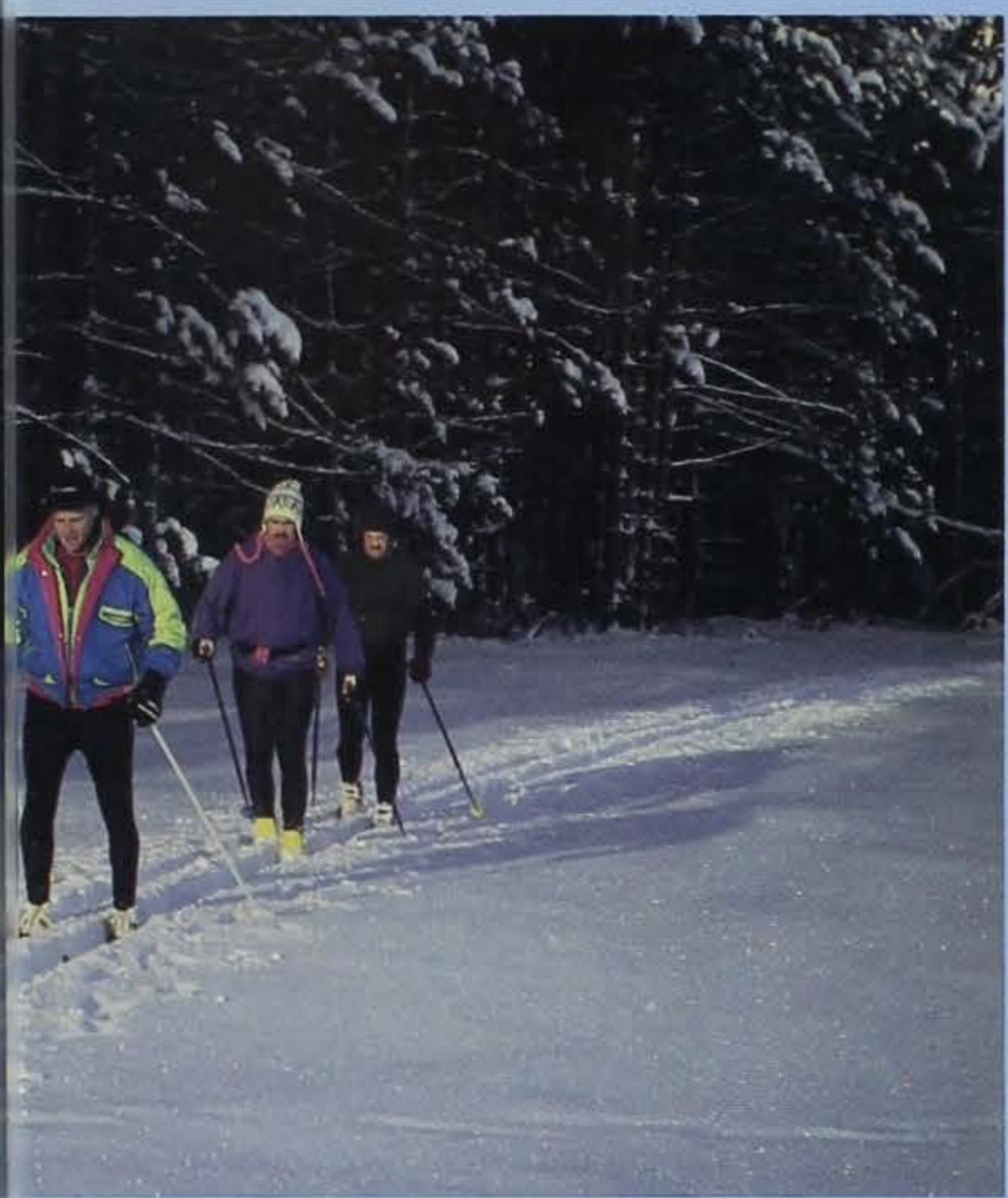


Robert J. Naisbitt



Ken Formanek

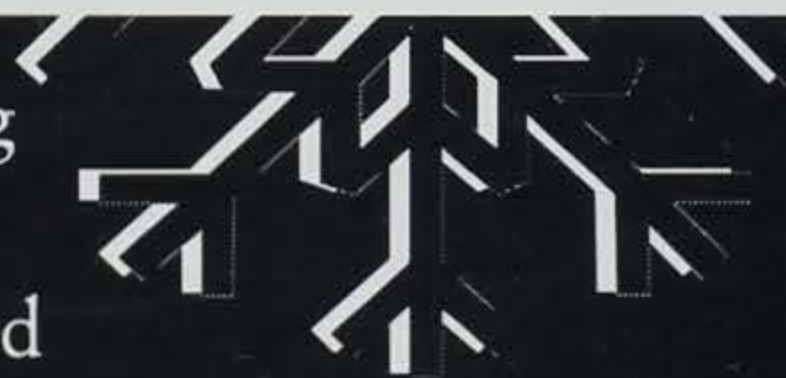




Ron Johnson



"The snow enveloped everything in a blanket of white serenity, bringing peace to all who reveled in its beauty." unknown



Ken Formanek

Christine Quinn



RANGER'S DIARY

by Bill Mishler

"Just Another Day in the Life of a Park Ranger"

4:10 a.m. -- I awake abruptly, look at the clock and wonder what in the world my Lab is barking at. There's knocking as I sit up and try to get my bearings. Dressing quickly I rush to the door expecting an emergency in the park but instead I see a young couple and ask them what the problem is. They calmly reply that there's no problem, but they do need a fishing license and are wondering if I would be so kind as to sell them one. I figure what the heck, I'm awake anyhow, so I get my keys and lead them to my office. I ask them if it ever occurred to them to buy their licenses during normal hours, sometime prior to going fishing. It has occurred to them, but they have also seen the sign at the park entrance indicating the 4 a.m. opening and they figure if the park is open, there should be someone available to sell them a license.

4:30 a.m. -- Sitting alone in my office I try to decide whether to go back to bed or work. I figure that since the park is open, there might as well be someone working. Right?

8 a.m. -- I'm patrolling the campground when a hungry looking camper relays that during the night, a band of renegade raccoons has eaten all of his family's food. Not only is everything gone from the two grocery bags left on the picnic table, but they unlatched the cooler and cleaned it out as well. After telling the camper the only way to prevent this kind of theft is to lock the food in the car (and he should probably hide the keys just in case) I give him directions to the local grocery store and suggest a couple of pretty good restaurants -- one boasting the largest tenderloins in Iowa.

11:15 a.m. -- A radio call alerts me to an accident at the main ramp on Lake Macbride but no details are available. Not knowing if anyone is injured or what the extent of the damages are, I rush to the boat ramp. At the site there's a small group of people, watching a small red object floating about 25 feet from shore.

The object is actually neither small nor floating, but is the top of a 1965 Chevy pickup. Luckily, the owner was not behind his vehicle when the brake failed, and except for the owner's distress over his now waterlogged classic, nobody was injured. After the wrecker arrives and the wrecker driver uses some unique diving techniques, the truck is soon on dry land. The truck's owner promises to be back, but the first thing to be fixed will be the emergency brake.

Well past lunch time -- I decide to go to the beach concession for a bite to eat where I meet a woman who has locked her keys in her car. What she fails to tell me until I get to her car is that she has also locked her one-year-old daughter inside. Using a door unlocking tool that enables an average thief to unlock the car with in seconds, I attempt to unlock the car. It takes me *slightly* longer. As a matter of fact, the woman is about to shatter a window when I get lucky, hit the right spot and pop the lock. The woman is eternally grateful, but from the child's reaction, I sense she would like this game to go on.

I'm debating whether to call my upcoming meal lunch or supper, since it's rapidly approaching time for the latter but instead get a call saying a section of pontoon dock has broken free and is floating with two docked pontoons attached. After launching the park's boat, I capture the runaway dock and hook it onto three other sections anchored to shore. After rehooking the dock with a new rod, I swim to find the chain and anchor. On my fourth dive I'm successful, and soon have the dock anchored in place. Three young boys watch all this intently from across the bay. They scatter as I walk towards them. They had indeed unhooked and unanchored the dock in an attempt to use it as a raft. After my *short* lecture, they won't be doing it again.

After 6 p.m. -- I get showered and into a dry uniform. Even though eating



Illustration by Newton Burch

is high on my to-do list, I'd better get to the campground, verify registrations and patrol the campground. I figure I'll grab a snack later in town on the way to the south campground. Things go very smoothly in the north campground, and except for a few minor problems I'm soon on my way south. Only a mile from town I observe a car driving through a farmer's bean field, doing quite a bit of crop damage. I pull up just as the car drives through the fence and becomes stuck in the ditch. The very intoxicated driver says he thought he was taking a short cut to Cedar Rapids. The Highway Patrol arrives and transports the driver to the Johnson County jail.

Almost 10:30 p.m. -- It's closing time in Iowa state parks as I finally get to the south campground. Except for the complaint about loud music the night before, and a report of the fish cleaning station being clogged, everything is okay.

2 a.m. -- Back home after patrolling the rest of the park, my wife wakes to ask how my day has gone. "Pretty average," I say. She also asks what I ate for supper, which reminds me that I haven't eaten all day. I tell her I'll have a big breakfast when I wake up -- which hopefully won't coincide with the park opening!

Bill Mishler is a park ranger for Lake Macbride State Park in Johnson County.

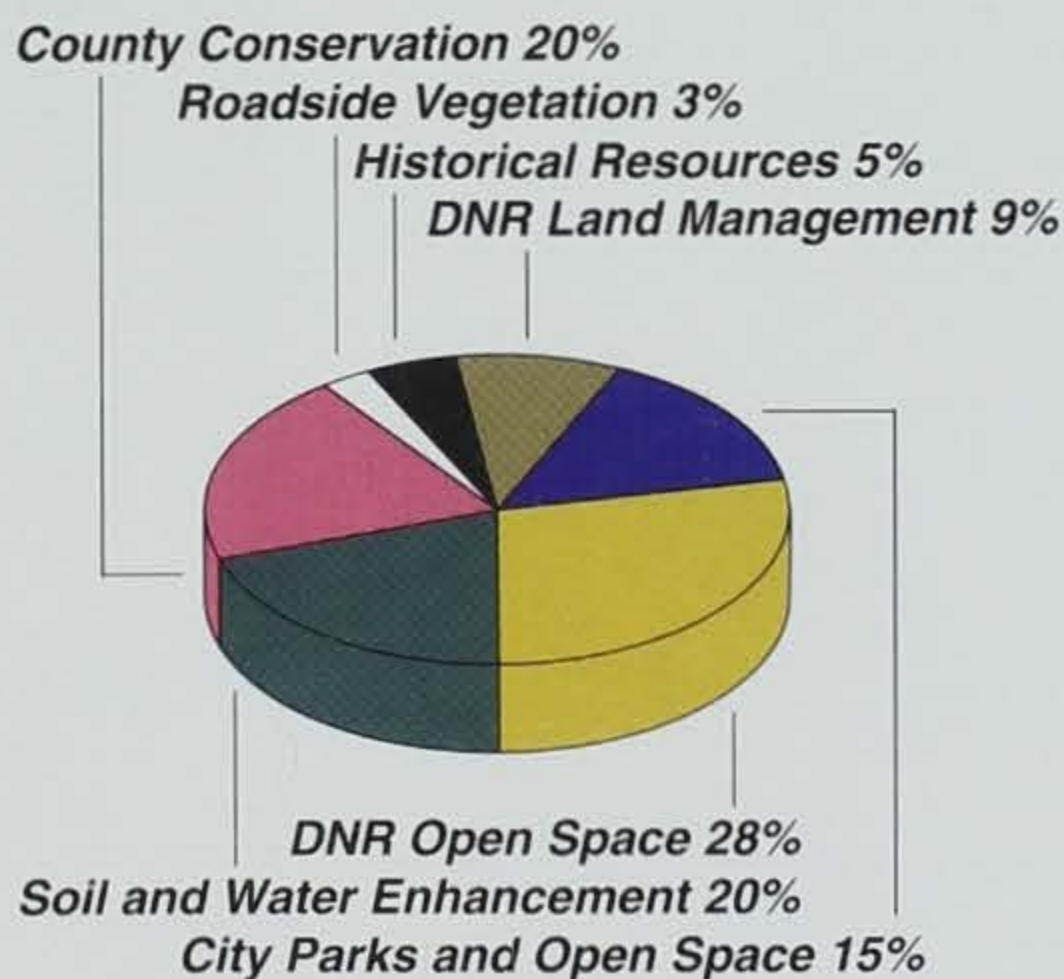
Drive Home Your Support For Iowa's Natural Resources



REAP in action...

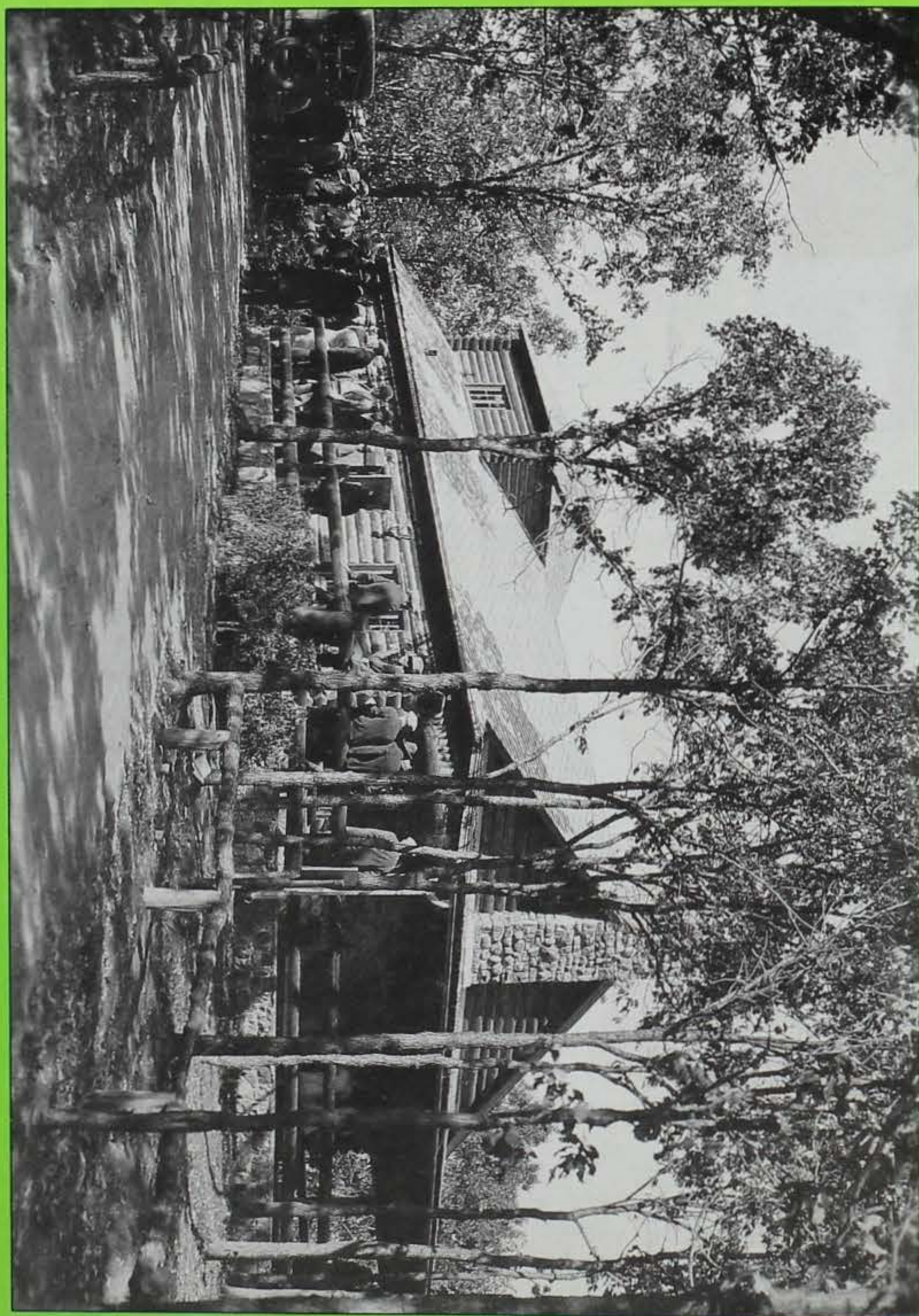
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Created in 1989, REAP has received the highest national award for improving local, county and state natural resources. REAP has invested about \$70 million in natural resource improvements in Iowa in these areas:



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