

MAR 16 1995

macbride nature recreation area



HAWK RAVINE NATURE TRAIL

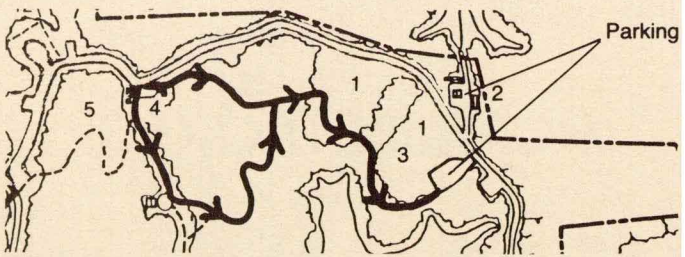
The University of Iowa
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| 1. Prairie Grass Project | 4. Parking Lot |
| 2. Boat Dock | 5. Nature Trail |
| 3. Parking for Sailing and Boating,
Skiing and Hiking | |

- | | |
|-------|-------------------|
| ----- | Hiking Trail |
| →→→→→ | One-Way Ski Trail |

The Hawk Ravine Nature Trail begins in the southwest corner of the main parking lot (see map).

This trail guide is a collection of information and ideas that are meant to provoke thought. The hiker should walk slowly, taking time to interact with surroundings. To keep the area as natural as possible, please walk only on the trail.

Marker 1—Feel the trail with your feet. Notice the change in the soil from the parking area. Stop for a minute, try to attune yourself to nature's pace. Look out over the ravine as far as you can see. Take in the whole forest at once.

Marker 2—Locate a tree with a vine climbing its trunk. The vine is attached by hairs called tendrils. The vine near this marker is poison ivy. Poison ivy grows as a herb, shrub, or vine. Its leaves always grow in clusters of threes. The leaves range from light to dark green spring and summer. They change in late summer through fall to yellow or red. Sensitivity to this plant varies from person to person. A good rule to follow is: LEAVES OF THREE, LET IT BE!

Marker 3—Some people say moss only grows on the north side of a tree. Moss tends to grow best in damp areas. The north side tends to provide the most moisture because the sun shines there the least. Moss indicates the pH of the soil (acidity-alkalinity). Find a patch of moss, touch it with both sides of your hand. How does it feel?

Marker 4—Moving down the hill you will notice a tree limb on your left, the remaining tree is on your right. This is a good example of localized succession. Each step in the succession makes way for the next. Note: A forest tends to have three layers:

1. Ground Layer—moss, herbs, wildflowers, and lichens.
2. Shrub Layer—saplings and the tree layer above them.
3. Canopy Layer—this is the layer that contains the branches of the trees.

Marker 5—You have reached the bottom of the ravine. Look up the trail that has just been descended. Use the eyes as a photographer would a camera. Try the wide angle or focus on one solitary object. Look for different patterns, movement, and color.

Marker 6—Notice the creek and the direction the water flows. Smell the air, notice the arched tree down the trail a few yards. Nature does some interesting things.

Marker 7—The tree on the left side of the trail has four trunks. Imagine turning this tree upside down. For every root there are approximately the same number of branches.

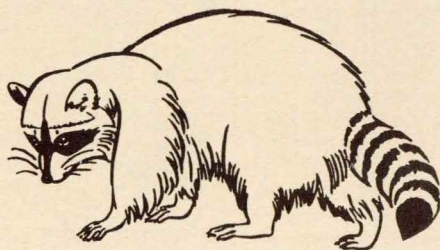
Marker 8—This stream has played a major part in the design of this ravine. The plant and animal life thrives in this stream. With careful searching, the hiker can locate flatworms, scuds, snails, insect larvae, mayflies, water boatmen, and water striders.

Marker 9—Notice the small gutter that mother nature has made. Gutters like this are found in terrain like this and used to channel water to the main stream at the bottom of the ravine.

Marker 10—Cup your hands behind your ears, use your hands as sound catchers. Attempt to identify five different natural sounds. Sometimes it is easier to hear it than see it.

Marker 11—The hiker should notice the large decaying stump. What may have happened? Could it have been lightning, insects, or other means? Look closely at the stump—what might be living here?

Marker 12—Fungi come in various forms. Some of the common names are mushrooms, toadstools, earthstars, puffballs, and stinkhorns. Many people actively search for the morel in spring. Fungi play a critical role in the cycling of nutrients throughout the forest community. Unlike green plants, fungi cannot make their own food through photosynthesis.





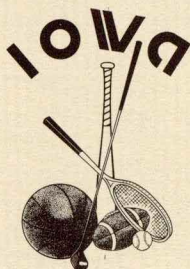
Marker 13—What natural phenomenon occurred to create this meadow? Perhaps a major storm passed through here. It may have been a small fire. Most people consider a forest fire a disaster, but it does serve a purpose. It can clear an area of large vegetation allowing the grasses to take hold. These plants are adapted to fire. Their root systems are sturdy and regenerate easily.

Marker 14—Notice the cloud patterns in the sky. Clouds are weather indicators. Gaseous water vapor in the atmosphere forms clouds. When cooled to saturation, the gas condenses to rain or snow. The cumulous cloud is a dense white, fluffy, flat-based cloud with a multiple rounded top and a well-defined outline. It is often part of the cumulonimbus, which provides much of the precipitation in the area.

Marker 15—Locate the brush pile on the left-hand side of the trail near this marker. Are there any clues which may indicate a home? Brush piles provide good protection for many animals.

Marker 16—The last hundred yards of the trail are different. The trees in this area are different. This type of tree is called a conifer. Conifers are cone bearing and produce needle-shaped leaves. The leaves do not fall often in the fall season as do deciduous trees.

This guide was designed to help the hiker better explore nature. Hopefully the hiker will take time on future hikes to explore the surroundings and thus be able to better appreciate nature.



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