

PREPARATION CANYON STATE PARK

The 344 acre Preparation Canyon State Park is a remote and lovely area still relatively untouched by humans. The park is located in Iowa's unique Loess Hills and is surrounded by dramatic ridges on the north, south and west. It provides a beautiful backdrop for hikers and family picnics. Picnic tables, a shelter and non-modern toilets are provided. In order to help protect the canyon's natural seclusion and the remaining evidence of its dramatic past, camping is not permitted in the park.

HISTORY

The 344 acre park encompasses what was once the town of Preparation. In 1853, Charles B. Thompson broke from the Mormon wagon train to Utah after receiving a message from the "Spirit." The Mormon leader and elder led 50 to 60 Mormon families to Kanessville, now Council Bluffs. Upon much searching, Thompson and a few select men chose the area called "Monona", an Indian name meaning "Peaceful Valley." Here they organized the town of Preparation, complete with houses and schools and started Monona County's first newspaper which Thompson owned and operated. This place was their "School of Preparation for the Life Beyond." The Mormons soon learned they had discovered one of the richest farming valleys in the new territory. Realizing the valley's potential wealth, Thompson's newspaper printed this message from a spirit he called "Beneemy": "I appoint Charles B. Thompson chief steward of my house to receive, hold, manage and direct all the treasures of my house to him." Believing this, the people turned over all deeds and possessions to Thompson, who grew quite wealthy. Thompson also taught his followers to call him "Father Ephraim" after the Ephraim in the Holy Scriptures.

In 1856, the people realized their mistake and asked for the return of their property, but "Father Ephraim" refused. Angered, the people decided to hang Thompson. After receiving warning from a young follower, Thompson escaped the mob by hiding in a friend's attic in Onawa. Thompson fled the state, unable to secure the deeds. Many disillusioned Mormons then left the valley and headed for Utah.

In 1866, the Iowa Supreme court divided the land equally among the remaining families, whereupon the town of Preparation began to grow. At one point, Preparation had sixty-seven houses, a post office, skating rink, and blacksmith shop. But by 1900, the town had faded and all that survived was a stockyard operation which closed in 1946. Martha and Walter Perrin, descendants of the original Mormon families, sold eighty-two acres of their land to the state of Iowa in 1934. In 1969, Martha Perrin sold another 157 acres and, eventually, the Perrin family homestead site to the state. These acres of land once contained the town of Preparation, including the valley the Mormons had settled many years ago for their "Preparation for the Life Beyond,"

STATE PARK USER PERMIT

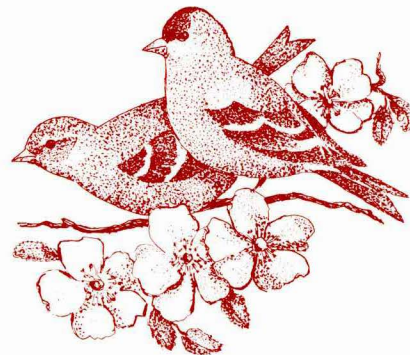
Motorized vehicles parked in state parks, recreation areas, and state forest campgrounds are required to have either annual or daily user permits on display. Annual permits are available at the park rangers' offices, county recorders, state park concessions, and other locations. Daily permits, good through 10:30 p.m. the following day, may be purchased on a self-service basis at posted locations in each park. Vehicles with Iowa Department of Transportation handicapped license plates or rear-view mirror tags are exempt from the user permit requirement. Iowa residents 65 and older, on Medicaid, or receiving food stamps, are eligible for free user permits available only at county recorders' offices. Park user permits are not required for simply driving through a park without stopping.

All funds raised through the sale of user permits are deposited in a trust fund to be utilized solely for the renovation and replacement of state park facilities.

EQUAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

All persons are entitled to full and equal enjoyment of the recreational opportunities, privileges and advantages available in Iowa's great outdoors.

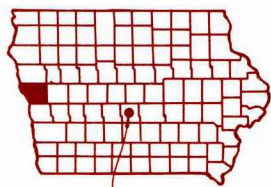
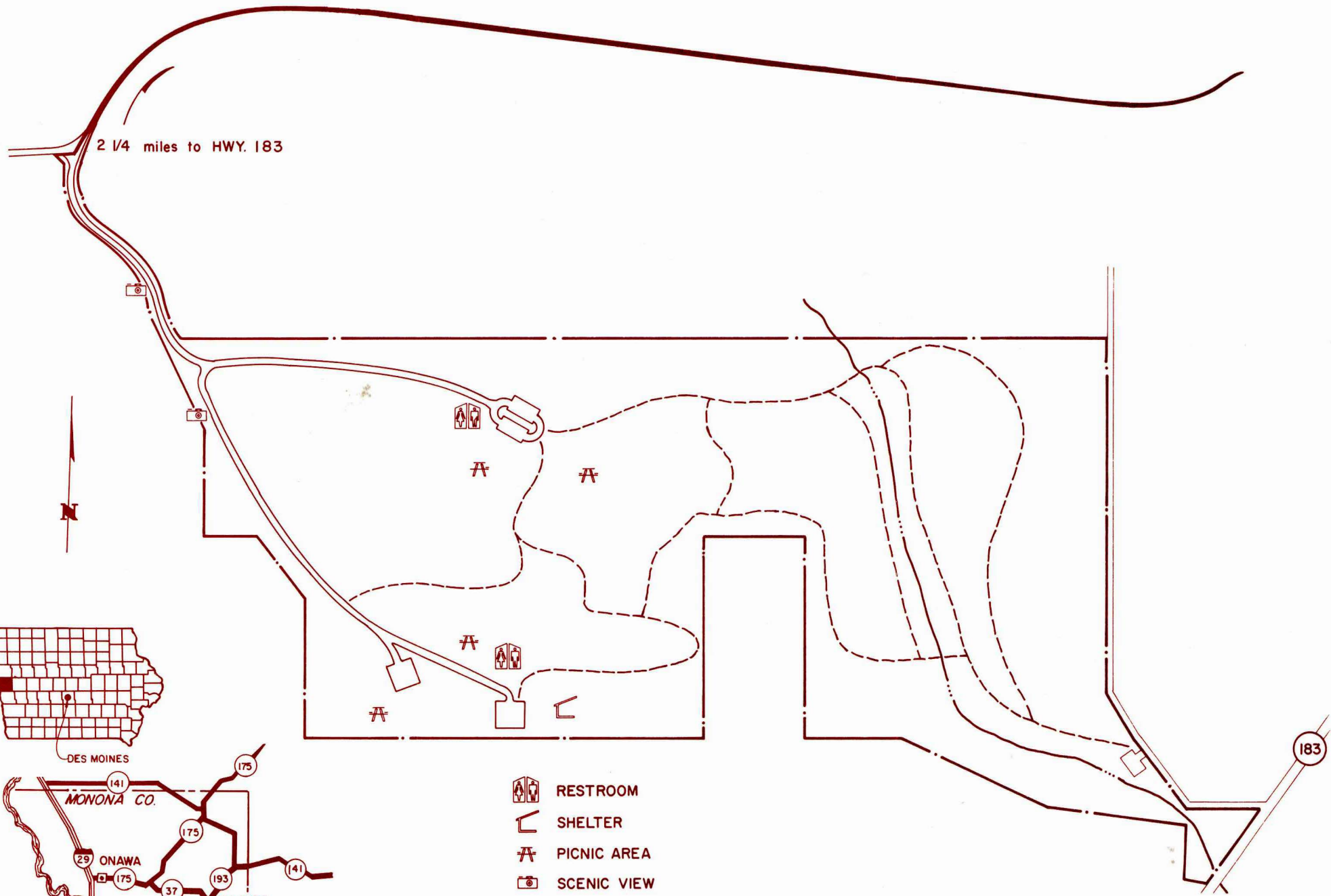
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PREPARATION CANYON STATE PARK



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DES MOINES

