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# LONE PINE INTERPRETIVE TRAIL



**PARK RANGERS ADDRESS**  
Backbone State Park  
Dundee, Iowa 52038  
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## Introduction

Our woodland in Iowa have many uses. As you walk the trail, learn how man, animals, and insects use this forest in their daily lives. What can you think of that you use the forest for? Please respect nature and leave the forest the same as when you entered, because Mother Nature has a place for all of its inhabitants.

### HACKBERRY (1)

Hackberry has a very distinctive looking bark. As the tree gets older, the bark develops warty knobs, looking like it has been 'hacked up', thus the name hackberry. Its fruit, 'sugar berries', are eaten by numerous birds, including quail, pheasant and wild turkey. Man uses hackberry timber for furniture, fuel and fencing.

### BLACK WALNUT (2)

Black walnut trees offer the highest quality timber and the best nut in the forest. The dark fine grained wood is used for quality furniture. The black walnut tree is easily recognized by its nut. The nut has a green husk around the large woody shell in the growing season. If you handle a walnut, you will get a brown sticky fluid on your hands.

### BITTERSWEET (3)

This sprawling, woody vine can be found throughout the park. Bittersweet is best known for its orange-red berries. The berries are poisonous if eaten in quantity. Many people use dried bittersweet in floral arrangements. Birds like them for food in the winter because they can be found easily.

### WHITE PINE (4)

Did you know that a person can tell how old this white pine is by counting each whorl of branches? A whorl is where the branches jut out of the tree all the way around the tree trunk, at the same level. This tree is 32 years old. We can also see how well the tree is growing by the amount of space between each whorl. The greater the space, the better the growing conditions were for that year.

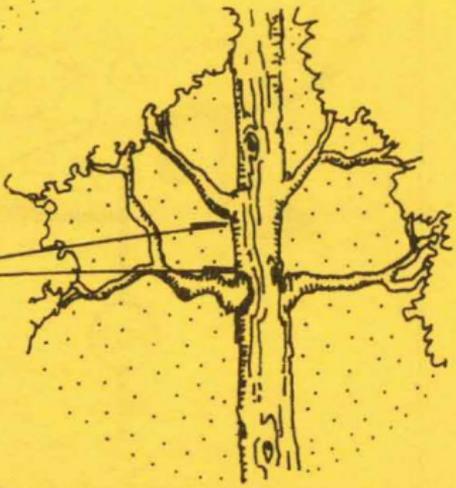
### OAK (5)

Oak trees are easily recognized by their nut, the



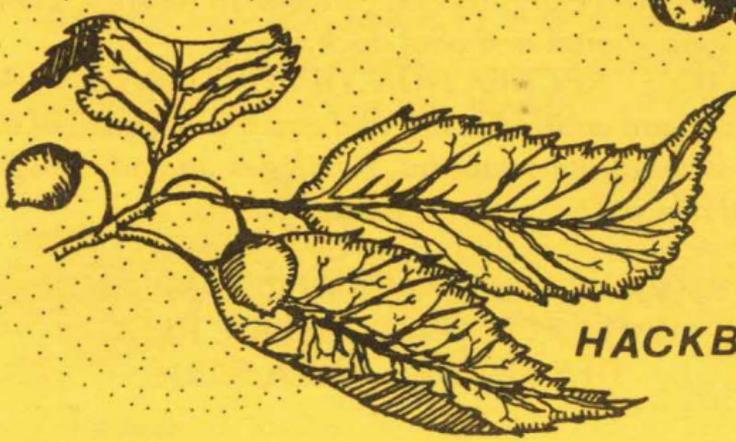
**BLOODROOT**

**WHITE PINE  
WHORL**



**BEDSTRAW**

**BUR OAK**



**HACKBERRY**

acorn. Acorns are a high protein food used by squirrels and deer. Squirrels bury many acorns during the fall for winter food. Many of the nuts are not found by the animal and sprout into young oak trees. Oak timber is a very strong wood, once used by the Navy for shipbuilding. Oak lumber is now used for making quality furniture.

### **POISON IVY (6)**

Man has no use for poison ivy, but it is good to know this plant so you can stay clear. The juice of every part of the plant contains a poison that causes an irritating itch, sometimes accompanied with blisters. The ivy has three large shiny leaves with serrated edges. It has a small whitish fruit which is poisonous, too.

### **STINGING NETTLES (7)**

Stinging nettles, true to its name, really stings! The plant looks very hairy, but don't be fooled; each hair can stick you like a needle, injecting you with its poison. Nettles can be used for soup or as a dye.

### **BLOODROOT (8)**

Bloodroot is one of the first flowers to bloom in the spring. The flower is snowy white and has 8 - 10 petals. Bloodroot has a single greenish-blue leaf. The sap from bloodroot was used by the native Americans in many ways. Dye was made and used for fabrics, baskets, pottery and war paint. It was also used for insect repellent. The sap is taken from the roots and is reddish in color.

### **DEER RUN (9)**

Deer have trails in the woods that are called "runs". The runs are very similar to our roads. Runs are heavily used by does and fawns for travel between feeding and bedding areas. A bedding area is where a deer sleeps. Bucks are more secretive so they develop their own runs, which are smaller because they are not used as much. Did you know that many of the "short cuts" you take through the forest originated as deer runs? Can you see the deer run here crossing our trail?

### **ROTTEN LOGS (10)**

Although a rotten log may not look very attractive in a green forest, it has many purposes. A variety of insects, reptiles and other animals use these logs as a source of food or sometimes as a home. As a log decomposes its nutrients return to the soil to continue the life cycle of the tree.

## **DEAD TREES (11)**

This old, standing, dead tree has many uses in the forest besides being used as firewood. Many insects live under the bark, using the wood for nourishment. Where there are insects you can find birds. Red-headed woodpeckers and chickadees are some of the birds that use these insects for food. Listen carefully. Can you hear any woodpeckers hard at work looking for a meal? Many other animals such as raccoons and squirrels also use the dead trees for dens and nesting.

## **BEDSTRAW (12)**

Bedstraw is not straw at all. It is a creeping weed that has leaves with hooked bristles on it. Bedstraw is prone to stick to anything that comes in contact with it. Sometimes bedstraw grows so thick that it smothers all surrounding plants. As its name implies, man once used bedstraw as a bedding material, long before today's mattresses.

## **ROCK OUTCROPPING (13)**

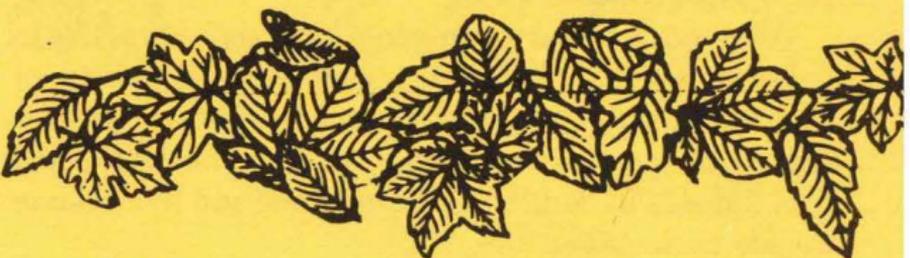
The rock outcropping you see is limestone. The "backbone" formation is of the same type of rock. Many fossils can be seen in the limestone on the backbone. The fossils tell us that this area was once covered by an ocean. The Civilian Conservation Corps used limestone blocks to make many of the buildings in the park during the 1930's.

## **WILD GOOSEBERRY (14)**

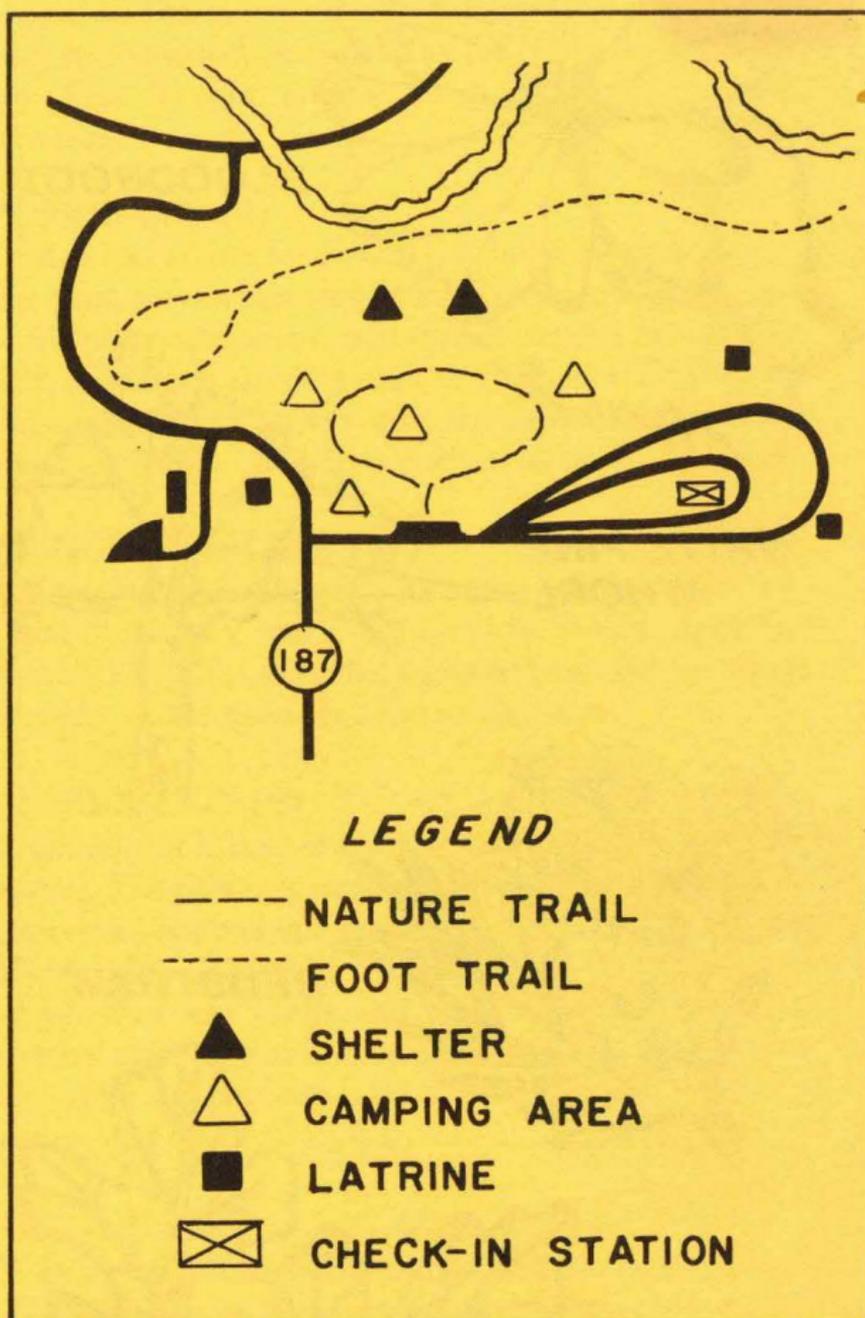
Wild gooseberry is a shrub, 2-3 ft. high, with drooping branches. Spines cover the plant in groupings at the base of each leaf cluster. The fruit is a brownish berry. Gooseberries ripen in mid-summer. They can be used for making pies and jelly. Birds also enjoy eating the sweet berries.

## **BLACK CHERRY (15)**

Black cherry can easily be recognized by its black, scaly bark. On both sides of the trail, you can see this tree. The long slender leaf of the black cherry usually has an orange colored fuzz on its underside. The fruit of this tree, the black cherry, is a source of food for many birds. This cherry was once used by man to flavor rum.



This interpretive trail is one-half mile long. It will take approximately 25 minutes to walk.



*State park maintenance and operation funds are derived solely from legislative appropriation and receipts from camping and concession revenue, cabin and lodge rental and boat dock fees.*

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

**IOWA CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
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