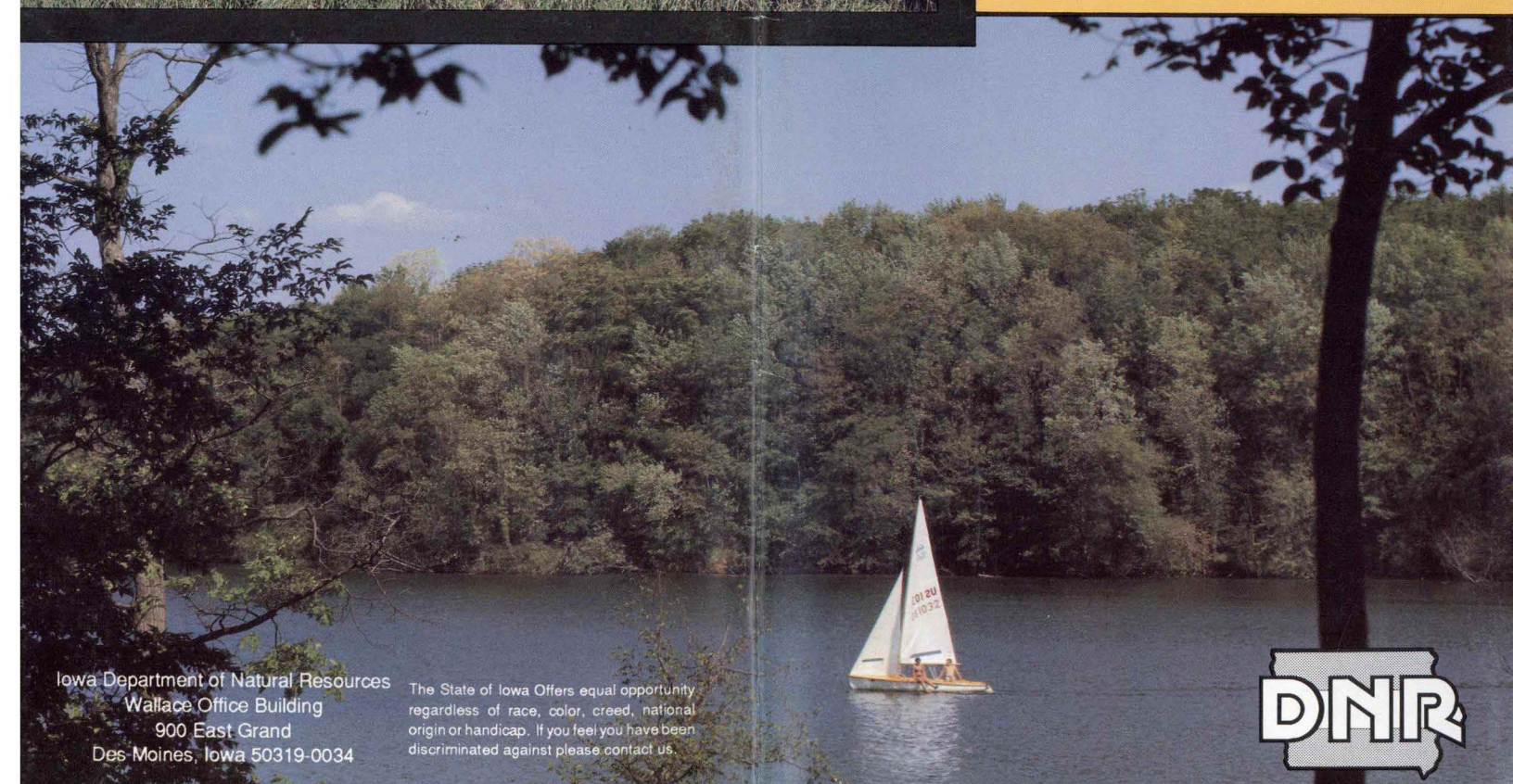


# Brushy Creek



## Brushy Creek

Brushy Creek State Recreation Area in Webster County represents a unique opportunity for Iowans. Present in this 4,200-acre area are all the ingredients to create a multiple-use recreation area that will serve a wide variety of users, while protecting Brushy's diverse natural qualities. This brochure tells the story of Brushy Creek...a story that has taken nearly 30 years to unfold; a story of conflicting interests among outdoor recreationists; and a story that includes a classic environmental debate and successful resolution of that debate through enlightened and thoughtful analysis.

In 1962, the Iowa Conservation Commission launched a study to identify sites for large recreation lakes in Iowa. One site identified was along a tributary of the Des Moines River in Webster County, known as Brushy Creek. After further study, it was concluded that the Brushy Creek site contained all the features necessary to create a lake of more than 1,000 acres. In fact, the study showed that this lake had the potential of being second only to West Okoboji in water quality, fishing and many other recreation pastimes.

Land acquisition began in 1968 and was completed in 1975, totaling 4,200 acres at a cost of \$2,600,000. As the Conservation Commission and the Iowa Legislature pursued acquisition of the area, they did so, fully intending to construct a major lake there. In 1976, a design was completed for the necessary dam and spillway to create a 980-acre lake. And, in 1977, a master plan for recreation facilities was approved.

From the first land purchase, conservationists began to realize what the state had purchased was something much more than just another lake site. Brushy's lower valley was found to contain a mosaic of unique natural resources that made the area worthy of protection. Exceptional scenic beauty, nationally significant archeological sites, habitat for a state-

listed threatened species of mammal, highly significant geological formations and mature forests blend together to create the area known as the lower Brushy Creek valley.

### The Compromise

Concern over the impacts a large lake would have on the lower valley resulted in completion of an environmental impact study published in 1982. The study identified in detail the area's significant features. It also considered several alternatives for the development of the recreation area. It was during the study process that the Conservation Commission modified its development proposal to include a smaller, 470-acre lake, rather than the 980-acre original version. In 1988 the Natural Resource Commission (formerly the Conservation Commission) modified this proposal to a 690-acre lake after it learned that the 470-acre lake would not produce satisfactory water quality for long term recreation and fishing benefits, and after it was shown that the 690-acre lake would not affect lower Brushy Creek valley.

A study was completed in 1988 to supplement the 1982 environmental impact study. The more recent study reviewed all the environmental issues previously considered, but took an in-depth look at the new lake proposal to determine what benefits it would provide. The study concluded:

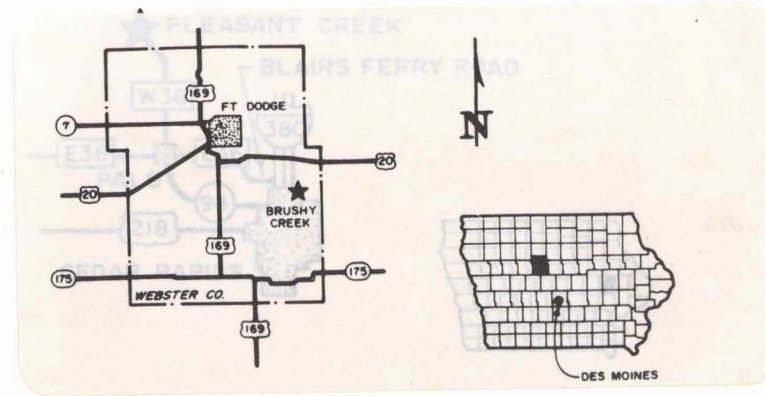
-- Water quality in the 690-acre lake would be comparable to Big Creek Lake in Polk County; second only to West Okoboji.

-- The 690-acre lake would not affect lower Brushy Creek valley, thus, habitat for the threatened species of mammal (woodland vole), the high quality forest, archeological sites and the most scenic areas would not be hurt.

-- Potential sport fishery in the 690-acre lake would be excellent.

These features, combined with years of additional analysis, public debate and careful consideration have led the Natural Resource Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to propose development for Brushy Creek that can be viewed as the best possible use of the area. This development is a true compromise between those who favored a 1,000 acre lake and those who oppose lake construction of any size.

Despite this, opposition remains to the currently proposed 690-acre lake at Brushy Creek. Opponents have campaigned against the lake and in favor of small ponds on the



area. Such a proposal would leave the area virtually unchanged in appearance and in use. For example, horseback enthusiasts, who have enjoyed almost exclusive use of the Brushy Creek area for the past 26 years, do not wish to see the area changed. Fishermen, campers, sailboaters and canoeists, however, would gain little from the small pond proposal and even less from leaving the area undeveloped. They logically prefer a large body of water, such as the 1000-acre lake.



The compromise of providing a 690-acre lake which does not impact the best environmental features of the area and which preserves the geological/archeological treasures, fits the Department of Natural Resources mission to provide citizens of the state outdoor recreation opportunities and to protect the environment. Accordingly, the DNR has proposed many developments for different types of uses at Brushy including:

- ▲ Equestrian and regular camping facilities, both modern and primitive.
- ▲ Family cabins for extended overnight stays.
- ▲ Extensive trails for horseback riders, snowmobilers, hikers and skiers.
- ▲ Boat ramps, beaches and fishing facilities.
- ▲ Picnic areas and scenic overlooks.
- ▲ 260-acre state preserve for permanent protection of unique features, public enjoyment, research and education.
- ▲ Creation of special management areas for forest growth, wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities.

This plan will provide facilities and activities for many more recreationists than currently use Brushy Creek. While some present users may have their special areas relocated, the quality and quantity of their recreation will not be diminished.

In conclusion, the proposed development plan for Brushy Creek represents a true compromise. After years of study, the environmental issues have been addressed and resolved. A development plan is proposed that would provide a significant improvement in the many potential uses of the area, representing sound resource management. Funds are needed from the Iowa Legislature to match other monies for construction of the lake and associated facilities.

### 690 - Acre Lake Characteristics

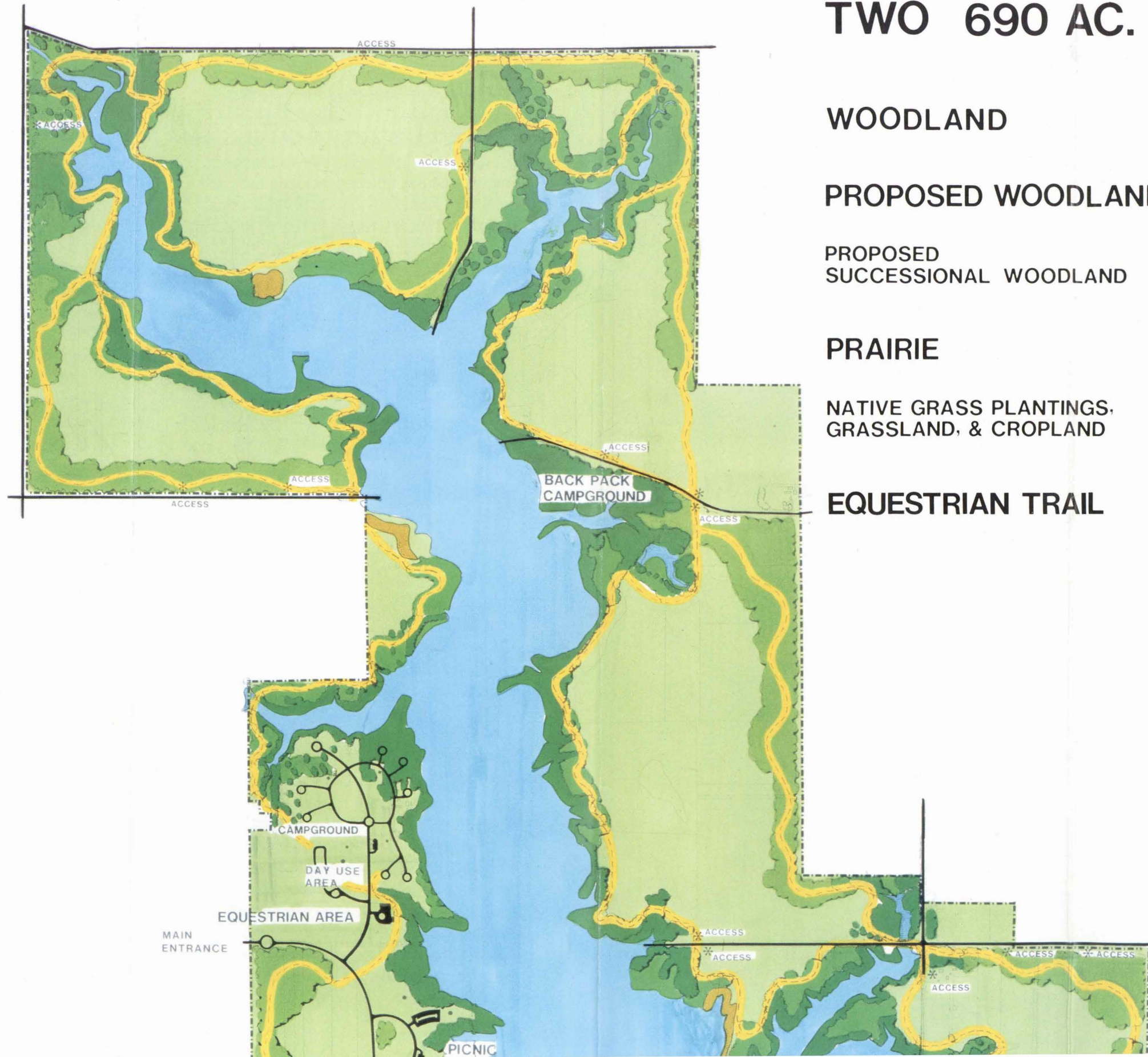
Characteristic	
Pool elevation	1055 feet
Surface area	690 acres
Volume	19,660 acre feet
Maximum depth	75 feet
Average depth	29 feet
Drainage area (acres)	56,360 acres
Ratio of drainage area to lake surface area	82:1
Percent of watershed in approved conservation practices	+80%
Miles of shoreline	21
Amount of wooded shoreline	35 %
Storage capacity lost in 100 years (at present soil loss rates)	15 % or less
Time to fill	2 years
Amount of stream impounded *	6.2 miles
Water quality compared to other Iowa lakes	Excellent
Predicted fishing	Excellent
*Includes amount of stream in spillway	

### Impact of 690 - Acre Lake

Description of Vegetation Type	Total Acres In Brushy Creek Area	Acres To Be Affected By 690 - Acre Lake
High quality, mature forest, some trees with high commercial value, good potential for occurrence of rare woodland vole; rare occurrence in Iowa of this type of quality forest.	60	0
Native prairie, likely unchanged since settlement; numerous diverse prairie plant species; rare occurrence in Iowa of this type of once-common prairie.	31	3
Young to middle-aged second growth timber; few commercially valuable trees, no unique or unusual species or stands, mostly pole-sized trees, common throughout central Iowa and many other parts of the state.	830	255
Grasslands with occasional scattered trees; mostly brome pasture areas, no natural or native prairie species, or unusual groupings; common throughout Iowa where slope or wet soils make row cropping difficult.	635	203
Hay fields and pastures with no trees; recently abandoned pasture and hay fields containing no natural or native species; common throughout the state.	238	64
Old crop fields, few native plants; recently abandoned from commercial farming, not unique or unusual.	313	163
Existing crop fields, sharecropped for wildlife habitat; typical of most Iowa crop fields, nothing unique or unusual.	2093	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>**789 (690 lake)</b>

\*\*Brice Petrides, the firm completing the study, included the dam site and borrow areas in the impact zone for a total of 99 additional acres

# MASTER PLAN TWO 690 AC. LAKE



WOODLAND



PROPOSED WOODLAND



PROPOSED SUCCESSIONAL WOODLAND



PRAIRIE

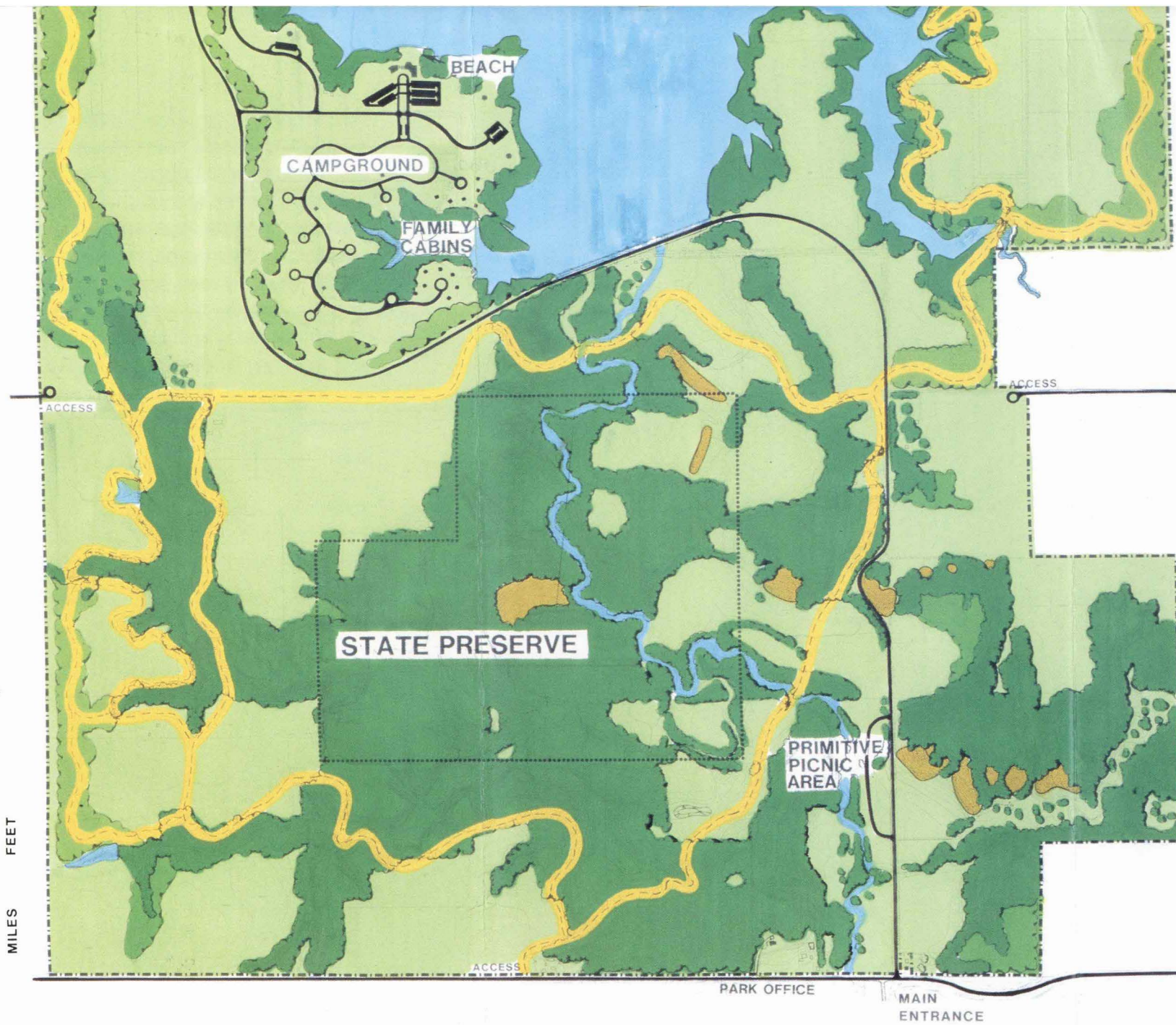
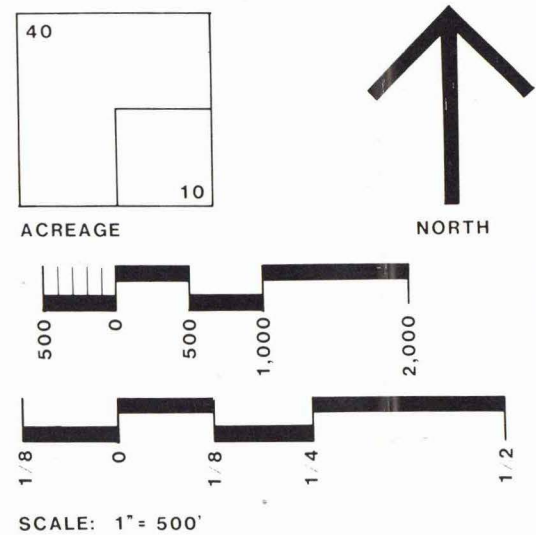


NATIVE GRASS PLANTINGS,  
GRASSLAND, & CROPLAND



EQUESTRIAN TRAIL





# BRUSHY CREEK

STATE RECREATION AREA

WEBSTER COUNTY, IOWA