

point #3) where the stream is well stocked with trout. Three overnight camping areas are available. The route now enters the access road to a trail-ride facility, where horse camping areas are maintained, to two rebuilt log buildings. The trail follows a spring-fed, rocky stream bed uphill to an area selectively managed for forestry, wildlife, and erosion control. The forest and game plantings are intended to attract grouse, turkeys, deer, and small game and provide winter food in the food patches. In summer, vultures soar overhead teaching their young flight techniques after nesting in the caves near the ridges. The trail meanders down an access trail managed as a snowmobile trail to an overnight backpack camping area and on to alternate stopping point #4 on the banks of Big Paint Creek. The backpacker shares the next part of the trail with horseback riders, through lands leased to farmers who leave grain for winter wildlife, and bird feed. The trail continues through a rejuvenated area that is highly susceptible to erosion. The gulleys are healed with erosion control ponds and plantings and grass protect the fragile slopes. The trail moves west to a cool northern exposure through a hardwood stand of timber to the summit near the fire tower. This area produces edible berries, nuts and acorns, and has a variety of trees of the oak-hickory association. Walnut trees are abundant on the lower bench. They are valuable for their nuts and quality woods. The butternuts show symptoms of a disease that threatens the species.

A short alternate hike up the fire tower access road exits at the fire tower. (The Evergreen Hiking Trail may be of interest here and will return the hiker to the main trail after an opportunity to see many uncommon species of conifers marked with tree names.)

The route follows the ridge easterly through an open area bordered by many planting areas including walnuts and shrubs plus the conifers, wildlife production ponds, and some areas replanted to native prairie grasses and so identified. A downhill trek returns the hiker to the Paint Creek Valley on the Waukon Junction

access road or alternate stopping point #5. The trail follows the road to the right into Brown's Hollow where primitive overnight facilities may be used. This hollow has a dense stand of thriving young walnuts. A small wayside area is located at the south end of the hollow, stopping point #6, and is adjacent to the wood's road which carries traffic back to the headquarters. A free-flowing spring gushes out of the roadside here. The trail follows the access road to an S curve which winds left into a fine hardwood timber that was harvested in 1974 and 1975, (a salvage clear cut was made in 1979 and 1980 due to severe windstorm damage), into an opening and back to a timber tract to the starting point.

A hike on this trail or any of its segments should be rewarding any season of the year. It was planned to thoroughly acquaint the user with the area and have 20 miles of quality experiences.

Three hiking or walking trails have been marked and developed in the Yellow River Forest as part of the family-type trail system. These trails are short and provide outlets for physical activity, study, and special interests. Interpretive signs are located on the trails and more information is available at the forest headquarters. These trails are marked with vertical brown signs painted with large yellow footprints.

### THE EVERGREEN TRAIL

This trail begins near the fire tower and is so named because of the many evergreen or conifer species planted and marked with signs for the viewer's pleasure. This trail requires a minimum of effort and can be comfortably traversed in 45 minutes. It is often used as a group study area for students and seems to provide interest and privacy in a secluded setting for those who use it. This evergreen species adaptation planting is located on lands that were no longer of value as agriculture land. It was started in 1946 by the Central States Forest Experiment Station, on a cooperative basis with the State Conservation Commission, now the Iowa DNR.

### THE BLUFF TRAIL

This trail starts at the junction of the access road and the abandoned railroad bed adjacent to the Paint Creek Bridge. The trail is exciting but steep and must be walked slowly to prevent fatigue. Some start at the top and walk down as one has to backtrack to return. Some hardwood tree species are identified along the trail and two fine scenic overlooks are rewards for those reaching the top. The first overlook allows one to view the headquarters, sawmill area, and much of the southern area landscape. The west overlook, or second one, is the Paint Creek overlook and provides views of the Big Paint Recreation Area, the winding stream and many pine plantations in various stages of growth. Both overlooks provide spectacular views during the fall color season. The trip to both bluff tops and return can taken an hour if one is leisurely inclined.

### THE RESEARCH TRAIL

This walking trail is over rolling terrain but of moderate intensity, and takes about an hour to hike and appreciate. It is so named because cooperative effort between Iowa State University, the U.S. Forest Service, and Iowa DNR has provided research and study in several areas. A small block of white pines was treated with various dosages of herbicide to study long-range effects and problems. Blocks of Scotch pines are from many worldwide seed sources and their characteristics in growth, color, vigor, and disease resistance are noticeable in the two plantations so marked. The same is true of many blocks of European larch from worldwide seed sources. A large block of seed sources of white pine from throughout the United States is planted with tabulations being made on fiber production by the U.S. Forest Service. This area is heavily used by wildlife and has lots of variety for the trail user.

# YELLOW RIVER STATE FOREST

## HIKING AND BACKPACKING TRAILS

### Regulations

1. Area use is at your own risk.
2. No camping permitted at day use areas.
3. All backpackers must register at registration booth.
4. Fires are permitted only in provided receptacles.
5. All fires must be put out before leaving.
6. No trees, alive or dead, may be cut. Use of fallen dead wood is permitted.
7. Keep the area clean and beautiful and enjoy the outdoors.
8. Camping privileges limited to maximum of two weeks.
9. All campgrounds other than those designated for backpacking require a fee.

Area Forester, Box 115  
McGregor, Iowa 52157  
Phone: 319/586-2254



THE PAINT CREEK UNIT

The Paint Creek Unit of the Yellow River State Forest is a year-round recreation area. It is basically timbered, has extremely steep terrain of the limestone bluff variety, and is bisected by two clear-flowing trout streams. Access to the Allamakee County area is marked from State Highways 76 and 364 plus county blacktop (Road H) winding west from Harpers Ferry. The towns of Lansing, Waukon, and McGregor are about equal distances from the area.

Hiking trails present challenges and provide pleasure to the growing number of hiking enthusiasts. A marked trail system has been developed that allows the visitor to become acquainted with the area and enjoy many rewards. Other trail systems supplement the marked trails — logging trails, fire lanes, stream stocking road, game trails, and access roads.

THE BACKPACK TRAIL

The Backpack Trail was developed with the hardy naturalist in mind. It is, however, segmented into five alternate trail patterns to allow shorter walks through select areas.

The trail begins at the information area adjacent to the forest headquarters and is identified by the yellow and brown international backpacker's sign of a person with a backpack; with an occasional arrow sign to provide guidance. The route transects the nine areas with overnight camping facilities. Water is available at the trail beginning and headquarters of the forest. About 20 miles of trail allow one to leisurely traverse rugged forested hills and valleys of a very scenic area.

The initial segment of the trail is quite undisturbed. It features many tree species in all stages of succession including larch and pine plantings from worldwide seed sources. Management priorities here are forest and wildlife production. The trail descends the mature timbered block to enter a valley at the county access road around the Paint Creek Bridge at the Waterville Access down a vacated railroad bed adjacent to the creek to a wayside area suitable for fishing or as a welcome break for cooling feet. The

wayside is marked on the map by #2 and is an alternate stopping point. The trail leaves the wayside, backtracks a stone's throw to join the route of the Bluff Hiking Trail to the top of two developed overlook areas situated on sheer limerock bluffs. Some common hardwood tree species are marked on this

segment. No camping is permitted on these overlooks. The trail continues northerly on the road into a small stand of hardwoods, guides right down the clearing area across one of 60 wildlife and erosion control ponds on the unit toward an established conifer planting area. A fire lane serves as the route for the trail around red pines, white pines, jack pines, and some spruce planted about

1948 on abandoned agriculture fields. The trail again crosses an access road into an area that was clear-cut in 1974 to salvage remaining values of an oak wilt infection and allow healthy forest regeneration. The trail continues downhill on the road to a narrow valley that is occupied by many primitive shade-growing plants and exits into the Little Paint Camping Area (alternate stopping

