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1996

# State Parks & Recreation Areas *of* Iowa



# IOWA

Ambrose A. Call ♦ Backbone ♦ Badger Creek ♦ Beeds Lake ♦ Bellevue ♦ Big Creek ♦ Bixby ♦ Black Hawk ♦ Bobwhite

Welcome to the great heartland

Brush Creek Canyon ♦ Brushy Creek ♦ Cedar Rock ♦ Clear Lake ♦ Dolliver Memorial ♦ Elk Rock ♦ Emerson Bay ♦ Lighthouse

outdoors. From hiking and camping to

Fairport ♦ Fort Atkinson ♦ Fort Defiance ♦ Geode ♦ George Wyth Memorial ♦ Green Valley ♦ Gull Point ♦ Honey Creek

bird-watching and bicycling, each

Lacey-Keosauqua ♦ Lake Ahquabi ♦ Lake Anita ♦ Lake Darling ♦ Lake Keomah ♦ Lake Macbride ♦ Lake Manawa ♦ Lake

park in this guide offers outdoor

of Three Fires ♦ Lake Wapello ♦ Ledges ♦ Lewis and Clark ♦ Lower Gar ♦ McIntosh Woods ♦ Maquoketa Caves ♦ Marble

enthusiasts a multitude of diverse and

Beach ♦ Mines of Spain ♦ Mini-Wakan ♦ Nine Eagles ♦ Okamanpedan ♦ Palisades-Kepler ♦ Pikes Peak ♦ Pikes Point ♦ Pilot

exciting adventures. Rich in history

Knob ♦ Pleasant Creek ♦ Pine Lake ♦ Prairie Rose ♦ Preparation Canyon ♦ Red Haw ♦ Rice Lake ♦ Rock Creek ♦ Shimek

and natural resources, Iowa is a

Forest ♦ Springbrook ♦ Stephens Forest ♦ Stone ♦ Templar Park ♦ Trappers Bay ♦ Twin Lakes ♦ Union Grove ♦ Viking Lake

treasure chest of recreational

Volga River ♦ Walnut Woods ♦ Wanata ♦ Wapsipinicon ♦ Waubonsie ♦ Wildcat Den ♦ Wilson Island ♦ Yellow River Forest

e x c e l l e n c e.

Division Administrator: Mike Carrier ♦ Designer/Editor: Casey L. Gradschnig  
Program Administration: Arnie Sohn ♦ Parks Publications: Angela Corio  
Field Operations: Steve Pennington ♦ Iowa Department of Natural Resources Director: Larry J. Wilson







Maquoketa

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## Camping

Iowa's state parks, recreation areas and forests offer enthusiasts 58 campgrounds with 5,700 campsites.

Modern facilities (showers and flush toilets) are available at 42 campgrounds.

Electrical hookups are available at 41 campgrounds.

Camping is permitted only at designated campsites on a first-come, first-served basis. No reservations are accepted.

Campers are required to register themselves. Designated "hike-in" campsites are

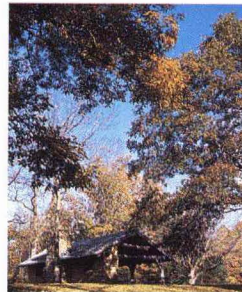
available at Ledges, Presperation Canyon, Maquoketa Caves and Honey Creek. Campsites marked with the wheelchair sign are reserved for use by persons displaying a handicapped parking permit on their vehicle.

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## State Forest Camping

For a more rugged camping experience without modern rest rooms or showers, campgrounds are available at Yellow River, Stephens and Shimek state forests.



Lacey-Keosauqua

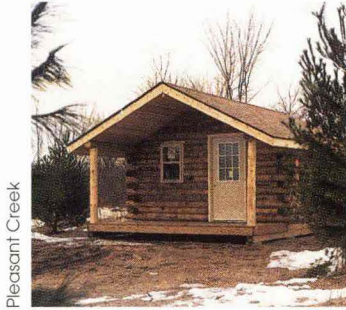
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## Rental Facilities

Cabins, group camps, enclosed shelters and open shelters may be reserved for a fee through the park ranger. All reservations must be made through the park ranger starting on the second business day after January 1.

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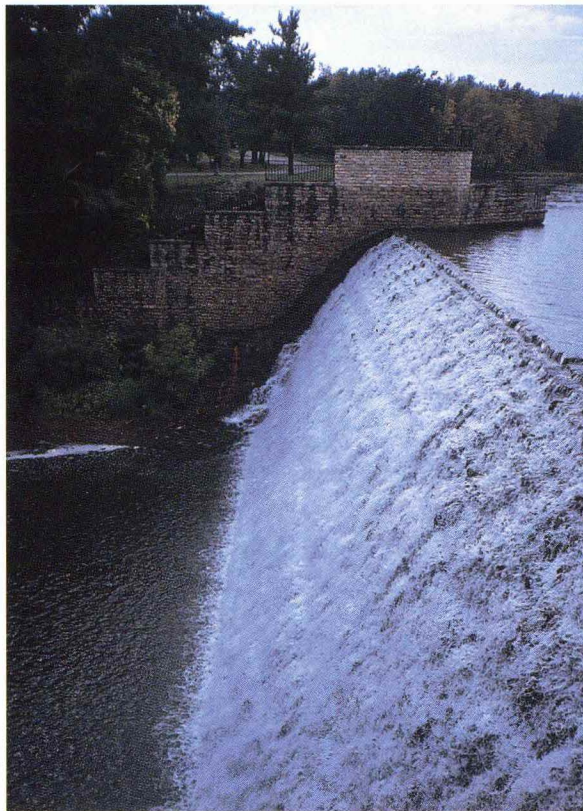




Pleasant Creek

## Organized Group Camps

Overnight group camping facilities are available on a rental basis at Dolliver and Springbrook state parks. Groups are provided complete lodging and dining accommodations including all dishes and cooking utensils as well as showers and rest rooms. Groups must bring their own bedding, towels and toiletry items. Special rates are available for organized youth groups. An organized group camping facility is also available at Lake Keomah State Park. Although there are no enclosed overnight accommodations, the area provides a scenic setting for daytime group events as well as overnight group tent or trailer use. The group camp building contains a complete kitchen, rest rooms and meeting space.



Beeds Lake

## Enclosed Shelters

A number of state parks contain beautiful enclosed shelters. The majority are stone and log structures constructed during the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) or the Works Progress Administration (WPA). All provide excellent settings for day-use group events. The facilities normally include kitchens, rest rooms and, in some instances, fireplaces. See parks chart for details and locations.



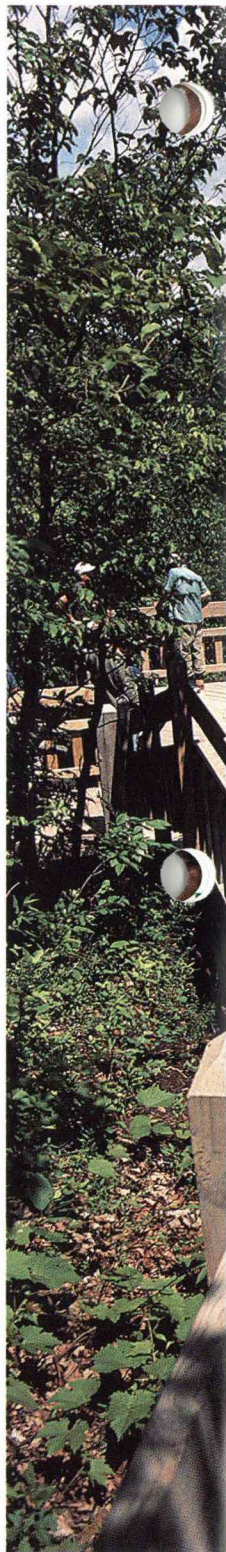
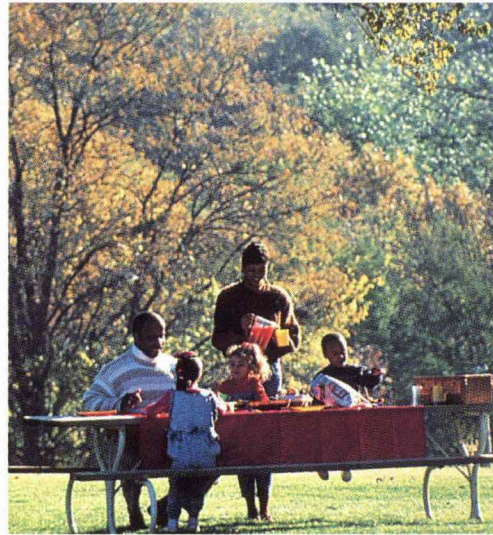
Gull Point

## Cabins

Cabins are available at 10 state parks. Cabins accommodating up to eight people are available at Backbone and Lake Wapello. Lacey-Keosauqua, Lake of Three Fires, Palisades-Kepler, Pine Lake and Springbrook cabins accommodate four people. Included are kitchens with cooking utensils. Renters must provide their own bedding, towels, dishes and other camping items. The heated and air-conditioned cabins at Backbone and Pine Lake are available year round.

The rustic cabins at Pleasant Creek, Dolliver and Wilson Island are camping cabins which are smaller and without modern frills. Basic furnishings include a full-size sleeper couch, bunkbeds, table, chairs and an outdoor grill and picnic table. Cabin users should bring all items needed for camping. Overnight visitors can use the shower and rest room facilities located in nearby campgrounds.

Priority reservations for the handicapped-accessible cabins at Pine Lake, Pleasant Creek and Backbone will be accepted from October 1 through December 1 for the following year. This reservation period is only open to persons needing wheelchairs. All reservations are accepted for a stay of one week, with the week beginning and ending on Saturday.



Pikes Peak

## Fishing

Fishing opportunities abound in state parks, from trout fishing in Backbone's trout streams, to walleye and yellow perch fishing in northwest Iowa's natural lakes. With opportunities like these, it's not surprising that 40 million fish are caught annually in the state making fishing the most popular participant sport in Iowa.



## Boating

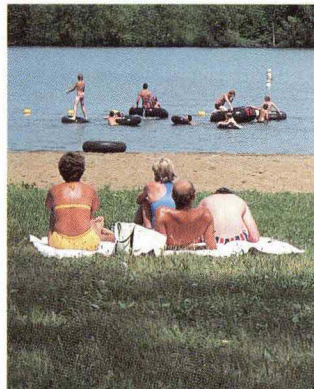
Experience the thrill of power boating and skiing at Lake Rathbun. Take a breeze-propelled sailboat trip at Big Creek or a scenic paddling adventure along the Iowa River through Pine Lake State Park. Whatever the preference, there are more than 9,000 miles of boatable rivers and streams, as well as more than 200 natural and artificial recreational lakes in Iowa. Most park concessionaires rent boats, canoes and pontoons. Motor size and speed regulations vary so check with the park ranger or contact the DNR for a boating regulations guide.

## Picnicking

Open shelters, tables, grills or fire rings, and water are available in most picnic areas. Facilities are available on a first-come basis, although some may be reserved by contacting a ranger. Picnic sites marked with the wheelchair sign are reserved for persons displaying a handicapped parking permit on their vehicle.



Stephens State Forest



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## Equestrian Facilities

Horseback riding is a popular activity at a number of state parks, recreation areas and state forests. Equestrian camping opportunities and extensive trail systems are available at Waubonsie and Elk Rock state parks; Brushy Creek and Volga River state recreation areas; and Stephens, Shimek and Yellow River state forests. Horses may be ridden on all state park roadways and on trails designated for equestrian use. Stone State Park features 15 miles of equestrian trails but no equestrian campground. Trail riding booklets are available from the DNR.

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## Swimming

Swimming opportunities are available in many state parks in designated beach areas only. Some offer life guards and a food concession. Check with park staff for more details.

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## Hunting/Shooting

Except in very limited special circumstances, the use of firearms or any other kind of weapon is prohibited in Iowa's state parks. However, portions of Volga River, Big Creek, Brushy Creek, Pleasant Creek, Badger Creek and Wilson Island are open for public hunting during regular open hunting seasons. Special regulations may apply, and hunters are urged to check with park rangers prior to their hunt. Big Creek also provides a concession-operated, state-of-the-art public shooting range for recreational shooting and sighting in of guns. A less formal, but safely designed range is available at Badger Creek, and others are planned at Volga River and Brushy Creek

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## Volkssport Trails

Volkssport hiking began in Germany during the 1960s to provide a noncompetitive physical activity for the whole family. This June marks the 20th anniversary of volkssporting in the U.S. with permanent trails in all 50 states.

Anyone can participate. Volkssporting is a family-oriented activity and many parents carry infants in backpacks or push them in strollers. Volkssport trails are approximately 6 miles in length and have recently been established in six parks. Most of these seasonal trails are available from Memorial Day to Labor Day with some extended to October 31. See the facility chart for a listing. Detailed brochures are available from the DNR.

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## Trails

State park and recreation area trails offer many things to many people. They are the connection between people and places, providing a path to the unique features, scenic views and recreation facilities of an area. Trails have led families and friends to the "heart" of Iowa for generations. They have shown visitors Iowa's "places of quiet beauty" and enduring nature.

Trails provide access for visitors while ensuring user safety and resource protection. Iowa trails are used by hikers, walkers, people who use wheelchairs, as well as those using a variety of transportation forms including touring and mountain bikes, horses, roller skates, skateboards, cross-country skis, snowshoes, snowmobiles and dogsleds.

The Department of Natural Resources provides hundreds of miles of trails within state park and recreation areas. Of these, more than 400 miles are available to hikers, 250 miles to snowmobilers, 155 miles to horseback riders, 300 miles to cross country skiers, and 16 miles of hard surface trails specifically for cyclists with an additional 130 miles for mountain bikers.

Many state parks have self-guided nature trails. These include points of interest, species identification and site interpretation. Brochures are available at trail heads and park offices. Long distance backpacking trails challenge the physically fit and provide access to remote park areas. Fully accessible trails can be found in some areas.

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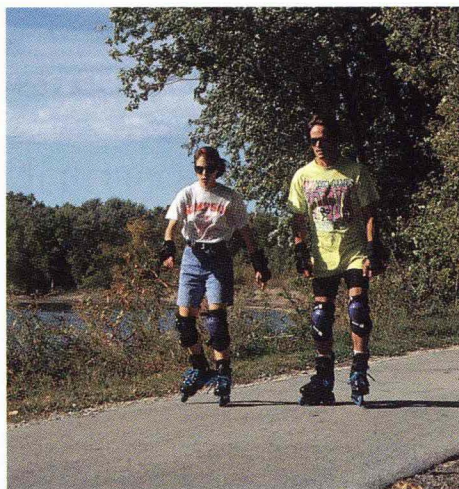


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## State Park Two-Wheel Treks

Ride from park to park for a weekend getaway or a week-long adventure. Four bike routes on paved county roads have been developed around the state to connect numerous parks and attractions. Gear shuttles are available for some routes. Detailed brochures are available from the DNR.

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Big Creek





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## Nature Centers/Museum

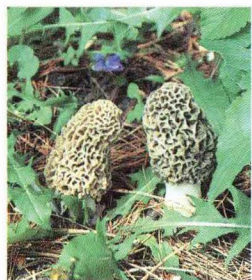
Two nature centers and a museum are operated by the Department of Natural Resources. The E.B. Lyons Nature Center is located in Dubuque at the Mines of Spain State Recreation Area. The center provides programs year round. Its displays, trails and the natural and historical features of the Mines of Spain provide a wide array of visitor opportunities.

At Bellevue State Park's Nelson Unit, just south of Bellevue, the South Bluff Nature Center is open seasonally and for groups by request. The center has outstanding displays. The nearby one-acre Garden Sanctuary for Butterflies is designed specifically to provide habitat for a variety of butterflies and is unique to the Midwest. More than 150 individual plots contain plants which provide food and shelter for butterflies as well as beautiful viewing for visitors.

The Loess Ridge Nature Center tells the story of the geology, plants and animals of the loess hills region of western Iowa. Located in Stone Park, the center is open year round and operated by the Woodbury County Conservation Board.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) museum at historic Backbone State Park in Delaware County tells the story of the CCC in Iowa. The museum is open seasonally and for groups by request.

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## Harvesting Edible Plants

Mushrooms and asparagus may be harvested in all state parks, recreation areas and forests. Nuts, fruits and berries may be gathered unless posted otherwise. American ginseng may not be harvested in state parks or preserves.

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Springbrook

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## Winter Sports

Iowa's state parks and recreation areas offer a variety of winter recreational opportunities. Popular winter activities include cross-country skiing, sledding, ice skating, snowshoeing, ice fishing, nature study and snowmobiling. Snowmobilers should contact park personnel for information regarding snowmobile trail locations and weather conditions. Honey Creek State Park on Lake Rathbun features a heated rest room with showers for winter camping comfort.

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Palisades Kelper

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## Special Winter Events

Special events are not just limited to summer and fall. Special winter events such as McIntosh Woods Winterfest, Pilot Knob Dog Sled Race and ice fishing tournaments at Big Creek and Pleasant Creek are held every year.

These events often include such varied activities as snowmobiling and cross-country skiing contests as well as winter hiking snowshoeing and sledding.

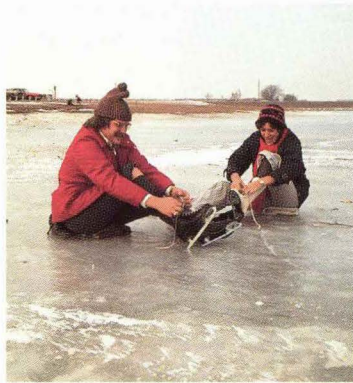
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Springbrook

## Winter Sports

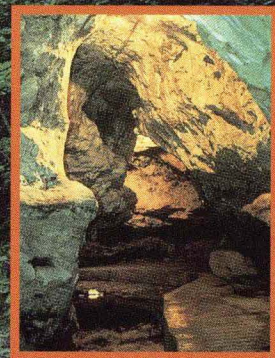
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## Nature's finest

Whether strolling under the natural bridge or exploring the subterranean wonders at Maquoketa Caves State Park, Iowa's majestic natural beauty is impressively boundless. A peaceful picnic at Steele Prairie Preserve amongst the wildflowers, a hike-in overnight camping expedition with the family at Ledges State Park -- or how about a fishing trip floating atop the reflective waters of Beeds Lake -- the possibilities are endless **NATURALLY!**



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## Playgrounds

Parks are for kids of all ages. Play on the huge wooden play structures at Big Creek and Lake Manawa beaches or enjoy any of the 30 other play structures located in state parks throughout Iowa.

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Pikes Peak



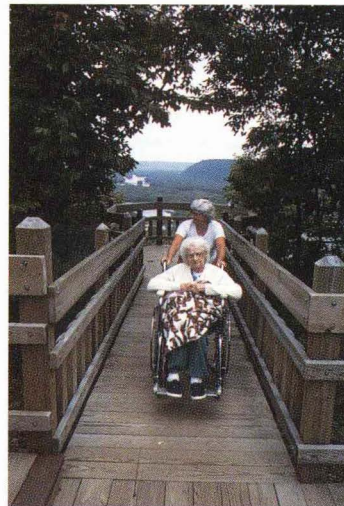
Big Creek

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## Accessible Park Facilities

A primary DNR goal is making campgrounds, picnic shelters, cabins, overlooks, fishing jetties, trails and other facilities accessible to everyone. Check the parks chart for a listing of facilities accessible to the mobility impaired. Open picnic sites and camp sites marked with the wheelchair sign are reserved for persons displaying a handicapped parking permit on their vehicle.

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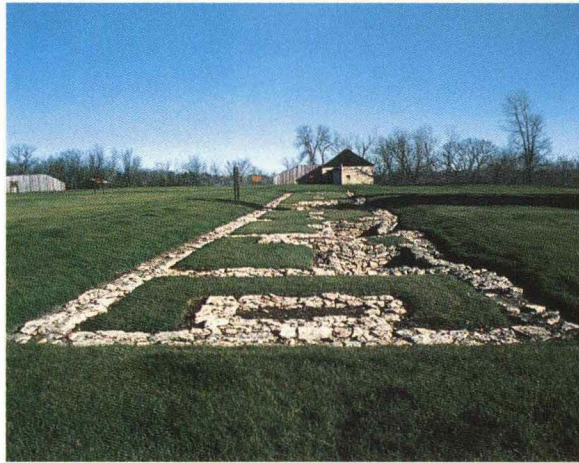
Fort Atkinson

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## A Look Back

Many state parks have historic significance. Ancient human evidence in the form of earthen ceremonial and burial mounds can be found in several state parks. Native Americans roamed and lived in places such as Maquoketa Caves, Pikes Peak, Ledges and Lacey-Keosauqua state parks. And some state parks have ties to more recent European settlement.

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## Fort Atkinson Rendezvous

The annual rendezvous has been held during the last full weekend of September at Ft. Atkinson State Preserve in northeast Iowa since 1977. The event recreates life on the 1840s Iowa frontier with authentic buckskinners, U.S. Army dragoons, black powder shoots, craftspeople, contests, movies and demonstrations.

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## Forest Crafts Festival

Held at Lacey-Keosauqua State Park the second weekend of October, the festival features woodcraft demonstrations and sales, forest and wildlife management demonstrations and buckskinners. Nearby Keosauqua has a parade, carnival and other related events.

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## Lewis and Clark Festival

In 1984, the first annual Lewis and Clark Festival was held at Lewis and Clark State Park near Onawa, the site of an 1804 Lewis and Clark encampment. The June festival features movies about the 1804 expedition, buckskinners in frontier dress, bluegrass music and events such as a fishing contest and "fun run." A major attraction is the full-sized replica of Lewis and Clark's keelboat, *Discovery*, constructed by local volunteers and park staff.

## State Preserves System

There have been many changes to Iowa's plant and animal communities in the last 150 years. Of the millions of acres of prairie which once covered Iowa, less than one percent remains. Animal species such as bison, elk and the gray wolf were eliminated by the early 1870s. Whooping cranes disappeared by the turn of the century while prairie chickens last nested in northwest Iowa in the 1930s.

The state preserve system was established in 1965 to protect areas of our natural, prehistoric and historic heritage for present and future generations. Preserve designation provides an area with the highest form of protection the State of Iowa offers. Currently, there are 87 state preserves known for their archeological, geological, biological, historical or scenic resources. Visit any of Iowa's preserves and take a step "back in time." A directory of state preserves is available from the DNR.



Steele Prairie State Preserve



## Historic Properties

The State Historical Society of Iowa within the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs maintains a number of historic properties open to the public including Clermont Museum, Montauk Historic Governor's House and Union Sunday School at Clermont; the Matthew Edel Blacksmith Shop and Historic Site at Haverhill; Abbie Gardner Cabin in Arnolds Park; Toolesboro Indian Mounds National Historic Landmark near Toolesboro; and Plum Grove in Iowa City.

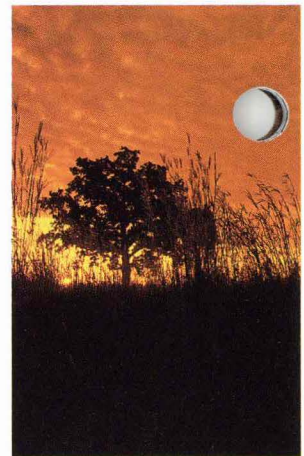
For more information on these and other historic sites managed by the State Historical Society, call 515-281-5111.



Montauk



DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge



Walnut Creek

The Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in West Branch encompasses the Presidential Library-Museum, the original cottage in which the President was born and the Presidential gravesite. 319-643-2541

Effigy Mounds National Monument along the Mississippi River, near Harpers Ferry, preserves unique prehistoric Indian burial mounds, some of which are 2,500-years old. The 1,475-acre monument protects 191 known earthen mounds, many in the form of bird or bear effigies. 319-873-3491

Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge and Prairie Learning Center, near Prairie City in central Iowa, offers unique opportunities to develop an appreciation for reconstructed tallgrass prairie, savanna, wetlands and woodlands on this 5,000-acre area. Herds of bison and elk will be included on the prairie. 515-994-2415

DeSoto Wildlife Refuge and Visitor Center is near Missouri Valley, Iowa. In the fall this 7,800-acre area of Missouri River bottomland is a stop-over for 500,000 migrating ducks and geese. On display in the visitor center are more than 200,000 artifacts from the sunken steamboat, *Bertrand*. 712-642-4121

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and Visitor Center, near McGregor, consists of 200,000 acres from Wabasha, Minnesota to Rock Island, Illinois preserving wildlife resources and providing wildlife-oriented education. 319-873-3423

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## County Conservation Boards

Iowa's 99 county conservation boards offer more than 1,300 park, recreation and wildlife areas for public use and enjoyment. Camping, swimming, fishing, picnicking, boating and hunting are just some of the activities to be enjoyed at county areas in Iowa.

In addition, a number of state parks are managed by county conservation boards including Sharon Bluffs in Appanoose Co.; Heery Woods in Butler Co.; Swan Lake in Carroll Co.; Cold Springs in Cass Co.; Silver Lake in Delaware Co.; Echo Valley in Fayette Co.; Eagle Lake in Hancock Co.; Spring Lake in Greene Co.; Oakland Mills in Henry Co.; Frank A. Gotch in Humboldt Co.; Pammel in Madison Co.; Pioneer Recreation Area in Mitchell Co.; Mill Creek in O'Brien Co.; Lost Island in Palo Alto Co.; Oak Grove in Sioux Co.; and Lake Cornelia in Wright Co. Kearny State Park is owned by the city of Emmetsburg. Regulations and fees may differ from those of the state, in county-managed areas. Information about county conservation board areas and programs is available in the *Outdoor Adventure Guide*. 515-367-4000.

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REAP license plates are available from individual county treasurers. A portion of REAP funding goes to park facility restoration and new development.

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For more information on state, county and federal areas, the Iowa Division of Tourism offers both the *Iowa Travel Guide*, and a *Camping and Outdoor Guide*. 800-345-IOWA

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STATE LIBRARY OF IOWA



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