



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

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White Pine Hollow is as wild as it gets in Iowa



Navigating White Pine Hollow is challenging and often done by following deer or other game trails. With its limited access and, in the state preserve portion of the area, almost no improvements, it's advised that those new to White Pine Hollow bring a fully charged GPS, cell phone or a compass to find their way out. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.

"If there's a place you can get lost in Iowa, this is it," said Curt Kemmerer, wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Maquoketa Wildlife Unit while bushwhacking through White Pine Hollow State Preserve in northwestern Dubuque County.

In this 1,027-acre mix of forested state preserve land and wildlife area with deep, winding, intersecting canyons and towering oaks and white pines blocking out the sky, there is limited access and, in the state preserve portion of the area, almost no improvements.

“It has that ‘out west’ feel to it,” he said. “There’s no way in or no way out except on foot.”

It is one of the wildest places in Iowa, and that was the plan when the Dubuque County Conservation Society worked with the Iowa Conservation Commission to protect the area in 1934 when 80-acres was acquired by the State of Iowa. More land was added over time, then in 1968, White Pine Hollow was designated as a state preserve. The preserve status bestows added protection for the highest quality resource and here, that resource was the largest and farthest south stands of white pines in Iowa.

“It is one of the crown jewels of our state preserves system,” Kemmerer said. Then in 1972, it was designated as a National Natural Landmark, by the National Park Service, one of only seven in Iowa.

Navigating the area is challenging and often done by following deer or other game trails. It’s advised that those new to White Pine Hollow bring a fully charged GPS, cell phone or a compass to find their way out.

“They have to go find a few lost hikers every year or so,” said Mike Ungs, fifth generation owner of Ungs Shopping Center in nearby Luxemburg. Ungs grew up in the area and tells stories from his childhood of exploring and hunting in White Pine Hollow. They would visit an old cabin that was on the original 80 acres and used as camping spot by the boy scouts. The cabin burned down in 1975.

He often meets people from out of the area who stop in to his family store on their way to White Pine Hollow. Ungs Shopping Center is part outdoor store, part grocery store and part farm and home store. Fishing tackle, a meat case, groceries, night crawlers, camping equipment, tools, batteries, boots, hunting supplies and specialty snacks from the nearby and well-known Edgewood Locker.

“Hunting and fishing – they stop in,” Ungs said. “Mushroom hunters stop in here. Trout fishing. Campers for camping supplies, buying license. We benefit the most from the hunting side of it.”

Managing the Wildlife Area

While the preserve has traditionally been hands-off management, the Maquoketa Wildlife Unit staff is conducting some management on the wildlife area portion of White Pine Hollow.

Specifically, they are creating early successional timber growth by cutting older trees and allowing a dense young forest to return in its place and reclaiming some of the old prairie sites. He said they are working on the recent 80-acre addition that was logged by the landowner prior to the DNR accepting the land which allows them to focus on promoting oak and hickory.

“We want to remove the non-target tree species and turn the area back into an oak and hickory forest,” he said. Thousands of seedlings were planted in addition to natural regeneration and re-sprouting.

Oak and hickory nuts are an important food source for many wildlife species, including the ever-popular deer and turkeys.

Plants and Animals

White Pine Hollow, with its numerous microenvironments, has been studied by botanists extensively for nearly 100 years, resulting in identifying more than 500 vascular plants and more than 100 non-vascular plants, including a number of plants listed as endangered, threatened or are of special concern.

The area is home to grape-stemmed clematis, northern monkshood, purple cliffbrake, green violet, nodding wild onion and crow foot clubmoss.

It is also important for resident and migrating birds including Bobolinks, Baltimore orioles, common yellowthroats, Canada warblers, northern flickers, red-headed woodpeckers and wood thrush warblers – all considered species in greatest conservation need. It's home to 16 butterfly species, five herptile species, eight odonates and six species of bats.

Etcetera

- The 792-acre section of White Pine Hollow designated as a state preserve means there is no camping or removing plants and trees. Hunting for mushrooms and berries is still allowed.
- Students from the University of Dubuque conduct different studies at White Pine Hollow, including bat studies, small mammal studies and more.
- A white oak tree that fell here was more than 400 years old, making it around 200 years old when Lewis and Clark explored the Missouri River.

Media Contact: Curt Kemmerer, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 563-357-2035.

Scholastic Action Shooting Program State Championship brings out some of the nation's fastest shooters

More than 90 athletes ranging from grade school through high school competed in the Scholastic Action Shooting Program Iowa State Championship match, June 4 and 5, at the Olofson Shooting Range, near Polk City.

Nate Gibson, from the Iowa Dead Shots, won the Men's High Over All Rimfire Pistol with a time of 31.85 seconds to complete all four stages. Braelyn Kuro, from Dubuque Scholastic Shooting Sports, won the Ladies Rimfire Pistol High Over All with a time of 44.5 seconds. The Men's High Over All Rifle competition was won by Brice Jones, from the Iowa Dead Shots, with a time of 26.67 seconds. Sydney Vavroch, from the Steel Shooters of Traer, won the Ladies High Over All for rifle in 34.48 seconds.

Squads from Ankeny Action, Baxter Shooting Sports, Carroll Action Shooting Sports, Central Iowa Scholastic Shooters, Dubuque Scholastic Shooting Sports, Iowa Dead Shots, Montezuma SASP, and the Steel Shooters of Traer competed in rimfire pistol,

rimfire rifle, centerfire pistol, and pistol caliber carbine disciplines. Complete results can be found online at <https://app.sssfonline.com/results>.

The Scholastic Action Shooting Program combines precision and speed as contestants shoot a series of five different targets in four stages for a timed score. Athletes compete with rimfire pistol, rimfire rifle, centerfire pistol and pistol caliber carbine.

“All SASP activities incorporate two key elements- safety and fun. The Scholastic Action Shooting Program provides an opportunity to Iowa’s shooting sports athletes to learn to safely handle, use, and maintain firearms while also learning to compete in these sports,” said Chris Van Gorp, Shooting Sports coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

The SASP is a youth development program, first and foremost and we do this through the shooting sports and competitive shooting. The SASP’s mission is to help kids reach their highest potential in becoming the best athletes and young adults they can be. For more information on the Scholastic Action Shooting Program in Iowa, contact Van Gorp, at 515-313-8048 or chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov.

Media Contact: Chris Van Gorp, DNR Shooting Sports Coordinator, (515) 313-8048 or Chris.Vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov.

Shooting sports athletes converge on Cedar Falls for Iowa’s largest trap shoot

Nearly 3,100 Iowa shooting sports athletes from grade school through high school will shoot more than 770,000 targets during the 2022 Iowa Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) Trap Championships, June 7-12, in Cedar Falls.

The Scholastic Clay Target Program has seen constant growth in Iowa and across the nation, with increases in participation seen in Iowa middle school and high school teams, which have grown from 1,400 athletes to over 4,200 athletes since 2011.

“The Scholastic Clay Target Program provides many opportunities to Iowa’s shooting sports athletes. You don’t have to be the biggest, strongest or fastest, it really is a level playing field. All athletes are welcome to attend and compete at the State Championship Events. The shooting sports are as much a competition against yourself as it is with other competitors, and we have many athletes shoot their personal best at these events,” said Chris Van Gorp, Shooting Sports coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Athletes will compete in American Singles, Doubles and Handicap Trap. The daylong competition will take place at the Iowa State Trapshooting Homegrounds, located north of Cedar Falls:

- June 7-8: Elementary and Middle School Trap Singles
- June 9: Handicap and Doubles Trap Events, all ages
- June 10-12: High School Trap Singles

The Scholastic Clay Target Program is the largest, fastest growing, and most exciting youth clay target program in the US. Student athletes from elementary through high school and college have the opportunity to compete in sports such as trap, skeet, and sporting clays, as well as Olympic disciplines like bunker trap and international skeet.

The SCTP is a youth development program, first and foremost and we do this through the shooting sports and competitive shooting. The SCTP's mission is to help kids reach their highest potential in becoming the best athletes and young adults they can be. For more information on the Scholastic Clay Target Program in Iowa, contact Van Gorp, at 515-313-8048 or chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov.

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