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# Trail Riding In Iowa

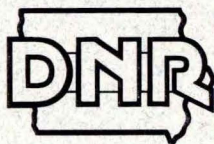


A Guide to Iowa's  
Equestrian Trails



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**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Wallace State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034  
515/281-5145**



# Contents

<b>General Rules and Recommendations for State Parks, Recreation Areas and Forests</b> .....	2
<b>Map of Iowa Trail Locations</b> .....	18-19
<b>Northwest Region Trails</b> .....	4
<i>Brushy Creek State Recreation Area</i> .....	6
<b>Northeast Region Trails</b> .....	10
<i>Volga River State Recreation Area</i> .....	12
<i>Yellow River State Forest</i> .....	15
<b>Southwest Region Trails</b> .....	20
<i>Waubonsie State Park</i> .....	22
<b>Southeast Region Trails</b> .....	24
<i>Elk Rock State Park</i> .....	26
<i>Stephens State Forest</i> .....	28
<i>Shimek State Forest</i> .....	32
<b>Organized Trail Riding Activities in Iowa</b> .....	34
<b>About this Trail Guide</b> .....	35

# Trail Riding In Iowa

The State of Iowa offers a wide variety of equestrian trail opportunities on 58 state and county areas. These trails vary in length from one to 35 miles.<sup>6</sup> Equestrian camping is provided in 22 areas, which range from modern to primitive.

This trail guide was developed to provide detailed information regarding equestrian facilities throughout the state so that visitors will know what to expect when they arrive with their horses for a day's ride or a camping adventure. Equestrian trails are generally open in early spring until the first snow fall. However, trails may be temporarily closed throughout the season if they are determined to be too wet for riding. Call ahead for trail conditions as additional information is available from individual area managers at the phone numbers provided.

## General Rules and Recommendations for State Parks, Recreation Areas and Forests

Equestrian camping facilities are available in eight state areas which are described in more detail in this guide. The facilities may vary from area to area. Following are some general rules and recommendations, as well as area specific regulations.

### To Prevent Erosion & Preserve Your Natural Resources

- Call ahead for current trail conditions.
- Always stay on marked equestrian trails -- do not make short cuts. Trail renovation is costly. By staying on designated trails, you are doing your part to protect these natural areas for the future.
- Cross streams only at designated areas.
- After camping, the hitch rail area or stall should be raked and left clean.
- Tying animals to any vegetation is prohibited.

-- State park and recreation areas have a “Carry In and Carry Out” litter policy in all areas except campgrounds.

## **For Safety**

- Be careful with campfires. Clear the area around the fire ring and never leave fires unattended.
- Horse racing or running in camp areas is strictly prohibited for your safety.
- Recognize that other parks users such as hikers or hunters may be unfamiliar with or afraid of horses.
- All pets must be leashed or caged.
- Be aware that hunting is permitted in all state recreation areas and forests except within developed facilities such as campgrounds.

## **Stabling**

- In designated campgrounds in all state areas, animals must be stabled inside a horse trailer; or at a hitch rail, in individual stalls or a corral, when provided. This practice reduces unnecessary damage to the campsites.
- Animals may be hitched to trailers for short periods of time to allow for grooming and saddling.
- Animals may be stabled at trailers where no hitching facilities are provided.
- Portable stalls/pens are not allowed.

## **Department of Natural Resources Equestrian Facilities**

- Please notify DNR staff of any dangerous areas or conditions.
- Campers must self register in the campground.
- Equestrian day-users must park in the equestrian day-use area if provided, not in the campground.
- These public lands are for your use and enjoyment. Do what you can to help maintain and preserve these trails.



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# NORTHWEST REGION TRAILS

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<b>MAP #</b>	<b>AREA NAME</b>	<b>MANAGING AGENCY</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
1	Bennett Area	Carroll County	(712)792-4614
2	Bertran Reservation	Clay County	(712)262-2187
3	Brushy Creek Recreation Area	State	(515)359-2501
4	Burt Lake	Kossuth County	(515)295-2138
5	Butrick Bluff Area	Carroll County	(712)792-4614
6	Dickson Timber	Carroll County	(712)792-4614
7	Fort Defiance State Park	State	(712)337-3211
8	Hillview Recreation Area	Plymouth County	(712)947-4270
9	Kindlespire Little Sioux Access	Clay County	(712)262-2187
10	Lime Creek Conservation Area	Cerro Gordo County	(515)423-5309
11	Martin Area Access	Cherokee County	(515)4225-5959
12	Merritt Access	Carroll County	(712)792-4614
13	Middle Raccoon River Access	Carroll County	(712)792-4614
14	Moorehead Park	Ida County	(712)364-3300
15	Oneota Little Sioux Access	Clay County	(712)262-2187
16	Pilot Knob State Park	State	(515)581-4835
17	Riverside Park	Carroll County	(712)792-4614
18	Russ Wildlife Area and Thorpe Park	Winnebago County	(515)565-3390
19	Russell White Nature Trail	Carroll County	(712)792-4614
20	Shell Rock River Green Belt	Cerro Gordo County	(515)423-5309
21	Southwood Conservation Area	Woodbury County	(712)258-0838
22	Stone State Park	State	(712)255-4698
23	Swan Lake State Park	Carroll County	(712)792-4614

*pc = primitive camping mc = modern camping*

<b>DIRECTIONS</b>	<b>MILES OF TRAIL</b>	<b>CAMPING</b>	<b>TOILETS</b>	<b>WATER</b>	<b>PARKING</b>	<b>HITCH</b>
4 mi. E, 2 mi. N of Glidden	3	mc			+	
2 mi. E of Peterson	4				+	
5 mi. E of Lehigh on D46	35	mc	+	+	+	+
2 mi. S, 1 mi. W of Algona	1.5				+	
3 mi. N of Glidden	4				+	
3.5 mi. NE of Glidden	3	pc	+	+	+	
1 mi. W of Esterville, Hwy 9	4.3		+	+	+	+
1 mi. W of Hinton	3		+	+	+	
5 mi. W of Webb	3	pc	+		+	
1 mi. N of Mason City	4.5	pc	+	+	+	+
4.7 mi. E of Larrabee	2.5	pc	+	+	+	
4 mi. NE of Glidden	2	pc	+	+	+	
3 mi. NW of Coon Rapids	5				+	
.5 mi. N of Ida Grove	2.5	pc	+	+	+	
1 mi. E of Spencer	5		+		+	
4 mi. E of Forest City off Hwy. 9	7.8		+	+	+	+
NE edge of Coon Rapids	2.0		+	+	+	
6 mi. W of Forest City	3		+	+	+	
Lanesboro to Hwy 286	3					
295 SE of County S62, S of Rock Falls	7.5	mc	+	+	+	+
1 mi. SW of Smithland	5	mc	+	+	+	+
8 mi. NW of Sioux City on Hwy. 12	7.2		+	+	+	+
2 mi. SE of Carroll	3	pc	+	+	+	

## **Brushy Creek State Recreation Area**

**Lehigh, Iowa 515/359-2501**

Consisting of more than 6,000 acres, Brushy Creek Recreation Area is located 14 miles southeast of Fort Dodge. This area has been known for many years as one of the nicest places in the state for horseback riding. Riders come from all across Iowa and surrounding states to enjoy the rugged, challenging and beautiful trails in one of Iowa's largest tracts of public recreation land. A network of trails winds through a variety of terrain which includes forests, grasslands, and cropfields, with Brushy Creek meandering through the entire area. There are approximately 35 miles of trails with more being planned.

In the early years, there was no formal trail system which resulted in a large complex of trails being developed by the recreation area visitors. In many cases, trails were located on fragile soils of excessive steepness. Because of an absence of formal design, heavy use, and little or no maintenance, trail erosion became a serious problem. In recent years, the DNR has worked with equestrian groups in order to provide quality riding opportunities and, at the same time, ensure that impacts on soils and vegetation are minimized. A Brushy Creek Trail Advisory Board was established by the Governor and Legislative Council in 1989 for the purpose of providing input on trails and other recreation facilities at Brushy Creek.

### **Day Use**

Currently there is one day use area near the existing equestrian campground in the northern portion of the recreation area. Facilities include seasonal rest rooms, with water available in the adjacent campground. Planned future facilities include an arena, modern rest rooms, drinking water, a picnic shelter, and improved parking facilities. Construction of an additional equestrian day use area in the southern portion of the recreation area is planned for 1994. Eventually this area will also have modern rest rooms, drinking water and a picnic shelter. Two



additional day-use areas are planned for development in the southern area in 1997.

## **Camping**

There are 125 camp sites<sup>e</sup> with 10 electrical hook-ups, a horse wash area and ample shade trees. Water hydrants with potable water are available, as are picnic tables, grills, and hitching rails. Animals must be tied to the hitch rails provided at each campsite. Future plans include a shower/toilet building and 40 additional electrical sites to be constructed in the fall of 1994. Another shower/toilet building, playground, and more electrical sites are tentatively scheduled for construction by 1997.

A future additional equestrian campground will be located in the southern addition. Campground road construction will begin in 1994 and there will eventually be 105 sites (70 electrical), a shower/rest room, an additional toilet and playground. Other types of overnight equestrian experiences are also planned for the future. Four family cabins will be available for equestrian use as well as a ride-in camp area in the north and one in the south. The ride-in camp areas will allow a more rugged and remote camping experience away from vehicles and other campers.

## **Future Plans**

Lake construction began in the spring of 1993, with completion of the 690 acre lake expected in 1996. The lake will have 21 miles of shoreline, with an average depth of 29 feet and is expected to be popular for fishing and boating. The lake itself will be open to all varieties of water craft, although the "any motor at no wake speed" rule will apply. Additional non-equestrian facilities will be developed as the lake construction proceeds. Picnic areas, a beach; a five-mile paved, accessible trail; family cabins and campground are included in the plans.

Acquisition of additional land in the south occurred in the early 1990s. This area will provide for multiple recreation opportunities with a special emphasis on equestrian camping and trail

development. Since Brushy Creek State Recreation Area will be crossed by a paved road, trail connections must be provided to ensure that riders can safely cross roadways. Campground development will begin in 1994, as will the trail development, which will continue for approximately three years.

Hunting is allowed at Brushy Creek State Recreation Area.

Brushy Creek State Recreation Area is located four miles east of Lehigh on County Hwy D46 or 15 miles southeast of Fort Dodge off of State Hwy 20.

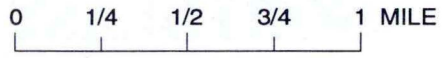


**Junior Competitive Rider at the ITRA Sink-or-Swim Ride at Brushy Creek.**

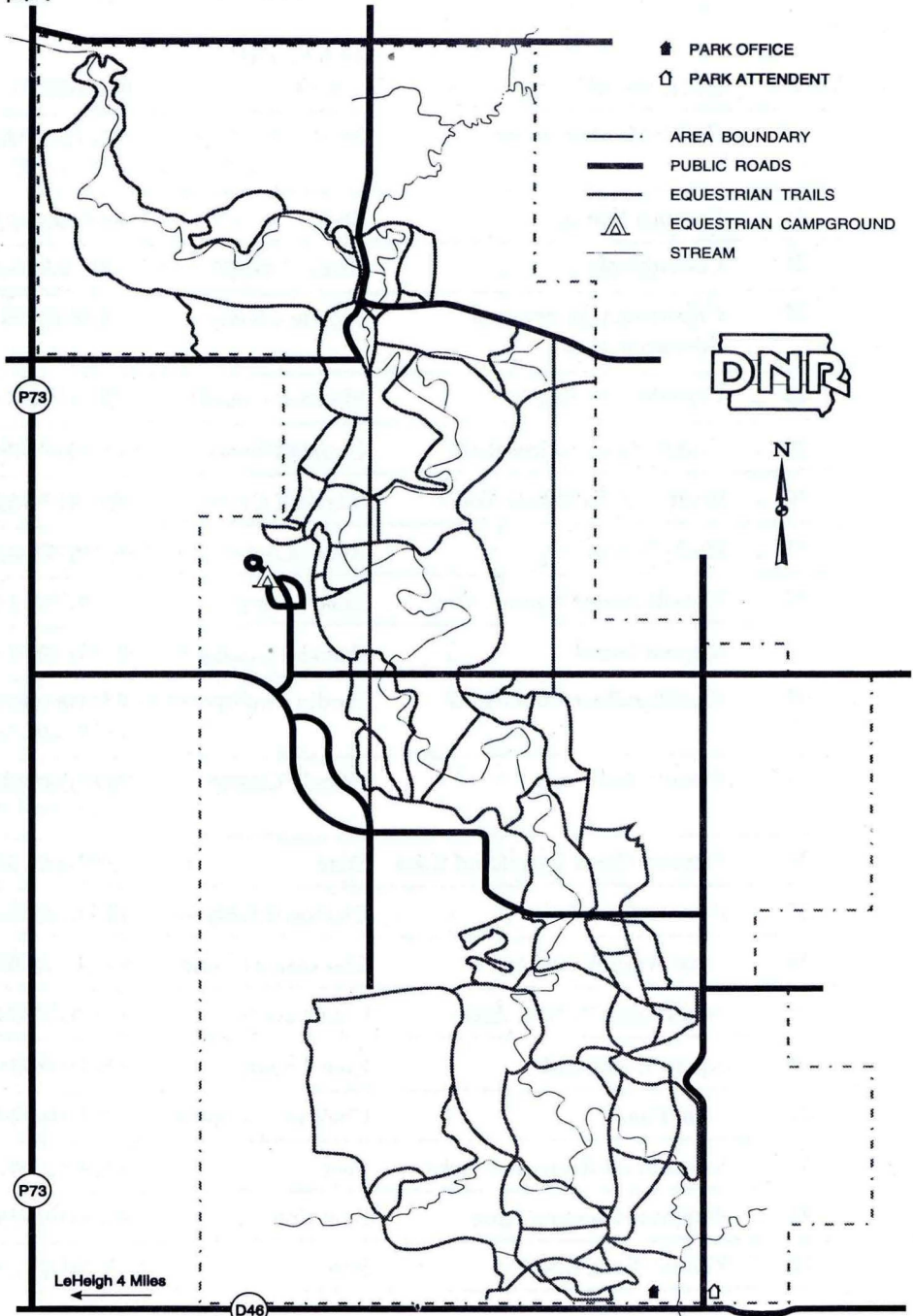


To Ft. Dodge  
15 Miles

# BRUSHY CREEK Webster County



- PARK OFFICE
- PARK ATTENDANT
- AREA BOUNDARY
- PUBLIC ROADS
- EQUESTRIAN TRAILS
- EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND
- STREAM



P73

P73

LeHelgh 4 Miles

D46



# NORTHEAST REGION TRAILS

MAP #	AREA NAME	MANAGING AGENCY	PHONE
24	Backbone State Forest	State	(319)245-1891
25	Cardinal Marsh	State	(319)927-3276
26	Central Park	Jones County	(319)487-3541
27	Gilbertson Conservation Education Area	Fayette County	(319)426-5740
28	Grammar Grove	Marshall County	(515)754-6303
29	Grundy County Greenbelt	Grundy County	(319)345-2688
30	Heart of Iowa Nature Trail	Marshall County	(515)754-6303
31	Heery Woods	Butler County	(319)278-4237
32	Matsell Bridge Natural Area	Linn County	(319)398-3505
33	Maynes Grove	Franklin County	(515)456-4375
34	Pineridge Recreation Area	Hardin County	(515)858-3461 o (515)648-3825
35	Pioneer Trail	Grundy County	(319)345-2688
36	Pleasant Creek Recreation Area	State	(319)436-7716
37	Pony Hollow Trail	Clayton County	(319)245-1516
38	Price Wildlife Habitat	Chickasaw County	(515)394-4714
39	South Cedar Natural Area	Linn County	(319)398-3505
40	Squaw Creek Park	Linn County	(319)398-3505
41	Twin Ponds	Chickasaw County	(515)394-4714
42	Volga River Recreation Area	State	(319)425-4161
43	Wakpicada Natural Area	Linn County	(319)398-3505
44	Yellow River Forest	State	(319)586-2548

*pc = primitive camping \*not maintained mc = modern camping*

<b>DIRECTIONS</b>	<b>MILES OF TRAIL</b>	<b>CAMPING</b>	<b>TOILETS</b>	<b>WATER</b>	<b>PARKING</b>	<b>HITCH</b>
2 mi. SW of Strawberry Point, adjacent to Backbone State Park	5		+		+	
1 mi. E, 3 mi. S of Cresco	11.5	pc			+	
2 mi. W of Center Junction	2 (ride on road only)					
E edge of Elgin	5		+	+	+	
3 mi. SW of Liscomb	1	pc*	+	+	+	
Reinbeck, Commercial Street	2	pc	+		+	
Enter from Rhodes	4.3				+	
S edge of Clarksville	1.5	pc	+	+	+	
2.5 mi. N of Viola	6.3	pc	+	+	+	+
1.5 mi. SW of Popejoy	2				+	
.5 mi. W of Steamboat Rock	4	mc	+	+	+	+
Grundy Center to Holland, Marion to Reinbeck	5.5	pc	+	+	+	
4.5 mi. NW of Palo	12	pc	+	+	+	
Elkader City Recreation Area	3				+	
9.5 mi former RR right-of-way	10					
3 mi. SW of Mount Vernon	.5-1	pc	+	+	+	
1 mi S of Marion	7	mc	+	+	+	+
2 mi. S, 3 mi. E of Ionia	.5		+	+	+	
4 mi. N of Fayette	22.3	pc	+	+	+	+
1 mi. S of Central City	1	pc	+	+	+	
14 mi. SE of Waukon	11	pc	+	+	+	

## **Volga River State Recreation Area**

**Fayette, Iowa 319/425-4161**

Volga River State Recreation Area is located in one of the most scenic parts of the state. Northeast Iowa is often referred to as “Little Switzerland” because of its rugged topography, geologic features and substantial forest cover which are in sharp contrast to the majority of the state. The heavily wooded, rugged landscape of Volga River is an exciting setting for a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits.

Volga River Recreation Area has become a popular center for a number of trail activities to include: equestrian usage, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. The multi-use trail system is 23.5 miles in length. Numerous trail rides and camp-outs are held here by saddle clubs all year long. A self-guided nature trail begins at the park office. A day-use area, one-half mile north of the campground, is available which includes picnic tables, hitch rails and portable toilets.

The rugged beauty of Volga river provides a picturesque setting for camping. There are 14 equestrian campsites available in the “Albany” non-modern campground (the campground covers what once was the little town of Albany). A pit vault toilet was constructed in 1993, but currently there is no water available. The river is close-by for watering of animals. In the near future, it is hoped that a well can be installed for potable water in the campground.

The 135 acre Frog Hollow Lake provides fishing and boating opportunities. Any size boat motor may be operated at “no wake” speeds

The area provides excellent habitat for fish and wildlife. Frog Hollow Lake and the Volga River, which meanders through the 5,420 acre area, hold a variety of fish species. Their banks harbor nesting wood ducks and shore birds. A multitude of birds may be



seen such as chickadees, finches, bluebirds, woodpeckers, hawks, great horned owls, wild turkey, ruffed grouse and woodcock. Other wildlife species of the area include: white-tailed deer, red fox, raccoon, opossum, muskrats, mink, beaver and fox and gray squirrels. Most of the Volga River Recreation Area is open to hunting.

Scenic features include: the Volga river and the old steel bridges which cross it; striking limestone outcrops, prairie areas, and woodlands with unusual stands of aspen and Canadian yew. Changes of season provide vivid contrasts in snowy winter, bright spring wildflowers, shady emerald woodlands in summer and vivid autumn colors.

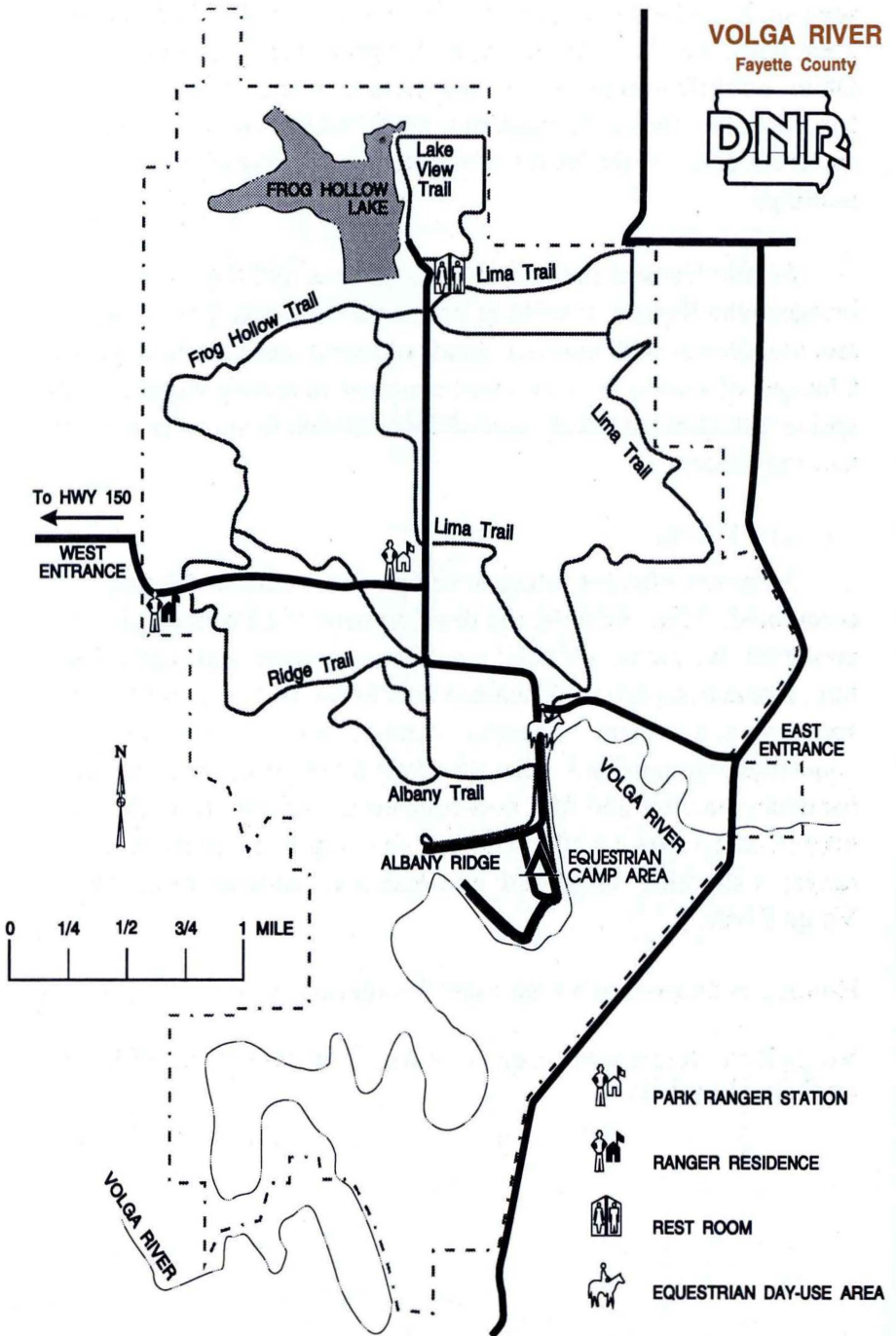
## **Future Plans**

A master plan for future development is currently being completed. Plans include: the development of a lakeside picnic area with two picnic shelters; a modern rest room and play structure; a beach; a partially enclosed shelter for an overlook/winter sports area; a modern equestrian campground; a modern non-equestrian campground with 48 sites; eight family cabins (four for equestrian use and four non-equestrian cabins); an eight site hike-in camp area; an eight site ride-in camp area; an archery range; a shooting range; and an additional canoe access to the Volga River.

Hunting is allowed at Volga State Recreation Area.

Volga River Recreation Area is located four miles north of Fayette on State Hwy 150.

**VOLGA RIVER**  
Fayette County



## **Yellow River State Forest**

**Waukon, Iowa 319/586-2548 (Park Ranger)**

**or 319/ 586- 2254 (State Forest Office)**

In the heart of northeast Iowa lay the timbered hills and valleys of Yellow River State Forest. This 7,687 acre forest is divided into nine units. Of primary recreation interest is the Paint Creek Unit. This 4,568-acre timbered area has two bubbling trout streams, Big Paint and Little Paint Creeks. Campers at the Paint Creek Unit are lulled to sleep by the gurgling of the cold water. Riding or hiking through acres of native timber, one marvels at the sheer limestone bluffs, clear trout streams, wildlife and the quiet beauty of nature undisturbed.

All units of the forest are operated under multiple use management plans to regulate periodic timber harvest. Areas currently accessible have been inventoried to determine the tree species composition, number of trees, quality and volume in board feet that are growing on the forest unit.

Game management practices are part of the operating plans. Adequate den trees are left, and food patches are cleared and planted with corn, milo and other grains. Deer use these areas in the fall and winter. There are two marshes and 52 erosion and wildlife ponds on the unit.

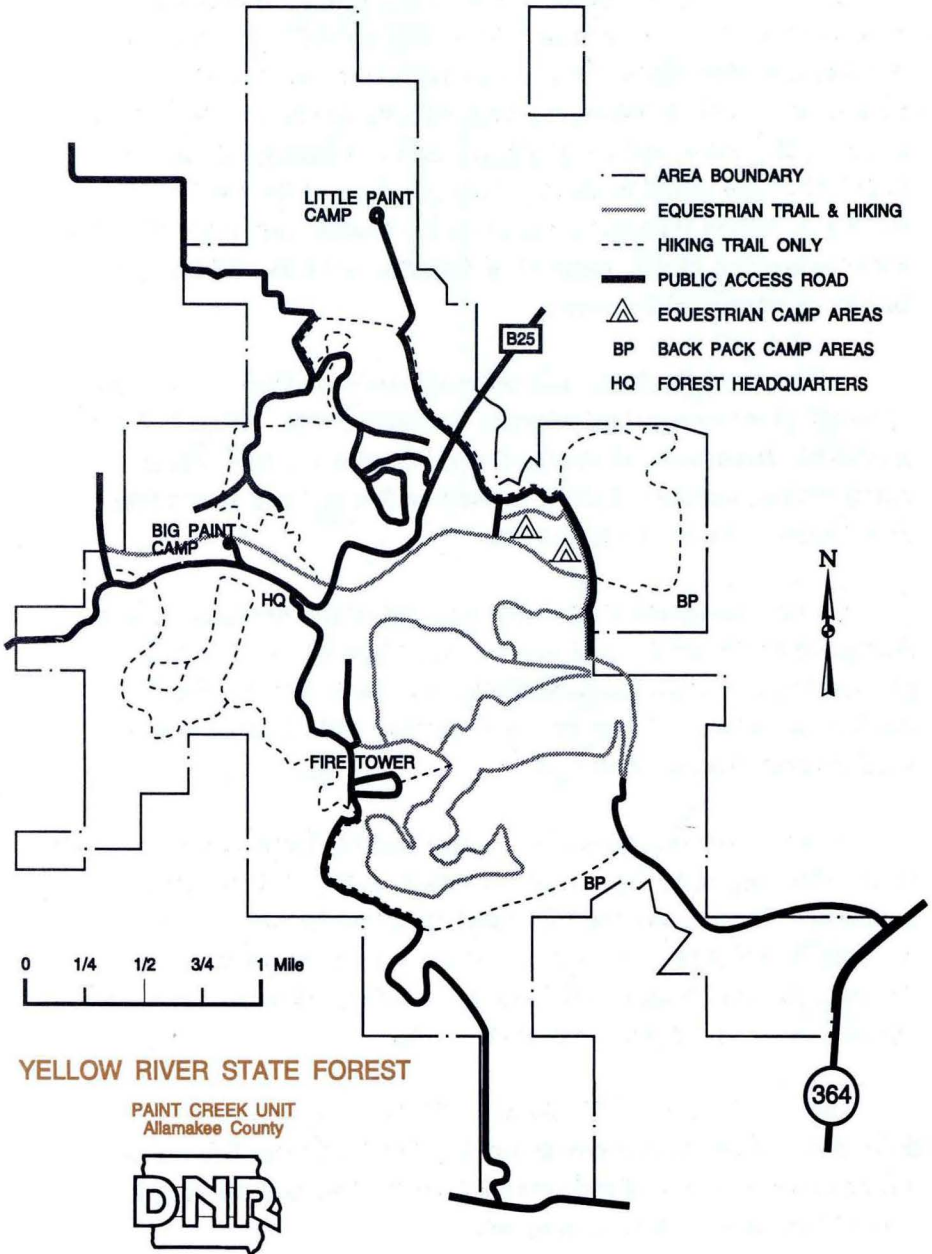
A non-modern equestrian campground is located here with 40 sites. Hitching rails, a pit-vault rest room and picnic tables are available. There is no potable water, however horses may be watered in the cold-water stream which runs through the campground. A small barn is available for stabling a few horses which operates on a first come, first serve basis.

There are 11 miles of scenic trails with varying levels of difficulty. Most trails traverse old logging roads and fire lanes which offer a variety of riding experiences. Day-use parking is allowed in the equestrian camp area.



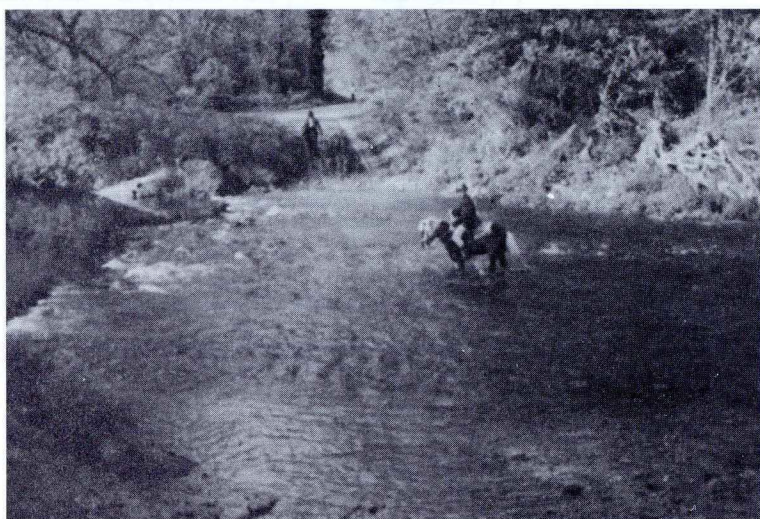
Hunting is allowed at Yellow River State Forest.

The Paint Creek Unit of Yellow River State Forest is located 14 miles southeast of Waukon off of State Hwy 76.





**Riders at Yellow River State Forest**



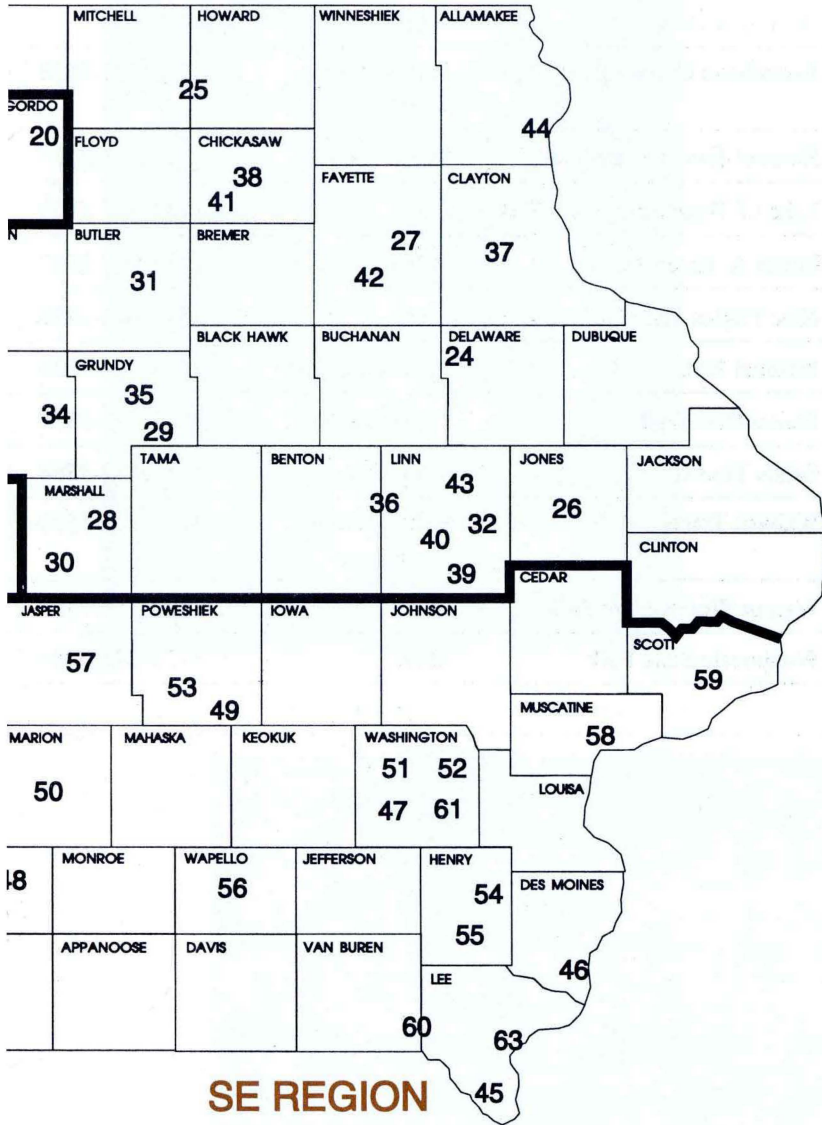
## NW REGION

LYON	OSCEOLA	DICKINSON	EMMET 7	KOSSUTH	WINNEBAGO 18 16	WC
SIoux	O'BRIEN	CLAY 15 2 9	PALO ALTO	4	HANCOCK	CE
PLYMOUTH 8	CHEROKEE 11	BUENA VISTA	POCAHONTAS	HUMBOLDT	WRIGHT	FR
WOODBURY 22	IDA	SAC	CALHOUN	WEBSTER 3	HAMILTON	HA
21	14					
MONONA	CRAWFORD	CARROLL 19 5 23 1 12 17 13	GREENE	BOONE	STORY 7	65
HARRISON	SHELBY	AUDUBON	GUTHRIE	DALLAS	POLK 67 73	
POTTAWATTAMIE 72	64	CASS	ADAIR	MADISON 69	WARREN	
MILLS	MONTGOMERY	ADAMS	UNION	CLARKE	LUC. 62	
FREMONT 74	PAGE	TAYLOR 66 71	RINGGOLD	DECATUR 68	WAY	

## SW REGION



# NE REGION



# SE REGION

<b>DIRECTIONS</b>	<b>MILES OF TRAIL</b>	<b>CAMPING</b>	<b>TOILETS</b>	<b>WATER</b>	<b>PARKING</b>	<b>HITCH</b>
1 mi. E of Neola, County Rd 255	3	pc	+	+	+	
Slater, Co.R38	32					+
3 mi. NE of Bedford, Hwy 49	8	pc	+	+	+	
3 mi. NE of Granger	12-15	pc				+
6 mi. SE of Davis City	6		+		+	+
4 mi. SW of Winterset	1		+		+	+
Roland to Zearing	10.5		+	+	+	
3 mi. NW of Blockton	3					+
Council Bluffs to Mineola	10					
4 mi. SW of Des Moines off Hwy 5	2.7	pc	+	+	+	
6 mi. SW of Sidney on Hwy 2	5.5	mc	+	+	+	+

*pc = primitive camping    mc = modern camping*

## **Waubonsie State Park**

**Hamburg, Iowa 712-382-2786**

Waubonsie State Park is located in the southwest corner of the state, near the Missouri River. From the steep ridges and scenic overlooks visitors can see hills 50 miles away, and view parts of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri.

Waubonsie is located in the unique "Loess Hills". These hills were formed 12,000 to 31,000 years ago when glaciers melted, carrying huge volumes of sediment and water down the Missouri River in summer months. The volume of this melt water reduced in winter months, exposing the sediments to the wind. The sediment, called loess, is a mixture of silt (composed of closely packed grains of quartz), with some clay, and fine sand particles. It was carried by strong westerly winds and deposited when the winds encountered the steep slopes of the valley wall. The only other place in the world, where such massive deposits of loess can be found is in China.

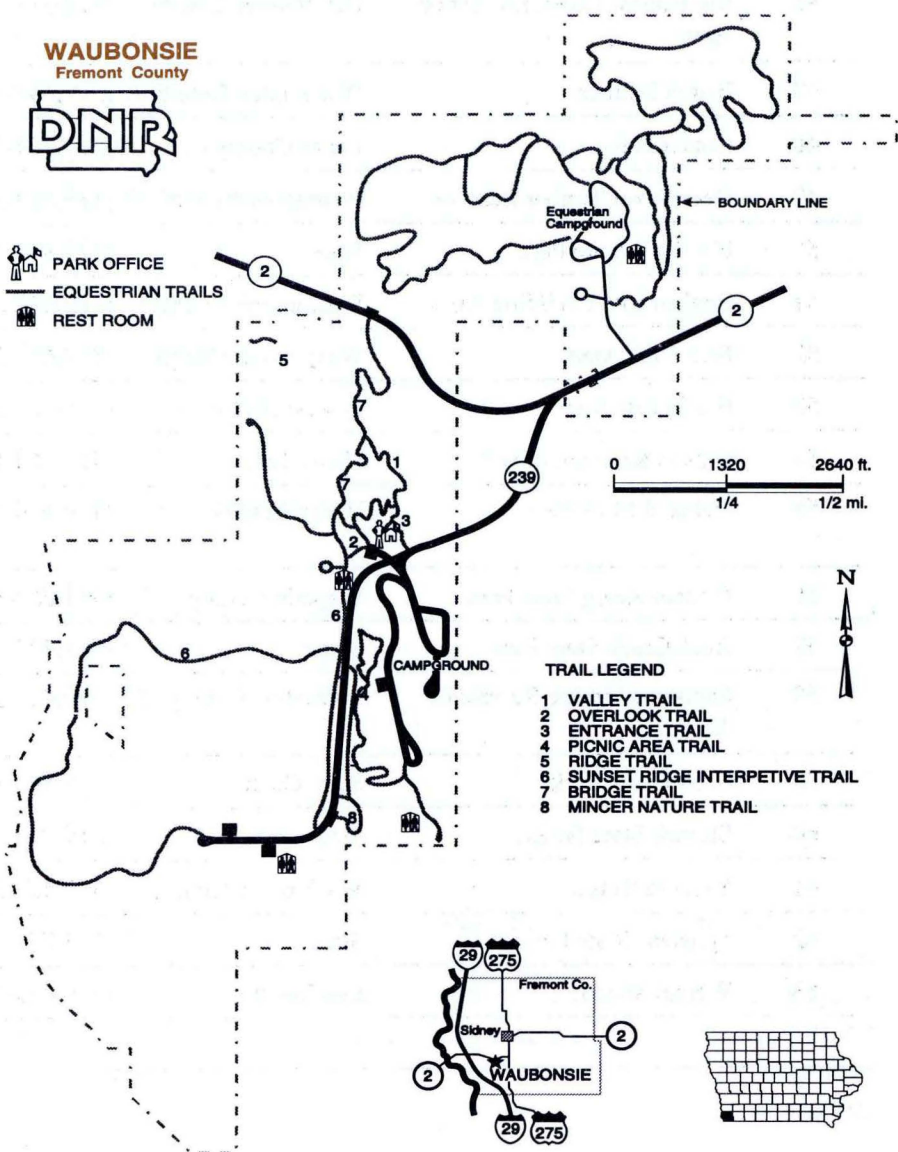
There are several distinctive features of loess hills topography. Because of the fine texture of the soil, deep steep sided and extremely narrow ridgetops have been created. Small, step-like terraces called "cat steps" are a result of repeated slumping of the soil. The deposits are porous, lightweight and easily eroded. They are vulnerable to collapse when wet, yet when dry are quite stable in nearly a straight up and down position. Two distinctive plant and animal species, the Spine-leafed Yucca and the Plains Spade Foot Toad, can be found in the loess hills, but are more typically found in desert environments.

There are eight miles of multi-use trails which allow equestrian use and seven miles of hiking trails which wind along wind-swept ridges into gorges and valleys providing fantastic views. Facilities in the park include a picnic area, a scenic shelter which is available for rent and a 60-site non-equestrian modern campground.



The equestrian campground and day use area is one quarter mile east of the junction of Hwys 2 and 239. Facilities include 32 campsites, a corral, potable water, and a non modern restroom.

The park is located seven miles southwest of Sidney on Hwy 2 and 239. Every August, Sidney is the home of the largest rodeo in North America.



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# SOUTHEAST REGION TRAILS

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MAP #	AREA NAME	MANAGING AGENCY	PHONE
45	Amborn-Pagin Wildlife Area	Lee County	(319)463-7673
46	Big Hollow Creek Recreation Area	Des Moines County	(319)753-8260
47	Briton Timber	Washington County	(319)657-3457
48	Cinder Path	Lucas County	(515)774-2314
49	Deep River Timber Reserve	Poweshiek County	(515)623-3191
50	Elk Rock State Park	State	(515)842-6008
51	English River Wildlife Area	Washington County	(319)657-3457
52	Fern Cliff Area	Washington County	(319)657-3457
53	Fox Forest Area	Poweshiek County	(515)623-3191
54	Gibson Recreation Area	Henry County	(319)986-5067
55	Oakland Mills Park	Henry County	(319)986-5067
56	Pioneer Reidg State Park	Wapello County	(515)682-3091
57	Rock Creek State Park	State	(515)236-3722
58	Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area	Muscatine County	(319)649-3379
59	Scott Conty Park	Scott County	(319)381-1114
60	Shimek State Forest	State	(319)878-3811
61	Sockum Ridge	Washington County	(319)657-3457
62	Stephens State Forest	State	(515)774-5632
63	Werner Woods	Lee County	(319)463-7673

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DIRECTIONS	MILES OF TRAIL	CAMPING	TOILETS	WATER	PARKING	HITCH
Argyle Rd. (Hwy 82) 340th St.	1.5				+	
2.5 mi. W, 5 mi. N of Dodgeville	5	pc	+	+	+	
5 mi. NW of Brighton	4	pc	+		+	
West Court Ave., Chariton	13		+		+	
2 mi. E, 1 mi. N of Deep River	.5					
7 mi. N of Knoxville	13	mc	+	+	+	+
5 mi. SE of Wellman	2				+	
12 mi. SE of Washington	1	pc	+		+	
.5 mi. W of Montezuma	1.5				+	
6 mi. SW of Mount Pleasant	1.5				+	
4 mi. SW of Mount Pleasant on W55	1.5				+	
6 mi. S of Ottumwa	15	pc	+		+	
6 mi. NE of Kellogg	11.4					
8 mi. NE of Muscatine	6	mc	+	+	+	
3 mi. E of Long Grove	3	mc	+	+	+	
1 mi. E of Farmington, Hwy 2	27	pc	+		+	+
5 mi. SE of Washington	2	pc	+		+	
3 mi. W of Lucas off Hwy 65	30.5	pc	+		+	+
Hwy X32, 5 mi. N of Fort Madison	4				+	

*pc = primitive camping    mc = modern camping*



## **Elk Rock State Park**

**Knoxville, Iowa 515/842-6008**

Elk Rock is located on Lake Red Rock, Iowa's largest artificial lake. Elk Rock has become a favorite camping and riding area for many because of the excellent camping facilities and other attractions.

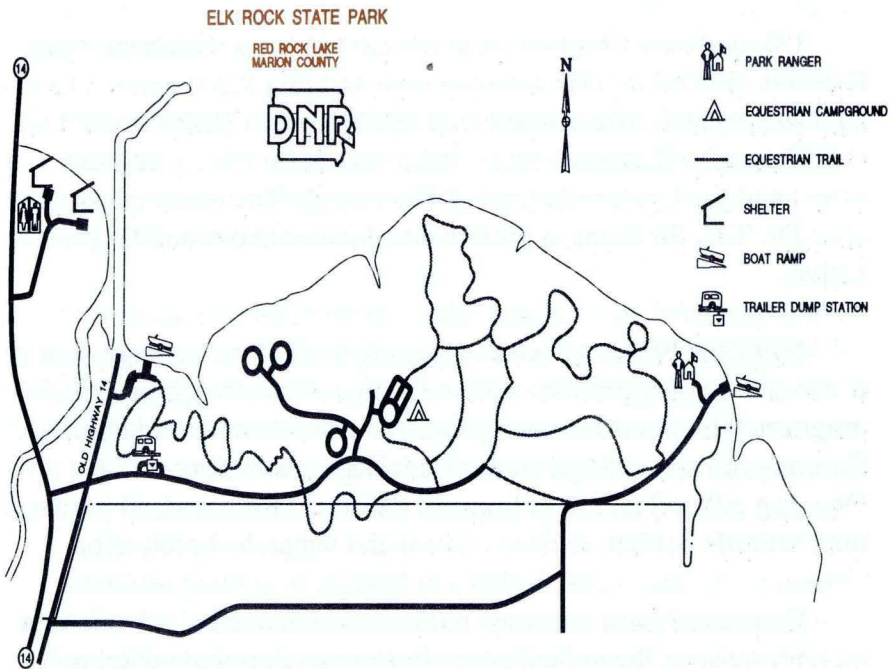
There are nearly 13 miles of equestrian trails at Elk Rock. These trails are excellent for starting young horses, for newcomers to the sport of trail riding, and for those who merely wish to enjoy a pleasant ride through the woods. Most of the trails are wide, relatively flat, with some rolling hills. The trails loop around the campground area, through the trees, along the bluffs overlooking the lake, through grassy fields, and along service roads. When the water level of the lake is not excessively high, riders have access to several miles of bike trails on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property. Day-use parking is available near the campground.

Elk Rock's excellent camping facilities make weekend outings a real pleasure. There are 33 equestrian campsites, 24 of which are electric, a modern shower building, water hydrants, picnic tables and fire rings. Animals are required to be stabled in the covered horse shelters with individual tie stalls or inside their horse trailers. Animals may be hitched to trailers for short periods of time for grooming or saddling.

A riding arena, built by a local saddle club, is also available. Special events at Elk Rock each summer include the Frontier Days, which features a fun show at the arena. Other organized events include competitive trail rides, trail ride clinics and 4-H clinics.

While the length of trails is limited, the opportunities for seeing wildlife, wild flowers and enjoying nature are abundant. Elk Rock is a favorite place for mushroom hunters every spring. Fishing is also a popular activity and is within walking distance of the campground.

The park is located seven miles north of Knoxville on Hwy 14.



Many horse-related organizations hold trail-ride outings. These range from short pleasure rides, to overnight camping trips and competitive events such as the ITRA Spring Fling competitive trail ride at Elk Rock, shown above.



## **Stephens State Forest**

**Lucas, Iowa    515/774-5632 or 515/774-4559**

Located near Chariton, in south-central Iowa, Stephens State Forest is divided into six separate units totaling 9,202 acres: Lucas Unit (991 acres), Whitebreast Unit (3,256 acres), Cedar Creek Unit (1,007 acres), Chariton Unit (1,185 acres), 1000 Acre Unit (884 acres) and the Unionville Unit (1,879 acres). The forest is named after Dr. T.C. Stephens, a prominent educator and Sioux City native.

Stephens Forest serves as an example of forest management. It was a base of operations for the Civilian Conservation Corps program, with demonstration plantings of hardwoods and conifers. Commercial sales of saw timber have been made since 1972. Ongoing cultural practices improve the forest for firewood production, wildlife habitat, erosion control and watershed protection.

Stephens Forest has large numbers of white oak, red oak, and hickory trees on the upland sites. Bottom land timber contains red and white elm, cottonwood, hackberry, green ash, silver maple and black walnut trees. Some coniferous and deciduous trees which are non-natives such as Douglas fir, spruce, pines, osage orange and tulip poplar have also been planted here.

The forest is abundant with wildlife including, white tailed deer, fox and gray squirrel, raccoon, woodchuck, muskrats, red and gray fox, coyote, beaver, opossums and many other small mammals. There is an equally large variety of birds, including those native to woodlands and its borders. A wild turkey stocking program began in 1968. This was so successful that the first hunting season in modern times was held in 1974 and continues today.

### **Trails and Day Use**

An extensive 30 mile network of trails is available for riding in the Lucas and Whitebreast units. The Lucas unit is smaller with



only seven miles of trails. Most of these trails are flat to gently rolling on old forest service roads which are relatively easy to ride. The 23 miles of trails in the Whitebreast Unit are more challenging due to the terrain.

Occasionally trails may be closed due to excessive erosion or wet conditions. If closed, they are clearly marked. It is important not to ride on trails while they are being repaired or rested to prevent further erosion.

There are two large ponds in the Lucas Unit. Watering horses in these ponds is not allowed to prevent bank erosion. A water hydrant is available in the campground, and horses should be watered in camp. There are two five-acre ponds in the Whitebreast Unit that have good footing and safe watering access. These ponds are located about one mile from the campground.

Day-use parking is located in a mown area south of the campground in the Whitebreast Unit. Day-use parking in the Lucas Unit is allowed in the equestrian campground.

## **Camping**

Equestrian campgrounds are located at both the Lucas and Whitebreast Units. Both campgrounds have hitching rails, lovely flat shady campsites, and non-modern rest rooms. Fire rings and picnic tables are provided, with use of dead and down wood permitted for camping and cooking. Camping is allowed only at the designated campgrounds.

Stephen's State Forest has become a popular riding area, especially among those who prefer non-modern camp areas. The quality of trails and beauty of the forest make it an ideal location for an enjoyable ride.

As in all forested areas, it is important to be careful with fires. Never leave a fire unattended and make sure your fire is out before leaving it.

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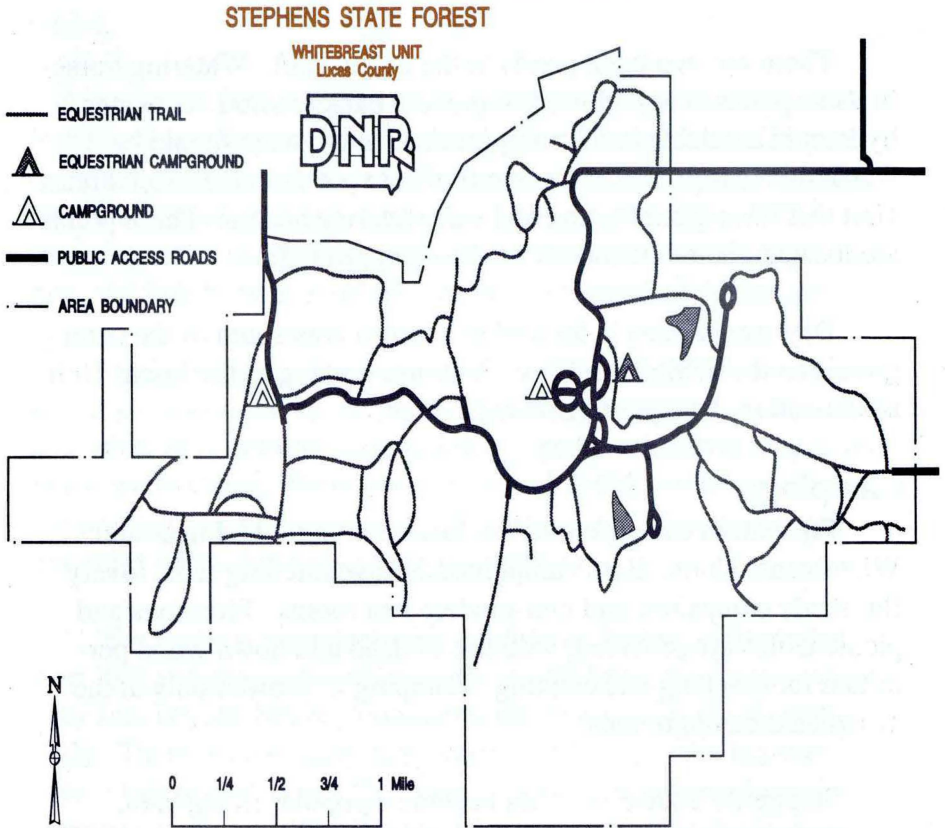
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### **Trails and Day Use**

An extensive 30 mile network of trails is available for riding in the Lucas and Whitebreast units. The Lucas unit is smaller with

Hunting is allowed at Stephens State Forest. The four large ponds on the Lucas and Whitebreast Units provide opportunities for fishing pleasure.

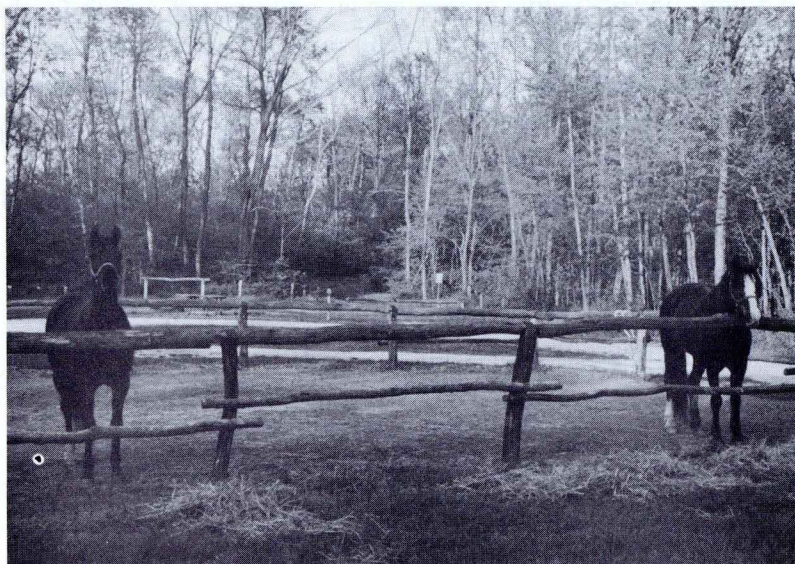
Stephen's State Forest is located just west of Lucas and 12 miles west of Chariton off of U.S. Hwy 65 and 34.







**Riders enjoy the Whitebreast Unit equestrian campground at Stephens State Forest.**



**Shown above is the Shimek campground/corral for horses. The hitching rail and trail head are shown in the background.**

## **Shimek State Forest**

### **Farmington, Iowa 319/878-3811**

Located in historic southeast Iowa, Shimek State Forest is the largest contiguous stand of forest cover in the state. This 8,901 acre forest is named after Dr. Bohumil Shimek, naturalist, one-time botany department head at the University of Iowa and one of the state's early conservationists.

Shimek Forest is managed as a multiple use demonstration area, producing wood for timber products, wildlife habitat and recreation. Timber is properly managed on a rotation basis. An important part of forest management is carrying out cultural practices that provide wildlife habitat, including harvesting trees to provide forest openings, thinning to increase growth of tree foliage, designating and retaining den trees and establishing wildlife food sources.

Equestrian facilities have been developed in the 2,846-acre Lick Creek Unit which include a 10-site non-modern campground and a non-modern saddle club camp area for groups and individuals. Both campgrounds have hitching rails, pit toilets, fire rings and picnic tables. Animals are required to be stabled in the individual stalls provided. Animals may be hitched to trailers for short periods of time for grooming and saddling. A day-use area, adjacent to the campground, is also available for those not camping. There are 25 miles of equestrian trails which are part of an extensive multi-use trail system. There is no potable water, however, horses may be watered in Lick Creek, a short distance from both campgrounds and day-use area.

Hunting is allowed at Shimek State Forest.

Shimek State Forest is located one mile east of Farmington off of Hwy 2.



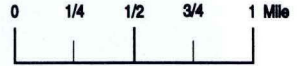
# SHIMEK STATE FOREST

LICK CREEK UNIT  
Lee and Van Buren Counties



- AREA BOUNDARY
- STREAM
- EQUESTRIAN TRAIL
- PAVED ROAD
- EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND (10 SITES)
- GROUP EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND

CROTON





# Organized Trail Riding

There are dozens of trail riding groups, saddle clubs and other horse related organizations in the state that hold trail ride outings. These range from short pleasure rides, to overnight camping trips, and competitive events.

Endurance and competitive trail riding, sanctioned by the Upper Midwest Endurance and Competitive Trail Riding Association, is done at some of the public areas in eastern Iowa. Contact Ida Hendrickson for information on these events at (319) 245-1791. The Manchester Riding Club in northeast Iowa has trail rides in their area, every couple of weeks. For details, contact Linda Helmricks at (319) 924-2475.

Competitive trail rides sanctioned by the North American Trail Ride Conference and pleasure rides are held mostly in public areas in central Iowa by the Iowa Trail Riders Association. ITRA has also sponsored 4-H clinics, TTEAM clinics, and competitive trail clinics at different locations throughout the state. For more information on these, contact Dave Smith (515) 989-0123.

The Iowa Equestrian Trails Council was designed to strengthen communication between equestrians and government officials regarding the provision and maintenance of quality equestrian trails, and to provide a contact source for persons interested in supporting these trails. Donations to IETC go towards special trails projects and may be designated for a specific park, recreation area or forest. To support the IETC and for further information contact Jan Schultz, 319/927-4910.

There are numerous other groups that have specialized and trail events, volunteer work days, and activities at parks and forests with equestrian facilities. Contact the area managers for a schedule. A special events permit must be obtained from the DNR prior to holding an organized event in parks, recreation areas and forest under DNR management.

Ample and diverse trail riding opportunities are provided within the state. Enjoy the beauty of Iowa from equestrian trail riding!

## About This Trail Guide

The Trail Riding in Iowa guidebook was produced as a cooperative effort by several groups and individuals. It is designed to provide information on trail riding opportunities and equestrian camping in the state, with enough details to give readers an idea of the conditions they may expect, before they head out for a trail riding or camping adventure.

For more information on individual parks, a phone number has been provided for each area manager. Individual park, recreation area and forest brochures are available from the DNR office at (515) 281-5145 or from the individual areas.



**Ample and diverse trail riding opportunities are provided within the state.**



# Iowa Horse Industry Council

The Iowa Horse Industry Council represents and promotes the best interests of the entire horse industry through legislative action, research, public information and education.

*Invest in Iowa's horse industry by joining today!*

- \$5 Individual Membership
- \$20 Businesses
- \$20 Breed Groups--Saddle Clubs--Associations

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Association/Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (       ) \_\_\_\_\_

What are your horse-related interest or horse activities? \_\_\_\_\_

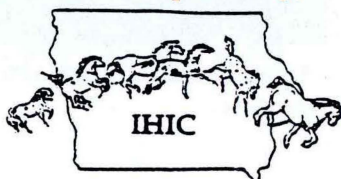
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What breed (s) do you own or are you interested in? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Please make Check payable to IHIC and return with completed membership form to: **Barb Albert, IHIC Membership Society, 1222 198th Road, Boone, IA 50036**





The trail riding guide was designed by Ruth Bourgeois, Design Graphics of Boone, Iowa, who donated her time and information from years of trail riding experience. Area maps were provided by the DNR, who was also responsible for the final layout, and printing of the guide. The Iowa Equestrian Trails Council provided support and the Iowa Horse Industry Council donated a portion of the printing costs.



**Printed on Recycled paper**