



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2024

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Peak camping season begins May 1



Iowa state parks and forest staff are busy preparing for the summer camping season, turning on water, sprucing up campgrounds and freshening up bathroom, cabin, lodge and shelter facilities. With more than 864,000 campers and almost 14 million visitor days last year, state parks are anticipating another busy season. For park visitors, there will be some new things to see.

Recently renovated and 100 percent reservable sites

Pikes Peak and Lake Ahquabi state parks, two of Iowa's most popular campgrounds, reopened in July 2023 after undergoing extensive renovations. Both

campgrounds feature electrical upgrades, pull-through driveways and a reduction in the number of campsites to create more space for large vehicles.

Both the Pikes Peak and Lake Ahquabi campgrounds also switched to 100 percent reservable sites, allowing for campers to see availability in real time. The change has been popular with campers who enjoy the increased convenience and peace of mind for trip planning. Additional campgrounds switching to 100 percent reservable in 2024 include Ambrose A. Call, Ledges, Lewis and Clark, Pleasant Creek, Wilson Island and Clear Lake.

Other new or renovated amenities in the state park system:

- George Wyth State Park – Cedar Valley Trail 1.3 miles reconstruction
- Twin Lakes – new boat ramp
- Lake Macbride – new boat ramp, parking lot resurfacing and new fishing dock
- Rock Creek State Park – new water lines and sewer repairs
- Green Valley State Park – renovated fishing pier, spillway repair and sewer repairs
- Beeds Lake – new dump station at the campground

Current construction and renovation projects

State parks are also busy with several new construction projects. Some of these projects will temporarily close parts or all of the listed parks in the 2024 season. Park visitors can go to www.iowadnr.gov/parkclosures for latest information on any closures.

2024 projects include:

- Clear Lake campground - renovations will start around August 1 to update electrical facilities, campsite design and roadways
- Red Haw – campground renovations and shelter construction have begun after major damage caused by a tornado in March 2022
- Lake Ahquabi – lodge and shelter renovations
- Fort Atkinson – restoration of historic buildings, closing the park to visitors until mid-July
- Brushy Creek – campground renovations starting around August 1
- Pleasant Creek – campground renovations starting around October 1
- Lake Manawa – concession building remodel
- Ledges – new shower building and shelter renovation
- McIntosh Woods – shelter renovation
- Wapsipinicon – flood repairs, renovating river wing dams
- Big Creek – fishing pier renovations
- Road resurfacing in Palisades-Kepler, Wildcat Den, Pleasant Creek, Elk Rock and Lake Manawa

To learn more about Iowa state parks, go to iowadnr.gov/stateparks or make a reservation at <https://iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com/>

Landowners invited to Women's Woodland Stewardship Network events in Amana, Fairfield

The Women's Woodland Stewardship Network is hosting two events in May for women who are landowners.

"Your woodlands are valuable resources and their potential can be increased and expanded through management. The first step is knowing more about your woods and defining your goals and that's what these events are for," said Lisa Louck, district forester with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Louck said forestry experts will lead low-intensity walks through the woods while discussing woodland management, tree and plant identification, how to manage for pollinators, wildlife and lumber, and more. Information on forestry and wildlife resources, as well as cost share programs available will be included near the end of the event.

The events are scheduled for May 1, in the Amana Colonies, from 6-8 p.m., and again on May 16, at Lamson Woods Preserve, in Fairfield, from 6-8 p.m.

To register for the Amana event, contact Louck, at 319-759-1108 or lisa.louck@dnr.iowa.gov, for location and shuttle information. The event is hosted by the Iowa DNR, ISU Extension and Outreach and Amana Forestry.

To register for the Fairfield event, contact Louck at 319-759-1108 or lisa.louck@dnr.iowa.gov. The event is hosted by the Iowa DNR and ISU Extension and Outreach.

Media Contact: Lisa Louck, District Forester, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 319-759-1108.

DNR to host public meeting on Lake Keomah restoration plans

OSKALOOSA – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting a public meeting to present preliminary restoration plans for Lake Keomah, on May 14, at 6 p.m., at the Lake Keomah State Park Lodge, 2720 Keomah Lane, east of Oskaloosa.

With the goals of improving water quality and recreation, the DNR will detail upcoming renovations at Lake Keomah, which are slated to begin in fall. Planned improvements include shoreline stabilization, dredging, boat ramp upgrades, trail improvements, spillway repairs and fish habitat enhancements.

The state park's campground and lodge should remain open throughout the project; however, access to the lake may be limited during construction. The project will wrap up in spring 2026.

For questions regarding the public meeting, contact the park office at (641) 673-6975. To learn more about Lake Keomah and Iowa state parks, visit www.iowadnr.gov/stateparks