

A person wearing a helmet, goggles, and protective gear is riding a white four-wheeled ATV on a dirt trail through a forest. The ATV has large, knobby tires and a front bumper. The rider is wearing a black and orange vest, blue gloves, and a blue and white helmet with goggles. The background shows a dirt path winding through green trees.

# IOWA | DNR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE REFERENCE GUIDE

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**IOWA DEPARTMENT  
OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES**

**This booklet contains rules and regulations most likely needed for motorized recreational use in Iowa. However, it is not a complete list of all regulations or laws, nor is it a legal document. For more information, please reference Iowa Code Chapters 321 and 321I and Iowa Administrative Code, Chapter 571.**

# **ATV EDUCATION**

**IOWA  
DNR**



ATV riders in the state of Iowa who are ages 12 through 17 are required to complete an approved ATV Safety Course and carry the Iowa ATV Safety Certificate with them while riding on designated riding areas, designated public land, and public ice.

To enroll in the  
DNR-approved Online course:  
[www.ATVCourse.com](http://www.ATVCourse.com)

# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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## OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE REFERENCE GUIDE



### DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is required to collect social security numbers from all persons obtaining a hunting, fishing, or other recreational license under Iowa Code Section 252J.8 and 42 U.S. Code Section 666(a)(13). Your social security number will serve as your principal identification number to determine your eligibility for licenses. It will be provided to law enforcement agencies and the Iowa Child Support Collection Unit to establish, modify, and enforce child support obligations. It will NOT appear on any printed forms.

**PUBLIC NONDISCRIMINATION** Federal and State law prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, mental and/or physical disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 1-800-457-4416 or DNR's Civil Rights Coordinators at [civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov).

**FREE LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE. ASISTENCIA LINGÜÍSTICA GRATUITA.**

If you speak a non-English language, we offer you language assistance services free of charge. Call (515) 725-8200. Si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita. Llame al (515) 725-8200.

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# Definitions

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**All-terrain vehicle (ATV)** means a motorized vehicle with not less than three and not more than six nonhighway tires that is limited in engine displacement to less than 1,000 cubic centimeters and in total dry weight to less than 1,200 pounds and that has a seat or saddle designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control.

**Commission** means the Natural Resource Commission of the Department.

**Department** means the Department of Natural Resources.

**Designated riding area** means an OHV riding area on any public land or ice under the jurisdiction of the Department that has been designated by the Commission under Iowa Code Chapter 321I for such use.

**Designated riding trail** means an OHV riding trail on any public land, private land, or public ice that has been designated by the Department, a political subdivision, or a controlling authority for OHV use.

**Direct supervision** means to provide supervision of another person while maintaining visual and verbal contact at all times.

**Education certificate** means an ATV education certificate, approved by the Natural Resource Commission, which is issued to a qualified applicant who is twelve years of age or older. The requirement to have an education certificate does not apply to operators of ORMs or ORVs.

**Nonresident** means a person who is not a resident of this state.

**Off-highway vehicles (OHVs)** means all-terrain vehicles, off-road motorcycles, and off-road utility vehicles, either collectively or individually.

**Off-road motorcycle (ORM)** means a two-wheeled motor vehicle that has a seat or saddle designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control and that is intended by the manufacturer for use on natural terrain. Off-road motorcycle includes a motorcycle that was originally issued a certificate of title and registered for highway use under Iowa Code Chapter 321, but which contains design features that enable operation over natural terrain. Dual sport motorcycles are required to be registered with the DNR to be operated at designated riding areas.

# Definitions

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**Off-road utility vehicle (ORV)** means a motorized vehicle with not less than four and not more than eight nonhighway tires or rubberized tracks that has a seat that is of bucket or bench design, not intended to be straddled by the operator, and a steering wheel or control levers for control. “Off-road utility vehicle” includes the following vehicles:

**“Off-road utility vehicle—type 1”** means an off-road utility vehicle with a total dry weight of one thousand two hundred pounds or less and a width of fifty inches or less. **“Off-road utility vehicle—type 2”** means an off-road utility vehicle, other than a type 1 off-road utility vehicle, with a total dry weight of two thousand pounds or less, and a width of sixty-five inches or less. **“Off-road utility vehicle—type 3”** means an off-road utility vehicle with a total dry weight of more than two thousand pounds or a width of more than sixty-five inches, or both.

**Operate** means to ride in or on, other than as a passenger, use, or control the operation of an OHV in any manner, whether or not the OHV is moving.

**Operator** means a person who operates or is in actual physical control of an OHV.

**Owner** means a person, other than a lienholder, having the property right in or title to an OHV. Owner includes a person entitled to the use or possession of an OHV subject to an interest in another person, reserved or created by agreement and securing payment or performance of an obligation. Owner excludes a lessee under a lease not intended as security.

**Public ice** means any frozen, navigable waters within the territorial limits of this state and the frozen marginal river areas adjacent to this state, other than farm ponds, that are under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Commission.

**Public land** means land owned by the federal government, the state of Iowa, or a political subdivision of the state and land acquired or developed for public recreation pursuant to Iowa Code Section 321.8.

**Railroad right-of-way** means the full width of property owned, leased, or subject to easement for railroad purposes and is not limited to those areas on which tracks are located.

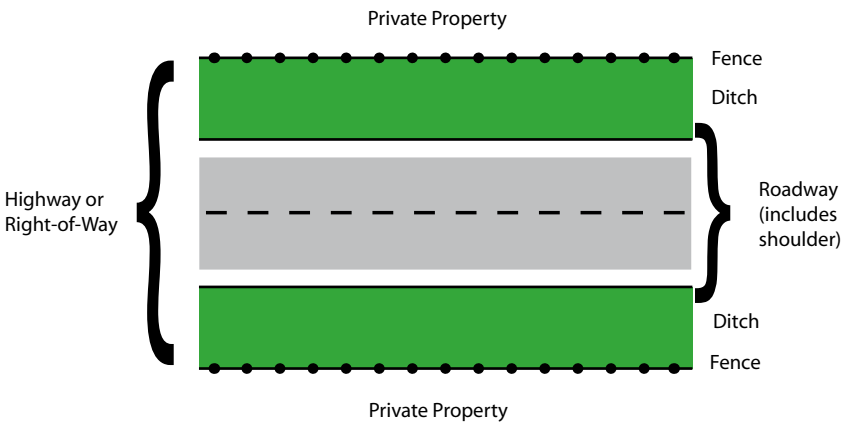
**Resident** means as defined in Iowa Code Section 483A.1A.

**Roadway** means that portion of a highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel.

# Definitions

**Special event** means an organized race, exhibition, or demonstration of limited duration which is conducted on public land, public ice, or a designated riding trail under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Commission according to a prearranged schedule and in which general public interest is manifested.

**Street or highway** means the entire width between property lines of every way or place of whatever nature when any part thereof is open to the use of the public, as a matter of right, for purposes of vehicular travel, except in public areas in which the boundary shall be thirty-three feet each side of the center line of the roadway.



# Laws and Regulations

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## REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

### Machines Registered in Iowa

- Each OHV in Iowa used on public land or ice, a designated riding area, or a designated trail of this state must be currently registered with the DNR. A person shall not operate, maintain, or give permission for the operation or maintenance of an OHV on public land or public ice unless the OHV is registered in accordance with the laws and administrative rules of Iowa or applicable federal laws.
- The owner of each OHV required to be registered shall file an application for registration with the Department through a County Recorder and pay all applicable fees. Vehicle dealers are required to make application and pay all applicable registration and title fees on behalf of a purchaser.
- An application for registration shall be made on the approved DNR form. Applicants shall provide bill of sale, proof of prior registration, and other proof of ownership of the vehicle as the County Recorder may require. In the event the applicant does not have documentation required by the DNR, the applicant may be required to secure a bond consistent with the requirements of Iowa Administrative Code, Chapter 571.
- Registration certificate.
  - An operator of an OHV shall carry the registration certificate either in the vehicle or on the person of the operator when the OHV is in use.
  - An operator must provide the registration certificate to all of the following:
    - To a peace officer or department personnel upon request.
    - To a person injured in an accident involving the OHV, or that person's agent.
    - To the owner or operator of another OHV when the OHV is involved in a collision or accident of any nature with the OHV, or that person's agent.
    - To the owner of personal or real property when the OHV is involved in a collision or accident of any nature with the property of the other person, or that person's agent.



# Laws and Regulations

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Registration certificate. *Continued from previous page*

- To the property owner or tenant when the OHV is being operated on private property without permission from the property owner or tenant, or that person's agent.

Registration decal display.

- All-terrain vehicle. The decal shall be affixed to the rear of the ATV so that the decal is clearly visible.
- Off-road motorcycle. The decal shall be affixed to the steering yoke in such a manner that the decal does not cover up the vehicle identification number and is clearly visible.
- Off-road utility vehicle. The decal shall be affixed to the rear of the vehicle so that the decal is clearly visible.

Operation pending registration.

- Purchase from dealer. An unregistered OHV sold by a dealer shall bear a "registration applied for" card with the purchase date printed on it. This entitles the purchaser to operate the vehicle for 45 days immediately following the purchase while the application is being processed. The purchaser shall place this card on the rear of the OHV and the steering yoke of an ORM in a position so as to be clearly visible at all times and maintained in a legible manner. The operator of any vehicle displaying a "registration applied for" card shall carry and provide upon request to any peace officer a valid bill of sale for the vehicle.
- Private purchase—registered in Iowa. The purchaser of an OHV that is currently registered in Iowa may operate it for 30 days immediately following the purchase without having completed a transfer of registration.
- Private purchase—not registered in Iowa. An OHV not currently registered in the state of Iowa shall not be operated until it is titled and registered in the purchaser's name. Valid registration in another state does not authorize preregistration operation.

Registration renewals. Every OHV registration certificate and registration decal expires at midnight on December 31 of the year issued.

Registrations can be renewed beginning September 1 and are valid for the remainder of the current year and for the following year as printed on the sticker.

# Laws and Regulations

## Machines Registered in Another State— DNR Nonresident User Permits

- Any OHV registered in another state and used on public land or ice, a designated riding area, or a designated trail of this state must display registration in accordance with an approved numbering system of that state and the evidence of registration must be in full force and effect. This vehicle must also be issued and display a DNR Nonresident User Permit.
- A DNR Nonresident User Permit will be issued for only one OHV and is not transferable.
- DNR Nonresident User Permit Display.
  - All-terrain vehicle. The permit shall be affixed to the rear of the all-terrain vehicle so that the permit is clearly visible.
  - Off-road motorcycle. The permit shall be affixed to the steering yoke in such a manner that the permit does not cover up the vehicle identification number and is clearly visible.
  - Off-road utility vehicle. The permit shall be affixed to the rear of the vehicle so that the permit is clearly visible.
- A DNR Nonresident User Permit can be purchased starting September 1 which will expire December 31 of the year printed on the permit.



# Laws and Regulations

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## Exempt Vehicles

### Registration is not required for the following OHVs:

- A vehicle owned by the United States, this state, or another state, or by a governmental subdivision of a state and is used for:
  - Enforcement
  - Search and rescue
  - Official research and studies
  - OHVs used exclusively for agricultural purposes.

## Titling Requirements

- The owner of an OHV acquired on or after January 1, 2000, other than an exempt vehicle or a motorcycle previously issued a title pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 321, must apply to the County Recorder of the county in which the owner resides, or the OHV is registered, for a certificate of title for the vehicle.
  - Vehicles that are titled are required to be registered.
  - Vehicles that are titled must remain titled, regardless of intended use.
- The owner of a vehicle used exclusively for agricultural purposes may obtain a certificate of title. A person who owns a vehicle that is not required to have a certificate of title may apply for and receive a certificate of title for the vehicle which makes the vehicle subject to the registration requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 321I.
- The owner of an OHV is required to apply to the County Recorder in their county of residence for issuance of a certificate of title within 30 days after acquisition.
  - The applicant must provide the date of sale, the gross price of the vehicle or the fair-market value of the machine if no sale immediately preceded the transfer, and any additional information the County Recorder or Department requires.
  - If the vehicle was last previously registered or titled in another state or foreign country, the applicant must provide this information and any other information the County Recorder or Department requires.

# Laws and Regulations

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- If a dealer is transferring ownership of a vehicle, the dealer will assign the title to the new owner. In the case of a new vehicle, the dealer will assign the certificate of origin. Within 45 days of purchase, the dealer must forward all monies and applications to the County Recorder.
- Once titled, a person must not sell or transfer ownership of a vehicle without delivering to the purchaser or transferee a certificate of title with an assignment on it showing the title in the purchaser's or transferee's name. A person shall not purchase or otherwise acquire an OHV without obtaining a certificate of title for the vehicle in the purchaser's name.
- A motorcycle that has been issued a certificate of title pursuant to this section may be issued a title pursuant to chapter 321 upon proper application and surrender of the existing title. Upon issuance of a title pursuant to chapter 321, the certificate of title previously issued pursuant to this section shall be returned to the issuing county recorder.

## **RVRS**

The Recreational Vehicle and Vessel Registration System (RVRS) has been implemented by the DNR. This web-based system provides added customer convenience by combining registration, title, and lien information for all 99 counties into one system. Additionally, it creates a streamlined renewal process for customers.

All newly owned machines or machines which have not been renewed in RVRS must be registered through the County Recorder's Office in the owner's county of residence. Renewals can be done at any County Recorder's Office; you only need to provide the IA number assigned to your OHV through RVRS. OHVs can also be renewed at [www.gooutdoorsiowa.com](http://www.gooutdoorsiowa.com).

If your vehicle record has not been entered into RVRS, please bring the following information with you when you go to renew your registration:

- The most current registration form for your vehicle.
- Make, model, and model year of your vehicle.

# Laws and Regulations

- VIN.
- Color of vehicle.
- Weight and engine displacement (CCs).
- Number of wheels.

## DNR Nonresident User Permits

DNR Nonresident User Permits are sold at any general license agent who sells hunting and fishing permits and County Recorder offices. The DNR Nonresident User Permit is printed on license/tag paper. It is not issued to a machine, but rather to the user. The DNR Nonresident User Permit must be displayed on the vehicle as noted under Machines Registered in Another State. It is not transferable. Printing the DNR Nonresident User Permit on the license/tag paper makes them distinct from the registration decals.

Requirements	Registrations	DNR Nonresident User Permits
Renewal Requirement	Must be renewed each year	Must be renewed each year
Renewal Period	Starting September 1 each year	Starting September 1 each year
Expiration	December 31 each year	December 31 each year
Late Fee	\$5.00, no grace period	Not applicable
Display	Carried either in the machine or on the operator; decal must be affixed to the vehicle	Permit must be affixed to the vehicle

# Laws and Regulations

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## Unlawful Operation

### **A person shall not drive or operate an OHV:**

- On a designated riding area or designated riding trail unless signage indicates the riding area or trail is open to the operation of ORVs.
- At a rate of speed greater than reasonable or proper under all existing circumstances.
- In a careless, reckless, or negligent manner so as to endanger the person or property of another or to cause injury or damage thereto.
- While under the influence of intoxicating liquor or narcotics or habit-forming drugs.
- Without a lighted headlight and taillight from sunset to sunrise and at such other times when conditions provide insufficient lighting to render clearly discernible persons and vehicles at a distance of five hundred feet ahead.
- In any tree nursery or planting in a manner which damages or destroys growing stock.
- On any public land, ice, or snow in violation of official signs of the Natural Resource Commission prohibiting such operation in the interest of safety for persons, property, or the environment.
- In any park, wildlife area, preserve, refuge, game management area, or any portion of a meandered stream, or any portion of the bed of a nonmeandered stream which has been identified as a navigable stream or river by rule adopted by the Department and which is covered by water, except on designated riding areas and designated riding trails. This requirement does not prohibit the use of ford crossings of public roads or any other ford crossing when used for agricultural purposes; the operation of construction vehicles engaged in lawful construction, repair, or maintenance in a streambed; or the operation of an OHV on ice.
- Upon an operating railroad right-of-way. A vehicle may be driven directly across a railroad right-of-way only at an established crossing and, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, may, if necessary, use the improved portion of the established crossing after yielding to all oncoming traffic.
- A person shall not operate a vehicle with more persons on the vehicle than it was designed to carry. This requirement does not apply to a person who operates a vehicle as part of a farm operation as defined in Iowa Code Section 352.2.

# Laws and Regulations

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## Civil Penalty and Restitution

If an operator is convicted of the offenses listed under the heading “Unlawful Operation”, additional penalties and restitution can be added to the criminal charges. See Iowa Code Section 321I.15A for more details.

## Negligence

The owner and operator of an OHV are liable for any injury or damage occasioned by the negligent operation of the vehicle. The owner of an OHV shall be liable for any such injury or damage only if the owner was the operator of the vehicle at the time the injury or damage occurred or if the operator had the owner’s consent to operate the vehicle at the time the injury or damage occurred.

## Officer’s Signal to Stop

A person who has received a visual or audible signal from a peace officer to come to a stop shall not operate an OHV in willful or wanton disregard of the signal, interfere with or endanger the officer or any other person or vehicle, increase speed, or attempt to flee or elude the officer.

## Inspections—Warnings—Termination of Use

A peace officer may stop and inspect an OHV operated, parked, or stored on public streets, highways, public lands, or frozen waters of the state to determine if the vehicle is registered, numbered, or equipped as required by the Code of Iowa and the Iowa Administrative Code. The officer shall not inspect an area that is not essential to determine compliance with the requirements. If the officer determines that the vehicle is not in compliance, the officer may issue a warning memorandum to the operator and forward a copy to the DNR. The warning memorandum shall indicate the items found which are not in compliance and shall direct the owner or operator of the vehicle to correct these items and return a copy of the warning memorandum with the proof of compliance to the DNR within 14 days. If the proof of compliance is not provided within 14 days, the owner or operator is in violation of Iowa Code Chapter 321I.

A person who receives a warning memorandum for an OHV shall stop using the vehicle as soon as possible and shall not operate it on public streets, highways, public lands, or frozen waters of the state until the vehicle is in compliance.

# Laws and Regulations

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## Operation on Roadways and Highways

- As of July 1, 2022 registered OHVs can be operated, day or night, on the following secondary roads:
  - an unpaved secondary road
  - a paved, undivided two-lane secondary road over the most direct and accessible route between any of the following locations:
    - an all-terrain vehicle park or trail
    - another secondary road on which such vehicles are authorized to operate
    - a city street on which such vehicles are authorized to operate the vehicle operator's residence
    - a paved, undivided secondary road if authorized by county board of supervisors
- Registered OHVs can be operated, day or night, on the following primary roads:
  - paved, undivided two-lane primary highway over the most direct and accessible route between any of the following locations:
    - an all-terrain vehicle park or trail
    - a secondary road on which such vehicles are authorized to operate
    - a city street on which such vehicles are authorized to operate
    - the vehicle operator's residence
- To operate on the roadway, an OHV must:
  - be registered
  - have an operational headlight, tail and brake lights, horn and rear view mirror
- To operate on OHV on the roadway, the driver must:
  - keep speed below 35 mph
  - be at least 18 years of age



# Laws and Regulations

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- have and carry a valid driver's license
- carry valid proof of liability insurance
- operate headlights at all times while the vehicle is on the roadway
- OHV's may not be driven on County roadways that are marked for construction closures or detours that restrict normal motor vehicle traffic.
- All cities may regulate the operation of OHV traffic within city limits. A city may not charge a fee to operate such vehicles within the city.

## Use on Snowmobile Trails

OHVs are not allowed to be operated on snowmobile trails except where designated by the controlling authority and the primary snowmobile trail sponsor.

## Equipment Requirements (this is not an exhaustive list)

- Mufflers. No person shall operate an OHV that is constructed or altered in a manner that noise emitted from the machine exceeds 96 decibels on the A scale when measured in the manner prescribed in the revised 2008-05, Society of Automotive Engineers Standard J1287, titled "Measurement of Exhaust Sound Pressure Levels of Stationary Motorcycles."
- Headlights must be illuminated at all times when operating on roadways.
- Brakes. Every OHV shall be equipped with working brakes.

## Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

- Every OHV shall have a vehicle identification number assigned and affixed as required by the DNR.
- The DNR may assign a VIN to an OHV when the serial number on the machine is destroyed or obliterated or the machine is homebuilt or rebuilt. If a machine has a VIN which is not legible, the owner must submit to the DNR an affidavit which describes the machine. In cooperation with the County Recorder, the DNR shall assign a VIN to the machine.

# Laws and Regulations

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- The DNR will issue the owner a decal bearing the new VIN which shall be affixed to the machine by a Conservation Officer as follows:
  - All-terrain vehicle. The VIN shall be affixed to the frame under the seat.
  - Off-road motorcycle. The VIN shall be affixed to the steering yoke.
  - Off-road utility vehicle. The VIN shall be affixed to the frame under the seat.
- The machine shall be registered and titled using the new VIN and not the former serial number.

## Carrying a Firearm on an OHV

- A person shall not operate or ride an OHV with a firearm in the person's possession unless it is unloaded and enclosed in a carrying case, except as otherwise provided by law. However, a nonambulatory person may carry an uncased and unloaded firearm while operating or riding an OHV.
- A person may operate or ride an OHV with a loaded firearm, whether concealed or not, without a permit to carry weapons, if the person operates or rides on land owned or possessed by the person, and the person's conduct is otherwise lawful.
- If a person is operating or riding on an OHV on land that is not owned or possessed by the person, the person may operate or ride the OHV with a loaded pistol or revolver, whether concealed or not, and the person's conduct is otherwise lawful.
- A person shall not discharge a firearm while on an OHV, except that a nonambulatory person may discharge a firearm from an OHV while lawfully hunting if the person is not operating or riding a moving OHV.

## Hunting and OHVs

The following regulations apply when using OHVs for hunting purposes:

- It is illegal to chase or use a machine to assist in the taking of deer, turkey, and migratory game birds.
- It is illegal to operate an OHV on DNR wildlife management areas.
- Physically handicapped persons may apply for a permit to operate a vehicle on DNR lands. Issuance of the permit is required prior to accessing the land by a motorized device.

# Laws and Regulations

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- You must obtain permission from a landowner to operate an OHV on private land.
- For hunting rules related to a nonambulatory person, see [571 IAC 98.2(2)] Turkey and [571 IAC 106.7(6)] Deer.

## Accidents

Whenever an OHV is involved in an accident resulting in injury or death to any person or property damage amounting to \$1,500 or more, the operator of the vehicle or a person acting for the operator shall immediately notify the county sheriff or another law enforcement agency in the state.

If the accident occurred on public land or ice, a designated riding area, or a designated riding trail under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resource Commission, the operator shall file a report of the accident with the Department within 72 hours. A copy of the Operator Incident Report Form can be obtained from a Department Law Enforcement Officer calling the DNR at 515-725-8200, or going to [www.iowadnr.gov/Things-To-Do/Off-Highway-Vehicles](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-To-Do/Off-Highway-Vehicles), and selecting Operator Incident Report.

## Proof of Insurance

Iowa Code Section 321.20B provides that a person shall not drive a motor vehicle on the highways of this state unless financial liability coverage, as defined in Iowa Code Section 321.1(24B), is in effect for the motor vehicle and unless the driver has in the motor vehicle the proof of financial liability coverage card issued for the motor vehicle. The exception for OHVs was rescinded effective July 1, 2012. Please see Iowa Code Section 321.20B for more details.

## Special Events

The Department may authorize the holding of organized special events at the designated OHV parks as defined in Iowa Code Chapter 321I. The Department shall issue permits which address the conduct of special events and shall designate the equipment and facilities necessary for the safe operation of OHVs and for the safety of operators, participants, and observers in the special events. Endurance races, head-to-head competition, and nonmotorized events will not be permitted. A special event shall not be conducted without written authorization of the Department.

# Education/Safety/Stewardship

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## Education

ATV riders in the state of Iowa who are ages 12 through 17 are required to complete an approved ATV Safety Course and carry the Iowa ATV Safety Certificate with them while riding on designated riding areas, designated public land, and public ice.

## ATVCourse.com

The DNR has collaborated with Fresh Air Educators to make an online certification offering available for the DNR ATV Education Program. State-specific information regarding riding opportunities, laws, and regulations is a component of the course.

This is a managed course which features interactive exercises for students as well as narrated content to assist with different learning styles. The course fee is \$34.95, which includes the \$5 DNR education certificate fee. Students must pass a final exam with 80% accuracy to earn their certificate. There is no riding component for this course.

Students must be 12 or older to earn their ATV education certificate through [www.ATVCourse.com](http://www.ATVCourse.com).



# Education/Safety/Stewardship

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**An education certificate issued by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is recognized by most states. Please call ahead to your destination state to check their requirements.**

## Safety

- Never use drugs or alcohol while riding.
- Do not carry more passengers than the vehicle design allows.
- Seatbelts must be worn when operating or riding in a side-by-side.
- Safety equipment installed by the manufacturer should not be removed or altered.
- Drive only in designated areas, at a safe speed, and use care when turning and crossing slopes.
- If towing a trailer with an ATV or side-by-side, practice how the weight and load affects the machine on flat surfaces prior to hauling items in areas with a slope.
- Read and follow the operator's manual and warning labels.

## Size of Machine vs. Size of Rider Considerations for ATVs

**LEG LENGTH**—there should be a minimum of three inches of clearance between the seat and the top inseam of the pants. This is needed to maintain balance on the footrests when turning and riding over hills and rough terrain. While seated, the thigh should be roughly parallel to the ground.

**FOOT LENGTH**—a rider should be able to reach the brake by rotating the foot on the footrest.

**ARM LENGTH**—a rider's arms should be long enough to turn the handlebars and maintain a firm grip, operate the throttle comfortably when the handle is extended fully in a turn, and operate the brake lever.

**STRENGTH**—in addition to reaching the controls, a rider must have the strength to operate the controls.

**WEIGHT**—a rider should have enough body weight to be able to affect the operation of the machine by shifting his or her weight. This is a key element in being an active rider.

**Right-fit Principle for an ORV**—The operator should be able to place both feet flat on the floor while seated upright with their back resting firmly against the seat back.

## Stewardship

### Tread Lightly!

By practicing the Tread Lightly! principles you not only protect the outdoors, you also protect access to recreation opportunities for years to come.

**T** **Travel Responsibly** on trails or in permitted areas. Don't blaze a new trail or cut across switchbacks. Respect closed gates and regulatory signs. Stay out of designated wilderness areas. Drive over and not around obstacles to avoid widening the trail.

**R** **Respect** the rights of others, including private property owners, to allow them to enjoy their recreational activities undisturbed.

**E** **Educate** yourself by obtaining maps and regulations from public agencies, planning for your trip, taking recreational skills classes, and knowing how to use and operate your equipment safely.

**A** **Avoid** sensitive areas such as meadows, wetlands, and streams, unless on designated routes. This protects wildlife habitat and sensitive soils from damage. Prevent fires by equipping your ATV with a spark arrestor. Keep engine noise to a minimum. Avoid riparian areas, the green strips of vegetation along rivers and lakes. Cross soft or muddy areas slowly to avoid spinning your wheels.

**D** **o** your part by leaving the area better than you found it. Dispose of waste properly—pack out what you pack in. Stay off soft, wet trails that are easily damaged by vehicles. Avoid creating dust. Cross streams only at designated crossings.

Tread Lightly! is a nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship.

For more information, please visit [www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org).

# Education/Safety/Stewardship

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## Trail Etiquette

- Respect all trail restrictions and use only trails open to OHV use.
- Be considerate of other riders on the trail.
- Ride on the right side of the trail.
- Slow down when passing.
- Slow down when sight lines are poor.
- Keep speeds low around other riders.
- Keep noise and dust down.
- Keep your ears open – no earbuds or headphones. Riders need to be able to hear and communicate with other riders and recreationalists.
- Yield the right-of-way to those passing you from behind or traveling uphill.
- Report all illegal riding.
- Carry out what you carry in.



# Iowa OHV Association

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The Iowa OHV Association (IOHVA) is the recognized state association for Iowa advocating for off-highway vehicle recreation opportunities and rider concerns.

IOHVA works closely with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the clubs that manage the current 8 designated riding areas in the state. IOHVA strives to be the leader in strategic planning efforts and inclusion of interested parties in the state, including legislators, vehicle dealers, and industry representatives.

In addition to supporting the sport, IOHVA also promotes safety, education, and awareness to the enthusiasts that ride in Iowa. IOHVA holds events at the parks during the peak riding season to serve as a resource for education requirements, regulations, safety, rider responsibility, opportunities, and general information of interest to the riding community.

During the year IOHVA holds several rides at the parks which promote awareness of safety and health campaigns of interest to its members, rides for disabled individuals to make them aware of other mobility devices available to them, a veterans ride to express appreciation for their service, as well as rides for elected officials to make them aware of recreational opportunities in Iowa as well as highlight economic development opportunities in Iowa.

IOHVA holds quarterly meetings and rides for its members and has an annual meeting in January. To learn more about the association, the parks, the clubs, and how to get more involved, go to [www.IowaOHV.org](http://www.IowaOHV.org)







# DNR-Designated OHV Park Rules

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## General Rules

- Machines registered in Iowa must have an Iowa registration decal affixed to the machine and the registration certificate must be carried on the operator or machine.
- Machines registered in another state must have their valid registration decal and DNR Nonresident user permit affixed to the machine.
- Helmets are required for all operators and passengers on riding areas and parking and loading areas.
- Passengers are only allowed on machines which are designed by the manufacturer to carry a passenger. Riding double on all other machines is prohibited.
- Users of the park must comply with all posted signs.
- Hours of operation are sunrise to sunset, unless posted differently.
- All machines must have working brakes.
- All OHVs operated between sunset and sunrise shall display a lighted headlight and taillight.
- All vehicles and trailers must be parked in designated parking areas and may not be left unattended in any park drive access.
- Unauthorized vehicles and hauling equipment may be towed at owner's expense.
- Operation in a careless, reckless, or negligent manner or at excessive speeds is prohibited.
- Operation of a machine while under the influence of alcohol or narcotics is prohibited.
- Sound-level limits are enforced. Aftermarket products may exceed acceptable levels (96 decibels).
- Consumption or possession of alcohol in the designated riding area is prohibited.
- Pets are not allowed in designated riding areas. They are permitted in parking areas.

## Age-related Operation Guidelines

- All-terrain Vehicles.
  - Under 12 years of age—operation must be under the direct supervision of a responsible parent or guardian of at least 18 years of age who is experienced in ATV operation and who possesses a valid driver's license as defined in Iowa Code

# DNR-Designated OHV Park Rules

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Section 321.1, or the operator is taking an ATV education course and is under the direct supervision of a certified instructor. Direct supervision means maintaining visual and verbal contact at all times.

- Ages 12 through 17—must have a valid ATV education certificate in their possession. The supervision rule does not apply to these riders.
- Off-road Motorcycles.
  - Under 12 years of age—operation must be under the direct supervision of a responsible parent or guardian of at least 18 years of age who is experienced in ORM operation and who possesses a valid driver's license as defined in Iowa Code Section 321.1.
  - Ages 12 through 17—education certificate is not required.

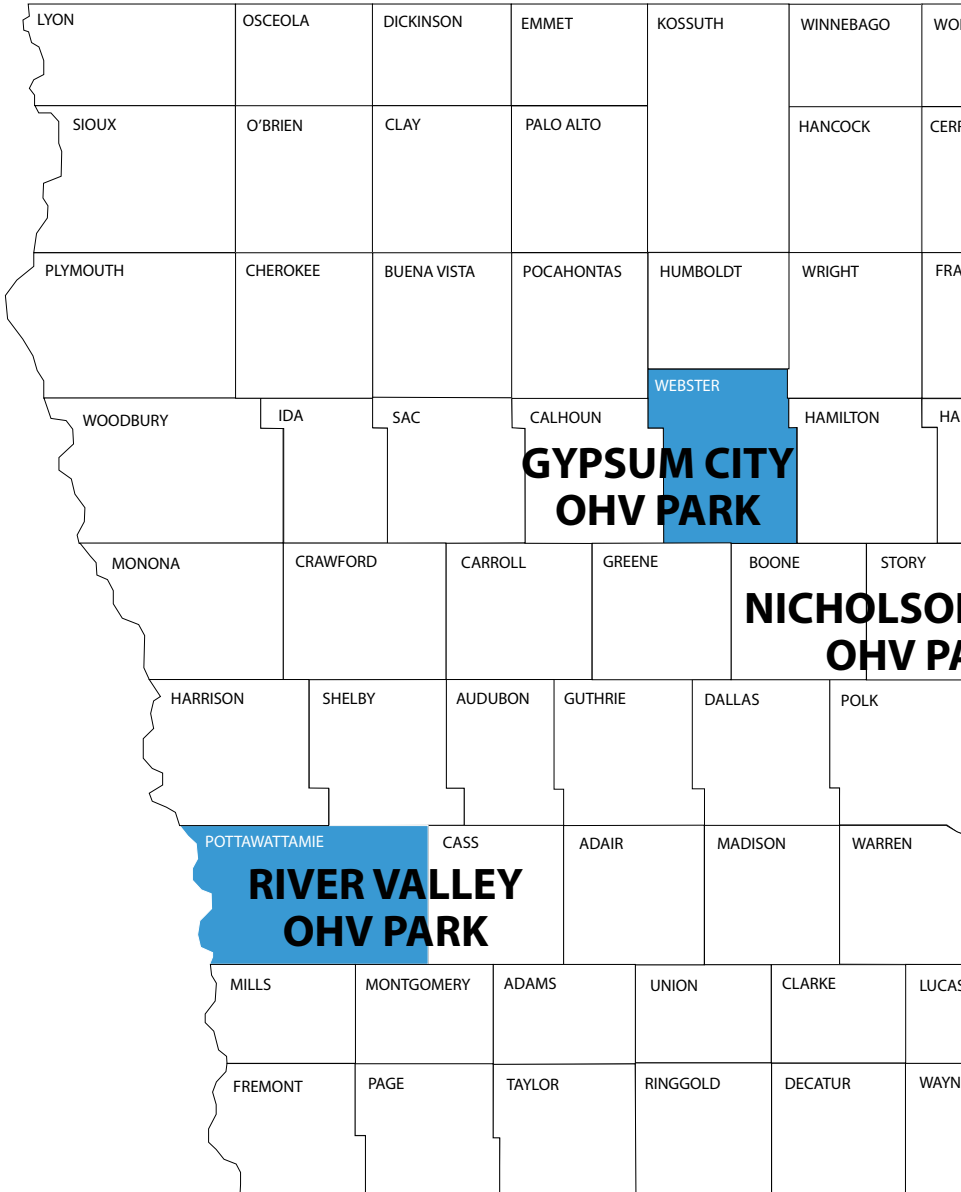
## Operation with Passengers

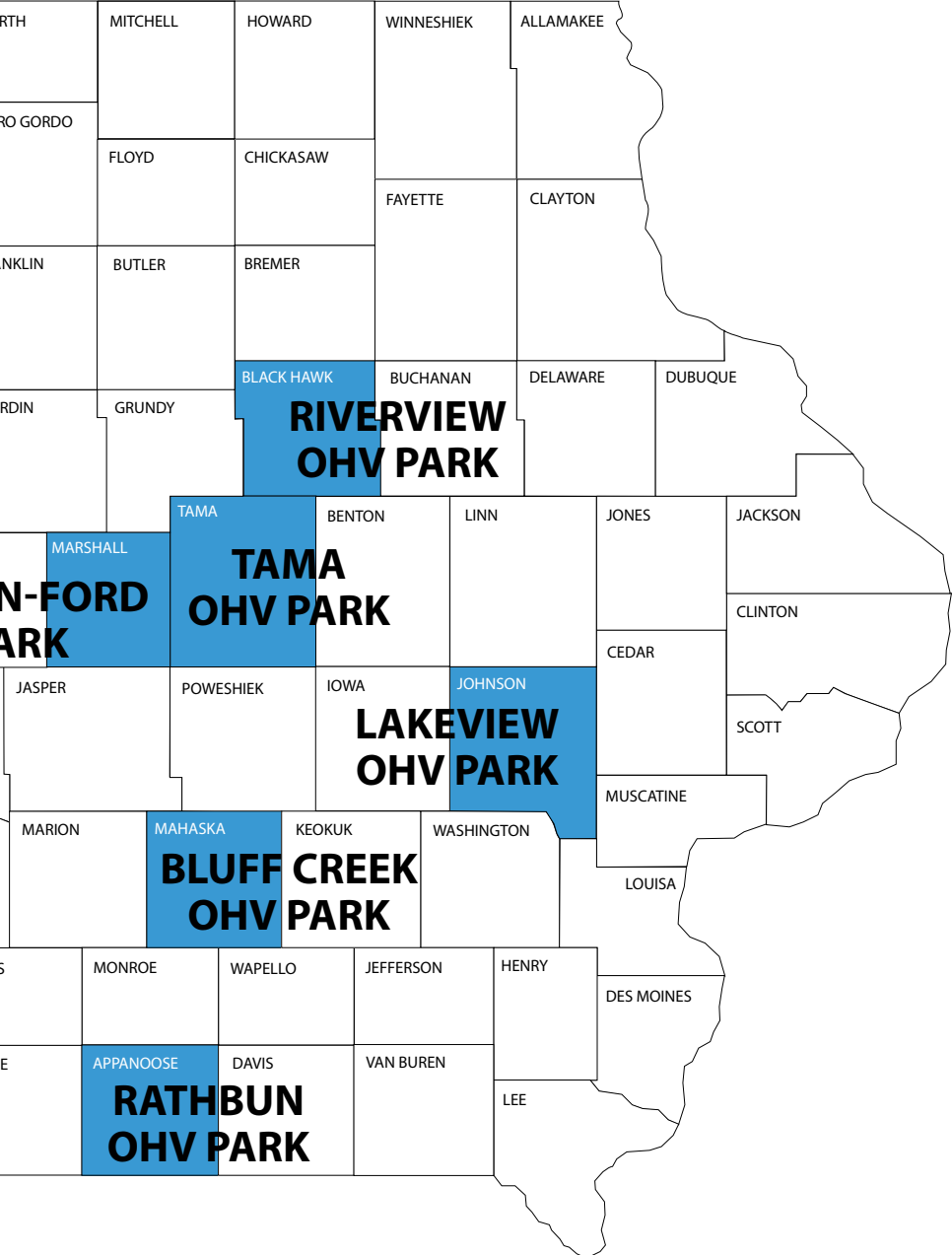
- Anyone operating an OHV with a passenger must possess a valid driver's license as defined in Iowa Code Section 321.1.
- Number of passengers cannot exceed manufacturer's recommended capacity.
- For an ATV or motorcycle, the passenger must be seated behind the operator and have the ability to securely hold on to the passenger handles or operator.
- For an ORV, a passenger must be able to place both feet flat on the floorboards with their back resting against the seat back.

## Off-road Utility Vehicles (ORVs) Requirements

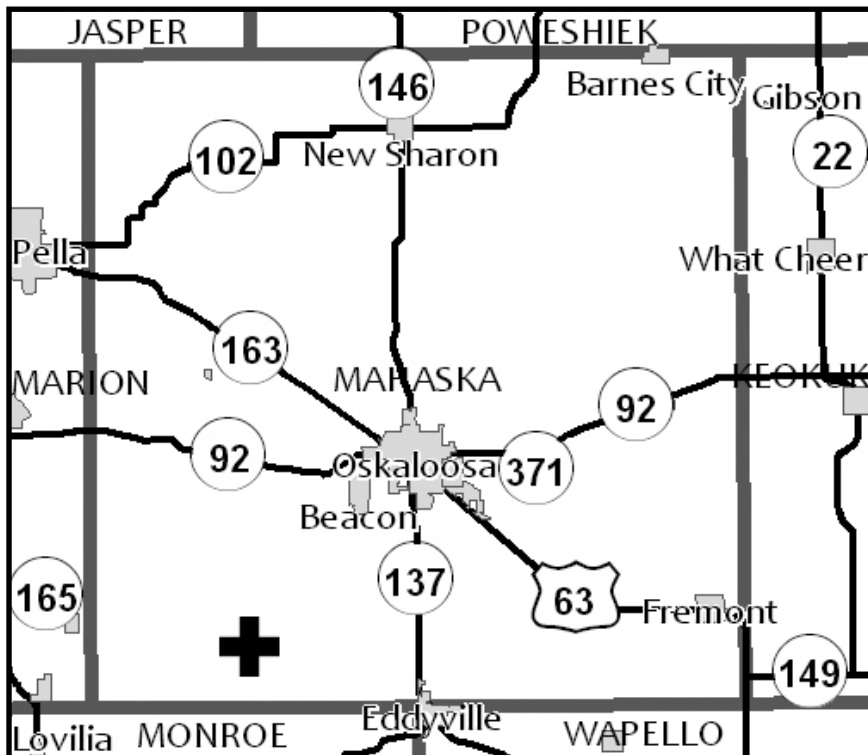
- The vehicle must be equipped with a roll-over protection system (ROPS) installed by the manufacturer.
- The vehicle must be equipped with manufacturer seat belts or equivalent that are in good working order.
- Passengers must wear seat belts at all times and must keep feet and hands inside of the vehicle while the vehicle is in motion.
- Vehicles cannot be home built or substantially modified from the manufacturer's specifications.
- Anyone operating an ORV must possess a valid driver's license as defined in Iowa Code Section 321.1.

# Iowa DNR-Designated Riding Areas





## Bluff Creek OHV Park



This is a 350-acre park with most of the area accessible for riding. The area is an abandoned coal mine that has been developed into a riding area. There are approximately 20 miles of trails, steep hill climbs, deep pits, and four motocross tracks. One track is dedicated to novice and beginner riders. One track is extremely challenging and is often called the “gravity cavity”. The park is not currently signed open to ORV, or side-by-side, use.

The park is open year-round, but is closed when weather or trail conditions do not permit riding. Thirteen primitive camping sites are available, with flush toilets, shower stalls, and water spigots.

### **BLUFF CREEK OHV PARK**

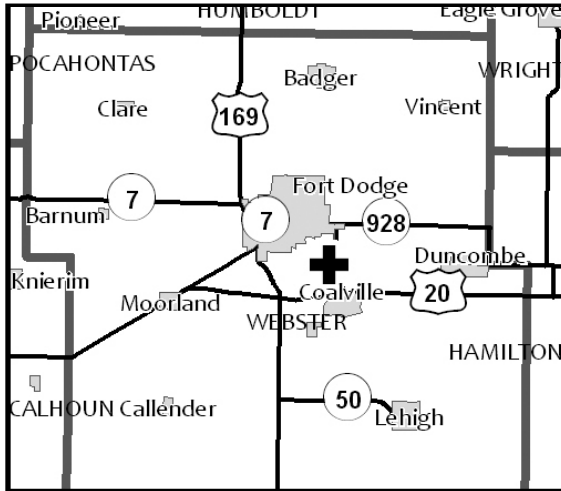
1625 325th St; Eddyville, IA/Mahaska County

**Managed by:** Iowa Partners of NOHVCC

**Contact Information:**

**DNR Park Ranger:** Chad Malone 641-660-5552

# Gypsum City OHV Park



Gypsum City OHV Park is located on the southeast corner of Fort Dodge. The park is approximately 800 acres in size and includes 60 miles of trails for use by ATVs, side-by-sides, and off-road motorcycles. The park also includes a 1.5 mile motocross track, an amateur supercross track, a skills development course, a .4 mile kids' track, and a beginner circle track. Trails within the park range from open prairie for novice riders to heavily timbered areas for more advanced riders and include water crossings and mudding areas. Trailhead signs within the park will indicate what machines are allowed on certain trails.

Park amenities include an open shelter with picnic tables and grill, men's and women's restrooms, and fishing ponds. There is also a campground with 29 campsites that can be reserved, and 3 tiny homes that sit on existing sites (which can also be reserved), that offers both full hook up and electric sites. Site amenities include water, electricity, sewer, picnic table, and grill. A men's and women's shower/restroom is also available. The campground will be open April 15–October 15 annually. To reserve a campsite, go to [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com).

Tremendous effort has been invested in developing this riding area. Please stay on marked trails and follow all posted signs.

## **GYPSUM CITY OHV PARK**

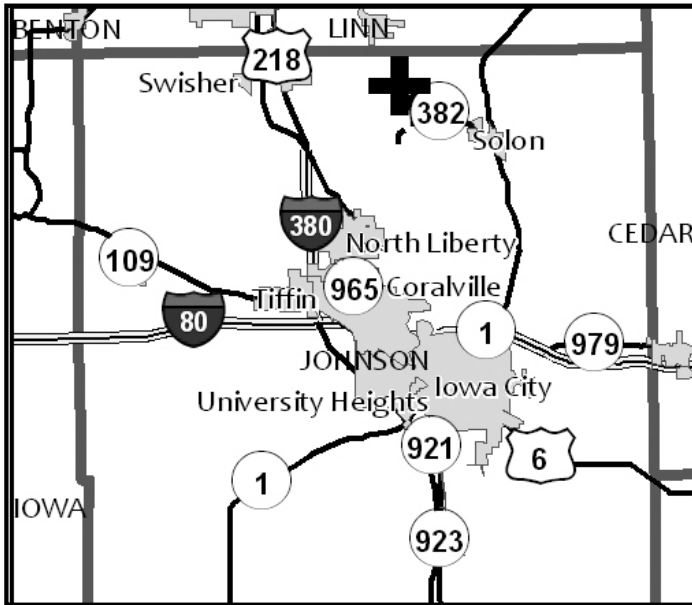
2390 Mill Road; Fort Dodge, IA/Webster County

**Managed by:** Webster County Conservation Board

**Contact Information:** 515-576-4258, [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com)

**DNR Park Rangers:** Eddie Elkin 515-408-5568 &  
Matt Petersen 712-260-9059

# Lakeview OHV Park



Lakeview OHV park has 160 acres of varying terrain. The park features an “A” level motocross practice track, a “B” level motocross practice track, an off-road utility vehicle practice track, a pit bike track, and two kiddie tracks. The tracks are designed to be used by both motorcycles and ATVs. There is also a very extensive trail network consisting of sand trails, mud trails, hard pack trails, some hill climbs, and single-track trails. There are restrooms on site. No camping is permitted. There are multiple state and federal campsites within a five-mile radius of the park.

The park is open year-round, with the exception of when weather and trail conditions do not permit riding.

The Lakeview OHV park offers something for everyone. From the beginning rider to the advanced rider, there is enough variety to keep things interesting for all skill levels. The park is maintained throughout the year to keep the riding area as safe as possible.

## **LAKEVIEW OHV PARK**

3877 140th St NE; Solon, IA/Johnson County

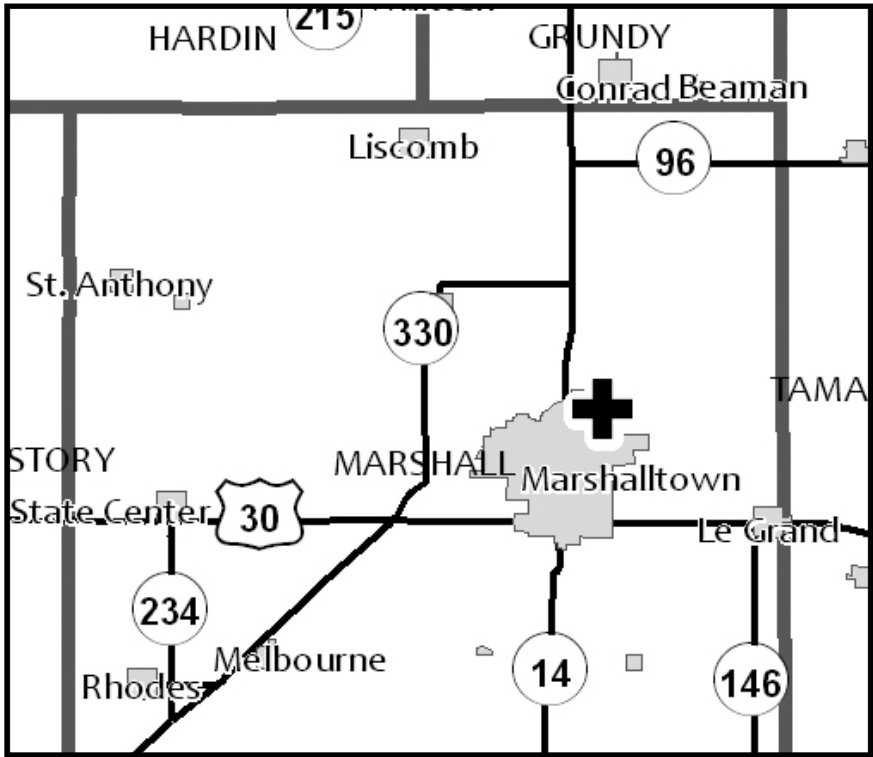
**Managed by:** Lakeview Off Road Riders

**Contact Information:** 319-361-1982, On Facebook at “Lakeview OHV Park”

**DNR Park Ranger:** Jason Dykstra 319-330-9116



# Nicholson-Ford OHV Park



Nicholson-Ford is a 120-acre off-highway vehicle park open to off-road motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and off-road utility vehicles. There are approximately 20 miles of tight, river-bottom, wooded trails for your enjoyment.

## **NICHOLSON FORD OHV PARK**

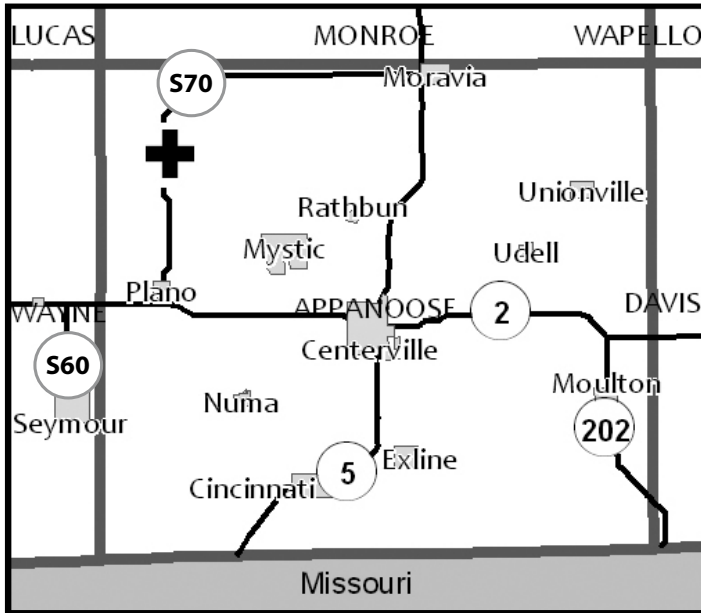
2002 Marion St; Marshalltown, IA/Marshall County

**Managed by:** Iowa River OHV Club

**Contact Information:** On Facebook at "Iowa River OHV Club"

**DNR Park Ranger:** Austin Dollen 641-858-5832

# Rathbun OHV Park



The 125-acre Rathbun Off-Highway Vehicle Area (ROHVA) is located in the northwest corner of Appanoose County. Established in an abandoned rock quarry in 1993, the park provides riders of registered ATVs, UTVs, and dirt bikes an impeccable riding experience for novice and seasoned riders alike. Trails, consisting of dirt and rock, follow the lay of the land meandering around trees, rocks, hills, and along the lakeshore. Most are wide enough to accommodate off-road utility vehicles. Trails for leisurely cruising or testing the skills of advanced riders await visitors to the park. ROHVA also features a practice track and a tot lot, which is fenced as a separate area for safety and can be monitored by parents. There are two shelters with picnic tables available as well as water hydrants and a vault toilet.

The park is open year-round except for closure due to weather or trail conditions that do not permit riding.

## **RATHBUN OHV PARK**

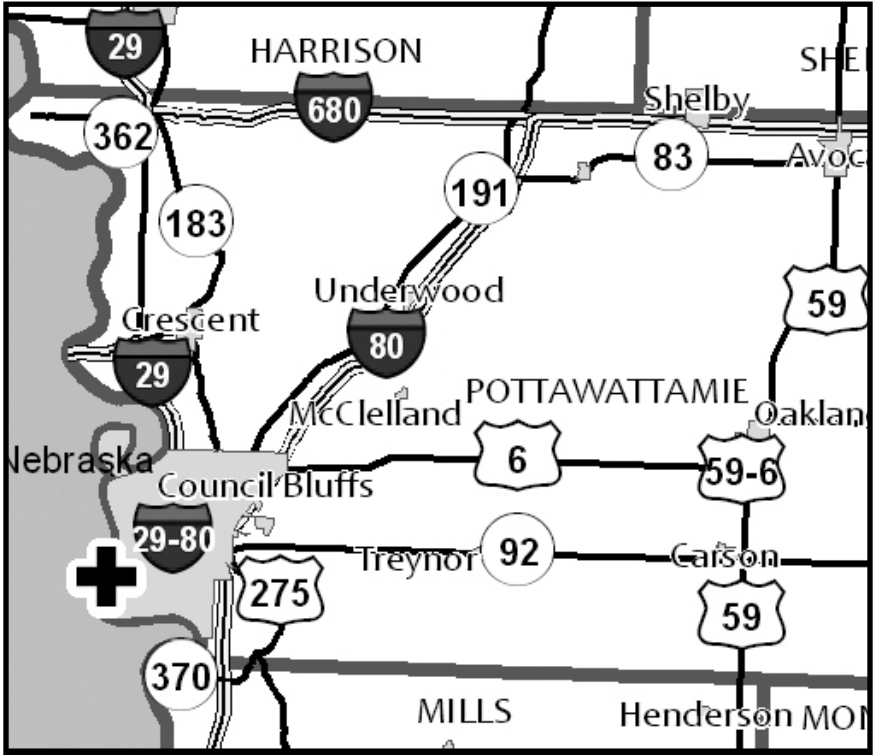
14230 Highway S70; Plano, IA/Appanoose County

**Managed by:** South Central Dirt Riders

**Contact Information:** [scdrrohva@gmail.com](mailto:scdrrohva@gmail.com)

**DNR Park Ranger:** CJ Hughes 641-895-2222

# River Valley OHV Park



River Valley OHV Park is closed until further notice. The park has signage posted and all use of the park is currently restricted. For more information, please visit [www.iowadnr.gov/Things-To-Do/Off-Highway-Vehicles](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-To-Do/Off-Highway-Vehicles).

## **RIVER VALLEY OHV PARK**

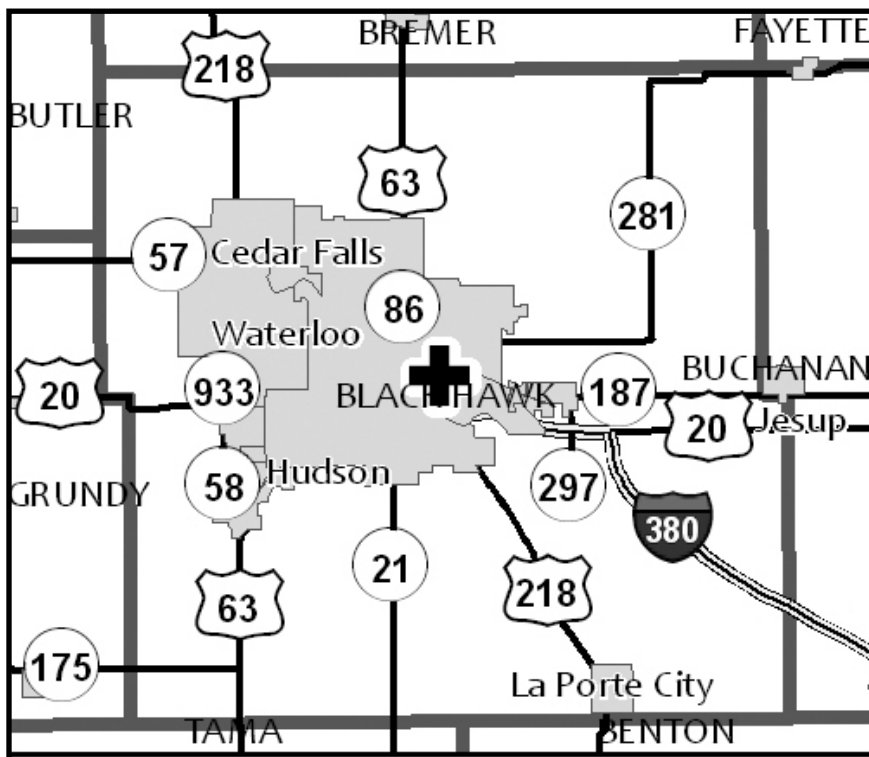
Veterans Memorial Hwy; Council Bluffs, IA/Pottawattamie County

**Managed by:**

**Contact Information:**

**DNR Park Ranger:**

## Riverview OHV Park



This 180-acre park is located in Black Hawk County along the Cedar River, which allows for scenic riverside trails. The park has two motocross tracks, a four-mile perimeter track, and a pee wee track. ATVs, ORMs, and side-by-sides no wider than 65" are allowed to operate at the park. There is a picnic shelter and pit toilet available. Park is open year-round except when weather or trail conditions do not permit riding.

### **RIVERVIEW OHV PARK**

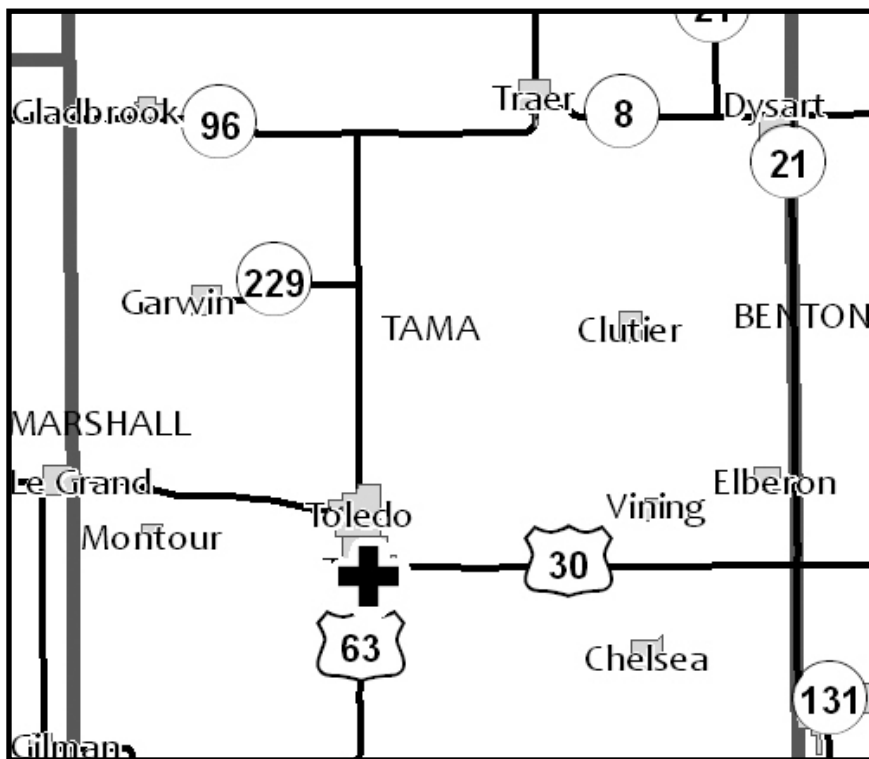
2531 Kenyon; Waterloo, IA/Blackhawk County

**Managed by:** Trailblazers Off-Road Club

**Contact Information:** [www.trailblazersoffroadclub.com](http://www.trailblazersoffroadclub.com)

**DNR Park Ranger:** Chase Burtness 515-336-3300

# Tama OHV Park



This 300-acre park is located in Tama County and features tight, wooded trails with some hills, a 15-mile perimeter trail, a kids' track, and a motocross track. Camping features 10 electric campsites and 13 primitive campsites. This park is open to off-road motorcycle, all-terrain vehicle, and off-road utility vehicle use.

Park is open year round, except when weather or trail conditions do not permit riding.

## **TAMA OHV PARK**

226 S State St; Tama, IA/Tama County

**Managed by:** Club S.P.O.R.T.

**Contact Information:** [www.clubsporttama.com](http://www.clubsporttama.com)

**DNR Park Ranger:** Kory Kinnick 641-236-3722

# Trail Signs



Stop  
Ahead



Yield  
Ahead



Intersection  
Ahead



Trail  
Marker



## Bridge Markers



## Trail Closures







## Websites

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### **Iowa Department of Natural Resources**

[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)

515-725-8200

### **Online Education Course Offering**

[www.ATVCourse.com](http://www.ATVCourse.com)

### **OHV Information**

[www.iowadnr.gov/Things-To-Do/Off-Highway-Vehicles](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-To-Do/Off-Highway-Vehicles)

