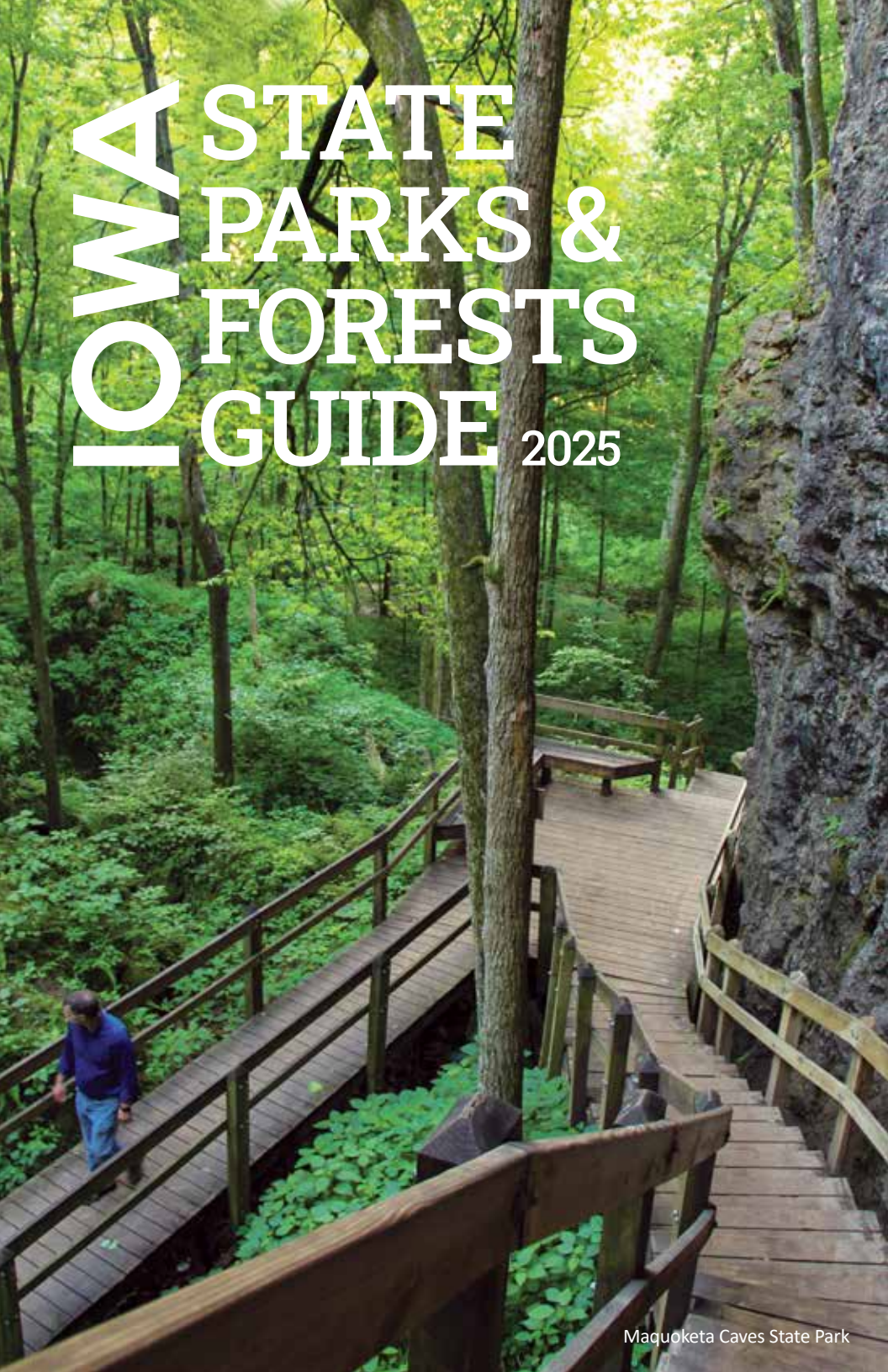
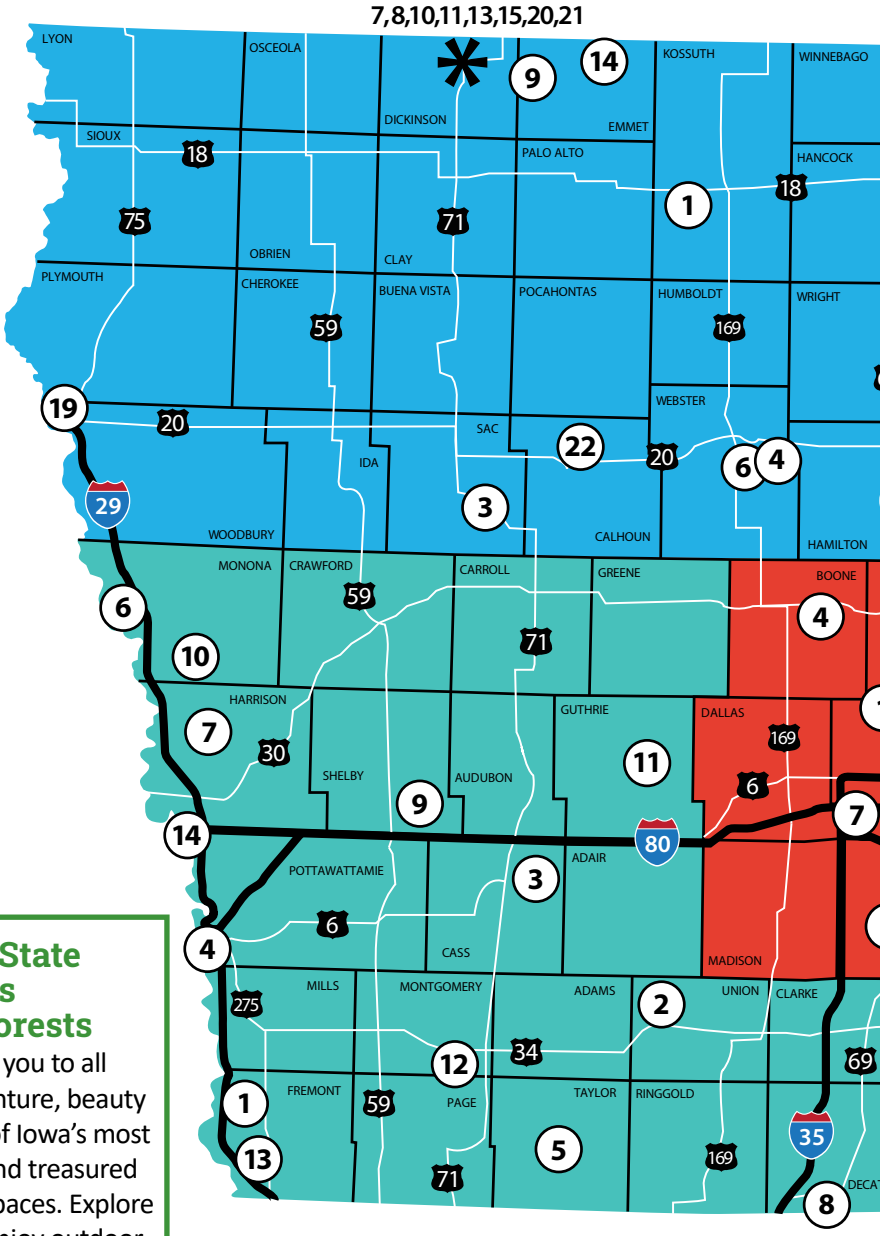
IOWA STATE PARKS & FORESTS GUIDE 2025



Maquoketa Caves State Park

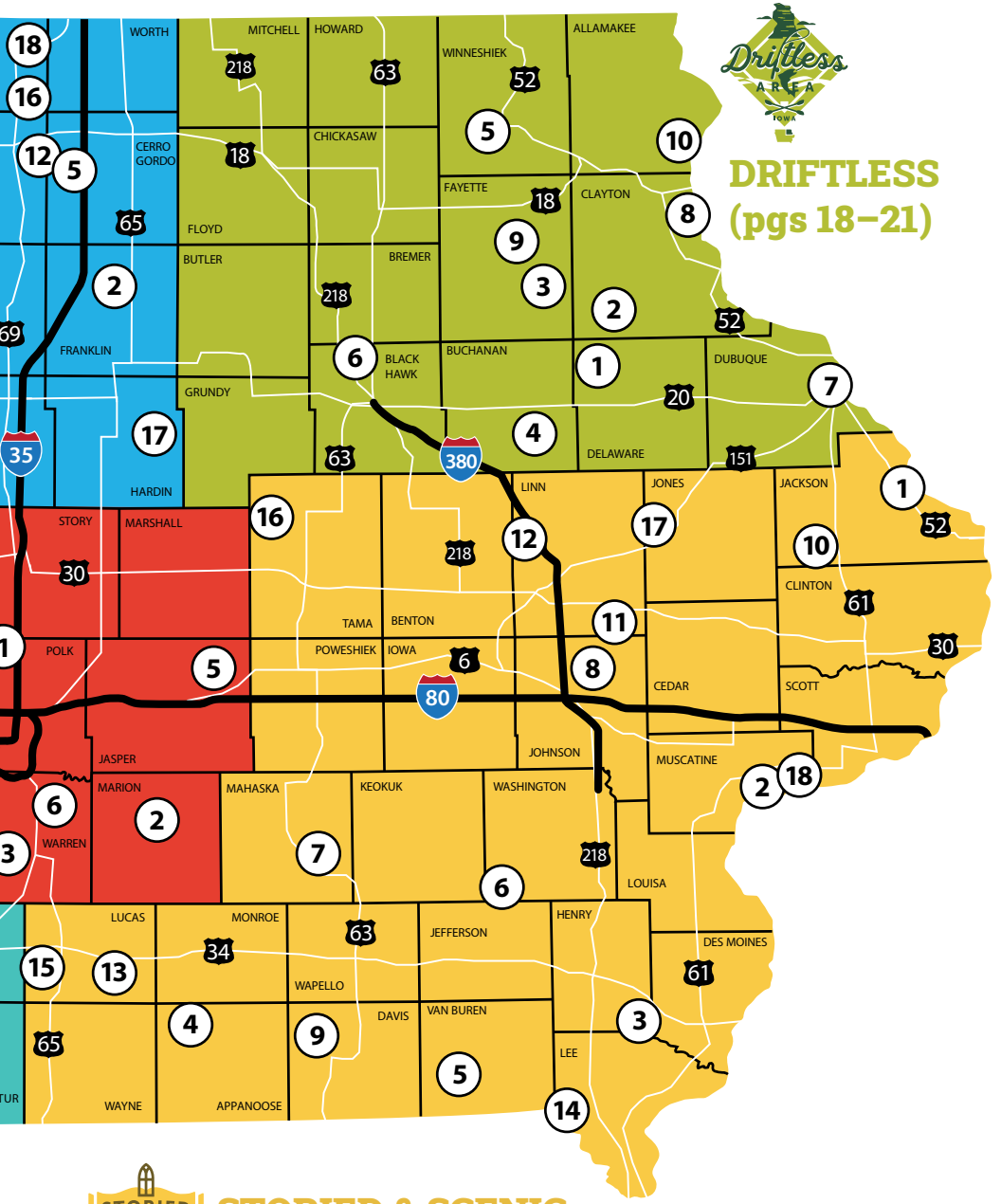
LAKES & LAND (pgs 6–9)



Iowa State Parks and Forests welcome you to all the adventure, beauty and fun of Iowa's most unique and treasured natural spaces. Explore nature, enjoy outdoor activities, and make memories in Iowa's state parks and forests.

LOESS HILLS & BEYOND (pgs 10–13)

CAPITAL COUNTRY (pgs 14–17)



DRIFTLESS (pgs 18–21)

STORIED & SCENIC (pgs 22–25)

PLAN YOUR STAY

Ready to visit an Iowa state park? The best place to start is the website: **iowadnr.gov/stateparks** to pick a park, find maps and reserve a cabin, campsite, lodge or shelter. You also can learn about each state park's history, features, recreation and amenities.

RESERVATIONS:

Planning a weekend camping trip, family vacation, wedding or reunion? Iowa state parks and forests might have the perfect facility to meet your needs. Reservations can be made online.

Cabins: Stay in one of more than 90 cabins, including year-round, rustic camping cabins, yurts and more. Many cabins offer full kitchens and can accommodate varying party sizes. Cabins can be rented for a minimum of a two-night stay during the off-season, and for one-week stays during the summer.

Lodges and Shelters: Reserve a lodge for your next special event. Lodges are enclosed structures, many historic, that normally include electricity, water, restrooms and a kitchen. Or rent an open-air shelter for a day-use family gathering.

Campsites: Enjoy an overnight stay in a tent or RV. A few things to know:

- Reservations can be made online for most campsites up to three months in advance, with limited walk-in availability on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Facilities vary from park-to-park. Most campsites have picnic tables and fire rings. Many campgrounds offer full hook-up amenities for RVs, pull-through sites, electricity and modern shower facilities.

Lake Ahquabi State Park
Photo by: Rachel Marek

Some parks offer more rustic experiences with pit toilets but no shower facilities. Be sure to check the reservation site when planning your visit.

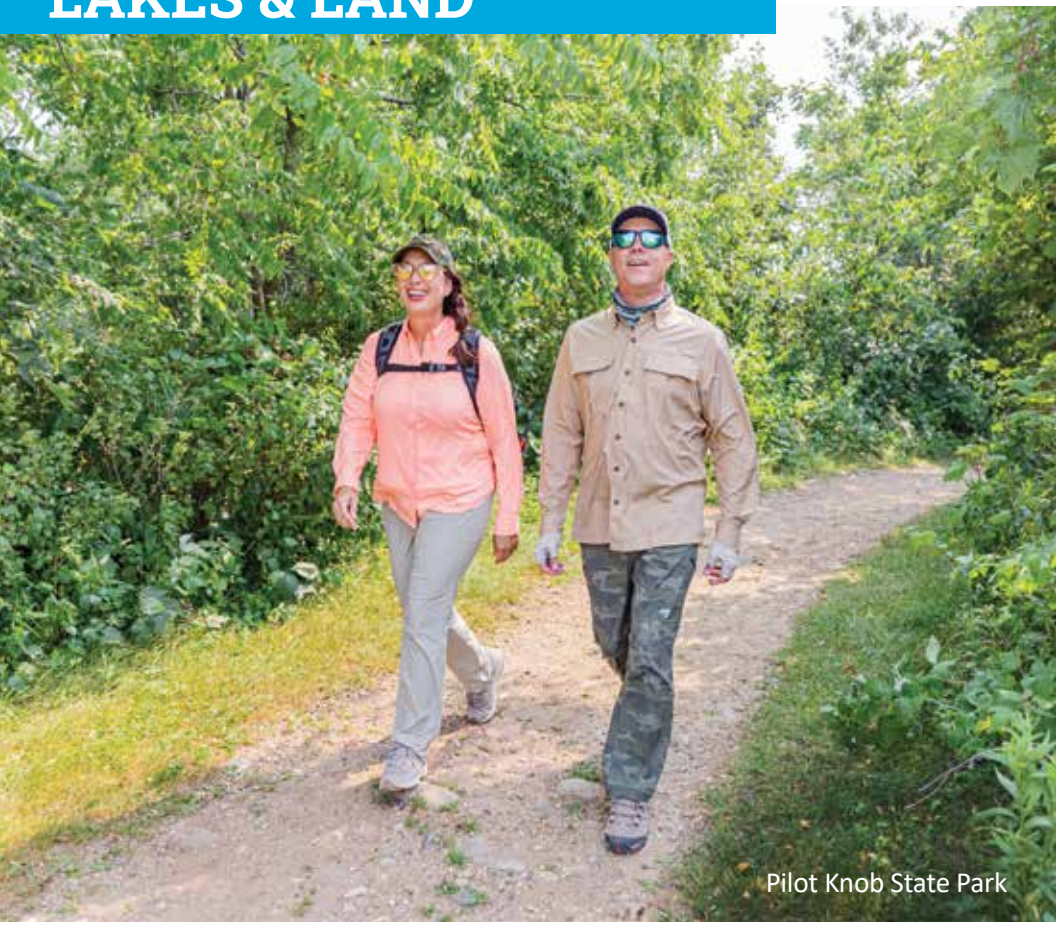
- Other unique camping opportunities include hike-in, equestrian and youth group sites.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Iowa state parks want to keep visitors safe and your experience enjoyable. Please follow posted rules and learn more at **www.iowadnr.gov/stateparks**.

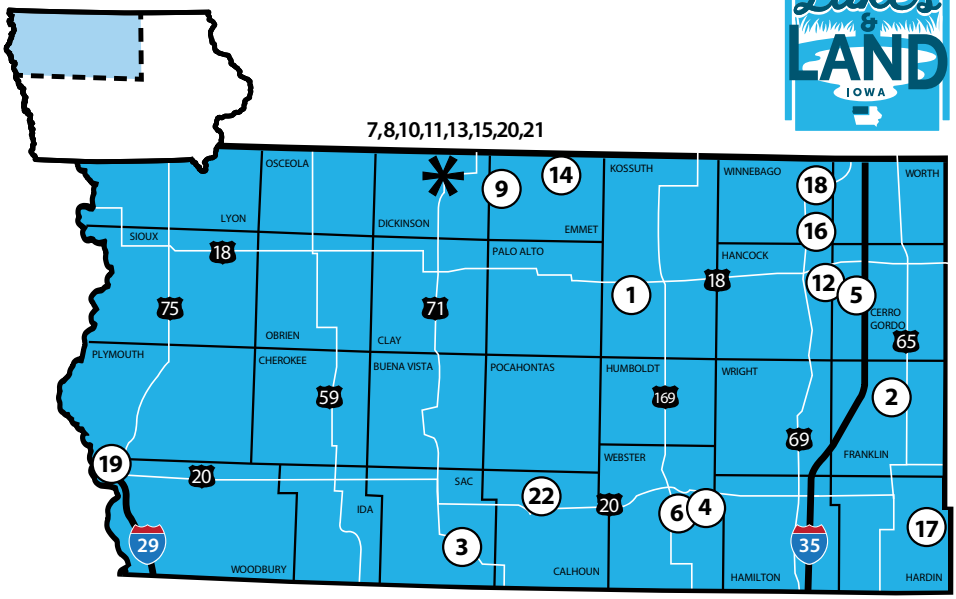
Prairie Rose State Park

LAKES & LAND



Pilot Knob State Park

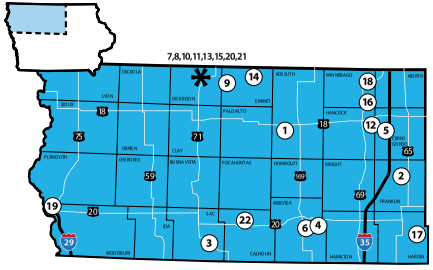
Explore Iowa's Lakes and Land region, home to several state parks and recreation areas full of hidden gems and geological discoveries. Start at **Gull Point State Park** on the shore of the glacier-formed West Lake Okoboji. It is one of several state park areas in the Great Lakes region. Venture to **Clear Lake State Park** or **McIntosh Woods State Park** for a day of boating, fishing or biking in Iowa's northern prairie region. Climb a CCC-era tower at **Pilot Knob State Park** to take in 360-degree views of Iowa countryside. End your adventure at **Brushy Creek State Recreation Area**, offering 45 miles of multi-use trails, or **Dolliver Memorial State Park**, home to a box canyon with Native American lore called Boneyard Hollow. Adventure awaits!



Clear Lake State Park

Dolliver Memorial State Park

LAKES & LAND


7,8,10,11,13,15,20,21
OSCEOLA
DICKINSON
EMMET
KOSSUTH
WINNEBAGO
WORTH
MITCHELL
LYON
BUENA VISTA
POCAHONTAS
HUMBOLDT
WRIGHT
FRANKLIN
HANCOCK
CERRO GORDO
HARDIN
PLYMOUTH
CHEROKEE
IDA
SAC
CALHOUN
WEBSTER
HAMILTON
WOODBURY
MARSHALL
STORY
GREENE
CARROLL
AUDUBON
GUTHRIE
DALLAS
POLK
JASPER
NEWTON
MAHASKA
MARION
WARREN
UNION
CLARKE
LUCAS
MONROE
WAPELLO
DAVIS
APPANOOSE
JEFFERSON
HENRY
LEE
VAN BUREN
DES MOINES
IOWA
KEOKUK
WASHINGTON
JOHNSON
CEDAR
CLINTON
JACKSON
DUBUQUE
BENTON
LINN
JONES
DELAWARE
CLAYTON
ALLAMAKEE
WINNESHIEK
FAYETTE
BUCHANAN
BLACKHAWK
BREMER
CHICKASAW
HOWARD
MITCHELL
ALLAMAKEE
CLAYTON
FAYETTE
WINNESHIEK
HOWARD
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BUCHANAN
BLACKHAWK
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DUBUQUE
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JACKSON
JOHNSON
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LEE
VAN BUREN
DES MOINES
HENRY
JEFFERSON
IOWA
KEOKUK
MAHASKA
MARION
WARREN
POLK
JASPER
NEWTON
MARSHALL
TAMA
BENTON
LINN
MARION
WAPELLO
DAVIS
APPANOOSE
MONROE
LUCAS
CLARKE
UNION
ADAIR
MADISON
ADAMS
TAYLOR
RINGGOLD
DECATUR
WAYNE
APPANOOSE
MONTGOMERY
PAGE
FREMONT
MILLS
POTTAWATTAMIE
CASS
ADAIR
GUTHRIE
DALLAS
POLK
STORY
MARSHALL
HARDIN
GRUNDY
BUTLER
BREMER
FAYETTE
CLAYTON
ALLAMAKEE
WINNESHIEK
HOWARD
MITCHELL
CHICKASAW
FLOYD
CERRO GORDO
WORTH
HANCOCK
WINNEBAGO
KOSSUTH
EMMET
DICKINSON
OSCEOLA
CLAY
PALO ALTO
BUENA VISTA
POCAHONTAS
HUMBOLDT
WRIGHT
FRANKLIN
HARDIN
GREENE
BOONE
WEBSTER
HAMILTON
STORY
POLK
JASPER
NEWTON
MARION
WARREN
MADISON
ADAMS
UNION
CLARKE
LUCAS
MONROE
WAPELLO
DAVIS
APPANOOSE
WAYNE
DECATUR
RINGGOLD
TAYLOR
PAGE
MONTGOMERY

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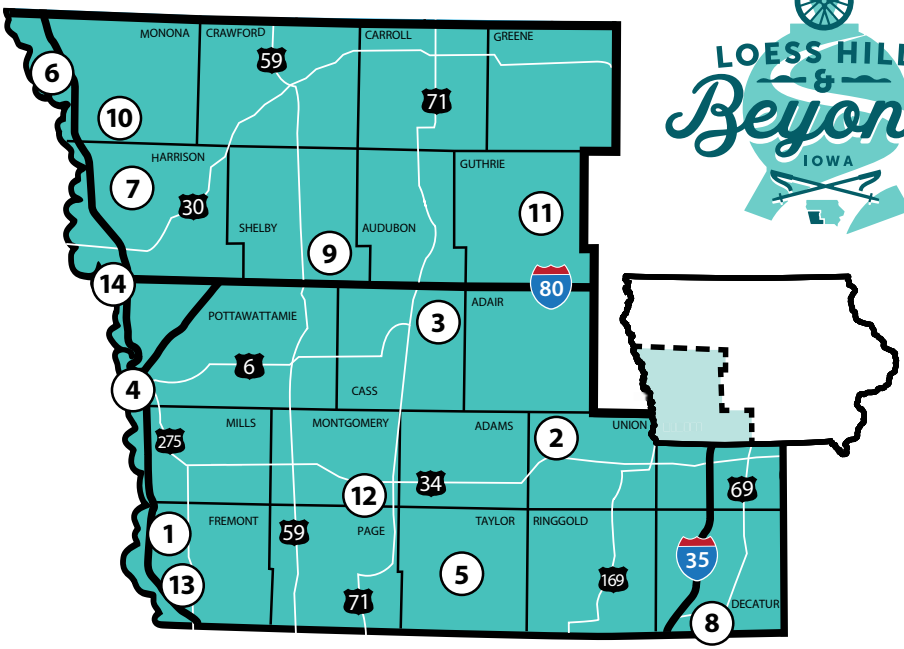
10	**Gull Point** (195 acres) Milford. 712-337-3211	●							❍	2	●	C		B,P	●	3847N		
11	**Marble Beach** (64 acres) Orleans. 712-337-3211	●					66				●	B,M		B	●	4169N	R	●
12	**McIntosh Woods** (62 acres) Ventura. 641-829-3847	●						**1X** 1X		5	●	B,C		B,P	●	3684N	R	●
13	**Mini-Wakan** (20 acres) Spirit Lake. 712-337-3211								❍						●	4169N	R	
14	**Okamanpedan** (19 acres) Dolliver. 712-337-3211									2					●	981N	R	
15	**Pikes Point** (15 acres) Spirit Lake. 712-337-3211									1				B,P	●	3847N		
16	**Pilot Knob** (528 acres) Forest City. 641-581-4835	●				●				2	●	C,M,S	●	P	●	15A		
17	**Pine Lake** (654 acres) Eldora. 641-858-5832	●				●		**1Y,** 3Y	❍	2	❍	**B**		B,P	●	69-50A	R	
18	**Rice Lake** (15 acres) Lake Mills. 641-581-4835									1					●	900N		
19	**Stone** (1595 acres) Sioux City. 712-255-4698	●			●	●		3S	●	3	●	C,M,S	●	P	●	3A		
20	**Templar** (10 acres) Spirit Lake. 712-337-3211									3					●	4169N	R	
21	**Trappers Bay** (57 acres) Lake Park. 712-337-3211														●	1041N		
22	**Twin Lakes** (15 acres) Rockwell City. 712-657-8712									3	❍			B,P	●	569N	R	

LOESS HILLS & BEYOND

Loess Hills State Forest

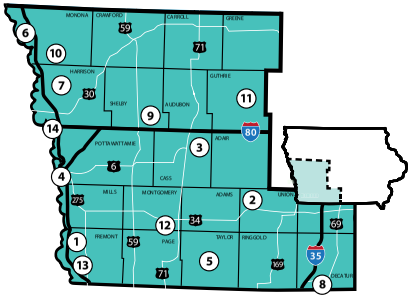
With 200 miles of windblown hills along Iowa's western border, the Loess Hills offer unique experiences full of natural history. Start exploring at **Loess Hills State Forest** and **Preparation Canyon State Park**. Continue your Loess Hill tour with majestic views and a vast trail system at **Waubonsie State Park**. For a bit of history, head to **Lewis and Clark State Park**, a site on the famed trail, or enjoy the highly popular **Lake Manawa State Park** for a day on the beach, boat or the accessible Dream Playground. In southwest Iowa, go fishing and boating at hidden gems like **Viking Lake State Park**, **Green Valley State Park** and **Lake of Three Fires State Park**. Visit the geographically diverse **Springbrook State Park**, with rocky outcrops and diverse terrain. Discover all the natural wonders of this region.



Prairie Rose State Park

Lake Anita State Park

LOESS HILLS & BEYOND



		Modern Camping	Non-modern Camping	Equestrian Camping	Hike-in Camping	Youth Camping	# Full Hook-Up Sites	Cabin Rental (X)Seasonal Yurt (G)Group (S)Seasonal (Y)Year-Round	Day-Use Lodge	Open Picnic Shelters	Trails Hiking	Trails Multipurpose (B)Paved/Rock Bike (C)X-Country Skiing (M)Mt. Bike (S)Snowmobile	Trails Equestrian	(B)Swimming Beach (P)Playground	Fishing	Lake Acreage (N)Natural (R)Federal Reservoir (A)Artificial	(R)Boat Ramp (B)Boat Rental	Hunting (Designated Areas)
1	**Blackburn** (72 acres) Thurman City. 712-382-2786										●							
2	**Green Valley** (1058 acres) Creston. 641-782-5131	●				●	18	**1S**, 2S		2	●	B,C, M,S		B,P	●	360A	R	
3	**Lake Anita** (1062 acres) Anita. 712-762-3564	●				●	40			6	●	B		B,P	●	171A	R	
4	**Lake Manawa** (1529 acres) Council Bluffs. 712-366-0220	●				●	39			7	●	**B**,M		B,**P**	●	772A	B,R	
5	**Lake of Three Fires** (1235 acres) Bedford. 712-523-2700	●		●		●		6S	❍	2	●	C,M,S	●	B,P	●	85A	R	●
6	**Lewis and Clark** (176 acres) Onawa. 712-423-2829	●				●	12		❍ ●	1	●			B,P	●	250N	R	
7	**Loess Hills State Forest** (11,484 acres) Pisgah. 712-456-2924									4	●							●
8	**Nine Eagles** (119 acres) Davis City. 641-442-2855	●		●		●		**1S**		3	●	C,S	●	B,P	●	67A	R	
9	**Prairie Rose** (496 acres) Harlan. 712-773-2701	●				●	7	2S		2	●	C,M,S		B,P	●	218A	R	●

10	**Preparation Canyon** (344 acres) Moorhead. 712-456-2924				●						●	C						
11	**Springbrook** (825 acres) Guthrie Center. 641-747-3591	●				●		**1Y**		2	●	B,C		B,P	●	17A	R	●
12	**Viking Lake** (1000 acres) Stanton. 712-829-2235	●				●	20		●	3	●	C		B,P	●	137A	R	
13	**Waubonsie** (2056 acres) Hamburg. 712-382-2786	●		●				**1Y,** 1Y, 6S	❍	1	●	C,M,S	●	P	●	7A	R	
14	**Wilson Island** (547 acres) Missouri Valley. 712-642-2069	●				●				2	●	C,M,S		P	●		R	

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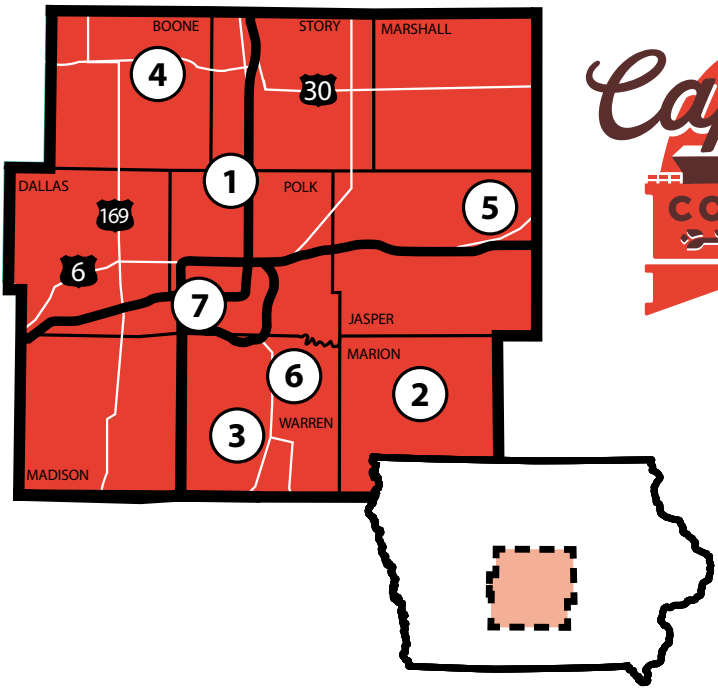
Waubonsie State Park

CAPITAL COUNTRY

Big Creek State Park

In central Iowa, Capital Country is full of immersive outdoor experiences and adventure. Visit the scenic overviews of one of Iowa's most iconic parks, **Ledges State Park**, with sandstone ledges towering 100 feet above the Des Moines River. Soak up the sun at **Big Creek State Park's** famed beach, or rent a pontoon to enjoy the lake. Head to **Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park**—a quarry-turned-state-park with more than 12 miles of multi-use trails. For a bit of natural history, camp and launch your boat at **Elk Rock State Park**, named for an unusual rock formation on the shore of Lake Red Rock, Iowa's largest lake. Near the Des Moines metro, explore **Walnut Woods State Park**, a lovely enclave near the Raccoon River, or visit **Lake Ahquabi State Park** near Indianola, a tranquil area named after the Sauk and Fox word meaning "resting place."

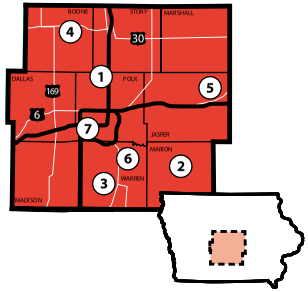


Capital COUNTRY IOWA

Elk Rock State Park

Walnut Woods State Park

CAPITAL COUNTRY



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1	**Big Creek** (3550 acres) Polk City. 515-984-6473								19	●	**B**,C,S		B,**P**	●	866A	B,R	●
2	**Elk Rock** (850 acres) Knoxville. 641-842-6008	●		●		●			1	●	M,S	●	P	●	19,000R	R	
3	**Lake Ahquabi** (770 acres) Indianola. 515-961-7101	●				●	52	●	3	●	C,M,S		B	●	115A	B,R	
4	**Ledges** (1100 acres) Boone. 515-432-1852	●			●	●	16		2	❍	C		P	●		R	
5	**Rock Creek** (1697 acres) Kellogg. 641-236-3722	●				●			3	●	C,M,S	●	B,P	●	602A	B,R	●
6	**Summerset** (222 acres) Des Moines. 515-961-7101									●	B,M			●	80AP	R	
7	**Walnut Woods** (250 acres) West Des Moines. 515-285-4502		●			●	8	❍		●	B,C	●	P	●		R	

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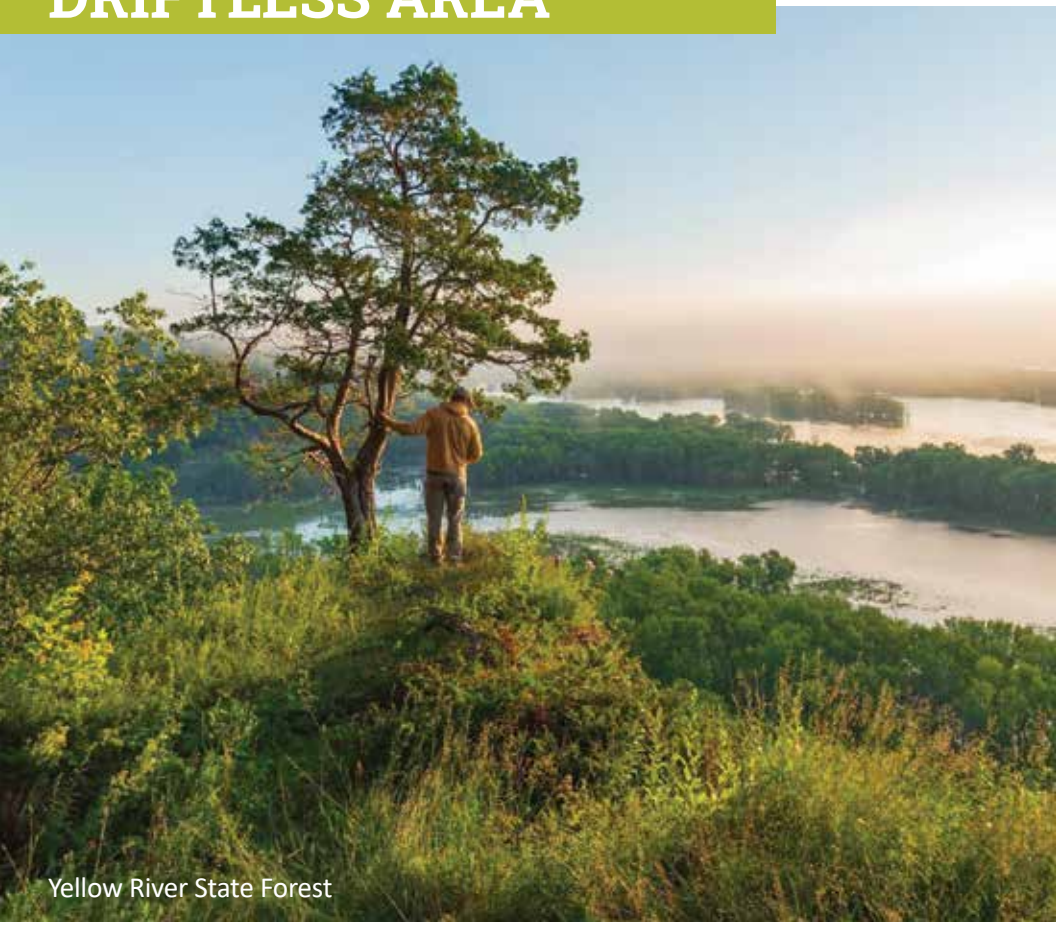
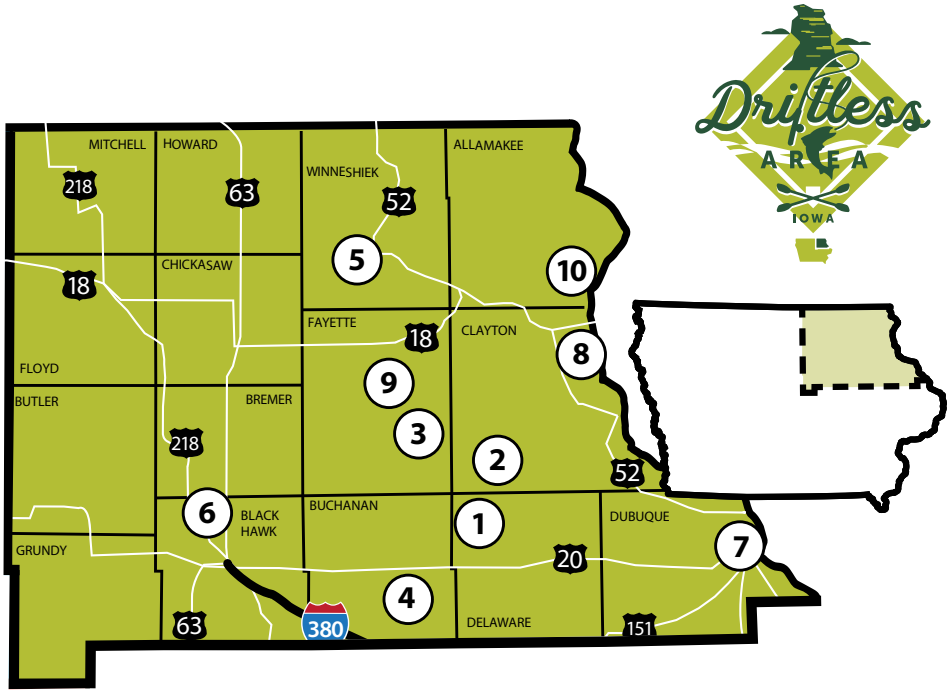
Ledges State Park

DRIFTLESS AREA



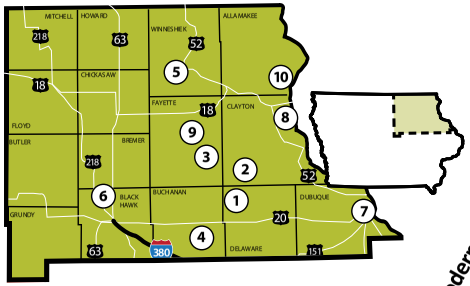
Yellow River State Forest

Scenic byways, stunning views and natural wonders mark the state parks and forests of northeast Iowa. Visit **Backbone State Park**, Iowa's oldest state park, featuring trout streams, 21 miles of multi-use trails, and historic CCC-era structures. Meander to **Pikes Peak State Park** and **Bellevue State Park** for breathtaking views of the Mississippi River. Enjoy some of the best hiking in Iowa at **Mines of Spain State Recreation Area** near Dubuque, stopping along the way at Horseshoe Bluff. Visit Iowa's only fire tower at **Yellow River State Forest**, or visit **Volga River State Recreation Area**, often referred to as "Little Switzerland" due to its rugged topography. For a bit of Iowa culture, stop at **Cedar Rock State Park** to tour a historic estate designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.



Mines of Spain State Recreation Area

DRIFTLESS AREA



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1	**Backbone** (2000 acres) Dundee. 563-924-2527	●	●			●		**5Y,** 11Y	❍	5	●	C,M,S	●	B,P	●	85A	B,R	●
2	**Bixby Preserve** (184 acres) Edgewood. 563-924-2527	Rugged woodland with stream, ice cave and trails. No camping.																
3	**Brush Creek Canyon Preserve** (217 acres) Arlington. 563-425-4161	Forested steep wooded terrain with diversity of habitats, flora and fauna. No camping.																
4	**Cedar Rock** (423 acres) Independence. 319-934-3572	Frank Lloyd Wright designed home. Call or email cedar_rock@dnr.iowa.gov to reserve a tour Memorial Day weekend–Oct. **Visitor Center and Walter House are ADA friendly, boat house and council fire are not accessible.**																
5	**Fort Atkinson Preserve** (5 acres) Ft. Atkinson. 563-425-4161	Reconstructed fort built in 1840.																
6	**George Wyth** (1200 acres) Cedar Falls. 319-232-5505	●				●			❍	3	❍	**B**,C, M		B,**P**	●	260A	B,R	
7	**Mines of Spain & E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center** (1439 acres) Dubuque. 563-556-0620	Center Hours: Open Monday–Friday, 7AM–3:30PM. Saturday–Sunday, 10AM–2PM. Center managed by Dubuque County Conservation									●	B,C			●		R	●

8	**Pikes Peak** (970 acres) McGregor. 563-873-2341	●				●	5			1	❍	C,M						
9	**Volga River** (5500 acres) Fayette. 563-425-4161	●	●	●		●	34			1	●	C,M,S	●	P	●	135A	R	●
10	**Yellow River Forest Camp** (8500 acres) Waukon. 563-586-2254		●	●	●	●		1S			●	C,M,S	●		●			●

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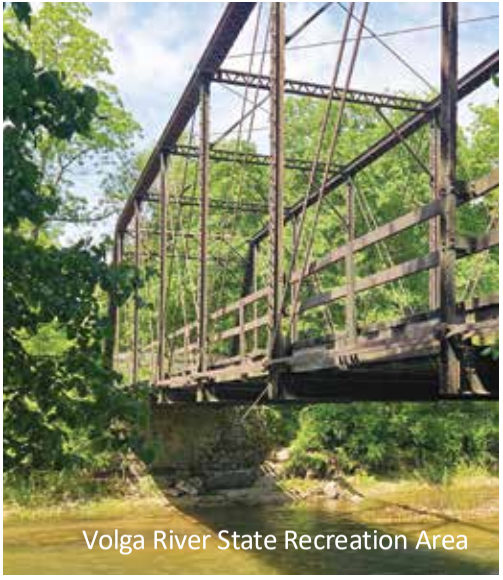
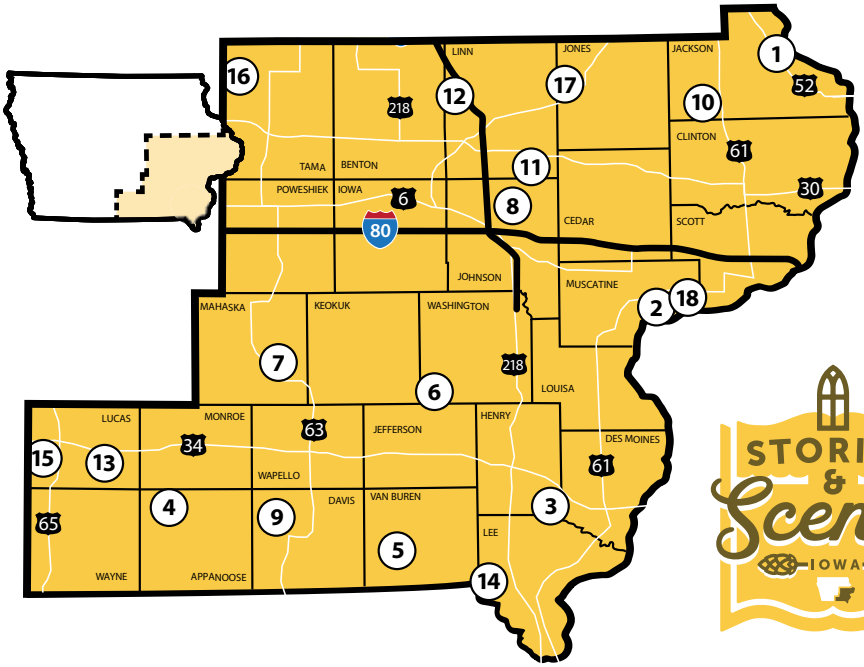
Backbone State Park


Volga River State Recreation Area

STORIED & SCENIC

Wapsipinicon State Park

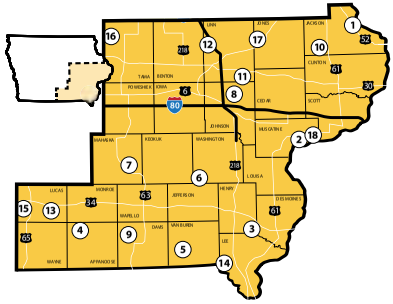
The Storied and Scenic area is home to some of Iowa's oldest and most scenic parks and forests. **Lacey-Keosauqua State Park** is the site of a river crossing on the Mormon Trek, and has ample forests and trails to explore. At **Wildcat Den State Park**, tour the oldest-running grist mill west of the Mississippi River, along with breathtaking trail experiences. Travel to **Lake Darling State Park** to cozy up in a year-round, ADA-accessible cabin. Visit **Lake Wapello State Park's** CCC-era beach house, featuring unique pueblo-style architecture. Get lost in the woods in **Stephens and Shimek State Forests**, offering trails and more rustic outdoor adventures. Explore one of the gems of the park system, **Maquoketa Caves State Park**, showcasing the 1,100-foot "Dancehall Cave" and Iowa's largest cave system.



Lake Macbride State Park

Union Grove State Park

STORIED & SCENIC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WASHINGTON
KEOKUK
FORT MADISON
BURL

9	**Lake Wapello** (1150 acres) Drakesville. 641-722-3371	●				●	13	**1Y,** 1Y, 11S	●	2	●	C,S		B,P	●	289A	B,R	
10	**Maquoketa Caves** (323 acres) Maquoketa. 563-652-5833	●			●	●				2	●			P				
11	**Palisades-Kepler** (840 acres) Mt. Vernon. 319-895-6039	●	●			●		**1S,** 3S	❍	2	●				●		R	
12	**Pleasant Creek** (1927 acres) Palo. 319-436-7716	●				●		4S		3	●	C,M,S	●	B,P	●	410A	R	●
13	**Red Haw** (649 acres) Chariton. 641-774-5632	●								3	●	B,S		B,P	●	72A	R	
14	**Shimek Forest Camp** (9000 acres) Farmington. 319-878-3811		●	●	●						●	C,M	●		●	20A	R	●
15	**Stephens Forest Camp** (15,000 acres) Lucas. 641-774-5632		●	●	●	●					●	M	●		●	10A		●
16	**Union Grove** (282 acres) Gladbrook. 641-473-2556	●					7	**2Y**		1	●	S		B,P	●	110A	R	
17	**Wapsipinicon** (390 acres) Anamosa. 319-462-2761	●			●				❍	2	●	C,S		P	●		R	●
18	**Wildcat Den** (423 acres) Muscatine. 563-263-4337		●			●				2	●			P				

Items appearing in **bold** and dots like this: ❍ in the tables indicate facilities accessible to the mobility impaired. Campground renovations may change campsite information listed before the next printing of this publication. Fully accessible campsites may not be available. Contact the local park office for details or check the reservation website: **iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com.**

ACCESSIBLE OUTDOORS

Iowa state parks and forests are committed to being welcoming destinations for people of all abilities by providing accessible outdoor opportunities and amenities.

Lake Manawa State Park
Photo by: Darren Budd

EXPLORE ACCESSIBLE EXPERIENCES

From adaptive equipment to accessible fishing piers, hiking trails, picnic shelters and campsites, Iowa's state parks and forests provide many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Examples of accessible experiences include:

- Track Chair at **Big Creek State Park**, which can be checked out for free on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Accessible playgrounds, including one of Iowa's largest at **Lake Manawa State Park**.
- Trout fishing paths for wheelchair access at **Yellow River State Forest** and **Backbone State Park**.
- Overnight stays at accessible campsites and cabins.
- And many more!

To learn more about accessibility in the outdoors, visit **iowadnr.gov/accessible**. If you need special accommodations for your next visit, please contact your local park office for assistance.

LEFT: Little Paint Creek accessible trout fishing trail at **Yellow River State Forest**.

ABOVE: Track chair in action at **Big Creek State Park**.

SHARE THE TRAIL

Many of us love to hit the trail—whether on foot, by bike or on horseback.

You can help make the day enjoyable by following a few tips to share the trail:

- If you see a horseback rider:
  - o Stop and move to the side.
  - o Give plenty of space because horses can be unpredictable.
  - o Say hello and communicate so the horse knows you're there.
  - o Let the horse and rider pass by before you start to move again.
- Bikers, remember to slow down, give space and communicate your presence when passing other bikers and hikers.
- And of course, everyone should stay on designated trails, carry out trash and be respectful of surroundings.
- Let's share the trail and make it fun for everyone!

Lake of Three Fires State Park

TOP PICKS FOR FUN AND ADVENTURE

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TRAVEL IOWA

If you're looking for a list of ultimate places to enjoy Iowa's outdoor activities, Travel Iowa has selected a few top picks showcasing many Iowa state parks. See the full list at and many more outdoor destinations at: **traveliowa.com/things-to-do/outdoor-adventure**.

MOST SURPRISING VIEW: Beeds Lake State Park

The dam at **Beeds Lake State Park**, constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, is said to be the most photographed dam in the Midwest. Located near Hampton, water from the lake plunges 40 feet down along the 170-foot-long horizontal layers of limestone. Don't forget to pack your camera!

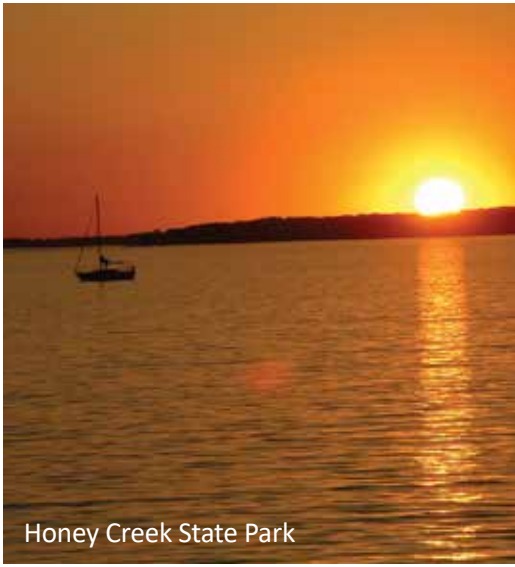
Beeds Lake State Park

BEST CAMPING: Backbone State Park

Iowa's oldest state park offers so many different adventures, there is no way to get through all of them without spending the night. Bring your tent along to "rough it" in one of two campgrounds, or rent a modern cabin for a more comfortable stay.

Backbone State Park

BEST BOATING:
Honey Creek State Park
Whether you plan to bring your own boat or rent one at a local marina, you are destined for a day packed full of fun on Lake Rathbun. This massive body of water (more than 11,000 acres) provides the perfect playground for more than a dozen boating styles from pontoon and speed boats, to paddling, kayaks and jet skis. **Honey Creek State Park** has one of the largest boat ramps on the lake, and features a beautiful campground, camping cabins and trails.


Honey Creek State Park

BEST HIKE: Maquoketa Caves State Park
Most of Iowa's state parks offer hiking, but not many offer hiking underground! At **Maquoketa Caves State Park**, you'll encounter wooded areas, fielded surroundings and caves that are several feet tall. Crawling might be required to navigate some caves. Be extra prepared for cave exploration by wearing clothes that can get dirty and bring a flashlight.

Maquoketa Caves State Park

travel IOWA®

GIVE IT *time*

From hike time to bike time, deep breath time to big adventure time — **the more time you give Iowa, the more you'll get back in return.** Let the Iowa outdoors work its magic and watch what happens.

traveliowa.com

WILDCAT DEN STATE PARK

IOWA DNR

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

iowadnr.gov/stateparks
iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com
1-877-PARKS (427-2757)