



Raccoon young are opportunistic creatures.

The Webster County Conservation Board currently manages more than 1000 acres of land and water for recreation and conservation. We invite you to explore and enjoy the variety of natural areas managed for public use. The rich diversity of these lands provides something of interest for everyone.



Indian Pipe, a woodland wildflower
Found in Iowa woodlands in fall.



Sunset over Badger Lake.

Habitat Preservation

One of the primary goals of the Webster County Conservation Board is *preservation*. Preserving diverse plant and animal communities is the key to keeping the numbers and varieties of them in balance. To counter the effects of the tremendous amount of habitat loss that has occurred in the last 100 years, the conservation staff is committed to land acquisition, landowner conservation programs, re-establishment of these precious areas, and management of them through good conservation practices.

The tall grass prairie, once covering 85% of the state, is now a rarity with less than one-tenth of 1% remaining. Only about 28% of Iowa's original forest cover remains. And of Iowa's wetlands, approximately 95% were destroyed in a hundred-year period. It's obvious that early settlement had a severe impact on Iowa's landscape.

Why all the fuss?? These natural ecosystems play important roles not only for plants and animals, but also for the human sector. The prairie is responsible for the fertile soil which has become the basis of our economy, and people have depended on prairie plants and wildlife for food, medicines, and materials. Wetlands cleanse the water, reduce erosion and flooding, and maintain populations of fish, ducks, and other wildlife. The benefits reaped from woodlands include hunting, hiking, fishing, wildlife watching, and lumber and firewood harvesting. These natural communities are rich, diverse, and a part of our heritage. Let's do our part in preserving them.

THE WEBSTER COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES TO THE PUBLIC DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ANYONE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, SEX, CREED, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE OR HANDICAP. IF ANYONE BELIEVES HE OR SHE HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO SUCH DISCRIMINATION, HE OR SHE MAY FILE A COMPLAINT ALLEGING DISCRIMINATION WITH EITHER THE WEBSTER COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD OR THE OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. U.S. DEPT. OF INTERIOR, WASHINGTON D.C. 20240



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Webster County Conservation Board

A Guide to Our Natural Areas



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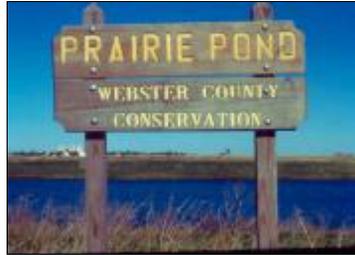
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Pat Shehan	Park Ranger
Cindy Knickerbocker	Secretary
Cody Peterson	Vegetation Technician

Board meetings are held monthly in the Reception Center at Kennedy Park. The public is notified of meeting times through the local media and interested persons are invited to attend.



Prairie Pond Wildlife Area



Acquired in 1988 from the Iowa Department of Transportation, this 17 acre borrow pit was created when work was underway on the 520 expressway. Located one mile south of Duncombe, this site is used by a variety of wildlife that is attracted to the pond for food, water, and protection. Additional reclamation work continues on the site, including the establishment of native grasses that will benefit waterfowl, songbirds, small mammals, deer, and upland game species.

Rossow Prairie



At one time, Webster County and all of north-central Iowa was covered by thousands of marshes, fens, and other wetland environments. Rossow Prairie is a relict from this age and its 40 acres of upland prairie and slough is a haven for a variety of wildlife. Located 3 miles south and 1/4 mile east of the town of Vincent, the area is an outstanding outdoor classroom. A trip to Rossow can provide an exciting escape and a chance to view some of nature's most interesting critters. Muskrats, mink, ducks, geese, shore birds, songbirds, turtles, fish, salamanders, and many invertebrates are well suited to life in the wetland environment.

Skillet Creek Indian Mounds



This is the site of a pre-historic native American ceremonial ground. Five conical burial mounds and one linear ceremonial mound lie forever on the heavily timbered limestone bluff overlooking the Des Moines and Skillet Creek valleys. The mounds were probably built 1,000 to 1,500 years ago by an extinct culture called the Woodland Indians. Found in the bottomland of this area is the old mining town of Hard Scrabble. Once a thriving town in the late 1890's, there are few remains left to indicate such a life existed. The area is located 5 miles east of Dayton, just north of the highway 175 bridge and the Carlson Recreation Area. There is a parking area and self guided interpretive trail. The area is a preserve and wildlife sanctuary; hunting is not permitted.

Whispering Wings Marsh

This recent addition to the Webster County Conservation Board is a natural pothole that has been re-established with the help of the NRCS. Currently there are about 1.5 acres of open water. The remainder of the area consists of about 15 acres of high quality restored prairie and a 1-acre windbreak along the north end. The area provides many of the basic necessities for the life cycles of many types of wildlife. The primary focus is on upland bird and waterfowl production. The area is open to public hunting with the exception of the 200 yard "no shooting zone" around the neighboring house. There is a parking lot in the southeast corner of the property. Whispering Wings Marsh is located 1 1/4 miles east of Fort Dodge on old Highway 20.

Whispering Wings is an attraction for upland birds, waterfowl and other wildlife.

Meier Memorial Marsh



Acquired by the Conservation Board and dedicated on September 8, 2001, Meier Memorial Marsh was paid for in part by the Conservation Board, a portion of it was donated by Zane Meier, and the remaining acres were paid for by donations from Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever. With a gentle rolling stream, fishing for small mouth bass and catfish is excellent. With the presence of a re-established wetland, this area provides excellent habitat for pheasants, waterfowl, and deer. Located on the western border of Webster County in the Lizard Creek river bottom, its 35 acres is a beautiful sight for hiking, bird watching, and hunting.

Miller Marsh

This forty acre tract of land was purchased in 2003 through a partnership with several conservation organizations. Grants were awarded from the Webster County Pheasants Forever, State Council Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Iowa DNR Wildlife Habitat Stamp Fund. Two wetlands have been restored as well as the planting of a pristine native prairie mix. A windbreak will be established on the north and west boundaries of the property. This area is open to the public for all types of recreational uses that are compatible with wildlife habitat such as nature study, bird watching and hunting.

Miller Marsh is available to the public for bird watching, nature study, and hunting.

Moorland Pond



A borrow pit resulting from the construction of U.S. 20, the Moorland Pond area is 22.5 acres in size and is a popular fishing spot that sports trophy size fish species. The claim to fame for this

The claim to fame for this area is the Trumpeter swan restoration project

area is the Trumpeter Swan Restoration Project involving a permanent pair of endangered Trumpeter Swans residing at the area with

the hopes of raising cygnets each summer.



Resident trumpeter swan parents and young.

Located just east of Moorland, the pond is easily accessible and complete with a parking lot and steps for public access. The nest site, along with the pair of Trumpeter Swans, is easily visible from the highway.

Naturalist Program



The Webster County Conservation Board provides recreational and educational experiences that are readily accessible to all county residents, and initiates programs designed to protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources of Webster County. The Webster County Naturalist offers a variety of educational programs throughout the year, both indoor and outdoor programs, including working with schools. Most of these are free of charge and are announced in the local media, in our newsletter, and on the county website at www.webstercountyia.org. Special, custom-fit programs can be arranged. If you have any questions, please contact the Naturalist at 576-4258.



IRVM Program

Webster County was one of the first few counties in the state of Iowa to start an Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Program, (IRVM). The program has been running for over ten years and has shown tremendous benefits. The primary goal of the program is to use an integrated approach in controlling weeds, stabilizing soil, and reducing runoff, thus improving the quality of water entering our streams and rivers.

This is accomplished by planting native vegetation in new construction projects, such as bridges and new roads. By working together, the resource coordinator and landowners can help re-establish native grasses and flowers, thereby restoring a valuable piece of Iowa's lost heritage for future generations.

Some native plants have ...root systems that can grow to thirty feet deep.

The native grasses and flowers have extensive root systems which are ideally adapted to go deep into soil which reduces erosion. Some of these native plants have roots that can grow to thirty feet deep!

There have been many roadsides planted to native vegetation throughout the county. We invite you to explore these ditches often, since there are many different species of grasses and wildflowers blooming at different times of the year. Just remember you can look, but please do not pick the flowers.

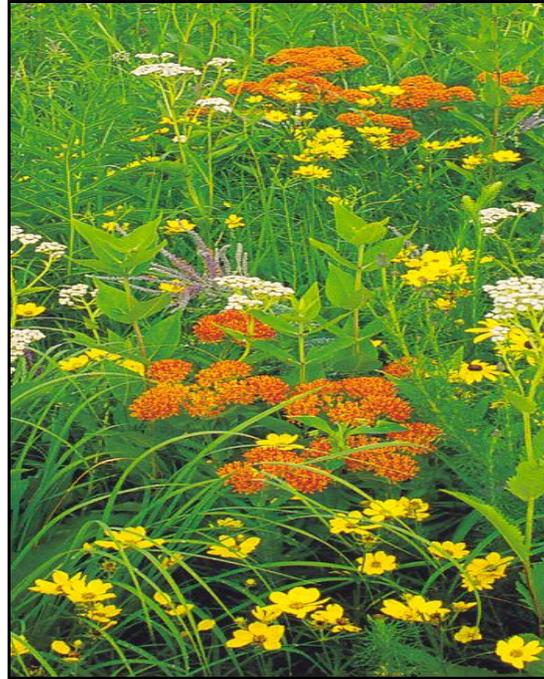
These plantings are all cooperative efforts between Webster County IRVM, Webster County Conservation, the Webster County Engineer, and the individuals who own ground adjacent to the county right-of-way.



Controlled burning is a great management tool.

If you are interested in planting some wildflowers or would like more information on the IRVM Program, contact The Webster County Conservation Board at 515-576-4258.

Liska-Stanek Prairie



Located six miles southwest of Fort Dodge on county road P-51, this mesic native prairie featuring two potholes was purchased by the Conservation Board in 1972. In December 1976, the prairie was dedicated as a Natural Preserve by the State Preserves Advisory Board, thus ensuring the integrity of the area for generations to come. The area lies in the central part of the Wisconsin glacial region and harbors some of the richest soils in the world. These soils began development 14,000 years ago and were formed from glacial till, its subsequent erosion and the accumulation of organic materials. The prairie has been relatively undisturbed and it shows in the amount of diversity this prairie exhibits. The spectrum of colors displayed is unmatched and can be seen throughout the entire growing season. Some birds observed on the prairie are the bobolink, blue-winged teal, dickcissel, western meadowlark, red-winged blackbird, swamp sparrow, and grasshopper sparrow.

Lost Acres Wildlife Area

This primitive area located along the banks of the Des Moines River in the southern part of Webster County, is 28 acres of heavily timbered wildlife habitat. A bald eagle nest could be viewed from the property in recent years. There is no public access to this area except by canoe or boat from the river. It does provide an excellent stop-over area for canoe enthusiasts, snowmobilers, and fisherman. No facilities exist on the site, however.

Lundgren Church Nature Park



The Lundgren Church Nature Park, located on the former site of the Lundgren United Methodist Church, is utilized as a rest stop/natural area with emphasis on the development of a mini-wildlife sanctuary. Numerous shrubs and conifer trees have been planted and transplanted in the area providing excellent wildlife habitat that will serve as an oasis for area wildlife. Located 7 miles west of Lehigh on highway 50, this site will be a living memorial to the church and its members for generations to come. We would like to express our appreciation to the church members for this sanctuary and hope the public enjoys it.

Deer Creek Area

Located about eight miles north of Fort Dodge on highway 16, is the Deer Creek Wildlife Area. This seventeen acre tract of natural flood plain timber is on the west bank of the Des Moines River and provides an excellent stopover facility for the canoe enthusiast. Wildlife abounds in this rather primitive area with large concentrations of whitetail deer. Fishing on the Des Moines river can provide some nice catches of channel catfish, small mouth bass, northern pike, and walleye. Hunting is also permitted in season.

The Diggings



Donated to The Nature Conservancy by educator and conservationist Susan Atwell in 1968, The Diggings was acquired by the Conservation Board to help preserve the site of numerous coal excavation areas. Located on the eastern bank of the Des Moines River in the town of Fort Dodge, these 7 acres share a rich wildflower display in the spring with trees dominated by black oak, red oak, white oak, hickory, black maple, ash, and basswood. An interpretive nature trail established by Eagle Scouts takes hikers on a scenic tour of the property.

Holiday Creek



Located just one mile east of Coalville, and just north of highway 20 is the 38 acre Holiday Creek Area. Acquired in 1987, the area is marked by heavily timbered ravines that provide prime habitat for a host of animal life, along with aesthetically pleasing colors in the fall. Hunting is permitted on the site during designated seasons.

Lake Ole Park

Lake Ole Park consists of six and a half acres in the Skillet Creek valley within the Dayton town limits. A 3 acre impoundment provides nature study possibilities and creates wildlife habitat for various amphibians and reptiles, as well as numerous mammal species.

Lindquist Wildlife Sanctuary

This six acre site on the northern border of Gowrie was once a bustling hobo camp when rail-roading activity was at its peak. Today, it is a diverse natural community, with a wide variety of plant and animal species. The railroad right-of-way area is a diverse natural community consisting primarily of marsh, tall grass prairie and woodland habitats. This area provides an outdoor classroom on the edge of town in which local people can view waterfowl, songbirds, woodland mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Small patches of native tallgrass prairie species can also be seen, all of which point out that Mother Nature never completely gives up her grasp of an area.

Swan Restoration



Successful trumpeter swan nesting.

Under the auspices of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, a cooperative effort has been launched with Webster County Conservation, other conservation boards, individuals, and public and private groups to reintroduce trumpeter swans to the state of Iowa. Over 95% of wetlands in Iowa had been drained when the last free wild nesting pair of the magnificent birds were in the state in 1883. Loss of wetland, combined with the lack of hunting regulations in earlier years, pushed them out of the area. Moorland Pond and Prairie Pond are two Webster County Conservation ponds used by the DNR as holding sites. Swans are over wintered at Moorland Pond, which has an aerator to ensure open water in cold weather. In the spring, some swans at Moorland Pond are moved to other large bodies of water. One pair has remained at Moorland Pond year around in hopes of raising young, which are known as cygnets. The Conservation Board staff constructed a nesting platform for this purpose. The comeback of the trumpeter swan is dependent upon the continuing reestablishment of wetland habitat, enabling them to once again become a part of the Iowa landscape.



Trumpeter swan pair and cygnet

John F. Kennedy Memorial Park

The largest and most popular area managed by the Webster County Conservation Board, this 395 acre multi-use facility offers something for everyone. Whether you have just a few hours or an entire weekend to spend at the park, you will find fun and excitement for the whole family. The Webster County Conservation Board was established in 1958. Through the Board's hard work and determination, the construction of John F. Kennedy Memorial Park was started in 1962 and the park was officially dedicated in 1965.



Badger Lake

Badger Lake is a 45 acre man-made impoundment, stocked with largemouth bass, crappie, channel catfish, bluegill, and northern pike. Fishing is all year around on the lake. Only electric trolling motors are permitted. A boat ramp with a courtesy dock as well as a hand-capped accessible fishing pier is located in the central portion of the park. A swimming beach is located down the hill from the large enclosed lodge that is also available on a rental basis. Six other open shelters throughout the park are available on a first come, first served basis. Many shady picnic sites are available with grills, water, playground equipment, and sanitary facilities throughout the park.

Webster County Conservation Board Natural Areas

The Conservation Board maintains nineteen areas totaling over 1000 acres that are managed as wildlife habitat areas with little if any development on site. These relatively small areas provide much needed shelter, food sources, and nesting cover for a variety of wildlife indigenous to Webster County. These areas act as oases, left as undisturbed as possible with only additional tree and shrub plantings and food plot establishments as ongoing developments.

Becker Wildlife Area

The Becker Wildlife Area, donated to the Conservation Board in 1986, is located on the Des Moines River, just south of the county road D-14 bridge, north of Fort Dodge. Native grass and tree plantings were established in the area for the benefit of the wildlife found there. Visitors can use the parking area to gain easy access to the river for fishing and canoeing.

Bob Hay Memorial Conservation Area

Named after an avid local conservationist, this 225 acre tract of land consists of different habitats such as steep wooded ravines, small tributaries, Lizard Creek, bottomland, woodland, prairie, and cropland. Although approximately 1/3 of this area had been farmed in previous years and marshes had been drained, two ponds, restored prairies, tree and shrub plantings, and food plots have since been established. Wildlife is abundant here because of the much needed space that is available and the variety of habitats that exist. Migrating birds and waterfowl use the ponds as a resting place and nesting area. The area will be preserved as a wildlife habitat area and only hunting, hiking, and bird watching will be allowed. To get to the area, travel 3/4 mile off of Hwy 169 on Ave. O west and park in one of the two parking lots available to the public.



Carlson Recreation Area



Located approximately five miles southeast of Dayton, the Carlson Recreation Area is 120 acres of natural diversity. From the timbered bluffs to the upland prairie, and to the typically level bottomland, the Carlson Area affords the visitor a chance to explore the scenic Des Moines River Valley. The valley contains the largest remaining tracts of woodland, predominately oak and hickory, in north central Iowa, which presents a spectacular color show in the fall. The Carlson Area is readily accessible via a graveled county road a mile and a half south of the highway 175 Des Moines River bridge, between Dayton and Stratford. Before being destroyed by fire in 1981, the site contained the historically significant Anderson cabin, one of the first built in Webster County. In season, hunters may pursue wild turkey, deer, squirrels, and rabbits among other game species.

Nature Center

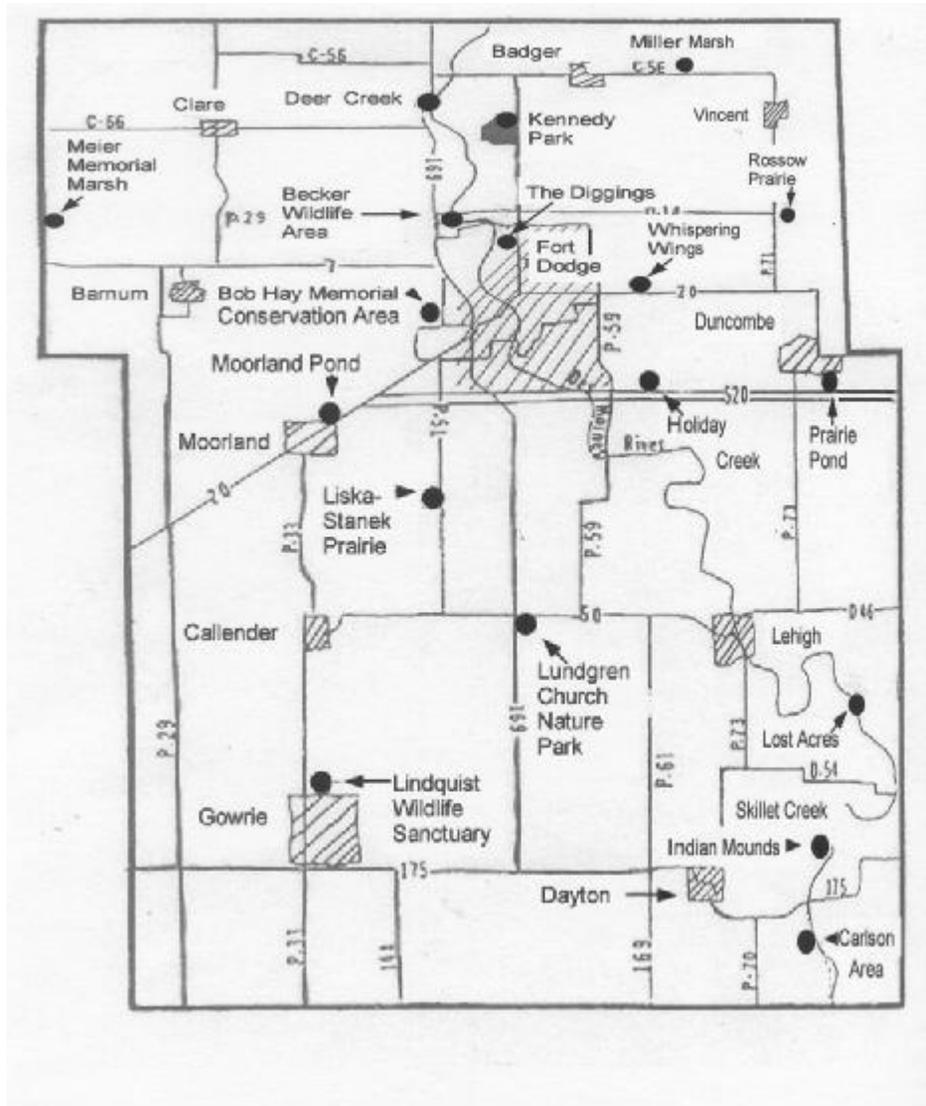
Our expanded and improved nature center is located on the main road above the boat launch. It contains dozens of mounted animals displayed in their natural Iowa habitats, and interactive displays for all ages. Live specimens may be on display at various times of the year. The center is open when the staff is present or by appointment.



Prairie mural painted by Scott Patton.

Reception Center

For people seeking information and brochures or maps of the park, stop at the Reception Center, located above the boat launch on the main road. Field guides are also available for references.



Webster County Conservation Board Areas

Children's Forest

Located in the northwest portion of Kennedy Park is the Children's Forest. Developed primarily as an outdoor classroom facility, the Phil Fox Chapter of the local Izaak Walton League of America has been very instrumental in the development and maintenance of this area. The club has coordinated plantings of trees and shrubs as living memorials for families, church groups, and scout troops. The forest offers a variety of species, and most of these are labeled, providing the visitor a chance to become acquainted with species that they might be considering for plantings in their own yard or garden. Numerous trails are ready to be explored throughout the forest, affording the entire family an enjoyable experience. To reach the Children's Forest, enter the park's west entrance.



Bird Blind

As our most recent addition to Kennedy Park, the bird blind was built in 2000 with help from Wal-Mart and Beisser Lumber Co. This small building with benches inside has narrow openings to view birds at feeders. There are also interpretive signs to assist with bird identification, food preferences, and feeder types. The bird blind is located on the north side of the main road, near the park entrance. Also, there is a trail to the bird blind leading from the Model Backyard.

Questions and Answers for Campers

I AM UNDER AGE 18. CAN I HAVE MY OWN CAMPSITE?

You must be 18 or over to camp without parents or guardian unless your parents or guardian make arrangements with the park ranger.

WHERE CAN WE PARK OUR VEHICLES?

You can have only two vehicles per campsite and you and your guests must park on your own campsite.

WE HAVE TO LEAVE SOONER THAN WE PLANNED. CAN WE GET A REFUND?

No refunds are issued.

WHERE CAN WE BUILD A FIRE?

Build fires only in grills or fire rings that are provided. Firewood is available at designated times. If you leave, be certain that the fire is out unless it is immediately used by someone else.

CAN I LET MY PET RUN LOOSE?

NO! Tie up your pets for their own safety as well as that of other people in the park. Cats and dogs must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length when they are anywhere in the park. Do not leave your pet unattended at your campsite. No pets are allowed in the playground or amphitheater areas at any time. Please be considerate and clean up after your pet.

ARE THERE ANY PLACES TO RIDE BIKES IN THE PARK?

There are no bike trails, but you may ride on park roads. Bicycles operated after sunset must have lights and reflectors.

WHAT ABOUT BEER?

You can have beer in cans (no kegs or anything larger than a quart). Underage drinkers will be arrested and adults who become drunk and disorderly may be arrested. They will be asked to leave the park. Between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. adults can have beer inside the camper or tent.

WHAT ABOUT CLEANING UP AT OUR CAMPSITE?

Please put all garbage in the garbage cans provided. No dishwashing is allowed at drinking fountains, hydrants, or in restrooms. Taking hot water from the restrooms for those purposes or for any personal purposes is also not allowed. Please leave your campsite clean when you leave.

WHAT TIME DOES THE PARK CLOSE?

The park is closed between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. except for registered campers. Visitors must leave at 10:00 p.m. Gates are not locked, but you may be stopped by a park ranger to verify that you are a registered camper if you return after 10:30 p.m.

WE WANT TO STAY UP ALL NIGHT. CAN WE DO THAT?

You can stay up all night, but quiet time is between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

FINALLY—The park Director and the rangers have the authority to refuse camping privileges to anyone who fails to observe park rules and regulations. A complete copy of park regulations is available from the park rangers.

Camping



The Kennedy Park Campground offers large, shaded sites for all types of camping from the weekend tent camper to the full-time camper. Conveniently located just five miles north of Fort Dodge on County road P-56, the park offers the camping enthusiast one of the finest camping facilities around. With a total of 100 sites, the campground contains modern restrooms and shower facilities that are cleaned daily.

* 100 Camping Sites

- 1-29 Sewer, Water, Electricity (30 and 50 amps)
- 30-79 Electricity only (30 amp)
- 80-100 Campsite only

- Handicapped accessible restroom and shower facility
- Firewood available at scheduled times (5 logs per \$1.00)
- Camp host (May-September)
- Playground
- Sunday church service
- Pets allowed, but must be on a leash and supervised

Weekend movies and programs of interest are offered throughout the summer months in the outdoor theater found in the northwest corner of the campground.

CAN WE RESERVE A CAMPSITE?

No. All campsites are first come, first served. If you want to come for the weekend and want to be sure you have a site, a friend or relative can park a vehicle or put a tent on the site (lawn chairs won't do) for you until you come, but the site must still be registered and paid for within 30 minutes after they park the vehicle or put up the tent.

CAN WE PUT MORE THAN ONE CAMPING UNIT ON A SITE?

Yes, but only if those persons occupying the second tent are under 18 years of age and are part of your immediate family.

WHAT ARE THE LOCAL T.V. STATIONS?

5 (ABC), 8 (CBS), 13 (NBC), and 11 (Iowa Public Television)

HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN WE HAVE IN OUR CAMPER?

Not more than 6 persons may occupy any one campsite.

I WILL BE WORKING AT A CONSTRUCTION SITE FOR TWO MONTHS AND WANT TO STAY IN THE CAMPGROUND FOR THAT TIME. CAN I DO THAT?

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, no camping unit or party may occupy any camp area for more than 14 days out of any 21 day period. There are no exceptions. The campground is closed during the winter months.

Wildlife Area

The north side of the park has been developed along the natural history theme. The hiker will find a network of trails winding their way through such diverse habitats as mature woodlands with dense understory to wide open expanses of majestic tall grass prairies. Wildlife abound, and visitors can catch glimpses of whitetail deer, beaver, mink, opossum, raccoon, chipmunks, hawks, owls, pheasants, and numerous songbirds, to name a few.



Oak Alley Nature Trail

Beginning at the Model Backyard, adjacent to the Conservation Board offices, and north of the main road, this self-guided interpretive trail winds for 1 1/2 miles through the wildlife area. The trail offers the hiker a chance to become acquainted with a variety of nature's phenomena such as vegetation identification, animal sign, prairie restoration, a bluebird trail, and the concept of how all aspects of nature are interconnected.



Enjoy the diversity of the area as you walk through the woodland, meander through the restored prairie, and venture close to the lake. Taken at a leisurely pace, the relaxing hike brings the hiker back to the trail head and takes approximately one hour. The trail also continues around the entire lake, entailing about 3 miles total. There is a map of the trails at the Reception Center.



Nature trail on the north side



John F. Kennedy Park

John F. Kennedy Memorial Park is a 395 acre multiple use recreation area. The 45 acre Badger Lake provides the focal point for a wide variety of outdoor activities.

- 100 camping sites
- Shower house with flush toilets and hot water
- Lake fishing all year around
- Lodge with fireplace available for rental
- Six open picnic shelters
- Grills and picnic tables around the park
- Nature Center
- Hiking
- Canoeing and boating (no gas motors)
- Swimming area with beach
- Winter activities
- New playground
- Handicapped accessible fishing dock
- Boat ramp

Kennedy Park Trail Map

