

• Bigelow Park to Dougan's Landing • Iowa Falls to Daisy Long Memorial Park



**Prepare
for an
Adventure**

Brochure Design & Production By:
Tracy Moran, Power Graphics

Water Levels
USGS River Gage at Howan
www.waterdata.usgs.gov

US Army Corp. of Engineers - River Gage at Steamboat Rock www.river.usace.army.mil

Check water levels before you paddle.
Acceptable average levels: 250 to 300 cfs.

Major of the river is passable at much lower levels - especially if you watch where you are going. Below 100 cfs some areas may require a short "walk". And of course always be concerned with water levels that are at or near flood stage.
For more information see if your local library has Paddling Iowa by Nate Hoogewegen.

River Clean Up Project Aware:
Iowa Department of Natural Resources.
Volunteer Opportunities.
www.iowadnr.gov

Outfitters
Rock-N-Row Adventures
23539 1 St.
Eldora, IA 50627
www.rock-n-row-adventures.com
Phone: 641-858-5516 or 641-751-3418
Email: tristan@rocknrow.com

Iowa Falls Outfitters
www.iowafallsoutfitters.com
Phone: 641-373-6302
Email: paddling157@yahoo.com

DNR Livery Information:
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.gov
www.iowadnr.gov/interagencyresources.html

Safety Tips

- 1. Wear a life jacket!** They really do save lives, and paddlers are at a higher risk of drowning than powerboat users. Remember, it doesn't work if you don't wear it.
- 2. Stay alert** and be ready to move out of danger. It's important to be aware of your surroundings, especially if you encounter powerboats.
- 3. Keep it stable!** Leaning shoulders outside the edge of the boat can lead to capsize. Keep your weight low and balanced over the center line of the boat.
- 4. Don't boat under the influence** of alcohol or other drugs. Paddling a canoe or kayak requires unimpaired judgement.
- 5. Watch for hazards** which may include rocks, low-head dams, heavy current, lightning, and bad weather. Strainers are a type of hazard, such as trees overhanging or in the water, that block passage but let water filter through.
- 6. Plan to get wet!** If you fall out while in the current, back float to shore while keeping your feet on the surface. When weather is cool, you MUST wear warm clothing and a wet suit. Keep a change of clothes in a dry bag or other waterproof container. Usually, there's no need to end a trip because of swamping a boat, just dump the water out, sit-dryer, and you're on your way.

Keep mental note of where you are on the river. How many bridges have you passed under? What was the last access you passed? Remember that cell phone reception may be poor in some areas on the river. Pay attention to dam warning signs. DO NOT attempt to run a dam, always portage. Tell others where you are going and when you plan to return. Keep an eye on the weather.

What To Wear

Shorts or long pants depending on the weather. Old tennis shoes or water sandals, and a jacket if needed. If the air and water is cold - bring a dry set of clothes.

What To Bring

Sunscreen, hat, bug spray, sunglasses, beverages and snacks. Plan to get wet and protect electronics such as cell phones.

Conservation/River/Watershed Groups
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Website: www.dnr.iowa.gov

Hardin County Conservation:
15537 S Avenue
Ackley, IA 50601
Phone: 641-548-4321
Email: hardin@hardincountyconservation.com
Website: www.hardincountyconservation.com

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INH)
www.inhf.org

Iowa River Greenbelt Resource Trust (IRGRT)
www.iowarivergreenbelt.org

Southfork Watershed Alliance
www.southforkwatershed.org

The Iowa River Basin from Eldora to Union flows through a relatively closed valley gorge surrounded by beautiful wooded bluffs and occasionally emerging into broad valleys. There is 100 feet of changing elevation with an average gradient of 4.2 feet per mile in the 30 mile section of river in Hardin County. The Iowa River is noted for its excellent recreation and fishing opportunities. Keep a sharp lookout for wildlife as the river and surrounding woodlands are home to a wide variety of mammals, birds, and reptiles.



IOWA FALLS

"A river is more than an amenity... it is a treasure." *Chief Red Jacket*

Wildlife viewing

Paddling the Iowa River is an exceptional way to experience the abundant wildlife that the Iowa River ecosystem has to offer. You may encounter mammals that live in and around the river such as beaver, otter, muskrat, raccoon, White-tail Deer, mink, and perhaps even a rare bobcat. Herons, Kingfishers, Sand Eagles, Wood Ducks, as well as numerous other waterfowl and amphibians can be observed from the river bank or one's canoe or kayak. Reptiles that call the river home such as Painted Turtles, Snapping Turtles, and the semi-aquatic Northern Water Snake (formerly confused with the Cottonmouth or "Water Moccasin" which does not exist in Iowa) can also be commonly found in the Iowa River as well. Be sure to bring binoculars, field guides, and your camera! Enjoy your float, and make sure you respect the wildlife and their habitat.

Safe river use

The Iowa River is a great river to enjoy, but as with any river you need to provide for safety first. Please remember to never float alone, always let someone know where you are going and when you plan on returning. Be sure that your knowledge and skill level are equal to the river and its difficulty. Personal flotation devices (PFD) should be worn at all times when on the river to provide for your safety. Watch out for medical conditions that could arise while out on the river: hypothermia in cold, wet conditions and heat exhaustion and dehydration in hot, humid conditions. The river is constantly changing so be aware of downed trees that can cause strainers and other obstructions, and talk with someone who is knowledgeable about the river and its current conditions. If you are an inexperienced paddler, consider using a reputable guide service. Remember, do not trespass and PLEASE, DO NOT LITTER!

Geology

The geology of this segment of the Iowa River is truly unique. This is in part due to the three geological surfaces found in Hardin County: the lower Erosion Surface east of the Iowa River, the Des Moines Lobe west of the Iowa River, and the Southern Iowa Calk Plateau in the southern part of the county. The influence of glacial activity, as well as the variety of Mississippian and Pennsylvanian rocks, is also exposed by erosion as the river cuts its path through the valley, set the stage for the rugged character of the terrain along the Iowa River. Low bluffs of dolomite overlie by limestone grade into tall cliffs near Iowa Falls. Below Eagle City, outcrops of sandstone, shale, and thin layers of coal result in 40 to 70 foot cliffs, and here Riverbank Rock in Eldora, city dominated by sandstone and tilted shale rise in places up to 150 feet above the river.

Angling



Walleye

Smallmouth Bass

Crappie

Sunfish



US Hwy 20 Bridge

Sac & Fox Overlook
Steamboat Rock

Highway 20 Bridge

The Iowa River Greenbelt is a rare, remaining fragment of old-growth woodland that has survived the age of agriculture. The region features a steep river valley rich with traces of prehistoric cultures and remnants of 19th Century farmsteads. It is also a nesting and wintering area for bald eagles, and it is home for the rare monkshood plant and three endangered or threatened species of freshwater mussels.

Finding a way to build a modern, safe, and efficient highway facility through such an area, while minimizing construction impacts and highway intrusion at the Iowa River crossing in Hardin County, proved to be very challenging. It took some of the nation's most innovative design and construction methods to achieve the project's main objective of creating as gently as possible through the sensitive area.

This project addressed some major issues of environmental impact, including:

- A threat to water purity and temperature changes that could endanger the rare mussel species.

- Traffic-noise intrusion into natural areas that serve as wildlife habitats and are enjoyed by recreational users
- Visual impact of the bridge on the natural surroundings
- Soil erosion and sedimentation related to disturbance of the steep river valley slopes
- Potential chemical pollution of the site during and after construction
- Discovery of several endangered and threatened species
- Various historical - architectural components
- Archaeological areas containing prehistoric cultural materials

The U.S. 20 bridge over the Iowa River is a 1510-foot (460-meter) weathering steel girder structure, consisting of (5) 302-foot (92-meter) spans supported on (4) concrete piers and (5) abutments. Two 66-foot (20-meter) precast concrete spans connect the bridge to the roadway approaches.

The bridge deck is 137 feet above the Iowa River, opened August 22, 2003. The construction method is called launching. To learn more about the U.S. 20 bridge visit:

www.iowadot.gov



IOWA FALLS

"It is pleasant to have been to a place the way the river went" *Henry David Thoreau*

IOWA RIVER GREENBELT WATER TRAIL HARDIN COUNTY, IOWA

Suggested Trips

- Stop at one of the communities along the river for dining and shopping.
- Stay at an inn bed & breakfast.
- Stop at a store or two along the way.
- Visit a state or county park for a day or overnight.
- Paddle & Posh: Paddle down the river and push your bicycle back to your vehicle.

Wineries and Breweries:
www.iowawineandbeer.com

Bed & Breakfast:
www.bedandbreakfast.com

Bike Trails:
Bike Iowa
www.bikeiowa.com

Iowa Department of Transportation
www.iowadot.gov

Trails From Rails
www.trailsfromrails.com

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
www.inhf.org

Geocaching:
For geocaches along the river or close by the river go to:
www.geocaching.com

Calkins Nature Center
18335 135th Street
Phone: 641-646-9878
Email: naturescenter@hardincountyconservation.com
Website: www.hardincountyconservation.com

Pine Lake State Park
Website: www.iowadnr.gov
22620 County Highway 556
Eldora, IA 50627-9510
Phone: 641-855-5632
Email: PineLake@dnr.iowa.gov

Cities and Towns/Chamber of Commerce
A Great Source for Lodging, Dining, & Shopping Information

Alden Population: 818
Website: www.cityofaldeniowa.com
Phone: 515-859-3344

Iowa Falls Population: 4965
Website: www.iafalls.com
Phone: 641-645-0549
Email: chamber@iafalls.com

Steamboat Rock Population: 315
Website: www.steamboatrockiowa.com
Phone: 641-856-2240
Email: cityhall@steamboatrockiowa.com

Eldora Population: 2734
Website: www.eldoraiowa.com
Phone: 641-929-2393

Union Population: 427
Website: www.unioniowa.com
Phone: 641-486-2932

County Parks: www.mycountyparks.com

"Some day our rivers will be the most important and the most beautiful highways that we have, and especially if they are kept in this primitive way."
John Muir



Property Rights

The Iowa River in Hardin County is a navigable, non-meandering river. The public has the right to navigate between access points, but most of the riverbanks are privately owned, except at public areas. You must respect private property.

DO NOT LITTER. BETTER YET - PICK UP LITTER THAT OTHERS HAVE LEFT BEHIND. LEAVE OUR RIVER BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT.
Report littering or illegal dumping by calling 1-800-NOLITTER (1-800-695-4867)

What to Expect on the Iowa River Greenbelt Water Trail
Here are some descriptions to help decide which section of the water trail is for you. General "experience types" or water trails near the following:

Gateway: Introductory segments. Expect a relatively short, scenic segment of river whose at least one canoeing, kayaking, or inebriating outfitter operates shuttles between access points. More amenities, such as restroom facilities, campgrounds, and lodging are typically available. On summer weekends, expect to share the stream, potentially with many others. Both the launches and landing are very easy to use and well maintained.

Recreational: Experience will fit paddlers who have their own or rented boats. Encompasses a broad range of amenities, scenery, and experiences, but includes a reasonable day-to distance under normal paddling conditions, and access that are relatively easy for able-bodied people to use.

Challenge: Something about the segment is not for beginners and may have hazards that require solid abilities to paddle to specific points. Examples of "challenges" that may be encountered include a portage around a dam, a logjam, difficult launch or landing, rapids, or other demanding experiences.

Wilderness / Proposed Wilderness: Expect greater solitude and wildlife viewing opportunities, but also greater commitments to a longer day of paddling. Also indicates special conservation measures are in place or are being explored.

* Please note that temporary issues such as high water or low water conditions, fluctuations in water quality, channel changes after a flood, unexpected weather changes, or trees falling in river can greatly change the experience.

Terrain

Portage: Carrying a boat overland, either to get around an obstruction or from one body of water to another.

Wier right or weir left: Assumes you are facing directly downstream.

Stalens: Logs or branches in the river channel are a common natural hazard on Iowa's streams because they can fly a canoe and trap people.

Logjams: A live-wide accumulation of logs and debris creating a portage.



Legend

- Iowa River Access Points
- Water
- Corporate Limits
- County Conservancy Property
- Pine Lake State Park
- County Boundary
- Divided Highway
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Camping
- No Camping
- Picnic Area
- Restrooms
- Boating
- Boat Ramp
- Caution/Rapids Only
- Tree Ahead
- Portage Here

Put-In & Take-Out Points

ACCESS	ACCESS #	MILES TO NEXT ACCESS	STREET ADDRESS	CITY STATE ZIP	EXPERIENCE	EXPECTATION
Bigelow Park / Red Bridge	264	2.0	10053 EE Ave	Popejoy, IA 50227	Recreational	
Baseman / Kemp Park	266	0.8	10280 EE Ave	Alden, IA 50096	Recreational	
City of Alden / Portage	265A	0.8	101 River Drive / County Hwy 525	Alden, IA 50096	Challenge	Dam portage river left
Alden River Access / Hardin County	265S	4.9	802 River Drive / County Hwy D15	Alden, IA 50096	Recreational	
Wasson's Cove	260	2.1	2023 River Road	Iowa Falls, IA 50126	Challenge	Jet ski & speed boat traffic
Dougan's Landing	278	-	100 River Street	Iowa Falls, IA 50126	Recreational	No portage at high dam
Iowa Falls River Access / Hardin County	278	4.8	23191 138th	Iowa Falls, IA 50126	Recreational	
Cross' Ford Access	272	5.7	15491 OO Ave	Iowa Falls, IA 50126	Recreational	
Eagle City Access	268	12	27789 160th Street	Iowa Falls, IA 50126	Wilderness	Longer segment
Pine Ridge Access	254A	0.8	31498 Hwy 035	Steamboat Rock, IA 50672	Challenge	Includes a 637 dam portage river left
Steamboat Rock Access & Portage	254B	5.6	Main Street at Iowa River Bridge	Steamboat Rock, IA 50672	Gateway	Taking sun, scenic bluffs, heavy weekend traffic
Pine Lake State Park	248	8.1	33185 County Hwy 536	Eldora, IA 50627	Recreational	
Bates Memorial Park	228	1.8	33125 290th St	Union, IA 50258	Challenge	Logjams are common
Daisy Long Memorial Park	227	-	32671 Hwy 005	Union, IA 50258		

A Note From The DNR Water Trails Director

The goal of the Iowa DNR water trails program is to provide a variety of types of recreation experiences throughout the state and to help people understand which type of experience they are undertaking. The Iowa River in Hardin County is a fine example of how a county's water trail system can offer a little something for everyone. There is a lazy tubing run down the scenic segment from Steamboat Rock to Pine Lake State Park. Upstream, you'll find an entirely different "proposed wilderness" segment with its locally developed priority of solitude, wildlife habitat, and private land conservation, where you can enjoy a glass of locally made wine at the end of a long day of paddling. And then there's the fun town-to-town run from Alden to Iowa Falls offers a well-paced adventure, ending along the picturesque limestone bluffs of Iowa Falls, and local shops with river-centered restaurant scene. And for skilled paddlers, who want a challenge, consider setting up a long shuttle, plan an overnight stay at riverside campsites of Pine Ridge Park, and use the new portage around the dam at Steamboat Rock to have another full day of paddling. We are pleased to add the two sections of the Iowa River Water Trail in Hardin County as part of the growing statewide system of water trails. *Note: Hoopesport, Iowa Department of Natural Resources River Programs Director*

Thanks to the following organizations for their support of the Iowa River Greenbelt Water Trail Hardin County and the brochure:



Iowa Department of Transportation