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HOUSE IS GONE

WELCOME TO
GREATER DOWNTOWN
BARTLETT



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IOWA WATER TRAILS

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PEDAL POWER

Iowa's a hotbed of spring and summer bicycling events for both riders and spectators



Photo by Brian Abeling

May 18 7–10 p.m.

FULL MOON HIGH TRESTLE BRIDGE RIDE

Trail heads in Ankeny, Madrid, Slater, or Woodward
Enjoy a ride by moonlight on the High Trestle Trail in central Iowa. Multiple ride distances are possible: 20 miles from Ankeny, 11 miles from Slater, 3 miles from Madrid, 3 miles from Woodward. Free, no registration required. bikeiowa.com

May 25 8 a.m.

SNAKE ALLEY CRITERIUM AND BURLINGTON ROAD RACE

Downtown Burlington and surrounding areas
Hundreds of competitive cyclists from around the country will try for thousands of dollars in prizes. The downtown criterium has been described by the Iowa Bicycle Racing Association as “one of the most physically challenging races in the Midwest.” The road race is an out-and-back route and covers more than 100 miles. Cost: \$15–\$45. Register online usacycling.org. For the popular and free kids’ races and Cobblestone Climb, which take place at noon on Saturday, register at Steamboat Senior Center. snakevalley criterium.com

June 1 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

T-BONE TRAIL BIKE RIDE

Audubon
Ride the T-Bone Trail, a 21-mile paved route, for any distance you like. A ribbon cutting at 9 a.m. celebrates the new trail extension. Afterward, park your bikes at the town square and browse the art show and enjoy the food-truck offerings. audoboncounty.com

June 5 6:30–8 p.m.

CRANDIC TIME TRIAL SERIES

Big Grove Brewpub, Solon
This monthly competitive event draws riders largely from neighboring Iowa City and Cedar Rapids and includes four time trials with prizes three-deep in each category. The challenging 10-mile time trial includes 370 feet of climbing. Hosted by Big Grove Brewpub. Registration opens at 5 p.m. Riders are off at regular intervals starting at 6:30. Cost: \$15–\$45. Visit usacycling.org to register online. crandicracing.com

LIVE STREAMING

Unlike our vast network of linear highways, Iowa's water trails have carved crooked paths through the Iowa's rolling landscape, creating a fabulous series of routes for canoeing and kayaking

Introduction by Erich Gaukel Photography by Brian Abeling

Padding in Iowa is a great way to both enjoy the scenery and get a workout.

At last count, Iowa's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) had designated 964 miles of water trails in Iowa (with an additional 764 miles of study areas being considered for designation, so that total will likely go up). That's good news for Iowans seeking outdoor recreation in some of the most scenic parts of the state.

Don't own a kayak or canoe? No worries. Our state has many private outfitting businesses positioned along the routes that can set you up with everything you'll need and will drop you off and pick you up later downstream. Some even offer instructional classes you can take before embarking. These local experts can also help guide you around possible log jams and other obstacles and problems associated with the widespread spring flooding we've experienced this year.

Here's a sampling of the water trails you can discover this summer. The

Iowa DNR has detailed brochures on all of its water designated trails, indicating stream access points, safety tips, lists of local outfitters, plus detailed information about the wildlife, natural history, and cultural attractions along the routes. (Descriptions courtesy of the Iowa DNR).

NORTH RACCOON RIVER WATER TRAILS

Sac, Calhoun, and Carroll Counties

The North Raccoon through Sac, Calhoun and Carroll counties stands apart from the broader landscape of intense agriculture, while at the same time taking on the character provided by land practices of private landowners. The corridor varies from broad pasture and savannah grasslands to narrower forested buffers with nearby cropland. In some places, eroding riverbanks rise 50 feet above the river — a testament

to the volume of water being shed from the agricultural landscape. Wildlife is abundant, and varies greatly with changes in vegetation. The paddle is a bit challenging — with longer river stretches and occasional rock dams, riffles, and log jams to navigate.

Dallas County

The North Raccoon River in Dallas County is a great example of the transitions throughout Iowa from wildness to rural agricultural landscapes and increased human presence. The Water Trail begins in a narrower corridor largely engulfed by forests and bluffs. While proceeding downstream, the river meanders through mostly private lands, Beauty and some wildness still exist. Some rock outcrops are visible along a couple of short sections, and the woodlands that do exist are diverse. Wildlife is still present, including many of the animals mentioned in previous sections. Broad sand beaches are found at several bends in the river and receive

a lot of public use. Unfortunately, litter often is left behind. The mixture of human impacts, development, and nature is typical of many central Iowa rivers.

Greene County

A trip on the Raccoon River in Greene County takes travelers through a landscape of tall bluffs, hilltops with sprawling old oaks, and wild places with abundant wildlife. It is a place to experience nature, with few obvious signs of development. The river cuts through prehistoric glacial deposits in a modern agricultural landscape. The story of the river is one of natural features and human alterations, much of which is revealed on the water trail.

WAPSIPINICON RIVER WATER TRAIL

Buchanan County

The Wapsipinicon is a river pulsing with life. The lifeblood of the river is its backwater wetlands and forests that give the river the space it needs and provide habitat to support a diversity of wildlife. While traveling downriver, you will notice a varied landscape of broad floodplain forest, scenic bluffs, and changing colors through the seasons. Nature is abundant, with nearly all nearby farm activity separated by forest, and cabins popping up close to towns. It is a river to explore — by boat, with rod and reel, on sandbars, and by accessing land in adjacent parks. You'll paddle right by Cedar Rock, a Frank Lloyd Wright home now owned by the state of Iowa and operated as a museum.

Clinton and Scott County

Here, the Wapsipinicon meanders and frequently changes its mind as it braids its way through limestone cliffs and lowlands, on its route to the Mississippi River. The beautiful limestone bluffs and caves of Sherman Park will wow paddlers approaching or departing from Sherman Access. The Wapsipinicon

River Education Center is located across the river from Sherman Access. The Center features educational displays and other information about the river and its inhabitants, and is worth a visit.

LOWER DES MOINES RIVER WATER TRAIL

Davis, Van Buren, and Wapello Counties (Eldon to Farmington)

The Lower Des Moines River flows through lowland forests and along some of Southeast Iowa's interesting historic towns (Bentonsport, Bonaparte, and Keosauqua to name just a few) and structures. You may feel like you are moving through time while viewing ancient geology and archaeology evident in the layers of rock outcrops. Large sycamore and cottonwood trees of the lush forest add to the atmosphere of timelessness. Fish and explore from a boat, or get out on sandbars and adjacent public lands. Among the great recreational resources is Lacey-Keosauqua State Park — Iowa's second oldest state park. The park offers great opportunities for hiking, camping, and wildlife viewing along the river, and has its own rich history.

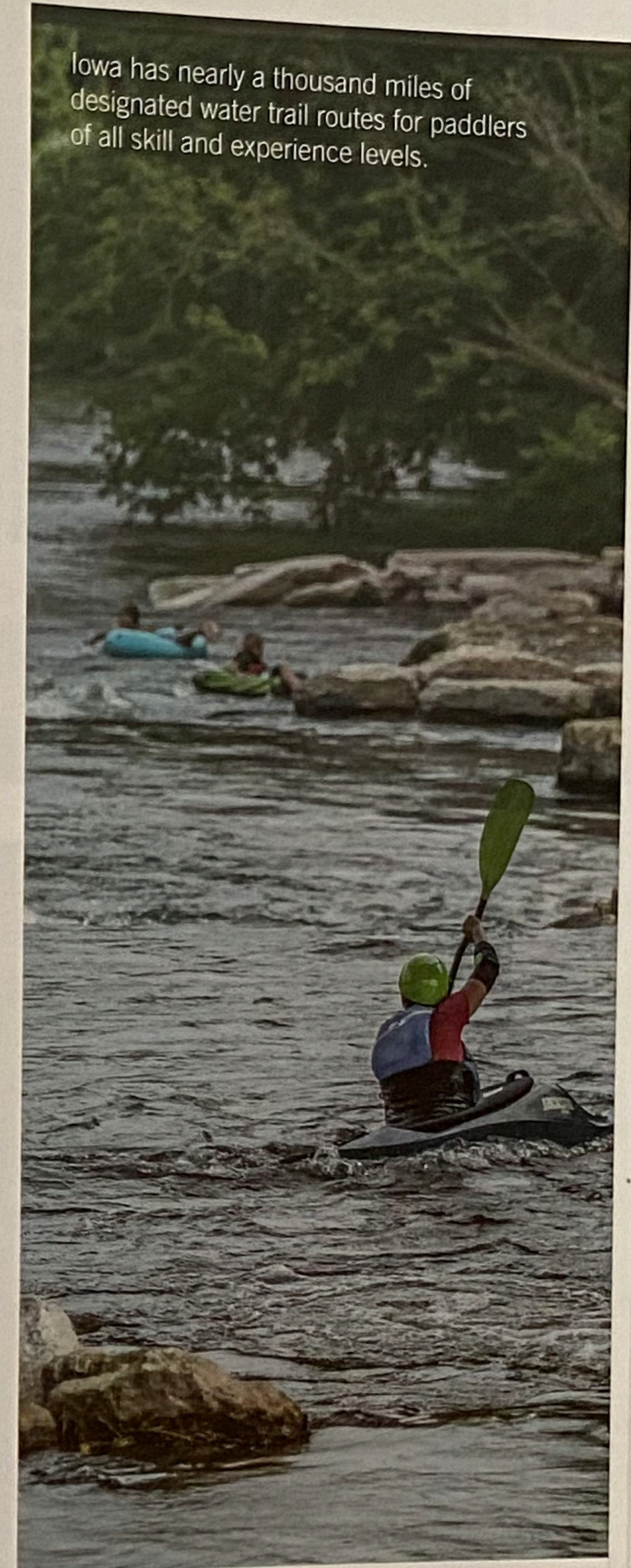
SKUNK RIVER WATER TRAIL

Story County

The Skunk River was once a green wooded ribbon in a prairie sea. Today, it is a green wooded ribbon in a sea of agriculture. Forested river corridors are the only continuous habitat left in the modern Iowa landscape. As such, the Skunk provides critical habitat for both river and land species. The Skunk was formed as a major drainage for melting glaciers. Rounded cobble, large granite boulders, and gravel were left behind as the glaciers receded, and are found in and along the river. Ada Hayden Park in Ames was formerly a quarry business that mined the gravel. Dams and bridges are part of the history of the Skunk

River. Paddlers will notice a bridge built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s at Story City. Remains of bridge abutments and a mill dam remain at Soper's Mill. A low-head dam where a mill once stood still can be seen near the Sleepy Hollow Access.

Iowa has nearly a thousand miles of designated water trail routes for paddlers of all skill and experience levels.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit iowadnr.gov, the Iowa DNR website, to find maps and additional information on these and other water trails.