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GRAIN-BIN GETAWAYS

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IN NORTHWEST IOWA

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GARDEN DESIGNER
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CURVE APPEAL

At Dog Creek Park in O'Brien County, you can rent spacious grain-bin cabins for fabulous family getaways

Text by Erich Gaukel Photography by Brian Abeling



When the O'Brien County Conservation Board decided to build new cabins for its popular Dog Creek Park, where visitors can hike, fish, and swim, they decided to forgo the traditional box shape in favor of something more recognizable on neighboring farms—the circular grain bin.

The board decided to erect two of grain bins (one is nicknamed corn and the other beans), which are outfitted with comfortable residential amenities. Positioned on a bluff above the lake, the shiny structures are almost sculptural in the context of the park's gently rolling hills that wrap around the bean-shaped body of water, where guests catch fish and cool off when the days get warmer.

With vaccines in wide distribution in the state and larger-group gatherings now taking place more safely, these grain-bin cabins are ideal. Each of the two buildings has 1,280 square feet of floor space on two levels with 6 double-size beds. A full kitchen makes cooking easy. Air conditioning and cable TV add to the comforts of home. Outside, there's a second-level wraparound deck (bring your telescope for stargazing), and nearby a grain-bin gazebo provides an outdoor gathering space with three picnic tables. A fire ring on the adjacent patio provides opportunities for evening fires and marshmallow roasting.

There's a 2-night minimum stay, and the park limits guests to 14 days. To reserve, simply call the O'Brien County Conservation Board at 712-295-7200, and they will walk you through the process. (You'll need to mail them a deposit check to secure your place.) Learn more at mycountyparks.com/County/OBrien.

A wraparound porch provides panoramic views of Dog Creek Park and the agricultural landscape beyond.

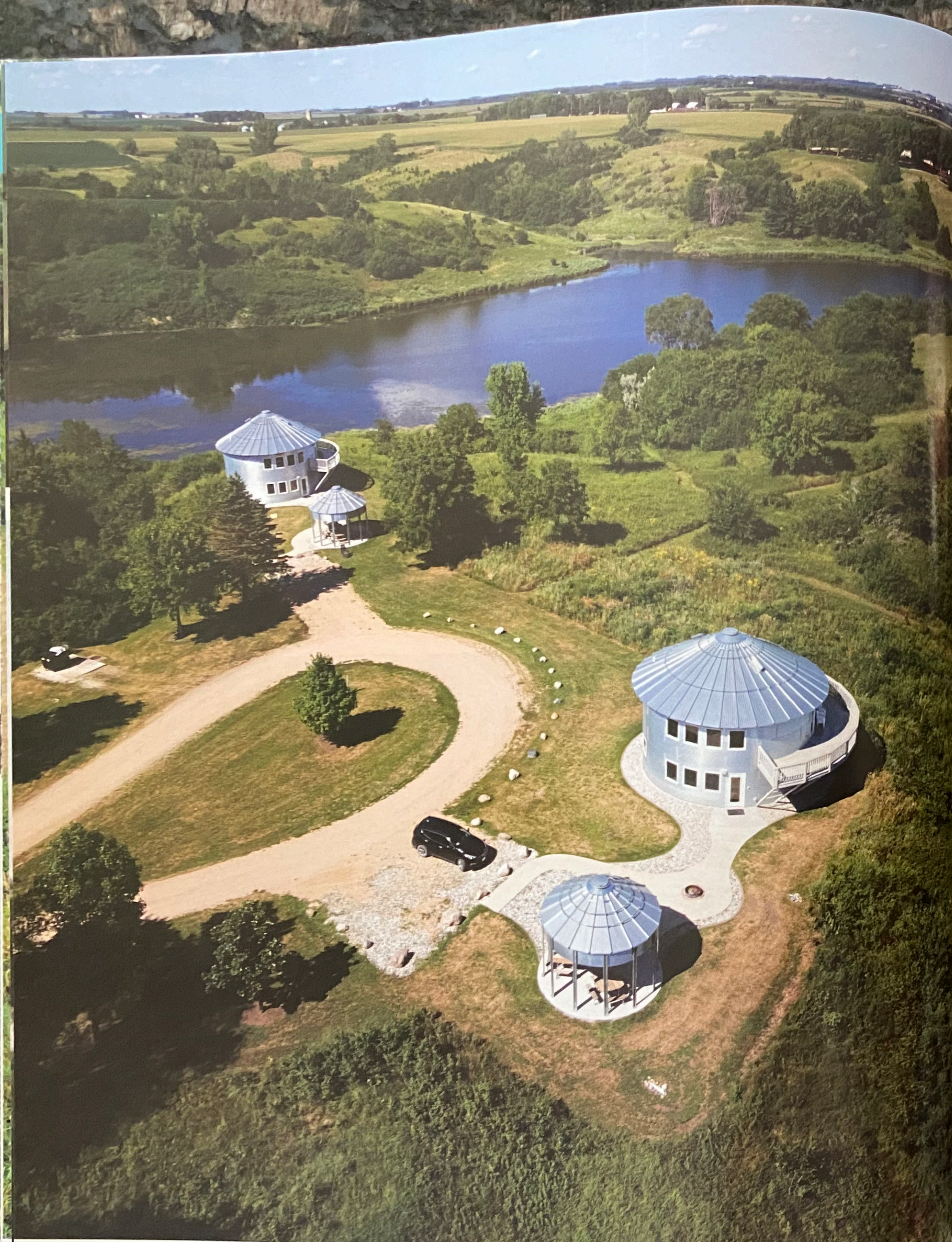


Above photos: Finished with all the comforts of home, the two grain-bin cabins offer interesting architectural features including curved walls, spiral staircases, and galvanized-steel panels.

Opposite bottom: Prairie flowers and grasses contrast with the industrial building materials used to construct the cabins.

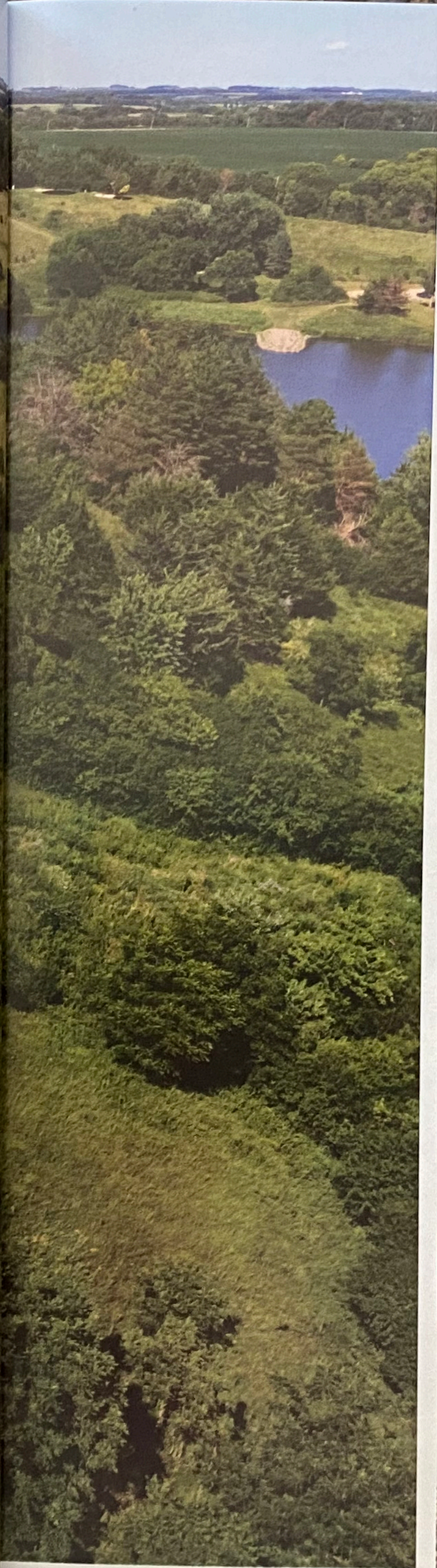
Below: Outdoor gathering areas and fire rings are connected to the cabins by paved walkways.





Above: An aerial image of Dog Creek Park's two grain-bin cabins shows their positions within the park and to each other. The cabins can sleep up to 12 people.

Opposite photos: The grain-bin cabins, which celebrate Iowa's agricultural heritage, provide an escape for guests, including those who want to stay out late for stargazing.





It's just a short walk to the water, where you can fish from the dock or shore. Kayak and canoe enthusiasts can paddle the waters.