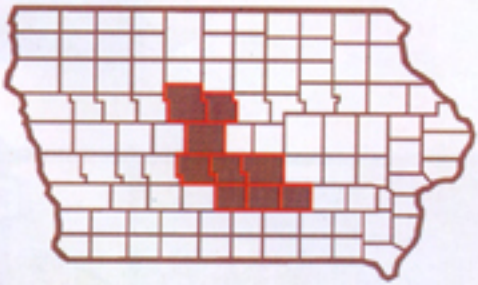
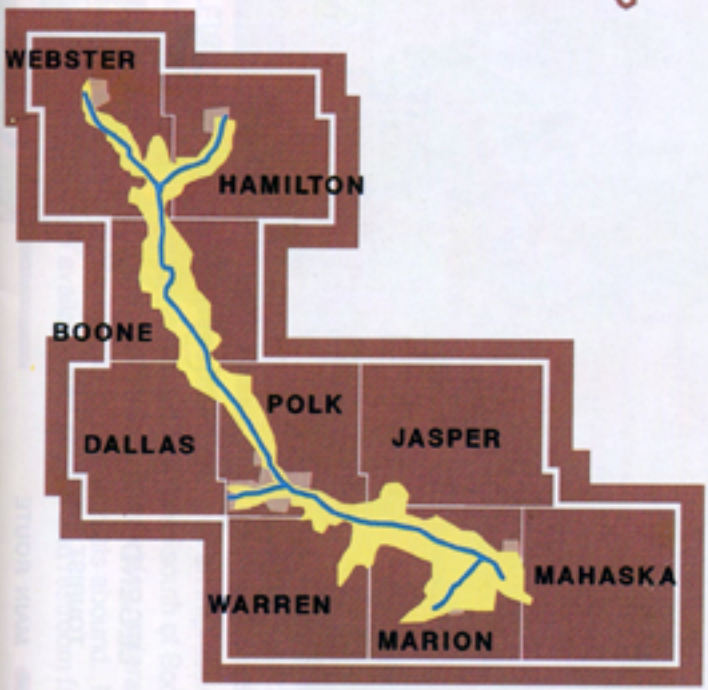
SCENIC ROAD ROUTE

DES MOINES RECREATIONAL RIVER & GREENBELT

IOWA

DRAGOON TRAIL COUNTIES





Des Moines Recreational River & Greenbelt

EXPLORE THE GREENBELT FOLLOWING THE DRAGOON TRAIL

The Des Moines Recreational River and Greenbelt Project was authorized by Congress in 1985. The Greenbelt includes nine counties and encompasses approximately 410,000 acres of public and private land in a 200-mile-long corridor along the Des Moines, Boone, and Raccoon Rivers.

State, county, and city governments, along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, continue to cooperate on a variety of cost-shared projects comprising:

* Natural and developed recreational area,
* Regional cultural features, and
* Environmental education programs.

The Dragoon Trail will guide the traveler along the most scenic route through the Greenbelt from Fort Dodge and Webster City in the north to just below Lake Red Rock in the south. The trail is marked in red on the route map on the reverse side of this brochure. Look for and follow the distinctive Dragoon Trail signs.

Explore the Greenbelt's scenic highways and byways and enjoy its many treasures -- including the waterways; camping, picnicking and hunting areas; fishing facilities; and hiking, biking, equestrian, and cross-country skiing trails.

Enjoy the year-round beauty of the Greenbelt. Each season offers an ever-changing view of nature at its finest. Discover the Greenbelt -- discover the real Iowa.

THE DRAGOONS "OPENED UP" IOWA

Welcome to THE DRAGOON TRAIL. As you journey along the Des Moines River and its tributaries, enjoy the countless facets of our heartland state and discover Iowa's natural and historical features.

When the Dragoons first traversed Iowa, there were no settlements or established roadways. Lieutenant Albert Lea, the Dragoon chronicler and topographer, had only rivers to use as guides. His *Iowa District* report was the first use of the phrase "Iowa, the beautiful land" to describe our state.

Dragoons, lightly armed Calvary soldiers who rode swift horses and scouted the land for potential enemies, originated in England. They were first used in America during the Revolutionary War. These men were sent to Iowa to scout this area, locate and record the number of American Indians, and keep settlers out of the region acquired in the Black Hawk Purchase. They were known as the "Watchmen of the Borders."

The Black Hawk Purchase Treaty was signed in 1832. Chief Black Hawk, leader of Iowa's Sac and Fox Indians, signed this treaty after their defeat in the Black Hawk War.

In 1834, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Watts Kearney led three companies of the First U.S. Dragoons to a point near where the Des Moines River empties into the Mississippi – near today's Keokuk. Captain Nathan Boone, son of Daniel Boone, served as second in command on this expedition.

In the spring of 1835, the 150 Dragoons, along with Indian scouts and guides, journeyed to the confluence of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers – to today's Des Moines. In August, they followed the Des Moines River north to the site where a fort, Fort Dodge, was later established.

With the opening of the area to settlement under the Treaty of 1842, there was a need for another military fort. Fort Des Moines was established by Captain James Allen in 1843 at the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers. Today this site is recognized by a historic marker and the Des Moines Birthplace Memorial Cabin.

Retrace THE DRAGOON TRAIL, relive the Dragoon adventure, and discover the beauty of this land.

Dragoon Trail marker, located on Highway 14, 3 miles north of Knoxville.

THE DRAGOON TRAIL

DRAGOON TRAIL

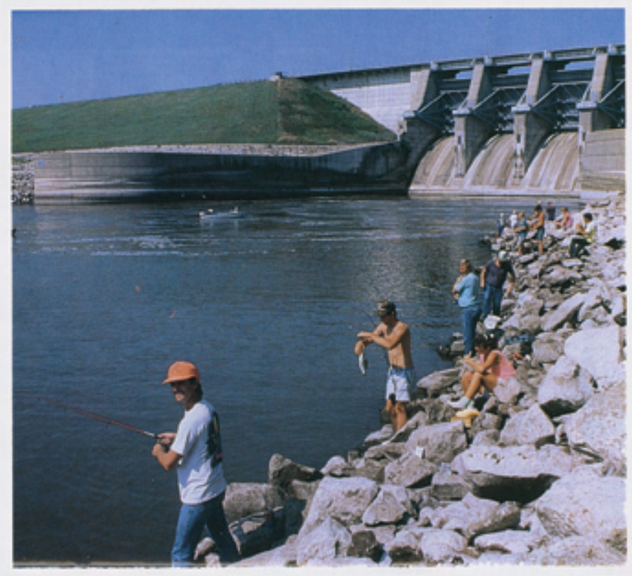
1 FORT MUSEUM AT FORT DODGE: Old Fort Dodge protected the Boone Forks people from the Sioux Indians.

2 WEBSTER CITY DEPOT MUSEUM: Located in Willson Brewer Park, along with the Harmony Center School House, log cabins, and the original Hamilton County courthouse.

3 BOONE AND SCENIC VALLEY RAILROAD: One of Iowa's top tourist attractions has a station replica located in downtown Boone. The seasonal train ride is an opportunity to view the Des Moines River Valley with breathtaking stops on the bridge.

4 LEDGES STATE PARK: This scenic park, with an impressive natural archeological area, is located four miles south of Boone on Highway 164. Hiking trails, scenic overlooks, birdwatching, natural prairie areas, and a variety of trees, plants, and animals abound. New and improved campsites are available with shower and restroom facilities.

7 DES MOINES BOTANICAL CENTER: Walk through the gardens of beautiful tropical and subtropical plants, as well as seasonal flowers. Located along the Des Moines River in downtown Des Moines.



9 COAL RIDGE CHURCH: Sunday worship services are held from Memorial Day until Christmas at this historical church, built in the early 1900's. Located just south of the entrance to Whitebreast Park at Lake Red Rock.

5 SAYLORVILLE LAKE: Located upstream of Des Moines at Johnston, this Corps of Engineers flood control project forms a 54-mile-long lake with recreational and wildlife benefits.

6 DOWNSTREAM CORRIDOR: Recreational opportunities abound in this 19-mile-long corridor from Saylorville Dam to the middle of Des Moines.

8 SEC TAYLOR STADIUM: Site of former Fort Des Moines, located at the confluence of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers.

Kate Shelley Museum at Moingona

Mamie Doud Eisenhower Birthplace located in downtown Boone

One of the Greenbelt's easy access docks

Des Moines River East Multipurpose Trail

Horseback riding at Brushy Creek State Recreation Area