

Park It!

Fort Dodge has more than 500 acres of open spaces

Whether you're looking for a place to hike, to break open that picnic basket, or just to watch nature slowly unfold her beauty, you don't have to go far to find what you're looking for. Fort Dodge offers more than 500 acres of parks and open spaces within the city itself. The four largest city parks have cabins for rent; each comes equipped with electricity and a fireplace. The cabins do go quickly during the summer months, so people would be wise to call well in advance of when they hope to rent one.

OLESON PARK

Oleson Park, located at 12th Avenue South and 17th Street, is the largest of the city parks. It is also perhaps the most diverse, providing for a wide range of recreational opportunities for people in all age brackets and with various interests.

The newest attraction at Oleson Park is a wet one.

Called a splash pad, this feature has nozzles and other devices that spray water on bathers. Some of that water squirts down on them from above, while more water shoots up from the ground like geysers.

The splash pad is designed to provide hours of water fun for small children.

Just steps away from the splash pad is a new arrangement of playground equipment, designed to meet the latest safety standards while promoting physical fitness for youngsters.

Families and friends enjoy a picnic before heading to the bandshell to listen to music. And hikers and mountain bikers traipse over the hilly trails.

The Oleson Park Zoo, built in the 1950s but recently renovated, is home to many critters, including deer, silver and gold pheasants, porcupine, Hungarian partridge, a red fox and a marble fox. Swans swim in a pond located in the center of the zoo. Children can pet lambs, llamas, and other safe animals at The Petting Zoo. The Petting Zoo is staffed by volunteers several afternoons each week. The Kiwanis Club established a walkway for the handicapped around the zoo area in 1987 with park benches located close enough



together that those who have difficulty walking can rest when they need to.

Picnickers shouldn't have much trouble finding a picnic table and grill to roast their hot dogs. The cabin at Oleson Park seats 60 people. Oleson also has four open shelters with picnic tables.

If people feel like they need to get up and move after the potato salad bowl is emptied and the last s'more is devoured, they can play a game of volleyball or take a hike on one of the park's many trails. The trails go deep into the woods and allow a person to really experience nature without leaving the city.

Another highlight is the **Oleson Park Bandshell**. The bandshell has been restored to its former glory: a Federal Works Progress Administration project, the bandshell was originally dedicated in

1938 in front of a crowd of 12,000 people.

LOOMIS PARK

A popular park for pitching horseshoes as well as hiking and picnics, Loomis Park is located along the Des Moines River on Hawkeye Avenue and Loomis Park Drive.

Loomis has a large **horseshoe court** and a **well-marked trail** for hikers. **Playground equipment** is primarily for younger children and includes swings and a small slide set.

The scenic river view makes Loomis Park another spot which is ideal for a picnic. The **two cabins**, like the one at Oleson, go quickly during the summer months. The larger cabin has a fireplace and seats 75, while the smaller cabin seats 30. Also, Loomis has two open shelters and grills, as well as many other picnic tables with grills.

HYDRO-ELECTRIC PARK

Just across the river from Loomis Park is Hydro-Electric Park, located at Fourth Avenue Northwest and First Street. This park is a **favorite for fishermen**, but also has lots of room for other activities.

A **public boat ramp** is located at the north end of the park. But many fishermen and women just like to hike down the barrier wall and drop their poles from there.

Hydro-Electric Park has a tennis court, a basketball court, and plenty of play equipment, as well as picnic tables and grills. A cabin with capacity for 40 is available to rent.

SNELL-CRAWFORD PARK

Snell-Crawford Park is a sprawling park with a creek running through it, located on Williams Drive and 12th Avenue North. Its most unique feature is a **disc golf course**.

But if disc golf isn't your thing, Snell-Crawford also has three sand volleyball courts, an exercise station and play equipment. And if you work up an appetite, there are plenty of picnic tables and grills. Also, a **cabin with a fireplace** and seating for 40 is available for rent.

The layout of the park is ideal for playing games and running off energy. There are two handsome footbridges across the



creek, but generations of children have preferred to wade through it when the water's not too high. They might also try their luck at catching a crawdad or two.

The Soldier Creek Nature Trail runs parallel to the park. Bikers, hikers and dog walkers peacefully co-exist on this trail ... but it's pretty hard not to be peaceful when surrounded by that natural beauty.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Fort Dodge also has many smaller neighborhood parks ideal for a quick picnic lunch or play session with the kids. Most of them have playground equipment, picnic tables and grills. These include East Lawn Acres, Eighth Avenue South and 30th Street; Hawley-Lions Park, Second Street and Eighth Avenue North, which also has basketball courts; Kennedy Brown, 26th Avenue North and 14th Street; Knollcrest Park, 10th Avenue North and 30th Street; Leif Erickson Park, Avenue F and E Street;



Linwood Hanson, Avenue Q; Mini Park, 10th Avenue Southwest and 10th Street, which has basketball courts; Phinney Park, Second Avenue Northwest and AMVETS Drive; R.D. Mitchell Park, Second Avenue North and 25th Street; and Reynolds Park, Third Avenue North and 17th Street. Also, Armstrong Park on Exposition Drive and North Seventh Street has a pond used for **ice skating** in the winter and fishing during the other seasons.

COUNTY AND STATE PARKS

If you're willing to drive just a little farther, even more outdoor pleasure awaits. The three largest nearby parks, Kennedy, Dolliver and Brushy Creek, each have unique features which make them well worth exploring.

KENNEDY PARK

John F. Kennedy Memorial Park is located at 1415 Nelson Ave. The 394-acre park's many attractions include an adjacent golf course, Lakeside Municipal Golf Course; camping facilities with hookups; playground equipment; the 45-acre Badger Lake, used for fishing, boating and swimming; nature trails; a bird blind; butterfly gardens; a shelter house; picnic tables and grills; and an educational nature center.

DOLLIVER STATE PARK

Dolliver Memorial State Park is located 10 miles south of Fort Dodge in the scenic Des Moines River valley. This park is a mix of bluffs, canyons, and flat land which spreads out over 457 acres of land. A prominent feature of the park is the abundance of hiking trails, mostly quite challenging ones with lots of uphill walking and rough terrain. Two lodges are available to rent. Each can accommodate about 100 people. Group cabins and a family cabin are also available, as well as camping ground.

BRUSHY CREEK STATE RECREATION AREA

Brushy Creek, 15 miles southeast of Fort Dodge and just east of Lehigh, is the largest recreational area in the state of Iowa with 6,500 acres of land. The park provides for many diverse interests and contains a shooting range, 35 multiuse trails popular with hikers and horseback riders, a large camping ground, and a 700-acre lake for fishing, boating and swimming.

On Moorland Pond



Nestled along U.S. Highway 20 near Moorland is a wildlife venture that has reintroduced water fowl into the north central Iowa outdoors.

A borrow pit located directly along the major highway thoroughfare is home to endangered trumpeter swans as well as a number of other waterfowl.

The swans are said by Webster County Conservationists to be the claim to fame to this area as they draw onlookers all summer long in hopes of catching a glimpse of young cygnets born each summer season.

The swans' nesting site, along with the trumpeter swans, is easily visible from the highway.

Though native to Iowa, the swans were driven from the state by hunting and the draining of wetlands. The pond where the trumpeters live is a recreated wetland, formed during the construction of U.S. Highway 20 during the late 1980s and turned over to the Webster County Conservation Board.

The swans, which weigh more than 30 pounds, have an 8-foot wingspan.

If pond visitors want to feed the swans, they should only toss whole corn. Bread, in particular, should be avoided as it carries the possibility of lethal mold.

The pond is also unique to the area in that it does not freeze in the winter months and therefore hosts a number of other area swans and wildlife from throughout Iowa as well.

Moorland Pond is also a popular fishing spot as many anglers have hoisted trophy-size fish out of the waters.



Iowa's trumpeter swan restoration program at a glance

- Since 2000, more than 1,000 swans have been released statewide, including 70 in 2008.
- Sightings of trumpeter swans born in Iowa have been reported in 16 states and two Canadian provinces.

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Picturesque Dolliver Park



History and the picturesque landscape of Webster County intermingle at Dolliver Memorial State Park.

Located just 10 miles south of Fort Dodge along the scenic Des Moines River Valley, Dolliver Park is a mix of bluffs, canyons and flatlands spread out over more than 450 acres of land.

The park is known for its abundance of hiking trails, including those that wind through the Copperas Beds — unique sandstone formations that tower 100 feet above Prairie Creek. Other trails lead through Bone Yard Hollow which is a unique historical area to Webster County. Bone Yard Hollow is said to have been given its name by early settlers who found large amounts of buffalo bones in the canyon. It is believed the first inhabitants in the area drove herds of buffalo from the prairie over the cliff to their deaths so that they might use the animals for their meat, hides, horns and bones.

Dolliver Park also features a number of additional trails that take visitors through an uphill climb of the wooded hillsides and Indian Mounds

of Webster County.

Two lodges are also available to visitors of Dolliver Memorial State Park. Both built during the 1930s, the lodges are available for rental and can accommodate groups of 100 people.

For those wanting to spend the night in the great outdoors, Dolliver Park offers group cabins and camping facilities.

Dolliver has two basic family cabins.

The group camping area also includes a dining hall and 10 separate sleeping cabins.

Both the family cabin and group camping area are located only a short distance from the modern restrooms and shower building.

The Dolliver campground is also

available to outdoor enthusiasts. The campground overlooks the picturesque Des Moines River. There are 33 campsites with electrical hookups, a modern restroom, showers and a dump station.

All of Dolliver Park's camping facilities can be booked online through the park reservation system at www.reserveiaparks.com.

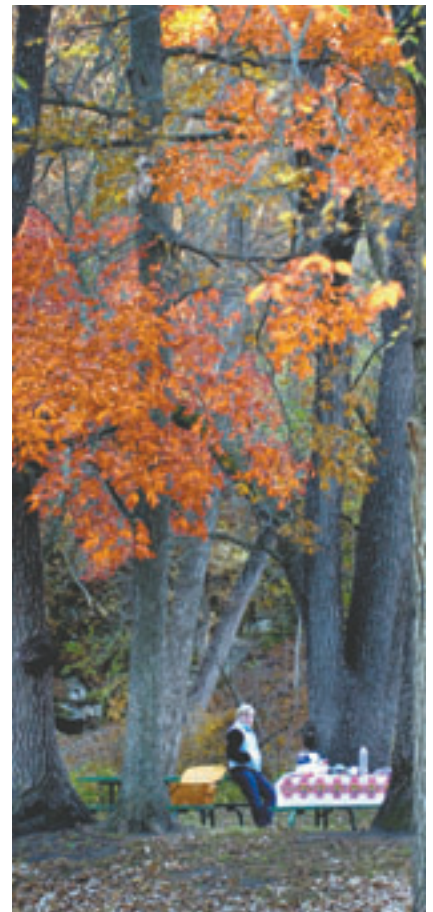
Boating and fishing opportunities also abound at Dolliver Memorial State Park. Located on the Des Moines River, which is popular for both boating and fishing, a modern boat ramp is available for canoes and fishing boats.

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Wild, relaxing Brushy Creek

Brushy Creek State Recreation Area at more than 6,500 acres, is Iowa's largest public outdoor recreation area. Visitors to Brushy Creek can relax in the great outdoors, as well as having opportunities for outdoor recreation activities all year round, including camping, hunting, biking, hiking, horseback riding, boating, fishing and swimming.

Brushy Creek Lake covers 690 acres and provides outstanding fishing, no-wake boating and swimming because of its excellent water quality and extensive system of fish habitat structures, jetties, and bank protection.

It has the largest earthen dam ever built by the Department of Natural Resources and the deepest manmade permanent pool lake in Iowa at 1,055 feet above sea level. Brushy Creek is a popular destination for both day and overnight activities.

BOATING AND FISHING

There is contagious enthusiasm among fishermen with Brushy Creek's fish population. A fishing pier is located on the west side of the lake, north of the beach area. Four boat ramps offer convenient lake access. Boats are restricted to a no-wake speed. High water quality, extensive fish habitat, eight fishing jetties and a handicapped accessible pier provide great angling opportunities. A lake-stocking program, which began in the fall of 1998, has proven a phenomenal growth rate success.

The stocking regime and water quality will provide good fishing in the lake for years to come. Primary species stocked here include walleye, large-mouth bass, small-mouth bass, muskie, red ear sunfish, crappie, channel catfish and bluegill.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has announced a Free Fishing Weekend for all ages the weekend of June 6-8.

PICNICKING AND SHELTERS

Picnic areas are located around the park with tables and fire grills. Two open shelters provide great places for gatherings — one is located at the equestrian day-use area and the other at Fish Pier Point. They are available for rent by contacting the park manager.

SWIMMING BEACH

A large sandy beach, located on the west side of the lake, provides swimming and volleyball opportunities.



Swimming is allowed in the designated beach area only.

TRAILS

Brushy Creek's 35 miles of multiuse trail system offers a variety of opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and mountain biking. A map of these trails is on display at the information kiosk located in the northern equine campground.

Trail users are asked to call ahead, 543-8298, for trail conditions. Wet weather can require trails to be closed to minimize environmental damage. Trail users are also asked to stay on designated trails, respect the rights of other trail users, and report any trail problems to the DNR staff.

EQUESTRIAN DAY-USE STAGING AREAS

There are two day-use staging areas — one near the campground and the other in the southern portion of the park. Equestrian day-users are encouraged to use these facilities for parking and trailering. Seasonal restroom facilities are available near the campground with year-round restrooms and a picnic shelter at the southern day use area. Day users may use these areas at no charge for the day.

EQUESTRIAN CAMPING

The campground at Brushy Creek is considered one of the most modern equestrian campgrounds in the Midwest. The shaded campground, located just inside the west park entrance, features a modern shower and restroom, 125 campsites (50 electrical hookups) and a playground. Each site has a picnic table, fire ring, grill and a hitch rail. Drinking water hydrants, a horse washing area and a large riding arena are nearby. The campground in the southern portion has hitching rails with 105 campsites, including 70 electrical hookups. A newly completed modern equestrian campground along County Road D46 includes 70 campsites — 10 with full hookup capacity and 60 with electricity. Non-equestrian campers are welcome to use all of the campgrounds.

PRIMITIVE CAMPING

Campers have the opportunity for camping in a beautiful site located along scenic Brushy Creek in the southeast corner of the park. This area is also available for picnicking.

GENERAL CAMPING INFORMATION

Camping in Iowa state parks and recreation areas is on a first-come, first-served basis. No reservations are accept-



ed. Camping permits are available at the information kiosk located at the entrance to the campground.

Campers are asked to follow these rules:

- Animals must be stabled inside a horse trailer or tied to a hitch rail to reduce damage to campsites.
- Hitching to trailers is only allowed for short periods of time for grooming and saddling.
- Portable stalls, pens or electric fences are not allowed.
- Animals must be kept to a walk or trot when in the campground area.
- All pets must be leashed or caged.

HUNTING

An active wildlife management program provides habitat and food for a va-

Neighboring Towns

Lehigh is located five miles southwest on County Road D46.

Duncombe is located five miles north on County Road P73.

Stratford is located nine miles southeast on County Road R21.

Fort Dodge is located approximately 15 miles northwest on U. S. Highway 20.

Webster City is located approximately 13 miles northeast on U.S. Highway 20.

Dolliver State Park is located 10 miles west on County Road D46.

Brushy Creek State Recreation Area
3175 290th St. • Lehigh, IA 50557
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For a complete detailed trails map, visit www.exploreiowaparks.com

riety of game and non-game wildlife. Mature forest, native prairie, young to middle-aged second-growth timber, grasslands, pastures, old crop fields and existing crop fields provide good wildlife potential. White-tailed deer and wild turkey are popular with hunters at Brushy Creek, along with pheasants, quail, rabbits and squirrels. A number of designated parking areas are located throughout Brushy Creek to provide

convenient access for the hunter.

SHOOTING RANGE

Two ranges are available — one is south of the park office approximately one-half mile north of County Road D46. The other is a trap range located in the northern section of the park. It can be reached by taking 250th St. from County Road P73, then turn right on Taylor Avenue.