



CEAR VALLEY TRAILS & RECREATION GUIDE

Black Hawk County, Iowa
Including the cities of Cedar Falls & Waterloo

WELCOME TO THE CEDAR VALLEY

With over 130 miles of hard-surfaced multi-use trails, an abundance of soft trails, thousands of acres of lakes and ponds, emerging water trails, numerous cultural venues/museums, and a variety of other recreational opportunities, Black Hawk County, Iowa has established itself as a destination for people of all ages.

This guide serves as your "road map" to fun and enlightenment. Whether riding your bike, paddling your kayak, or enjoying the museums in the area, Black Hawk County and its communities are the place to be.

Interested in playing a round of golf or riding your ATV? How about cross-country skiing or simply enjoying the outdoors in the parks and public spaces Black Hawk County has to offer? Look no further. It's all inside. Come, visit us and enjoy the many treasures of Black Hawk County for yourself!

For more information, contact any of the following:

Black Hawk County Conservation
1346 Airline Highway, Waterloo
(319) 433-PARK
blackhawcountyparks.com

Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau
6510 Hudson Rd., Cedar Falls
(319) 268-4266 or (800) 845-1955
cedarfallstourism.org

Experience Waterloo
500 Jefferson St., Waterloo
(319) 233-8350 or (800) 728-8431
experiencewaterloo.com
Open Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Strap on your backpack, grab your bike, launch the Iowa By Trail app iowabytrail.com, and experience why Iowa is the Trails Capital of the Nation.



PADDLER'S TRAIL LOOP

Where else can you paddle in a loop? On the Cedar Valley Paddler's Trail— Iowa's first designated water trail! Beginning at the Fisher Lake Boat Ramp, this 10-mile excursion travels through the chain of lakes, down the Cedar River, and through George Wyth State Park before returning to the start. The trip takes four to six hours (depending on skill and water levels) and makes a great group outing! Some portaging is necessary—the longest is .8 miles—and is marked by signs along the route.



WATER TRAIL SAFETY

Be Safe. River users are required to have a Personal Floatation Device in the boat. Actually wearing it greatly increases your chance of survival if you capsize. Children 13 years of age and younger must wear a life vest at all times. River levels change and conditions change constantly. Avoid hazards such as snags, and ALWAYS portage at low-head dams.

Limit Alcohol Consumption. Intoxication on waterways leads to poor judgement and increased risk of drowning.

Ability Levels. A Beginner may not be able to steer or adequately control his/her boat and will not be able to negotiate sweepers when the river is experiencing high water flows. Beginners should paddle with experienced paddlers during low flow on water with few obstacles. An intermediate paddler will have the ability to stop the boat quickly and to move the boat backwards and sideways with some precision. These paddlers can "read" the river and negotiate minor obstacles and rapids. Kayakers should have a mastery of wet exit skills. The advanced paddler has mastered eddy turns, rapid reversals in current, and advanced draw strokes, and should have precise boat control skills. These paddlers have the ability to navigate through obstacles or rapids that will prove to be dangerous to paddlers with inadequate skills. Kayakers should have a dependable roll.

Water Conditions. The water temperature and rate of flow both play a role in determining water conditions. Hypothermia can occur when the water temperature and the air temperature do not add up to 100 degrees. A flooded river is a dangerous river. When planning your trip, consider both water temperature and the rate of flow. Conditions for a Beginner trip include an air temperature of 75-85 degrees and the ability to see the bottom of the river; conditions for an Advanced trip include a cool air temperature of 35-65 degrees, or the river is over its banks and the bottom of the river cannot be seen.



HUNTING

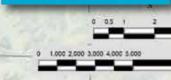
Black Hawk County offers over 6,000 acres of public hunting land with a variety of habitats and species. These are multi-use areas; please use caution and respect other users, neighboring landowners, and the land. All state laws apply. Details and maps of public hunting areas can be found at blackhawcountyparks.com.

WATER TRAIL RULES

Respect Private Property. Much land along these waterways is private. Do not tamper with fences, structures, livestock, or any other property. Enter private land only with permission of the landowner. Paddlers should camp only in designated campsites.

No Littering or Dumping. Leave no trace. Volunteers work to keep these waterways clean. To protect the natural beauty of the Cedar Valley's waterways, please observe the principle of "Leave No Trace" as you paddle and camp along the rivers:

- **Plan Ahead and Prepare:** Proper trip planning and preparation will help paddlers achieve trip goals safely and enjoyably while minimizing damage to natural and cultural resources.
- **Pack It In, Pack It Out:** Keep the rivers clean by picking up litter and hauling out your own garbage.
- **Properly Dispose of What You Can't Pack Out:** Prevent contamination of the rivers by dispersing dishwasher far away from the river. Minimize the need to pack out food scraps by carefully planning meals. Avoid the use of soap. Proper human waste disposal prevents the spread of disease, exposure to others, and speeds decomposition. Catholes, 6"-8" deep and 200' from the water are often the easiest and most practical way to dispose of feces.
- **Leave What You Find:** Allow others a sense of discovery; leave rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts, and other objects as found.
- **Minimize Use and Impact of Fire:** The natural beauty of the river can be degraded by poorly placed fire pits. When cooking, use a lightweight camp stove. The best place to build a fire is within an existing fire ring; the next best location is on a sand bar. The ashes should always be properly dispersed or buried.



The Cedar Valley offers a number of scenic waterways for canoers and kayakers of all ability levels. The Cedar River contains the Cedar Valley Paddlers Trail located in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls metro area and through George Wyth State Park. The Wapsipinicon Water Trail begins in northern Bremer County and runs southeast through Black Hawk County into Buchanan County. The many accesses available along the variety of waterways in the Cedar Valley enable users to enjoy varied trip lengths and offer such amenities as picnic and camping areas.

CAMPING, CABINS, LODGES, AND SHELTERS

Public campgrounds can be found at George Wyth State Park (Iowa Department of Natural Resources); Black Hawk Park, McFarlane Park, Hickory Hills Park, Siggelkow Park, and Big Woods Lake Campground (Black Hawk County Conservation Board); and Deerwood Park (City of Evansdale). For specific campground amenities, contact the campground's governing jurisdiction. Facilities of various sizes, amenities, and costs are available throughout Black Hawk County. Cabins enable overnight visits in scenic locations and lodges are great for informal or formal events such as weddings and conferences. The use of shelters is nearly limitless. For more information, visit: blackhawcountyparks.com cedarfalls.com waterlooleisureservices.org

OHV Park

Waterloo is one of few cities in Iowa with a state sanctioned OHV (Off Highway Vehicle) Park in an urban setting. Located in the Riverview Recreation Area, construction of this facility was made possible through cooperation of the City of Waterloo, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa OHV Association, and the Trailblazers, a local club. The nearly 170 acre OHV park contains two MX tracks, a flat track, a large parking lot, and many miles of ATV trails.

LAKES AND RIVERS

Water recreation is available for fishing, skiing, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, personal watercraft, and swimming. Twelve lakes, the Cedar River, Black Hawk Creek, and the Wapsipinicon River offer numerous species of fish, including bluegill, bullhead, channel catfish, flathead catfish, crappie, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, northern pike, walleye, trout, yellow bass, and yellow perch. Water skiing via boat and personal watercraft is available at Brinker Lake and the Cedar River. Beach facilities for swimming are located at George Wyth Lake and Deerwood Lake.

LEGEND

- Designated Water Trail
- Meander / Non-Meander Stream Boundary
- Parks & Open Space
- River/Water Feature
- State Preserve
- Boat Dock
- Boat Ramp
- Camping (Modern)
- Camping (Primitive)
- Camping (Watercraft Access)
- Carry Down Access
- Carry Down Access (Unmaintained)
- Dam
- Drinking Water
- Fishing Access
- Parking
- Portage
- Rapids or Rock Dam
- Rest Room (Public)
- River Mile Marker (Miles from Mouth of the River)
- Visitors Bureau
- 6000m U.S. National Grid Markers
- 42° 0' N Latitude and Longitude Grid Markers

CONTACT INFORMATION

Black Hawk County Conservation (319) 433-PARK blackhawcountyparks.com	Waterloo Leisure Services (319) 291-4370 waterlooleisureservices.org
George Wyth State Park (319) 232-5505 iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com	City of Evansdale (319) 232-6683 evansdale.gov/office
Cedar Falls Recreation Division (319) 273-8636 cedarfalls.com	City of Hudson (319) 988-3600 cityofhudsonia.com

For information on other Iowa Water Trails, visit iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking



DOWNTOWN CEDAR FALLS
A nationally recognized Great American Main Street and Iowa Cultural District, downtown Cedar Falls offers shopping, dining, and night life. It's bicycle friendly, too, with lots of bike racks, trails, and on-road cycling accommodations.

DOWNTOWN WATERLOO
Recognized as an Iowa Cultural District, Downtown Waterloo offers activities for all ages. Attractions on both sides of the Cedar River, from museums and family activities to outdoor recreation, the river walk, and nightlife are all tied together by the city's Riverfront Renaissance.

Cedar Valley
TRAILS
www.cedarvalleytrails.org

TRAIL LOOPS
Looking for a long bike trip or a scenic walking route? These trail loops link several points of interest, each of varying lengths and scenery. Feeling adventurous? Create a loop of your own!

- 1 Big Woods Loop** 8.3 miles
Big Woods Trail | Lone Tree Road Trail | Cedar Valley Lakes Trail
Moments from downtown Cedar Falls, this loop travels around Big Woods Lake and to Black Hawk Park. Visit the Cedar Falls Rotary Club's prairie restoration and cycle along open spaces and residential areas, the forested bank of the Cedar River, Cottage Row's homes, and Island Park on your return to downtown Cedar Falls.
- 2 Cedar River Loop** 17 miles
South Riverside Trail | Cedar Valley Lakes Trail
Connecting the downtown areas of Cedar Falls and Waterloo, this loop skirts Washington Park in Cedar Falls, the floodplain forests in George Wyth State Park and Hartman Reserve, and runs through the industrial area in northwest Waterloo, while providing views of the Cedar River.
- 3 UNI Loop** 2.6 miles
UNI Preserve Trail | Cedar Prairie Trail
Travel along babbling brooks and prairie preserves before entering the University of Northern Iowa campus. You'll also pedal through Rownd Park and past The Falls Aquatic Center. Take time out to visit the College Hill art galleries, bookstores, coffee shops, and the Hearst Center for the Arts' sculpture garden.
- 4 Prairie Lakes Loop** 10.2 miles
Prairie Lakes Trail | Cedar Prairie Trail
Take a trip to Prairie Lakes Park and enjoy views of the lakes, native prairies, and associated wildlife. Stop by the Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau and pick up a souvenir! Then head to Pfeiffer Park and continue your journey through Rownd Park and by sparkling Dry Run Creek.
- 5 Cedar Prairie Loop** 19.3 miles
Cedar Prairie Trail | Greenhill Trail | South Riverside Trail | Sergeant Road Trail
This loop passes by fields, along rolling hills, residential areas, shopping centers, industrial areas, the Cedar Valley Soccer Complex, the Katoski Greenbelt, and beside Black Hawk Creek.
- 6 Riverwalk Loop** 3.2 miles
218 Trail | Park Ave. Bike Lane | Cedar Valley Lakes Trail | 18th St.
Welcome to downtown Waterloo! Whether it is a concert at the amphitheater, a splash in Mark's Park, a stroll through the river plazas and overlooks, a visit to many of the cultural venues, or a great meal at one of many locally owned restaurants, Waterloo's downtown Riverfront Renaissance offers it all.

Please support the following Sponsors of this Guide:

Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
incog.org

Cedar Trails Partnership
(800) 845-1955
cedartrailspartnership.org

Cedar Valley Assn. for Soft Trails
217 Washington St., Cedar Falls
cvast.org

Cedar Valley Bicycle Collective
219 W. 4th St., Waterloo
(319) 427-2012
cvbikollective.org

Cedar Valley Cyclists
P.O. Box 2463, Waterloo
ridcvc.org

Outfitters
Crawdaddy Outdoors
207 E. Bremer Ave., Waverly
(319) 352-9129
crawdaddyoutdoors.com

SCHEELS
402 Viking Plaza Dr., Cedar Falls
(319) 277-3033
scheels.com

Cook's Outdoors
1910 Center Ave., Cedar Falls
(319) 260-2040
cooksoutdoors.com

Running Stores
The Runner's Flat
120 Main St., Cedar Falls
(319) 277-1154
therunnersflat.com

Bike Shops
Andy's Bike Shop
100 E. 2nd St., Suite 105, Cedar Falls
(319) 260-2151
shopandysbikes.com

Bike Tech
217 Washington St., Cedar Falls
(319) 266-5979
biketechcf.com

Hall Bicycle Company
207 E. Bremer Ave., Cedar Falls
(319) 260-2610
hallbicycle.com

Waterloo Bicycle Works
316 W. 3rd St., Waterloo
(319) 830-5631
facebook.com/WaterlooBicycleWorks



LEGEND

- Trail - Hard Surface
- Trail - Granular
- Bicycle Lane / Paved Shoulder
- On Road Bicycle Route (Shared Roadway)
- Planned Trail (Construction Pending)
- Trail Det - Biking Allowed
- Trail Det - No Biking
- Parks & Open Space
- State Preserve
- Public Hunting Allowed
- American Discovery Trail
- Amphitheater
- Beach (Public)
- Bicycle Repair Station (Self Service)
- Bicycle Store
- Boat Dock
- Boat Ramp
- Camping (Modern)
- Carry Down Access
- Dam
- Disc Golf
- Exit Number
- Golf Course (Open to the Public)
- Great American Rail Trail
- Hiking and Cross Country Skiing
- Hospital / Urgent Care Clinic
- Important Bird Area
- Mountain Biking Area
- Museum
- Off Highway Vehicle Park
- Parking
- Recreation Center (Non-Profit)
- Rest Room (Public)
- Shooting Range
- Swimming Pool (Outdoor)
- Trail Loop Number
- Visitors Bureau
- 60 Miles in U.S. National Grid Markers
- 42° 27' Latitude and Longitude Grid Markers

RULES OF THE TRAIL
We encourage everyone to safely enjoy the benefits of our trail system. Whether you're walking, biking or in-line skating, please:

- Observe all posted signs
- Use your head, wear a helmet
- Go with the flow - stay to the right
- Stay clear of the trail when stopped
- Signal turns or stops
- Announce when passing
- Show respect for adjacent property
- All dogs must be leashed
- Clean up after pets

CEDAR VALLEY NATURE TRAIL

The 52-mile Cedar Valley Nature Trail connects Waterloo/Cedar Falls with Cedar Rapids and many towns in between. Surfaced with asphalt from Evansdale to McFarlane Park east of La Porte City and then compacted limestone, the trail follows the floodplain of the Cedar River. A campground is located along the trail at McFarlane Park. Motorized vehicles and horses are not allowed on the trail. For more information call Black Hawk County Conservation at (319) 433-PARK(7275).

CEDAR TRAILS PARTNERSHIP

The Cedar Trails Partnership is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that advocates for the history of the Cedar Valley. Cedar Valley's extensive hard surfaced, soft, and water trails. Cedar Trail Patrol Ambassadors, volunteers trained in rudimentary first aid and bike repairs, provide assistance on the trails throughout the year. Call (319) 269-4266 or (800) 845-1955 or visit cedartrailspartnership.org.

PRAIRIE PATHWAYS

The Prairie Pathways project provides trail users the ability to learn about the history of the Cedar Valley. Dozens of panels and kiosks are located along the trail system, each depicting the area's natural and human history with pictures and stories. There are also trail maps located on the kiosks and on some of the panels to assist trail users in finding their way.

WAYFINDING SIGNS

Wayfinding signs are located throughout the Cedar Valley Trails network. Major destinations included on the signs are downtown Waterloo and Cedar Falls, the University of Northern Iowa, and George Wyth State Park. More localized destinations are included on signs as trail users near those locations. The signs include mileage and travel time, at 10 mph, to each destination.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Trail Emergency Access Signs (TEAS) and U.S. National Grid (USNG) signs mounted on posts, benches, and shelters close to the trails describe location information for emergency responders. If you are in need of emergency assistance while on the trails, please call 911 and be prepared to relay the information on the nearest TEAS or USNG sign.

AMERICAN DISCOVERY TRAIL

Nationwide, the 6,800 mile American Discovery Trail (ADT) begins at Cape Henlopen State Park on the Delaware seashore and ends at Point Reyes National Seashore in the Rockies to paved bike trails and rural roads in Iowa. In Black Hawk County, the ADT, marked by local and county park officials, uses a number of hard-surfaced trails including the Cedar Valley Nature Trail, Cedar Valley Lakes Trail, South Riverside Trail, Cedar Prairie Trail, and the Sergeant Road Trail. The northernmost point of the ADT is located in George Wyth State Park.

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL-TRAIL

The Great American Rail-Trail, a project of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, is the first trail that will be entirely bikeable across the country and, when completed, separated from vehicle traffic. This trail, stretching more than 3,700 miles between Washington, D.C., and Washington State, connects 125+ existing rail-trails, greenways, and other multiuse paths and passes through the Cedar Valley. For more information, visit railstotrails.org/greatamericanrailtrail.

