

# Chapter 10. Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources



**Blackhawk Wildlife Area**



**Hurstville Interpretive Center**



**Canton Church School**



**Environmental education outdoors**



**Maquoketa River kayakers**



**Historical Education at Millrock School**

*All photos from Jackson County Conservation*

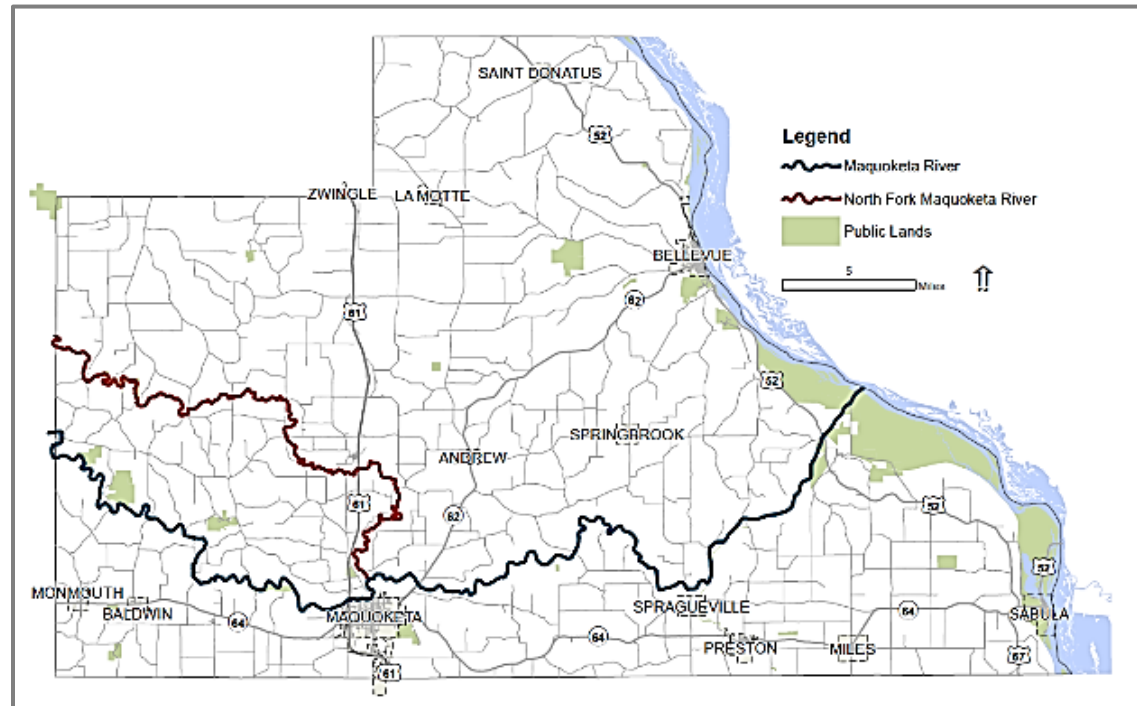
**OVERVIEW**

Jackson County’s rolling landscape is characterized by rugged hills, bluffs, caves, limestone outcroppings, and many streams and rivers. These and other unique natural, cultural, and historical resources make the county a regional destination for outdoor recreation.

Most streams flow into the Maquoketa River and the North Fork of the Maquoketa River. The two rivers flow primarily west to east before they converge near the center of the county. The Maquoketa River then continues east to the Mississippi River on the county’s eastern boundary.

Many natural areas in the County are public park and recreation areas owned by county, state, and federal agencies. They are open for activities such as camping, hunting, fishing, and paddling. Figure 10.1 is a map of the locations of the public lands and rivers. Figure 10.2 is a map of Jackson County parks and trails, as well as state and federal parks.

Cultural resources are the remnants of the people who lived in Jackson County



**Figure 10.1 Map of Public Lands and Rivers in Jackson County**

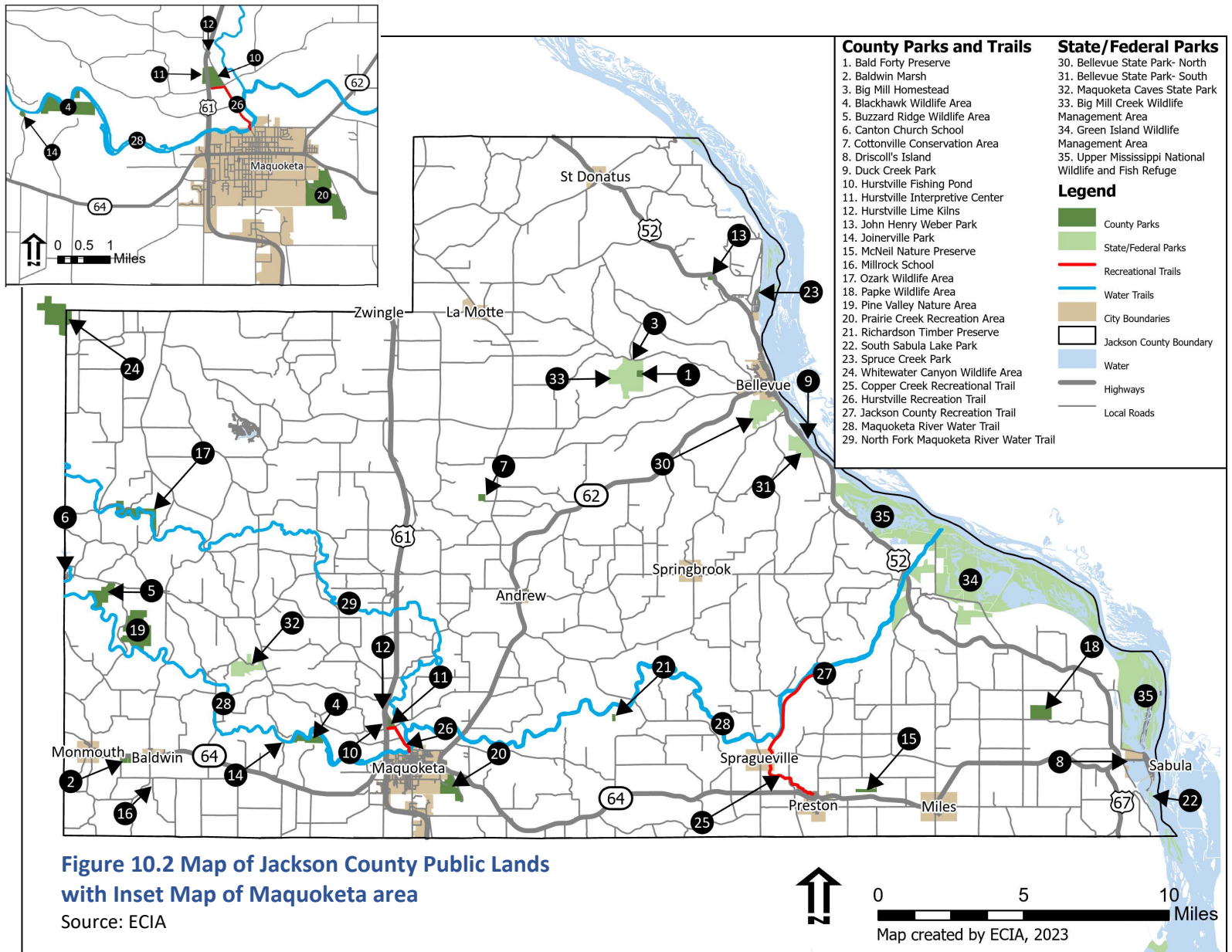
Source: 2021 Jackson County Water Trail Plan, p. 8

throughout time, including Native Americans, pioneers, and settlers. The county’s cultural resources include historic properties and districts; archeological sites (including pioneer cemeteries and ancient burial mounds); and the cultural landscape of natural resources, agriculture, and communities that intertwine with the county’s parks, recreation facilities, rivers, and streams.

Future planning for county parks and recreation improvements is linked with the conservation and interpretation of cultural resources in Jackson County.

Information about natural resources found in Jackson County is provided in Chapter 9. Agriculture and Natural Resources of this comprehensive plan.

10. PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES



**COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION AREAS**

The following information is from the Jackson County Conservation website at <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Jackson.aspx> unless noted otherwise.

The Mississippi River and its tributaries offer excellent fishing, paddling and boating. As a part of the driftless landscape, the exposed limestone provides unique hiking, biking, birding, horseback riding, backpacking, hunting, and rock-climbing opportunities.

Jackson County Conservation (JCC) manages nine hunting areas and 38 individual parks, natural areas, timber preserves, historic sites, river accesses, and campgrounds encompassing over 2,200 acres across the county. The county’s recreation areas provide both primitive and modern facilities including the Hurstville Interpretive Center, two modern campgrounds, bike trail, marina, and historical structures such as a one-room schoolhouse and the Hurstville Lime Kilns. In addition, the county maintains trails, shelters, boat ramps, and primitive campsites.

*County Parks, Preserves & Wildlife Areas*

**Bald Forty Preserve**, located five miles west of Bellevue on County Road D57, offers forested hunting and hiking. Access to this 40-acre tract is by walk-in only through the adjoining 700-acre state owned Big Mill Wildlife Area.

**Baldwin Marsh** is located one mile west of Baldwin on Highway 64. This 67-acre area includes a wetland, and native and restored prairie, providing excellent habitat for waterfowl and upland birds. It is one of the best examples of an upland marsh once very common in Iowa.



**Baldwin Marsh** Photo Credit: JCC

**Blackhawk Wildlife Area** is a 180-acre public hunting area along the South Fork of the Maquoketa River on 138<sup>th</sup> Ave. The area features 2 miles of hiking trails, cross country skiing, public hunting, seasonal equestrian use, and bird watching.



**Blackhawk Wildlife Area** Photo Credit: JCC

**Buzzard Ridge Wildlife Area** has 237 acres encompassing a variety of unique landscapes that include limestone outcroppings, upland timber, flood plain, wildlife, and panoramic scenery. The area is located on 30<sup>th</sup> Ave. along the Maquoketa River and can be accessed from the river or by hiking trail. The area features bird watching, boating, two miles of hiking trails, hunting, picnicking, pit toilets, primitive camping, stream fishing, and wildlife viewing.



**Buzzard Ridge Wildlife Area** Photo Credit: JCC

**Cottonville Conservation Area** is located three miles north of Andrew on Y61 and 189<sup>th</sup> St. Once part of the "county farm," this rolling 40-acre tract of land is managed for timber and prairie restoration projects. The area features forest and upland hunting and hiking.

**Driscolls Island** is a half-acre peninsula situated along the Highway 64 causeway just west of Sabula. It is a highway rest stop and offers fisherman and boaters access to Middle Sabula Lake.



**Driscolls Island** Photo Credit: JCC

**Duck Creek Park** is located two miles south of Bellevue on Highway 52 at the mouth of Duck Creek and the Mississippi River. A long river frontage provides beautiful scenery, and excellent bank fishing. There is limited parking and walk in access only.

**Hurstville Fishing Pond** is a two-acre borrow pit stocked with bluegill, catfish and largemouth bass. The pond is a short distance from the parking lot, via a handicap accessible sidewalk to an accessible dock. It is part of a 20-acre area on 63<sup>rd</sup> St. on the west side of US Highway 61, a mile north of Maquoketa.



**Hurstville Fishing Pond** Photo Credit: JCC

The **Hurstville Interpretive Center** provides a variety of education and recreation opportunities and serves as the headquarters of Jackson County

Conservation. The center is located at 18670 63<sup>rd</sup> St, on the east side of US Highway 61 about a mile north of Maquoketa.

The center has 20 indoor and outdoor exhibits and activities including an enclosed bee hive, live reptiles, and resident trumpeter swans. The center has Environmental Education staff.

The center is located on 48 acres that include a 15-acre restored prairie, an 18-acre wetland with boardwalk, picnic shelter, frog pond, pollinator garden, observation deck, bird blind, and a half-mile hiking trail. Check JCC website for open hours, which may vary by season.



**Hurstville Interpretive Center** Photo Credit: 2016 Grant Wood Loop Master Plan

10. PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

**John Henry Weber Park** is a 20-acre roadside park and wildlife preserve located four miles north of Bellevue on Highway 52.

**Joinerville Park** is located at 123<sup>rd</sup> Ave. along the Maquoketa River about four miles west of Maquoketa. It is a major recovery point for paddlers that float down the river. The 6.5-acre park is open for day use year-round and features a concrete boat ramp and overnight camping by special permit.

**McNeil Nature Preserve** has rolling upland hills covered with cedar trees and small pockets of native prairie. A trail through the maze of cedars provides a beautiful solitary hike. It is 1.5 miles east and one mile north of Preston off 33<sup>rd</sup> St.



**Ozark Wildlife Area** Photo Credit: JCC

The 323-acre **Ozark Wildlife Area** on the North Fork of the Maquoketa River is located on 40<sup>th</sup> Ave. northeast of Canton. This public hunting area features stream fishing, forest hunting, primitive camping, river access, bird watching, and wildlife viewing.

**Papke Wildlife Area** is dominated by upland prairie and provides habitat for many upland species. In addition, there are two ponds, woodlands, and food plots. It is located at 56732 64<sup>th</sup> St. between Miles and Sabula. The area is open to hiking and public hunting.



**Papke Wildlife Area** Photo Credit: JCC

**Pine Valley Nature Area** has 676 acres of some of the most diverse resource areas in Jackson County. The area features eight miles of hiking trails, forest and

upland hunting, high-quality woodlands, rare plants and animals, scenic quality, and archeological significance. It is located three miles north of Monmouth, off 30<sup>th</sup> Ave.

**Prairie Creek Recreation Area** is a 273-acre property located at 1215 East Summit St. on the southeast side of Maquoketa. From the meandering creek, to the rolling hills of the tallgrass prairies, and dense woodlands spotted with limestone bluffs, this park is full of ecological and archaeological treasures. The park features a picnic pavilion with fireplace and restrooms, over five miles of hiking trails, a two-acre fishing pond, archery hunting, and 1.5 miles of Prairie Creek.



**Prairie Creek Recreation Area** Photo Credit: JCC

**Richardson Timber Preserve** is a 20-acre example of a typical Iowa oak/hickory forest. The park features hunting, hiking trails, and a diverse collection of wildlife and flowers. It is located on 317<sup>th</sup> Ave. northwest of Preston.

Surrounded by water, the 14-acre **South Sabula Lake Park** at 1516 South Ave. in Sabula is an ideal spot for all water-related sports. A concrete boat ramp and public dock provide easy access to South Sabula Lake and the Mississippi River. The park has picnic shelters, showers, restrooms, a playground, and 39 camp sites with water and electric service.



**South Sabula Lake Park** Photo Credit: JCC

**Spruce Creek Park**, situated on the banks of the Mississippi River, offers a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Enjoy boating, fishing, camping and more while enjoying the scenic views of the mighty Mississippi. This 43-acre park offers boat ramp, boat docks, 80 campsites with electric service, showers, restrooms, playground, and shelters. It is located at 30711 396<sup>th</sup> St., two miles north of Bellevue off US Highway 52.

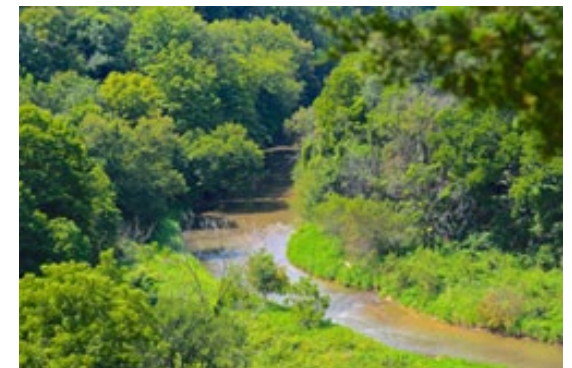


**Spruce Creek Park** Photo Credit: JCC

The following information is from the Dubuque County Conservation website, <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Dubuque/Park/Whitewater-Canyon-Wildlife-Area.aspx>. Bridging the lines between Dubuque, Jackson and Jones counties, **Whitewater Canyon Wildlife Area** combines biological, geological and archaeological wonders for a unique

recreational experience. As one of only three true canyons in Iowa, this 419-acre area has staggering limestone walls, beautiful lookouts, stream access for paddlers and anglers, unique wildlife, opportunities to find fossils, artifacts, geocaches, public hunting, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Rare plants and animals are also sheltered in the various natural communities in this wildlife area.

This park is owned and managed by Dubuque County Conservation. Vehicle access and parking are located on Whitewater Canyon Road off Curoe Road, 3.6 miles west of Bernard via Higginsport Road and about 5 miles northeast of Cascade.



**Whitewater Canyon Wildlife Area** Photo Credit: Dubuque County Conservation

**County Recreation Trails**

The **Hurstville Recreation Trail** runs north of Maquoketa on a paved, 10-foot-wide path. Currently in two sections, the trail can be accessed on the north side of Maquoketa where Hurstville Road/Main Street crosses the Maquoketa River (parking lot is on the north side of the bridge) and from the parking lot at the Hurstville Interpretive Center.



**Hurstville Recreation Trail: Maquoketa segment (upper photo) and Interpretive Center segment (lower photo)** Photo Credit: JCC

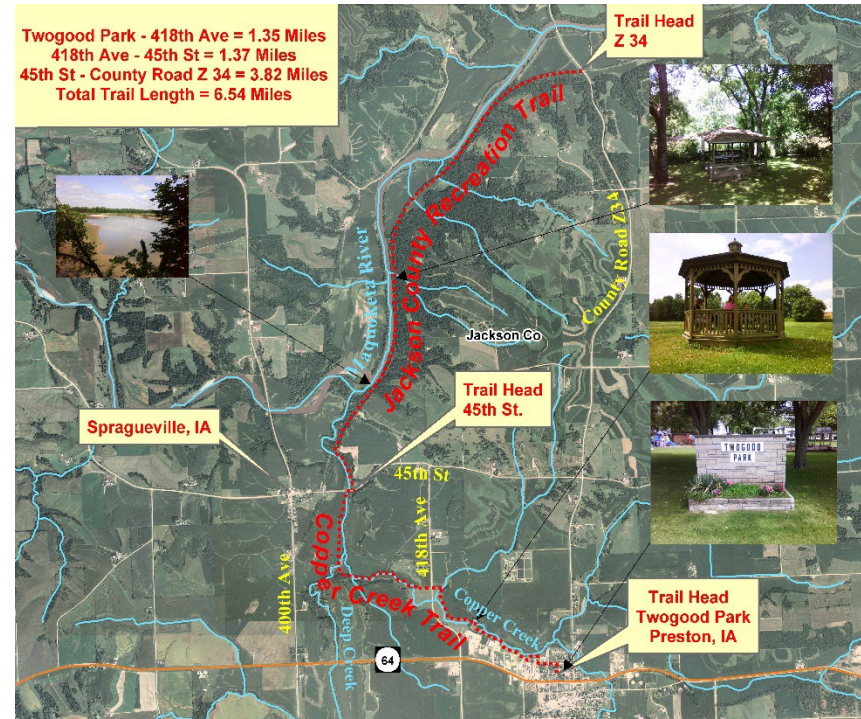
The **Jackson County Recreation Trail** is a 6.6-mile crushed limestone path open for picnicking, biking, hiking, fishing, and cross-country skiing. A 3.8-mile segment runs between a trailhead on County Road Z34 on the abandoned Chicago-Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way, runs along the Maquoketa River, and ends at 45<sup>th</sup> St. just east of Spragueville.

This trail connects to the 2.7-mile **Copper Creek Recreational Trail** that runs south from Spragueville to Preston. It crosses both Deep Creek and Copper Creek. Scenic overlooks provide striking views of the river valley and its limestone bluffs.

Figure 10.3 is a map of the Jackson County and Copper Creek Recreation Trails that shows the trailheads and lengths of segments.



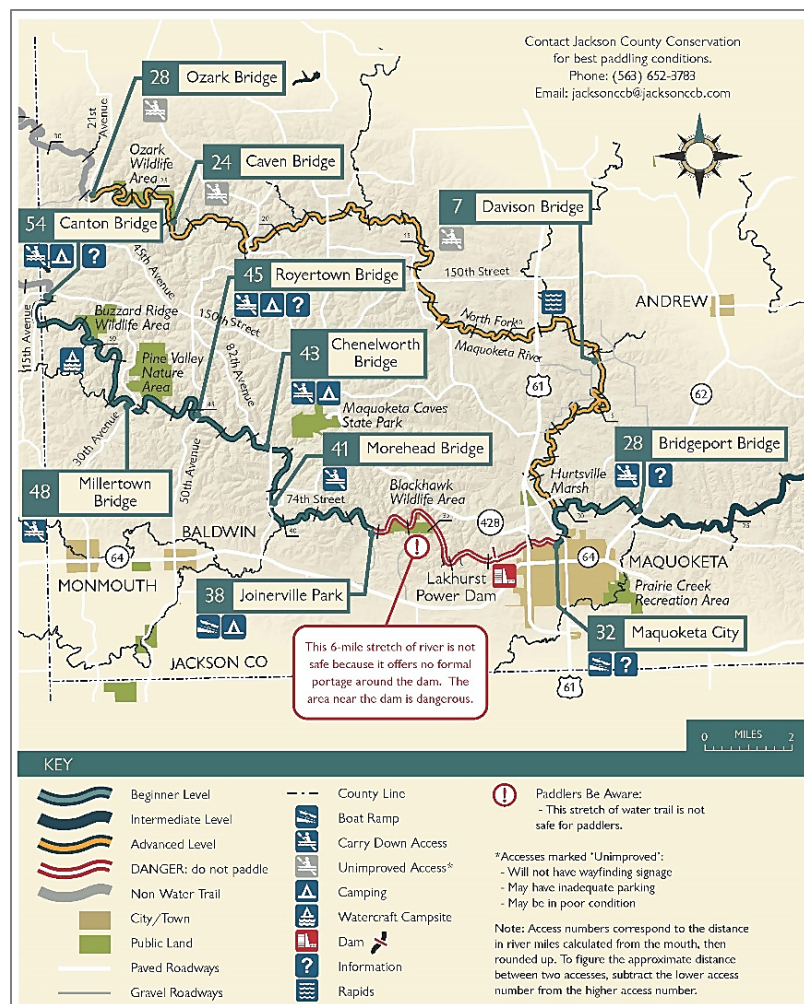
**Jackson County Recreation Trail** Photo Credit: JCC



**Figure 10.3 Jackson County & Copper Creek Recreation Trails**

Source: Jackson County Conservation website





**Figure 10.4 Map of North Fork and Maquoketa River Water Trails** Source: Iowa DNR water trail brochure

### County Water Trails

According to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), “Water Trails are recreational corridors and routes on rivers and lakes that provide a unique experience for canoeists and kayakers and provide adequate access points that can be used for planning your trips at various lengths and difficulty. A water trail may also provide access to riverside campgrounds, primitive campsites, amenities such as shelters and restrooms in city, county or state parks.”<sup>1</sup>

The Maquoketa River and the North Fork of the Maquoketa River in Jackson County are

regarded by many paddlers to be among the top Iowa destinations for canoeing and kayaking.<sup>2</sup>

The **Maquoketa River Water Trail** is the most developed. It has 13 accesses spaced at average distance of 3.5 miles at every bridge crossing along the river. Most of the accesses provide parking off of paved county roads. The **North Fork Water Trail** is less developed with fewer amenities and longer distances between its two accesses.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 10.4 is a map of the access locations on the North Fork and Maquoketa River water trails in relation to nearby parks and cities. For paddlers on the Maquoketa River, the Lakehurst Dam should be avoided.

A brochure with information on history, culture, and wildlife viewing along these trails and this map is available online at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking/Water-Trail-Maps-Brochures>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking/Water-Trail-Development>

<sup>2</sup> 2021 Jackson County Water Trail Plan, p.30

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 24

**COUNTY PARK & RECREATION PLANS**

The Jackson County Conservation Department has five-year plans for outdoor recreation, environmental education, and water trail development.

**2023 Outdoor Recreation Plan**

The following information is from Jackson County Conservation’s *2023 Outdoor Recreation Plan*.

The Outdoor Recreation Plan provides a guideline for future development and acquisition projects as well as various conservation efforts. It is comprised of the sections outlined below.

**1. Acquisition and Development Proposals**

The Jackson County Conservation Department will continue to seek priority acquisitions utilizing outside funding sources to leverage local dollars. In this section, the proposed projects encompass the acquisition and development of several outdoor recreation and resource areas listed below:

- A. “Green Belts” and other unique or important natural resource areas.
- B. Unique or important natural or cultural resource areas.
- C. River Accesses.
- D. Trail Development.
- E. Campground Development.
- F. Environmental Education Program.

**2. Forest & Prairie Management Plans**

This section provides a management outline for the following three forest and prairie ecosystems:

- A. Forest Management Plan
- B. Prairie Management Plan
- C. Remnant Bluff Prairie/Savanna Management Plan

**3. Management Area Development & 5-Year Plan**

This section provides a description of areas under management by Jackson County Conservation, a current

development report, and a 5-year development plan for these areas:

- A. Campgrounds and Parks
- B. Wildlife Areas
- C. Historic Structures
- D. Trails
- E. River Accesses

**4. REAP Projects – 2023**

With creation of the Iowa DNR’s Resources Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program in 1989, the Outdoor Recreation Plan includes this program for future planning in these areas:

- A. Future acquisitions
- B. Restoration and enhancement of habitat
- C. Other capital development projects that will enhance recreational activities

**2021 Water Trail Plan**

This 2021 plan is a guide for future improvements along the Maquoketa River and North Fork water trails. The plan’s water trail development concept is to make improvements that provide a range of experiences for paddlers ranging from beginner to expert.<sup>4</sup> Figure 10.5 is a set of two maps that show the future water trail concept from the 2021 plan.

The Maquoketa River Water Trail will be developed as a mix of recreational and gateway stream segments that cater to beginner and intermediate paddlers. The trail will have two gateway segments: Canton Bridge Access to Royertown Bridge Access and Maquoketa City Access to Bridgeport Bridge Access. The remainder will be classed as recreational.<sup>5</sup>

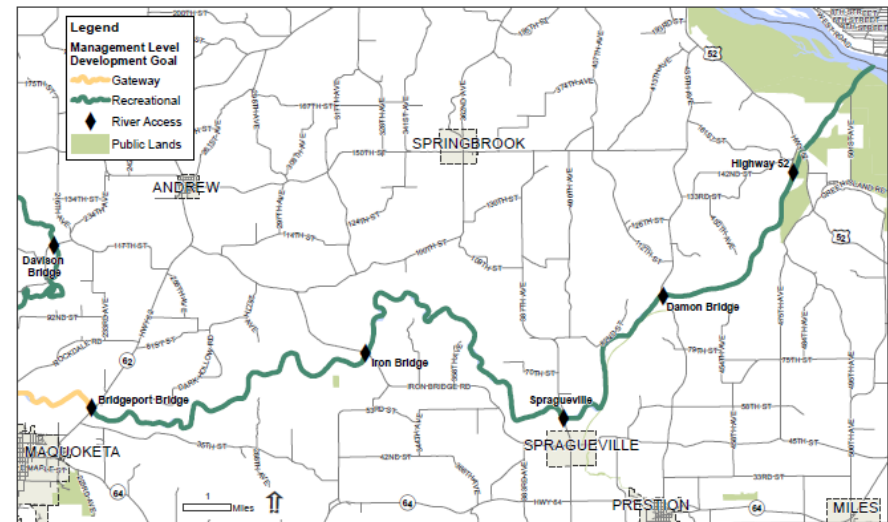
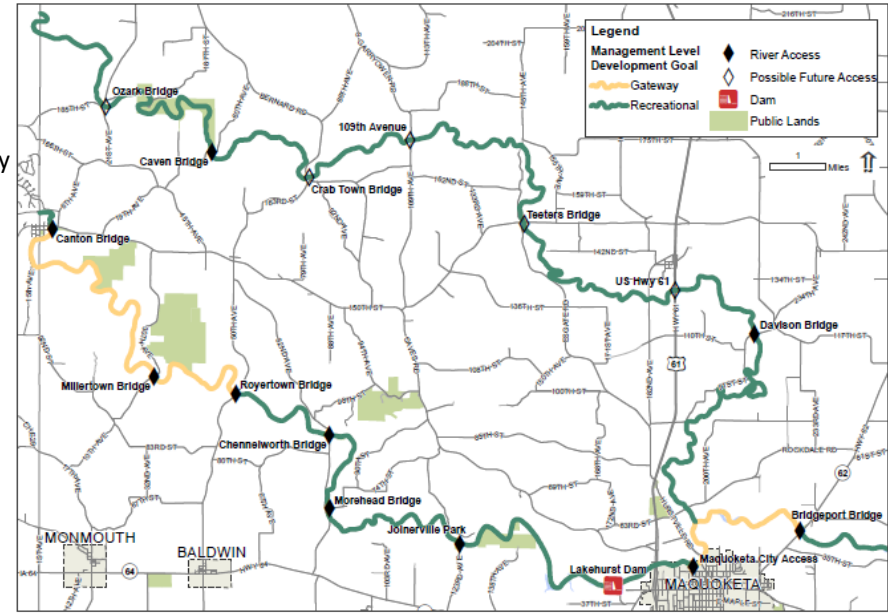
The North Fork Water Trail will be developed over the long-term as a recreational water trail for intermediate and experienced paddlers.<sup>6</sup>



**Canoeing the Maquoketa Water Trail**  
Photo Credit: JCC

**Figure 10.5 Water Trail Development Concept Maps**

Source: 2021 Jackson County Water Trail Plan, p .32



<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 31

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 31

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 32

**2023 Environmental Education Plan**

The following information is from Jackson County Conservation’s 2023 Environmental Education Plan.

The mission of the Jackson County Conservation Environmental Education Program is to increase public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues and promote environmental literacy through programs, exhibits, and visitor interaction.

Jackson County Conservation has Environmental Education staff that help teachers, students, groups, businesses, and organizations learn more about Iowa's natural resources through year-round programs in three main areas: school programs, public programs, and private programs.

**School Programs** include outreach programs to school districts, field days/field trips to county parks, and School of the Wild: a week-long outdoor experience at local parks.

**Public Programs** include outdoor recreation programs, natural resource

and ecology programs, day and overnight summer camps, volunteer workdays, special events, workshops, and training.



**Outdoor Environmental Education program**  
Photo Credit: JCC

**Private Programs** are offered for youth groups, adult groups, civic organizations, nursing homes, daycare centers, outdoor groups, and clubs at county parks.

Environmental education also includes passive interpretation and visitor interaction such as:

- exhibits and displays at the Hurstville Interpretive Center,
- interpretive signs at county parks, and
- publications (newsletters, event calendars, and social media posts).

The **5-Year Plan for Environmental Educational Programming** includes:

- increased interpretive signage;
- expansion of School of the Wild;
- connection with more upper-level students to increase their knowledge of natural resources and conservation; and
- installation of a large new exhibit at the Hurstville Interpretive Center.



**Indoor Environmental Education program**  
Photo Credit: JCC

**VOLUNTEER SUPPORT**

Volunteer support is vital to the Jackson County Conservation Department.

***County Conservation Board***

Formed in 1958, the Jackson County Conservation Board’s initial work was acquiring public areas for outdoor recreation and conservation of the county’s natural resources. In 1985, the Conservation Board hired permanent staff for the Environmental Education Program. The purposes of this five-member board appointed by the Jackson County Board of Supervisors are in Iowa Code Section 350.1: “to acquire, develop, maintain, and make available to the inhabitants of the county, public museums, parks, preserves, parkways, playgrounds, recreational centers, county forests, wildlife and other conservation areas, and to promote and preserve the health and general welfare of the people, to encourage the orderly development and conservation of natural resources, and to cultivate good citizenship by providing adequate programs of public recreation.”

***Friends of Jackson County Conservation***

Friends of Jackson County Conservation is a non-profit organization that brings people together through educational and recreational opportunities in partnership with the Jackson County Conservation Board and inspires people to understand and care for our environment. Members serve as volunteers for various programs and projects as well as raise funds for exhibits, conservation related projects, educational materials for programs and more. All donations are tax-deductible, and go towards outdoor recreation and education opportunities in the county.



**A Friends volunteer at work** Photo Credit: JCC

***Hurstville Center: 2024 Exhibit Makeover***

Jackson County Conservation and Friends of Jackson County Conservation are working to bring a new exhibit to the Hurstville Interpretive Center, celebrating the Center’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024.

The new exhibit will help tell the story of Iowa’s natural history through a woodland diorama with plants and wildlife, a walk-through cave interpreting cave geology, and showcasing the bluffs and hill prairies of Jackson County.

**STATE AND FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages two popular state parks and two major wildlife management areas in Jackson County.

**State Parks**

“Just south of the city of Bellevue along US Highway 52, **Bellevue State Park** encompasses a total of 770 acres divided between two separate tracts of land. The Nelson Unit is located immediately adjacent to the Bellevue city limits atop a 300-foot limestone bluff. The Dyas Unit is located two miles farther south on US Highway 52. The park’s southern boundary is located about five miles north of the Maquoketa River.

The park features scenic views of the Mississippi River, timbered walking trails, a unique butterfly sanctuary, and an enclosed nature center. The park offers a number of camp sites with electrical hook ups, modern restrooms, showers, and a sanitary dump station. The park’s four miles of hiking trails feature scenic

overlooks, a stream, bird and wildlife viewing, and woodland and prairie landscapes. The South Bluff Nature Center contains a variety of educational exhibits on the plants, animals, and geology of the park.”<sup>7</sup>



**Bellevue State Park – Mississippi River Overlook**  
Photo Credit: Iowa DNR

“**Maquoketa Caves State Park** is located on Iowa Highway 428 (Caves Rd) seven miles northwest of Maquoketa. The park’s caves, limestone formations and rugged bluffs make it one of Iowa’s most unique state parks.

The park contains more caves than any other state park in Iowa. The caves are all different sizes and shapes. Some can be

explored by walking while others can best be seen by crawling. A six-mile trail system links the park’s caves, formations, and overlooks while providing an exciting hiking experience. Trail highlights include the dramatic “Natural Bridge” which stands nearly fifty feet above Raccoon Creek, and the seventeen-ton “Balanced Rock.”

The park’s interpretive center contains detailed information about the geology of cave formations, park history, and a background of the early inhabitants of



**Maquoketa Caves State Park – Natural Bridge** Photo Credit: ECIA

the park. Other features include bird watching, camping, hiking, picnic shelters, playground, restrooms, and showers.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 17

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 18

### State Wildlife Management Areas

The 693-acre **Big Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area** is located 5 miles west of Bellevue on Mill Creek Road/County Road D57. The area encompasses timber, upland, and wetland habitats that are home to deer, turkey, squirrel, grouse, and dove. The area is open to public hunting, fishing, and trapping.

The **Green Island Wildlife Management Area** is a 4,000-acre state-managed area located just south of the Maquoketa River's confluence with the Mississippi River. The Iowa DNR partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Ducks Unlimited to help design and develop the area. The area includes a mix of mostly wetlands with some wooded uplands and is a popular location for bird watching, duck and deer hunting, and paddling.<sup>9</sup> The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners are planning a habitat rehabilitation project at Green Island.

<sup>9</sup> 2021 Jackson County Water Trail Plan, p. 17

### National Wildlife & Fish Refuges

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the public lands and waters throughout the country as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. "**Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge** has been a haven for migratory birds, fish, wildlife and people since 1924. The refuge stretches 261 river miles from Wabasha, Minnesota to Rock Island, Illinois, and protects more than 240,000 acres of Mississippi River floodplain. The refuge hosts more than 3.7 million annual visits for hunting, fishing, wildlife observations, and other recreation. The refuge is a Wetland of International Importance and a Globally Important Bird Area."<sup>10</sup>



Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge Photo Credit: US Fish & Wildlife Service

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/upper-mississippi-river>

About 15,500 acres of the refuge are located within Jackson County. The refuge encompasses one of the largest blocks of floodplain habitat in the lower 48 states. Bordered by steep wooded bluffs that rise 100 to 600 feet above the river valley, the Mississippi River corridor and refuge offer scenic beauty and productive fish and wildlife habitat unmatched in the heart of America.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 10.6 is a map of the Upper Pool 13 in the refuge which includes information about amenities, access points, and closed areas. The map also shows the locations of Duck Creek County Park, Bellevue State Park, Green Island Wildlife Management Area, and the Great River Road National Scenic Byway.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 20

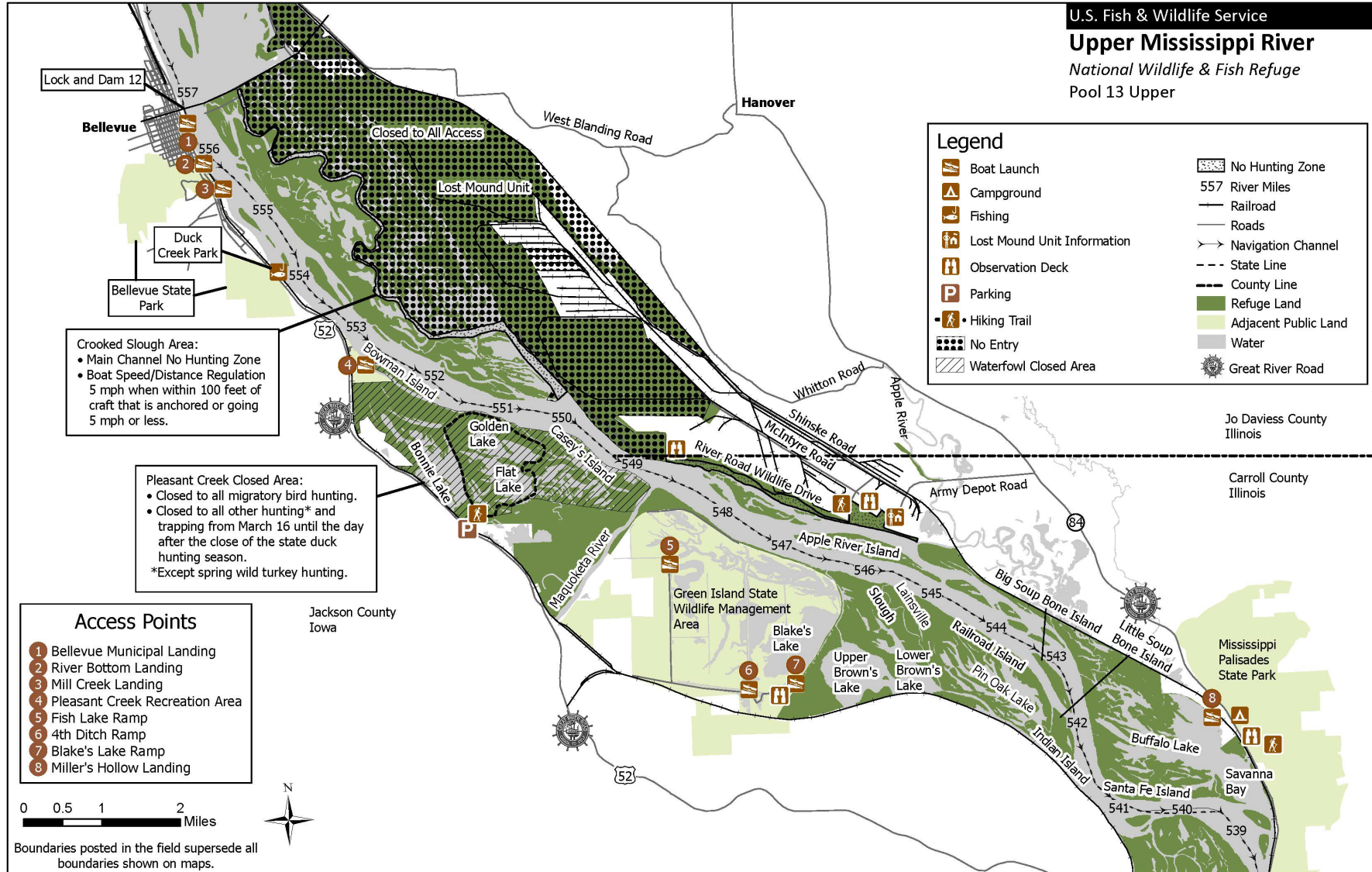


Figure 10.6 Map of Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Upper Pool 13 (2023 version)

Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service at <https://www.fws.gov/media/upper-miss-refuge-upper-pool13-2023-versionpdf>



10. PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

**Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge** was established in 1989 under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to protect two federally listed endangered species: Iowa Pleistocene snail and northern monkshood. Refuge boundaries include eight counties in northeast Iowa, southwest Wisconsin, and northwest Illinois. In 2023, the refuge consisted of nine units across northeast Iowa, ranging in size from six acres to 209 acres. Refuge lands include upland hardwood forests, grassland, stream and riparian habitats.<sup>12</sup>

“Algific (cold air) talus (loose rock) slopes occur in the karst region of portions of Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois. These areas are referred to as the “Driftless Area” because they escaped the last glacial event about 12,000 years ago. These steep slopes and cliffs remain cool throughout the year and are home to rare species of plants and animals such as the Iowa Pleistocene snail and northern monkshood.”<sup>13</sup>

Figure 10.7 is a map of Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge. The Howard, Fern Creek, and Pine Creek units are open to the public. Lytle Creek Unit is a 20-acre parcel near 287<sup>th</sup> Street in Otter Creek Township in Jackson County.



**Iowa Pleistocene snail and Northern Monkshood.**  
Photo Credit: US Fish & Wildlife Service



**Figure 10.7 Map of Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge (2023)**

Source: Wikipedia, accessed 2024

<sup>12</sup><https://www.fws.gov/refuge/driftless-area/about-us>

<sup>13</sup><https://www.fws.gov/refuge/driftless-area>

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

“Cultural resources encompass all the physical evidence of past human activity. They are non-renewable resources that are important to our nation’s history as they tell the story of our human past and interaction with the natural environment.”<sup>14</sup>

Cultural resources are the remnants of the lives of people who occupied and lived in an area throughout time, including Native Americans, pioneers, and settlers.<sup>15</sup>

Jackson County’s cultural resources include historic properties and districts, archeological sites (including pioneer cemeteries and ancient burial mounds), and the cultural landscape of natural resources, agriculture, and communities.

Figure 10.8 is a map showing the county’s historic structures, historic districts in rural areas, and archeological sites.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/environmental-cultural-resource/cultural-resources/index>

***Early County History***

“Native Americans lived in Iowa for at least 13,000 years. During this time, they gradually changed from highly mobile hunters and gatherers living in small camps to farmers living in large villages.”<sup>16</sup>

“Early settlers’ accounts note large groups of Sauk, Meskwaki, and Ho-Chunk groups, of which some had moved to this area from the Wisconsin area due to European encroachment from the east. Some of the early European settlers to the Maquoketa area noted several large Native American camps and villages, which may have been established in the late eighteenth century. Prehistoric occupation around Maquoketa and near the confluence of the Maquoketa and North Fork Maquoketa rivers is also evident by multiple archaeological sites recorded in that area, some dating to the Archaic Period.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> 2017 Office of the State Archaeologist Technical Report 556, p. 4

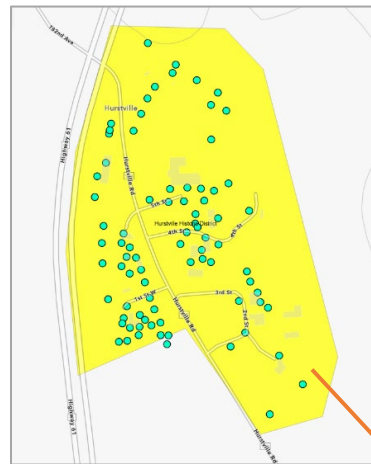
The earliest European settlers began arriving in Iowa in 1834. Their numbers grew rapidly after the area was surveyed for settlement in 1838 - 1839. The U.S. Congress established the Territory of Iowa in 1838. In 1846, Iowa became a state and its population expanded quickly. Early growth of Jackson County’s communities was spurred by the extension of railroads which reached the city of Maquoketa in 1873.<sup>18</sup>

When Jackson County was established in 1837, the county seat was located at Bellevue. It was moved back and forth between Andrew and Bellevue until 1873, when Maquoketa became the permanent county seat.<sup>19</sup>

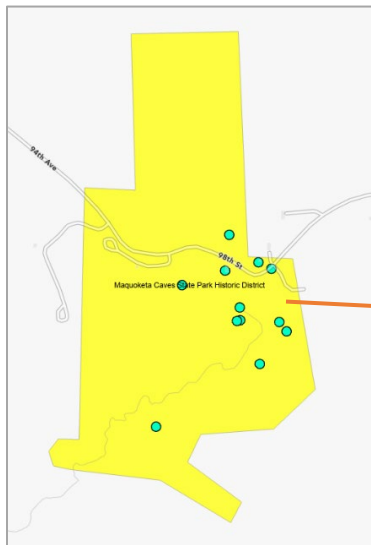
<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 23

<sup>18</sup> 2021 Jackson County Water Trail Plan, p. 9

<sup>19</sup> <https://jacksoncounty.iowa.gov/about/>



Hurstville Historic District



Maquoketa Caves State Park Historic District

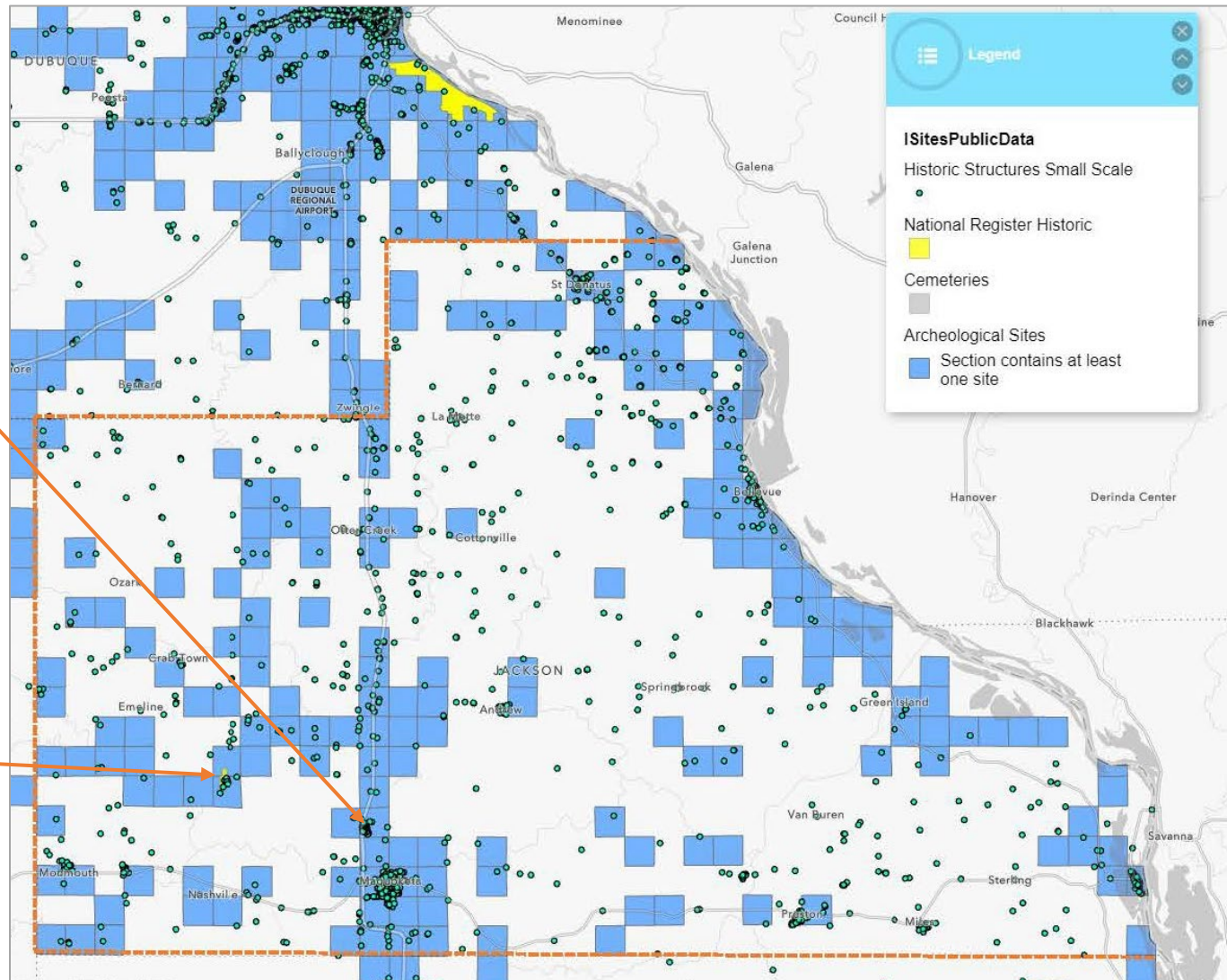


Figure 10.8 Map of Cultural Resources in Jackson County (2023)

[Note: inset maps are National Register Historic Districts located outside of cities]

Source: I-Sites Public Data Web Map at <https://archaeology.uiowa.edu/services/i-sites> accessed by ECIA in November 2023

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP)**

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is a federal-level inventory of places of local, state, and/or national significance, administered by the National Park Service under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Visit <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>

The NRHP listing does not provide legal protections at the local level. Rather, it is a planning tool for identifying properties worth preserving. Listing in the NRHP provides owners with opportunities for federal and state preservation incentives.

“Under Federal Law, listing in the NRHP places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance, usually funding or licensing/permitting.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup><https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/how-to-list-a-property.htm>

**Eligibility** for listing in the NRHP is based the following evaluation criteria:

*Age and Integrity:*

- Is the property old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old)?
- Does it still look much the way it did in the past?

*Significance:*

- Is the property associated with events, activities, or developments important in the past?
- With the lives of people who were important in the past?
- With significant architectural history, landscape history, or engineering achievements?
- Does it have the potential to yield information through archeological investigation about our past?”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

The NRHP has three levels of significance:

Properties would be considered to have **Local significance** when their importance relates only to a particular city or county.

Properties would be considered to have **State significance** when they represent an aspect of overall history of a State.

Properties would be considered to have **National significance** when they represent an aspect of the history of the United States and its territories.<sup>22</sup>

*In 2023, there were 76 listings for Jackson County, Iowa in the NRHP data base available online at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>*

<sup>22</sup>[https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15\\_web508.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf)

**Jackson County NRHP Historic Properties**

The 2023 NRHP data base for Jackson County lists 68 individual properties, generally for a single historic structure or building. They include houses, barns, shops, commercial buildings, schools, churches, government buildings, and mills. Table 10.1 lists the four individual NRHP historic properties in Jackson County with State significance. The remaining 64 individual NRHP historic properties are of Local significance.

| Historic Resource                    | Location           | Year Listed | Level of Significance | Area(s) of Significance                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Dyas Hexagonal Barn</b>           | Bellevue           | 1986        | State                 | Agriculture; Engineering                     |
| <b>Maquoketa Free Public Library</b> | Maquoketa          | 1989        | Local & State         | Architecture; Communications; Social History |
| <b>Polygonal Barn*</b>               | Van Buren Township | 1986        | State                 | Agriculture; Engineering                     |
| <b>Savanna-Sabula Bridge*</b>        | Sabula             | 1999        | State                 | Engineering                                  |

Source: NRHP data base and NRHP nominations \*No longer in existence



**Dyas Hexagonal Barn** Photo Credit: Wikipedia



**Maquoketa Free Public Library**  
Photo Credit: Maquoketa Public Library Facebook page



**Polygonal Barn (no longer in existence)**  
Source: 1986 NRHP nomination



**Savanna-Sabula Bridge (no longer in existence)** Source: Wikipedia

*Jackson County NRHP Historic Districts*

The 2023 National Register data base for Jackson County lists eight historic districts with multiple buildings and structures. They represent areas of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational use and development.

Table 10.2 lists the eight NRHP historic districts in Jackson County. Two have State significance, and two have National significance.



**Bellevue Commercial Historic District**  
Source: 2022 NRHP Nomination



**Maquoketa Commercial Historic District**  
Source: 2022 NRHP Nomination

| Name of Historic District         | Location           | Year Listed | Total Acres | Contributing Resources | Level of Significance | Area(s) of Significance                             |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Bellevue Commercial</b>        | Bellevue           | 2022        | 12          | 42                     | Local                 | Commerce; Transportation                            |
| <b>Hurstville<sup>1</sup></b>     | North of Maquoketa | 1979        | 39          | 84                     | State                 | Industry  |
| <b>Lock and Dam No. 12</b>        | Bellevue           | 2004        | 102         | 8                      | National              | Transportation; Maritime History; etc. <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>Maquoketa Caves State Park</b> | West of Maquoketa  | 1991        | 111         | 9                      | Local & State         | Conservation; Architecture                          |
| <b>Maquoketa Commercial</b>       | Maquoketa          | 2022        | 2           | 41                     | Local                 | Commerce  |
| <b>Paradise Farm</b>              | West of Bellevue   | 1977        | 200         | 3                      | Local                 | Local   |
| <b>Village of St. Donatus</b>     | St. Donatus        | 1989        | 50          | 33                     | National              | European; Architecture; Social History              |
| <b>West Pleasant Street</b>       | Maquoketa          | 1991        | 12          | 29                     | Local                 | Architecture  |

Source: NRHP data base and NRHP nominations

1. This district includes the four limestone kilns on Hurstville Road. Most of the other contributing resources in the district are no longer in existence.  
 2. The complete list of areas is: Transportation; Maritime History; Military; Social History; Commerce; Politics/Government; Economics.

**County Owned/Managed NRHP Sites**

The following information is from the Jackson County Conservation website at <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Jackson.aspx> unless noted otherwise.

**Big Mill Homestead** is located at 32575 Mill Creek Rd., five miles west of Bellevue on County Road D57. Built circa 1845, this two-story limestone farmstead was probably built as a dormitory for Paradise Farm owned by the Potter family. It was listed on the NRHP in 1991. Building access is by appointment only. It is located on a one-acre site in the Iowa DNR’s Big Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area. The site is owned and managed by the Jackson County Conservation Board.



**Big Mill Homestead** Photo Credit: JCC

The **Canton Church School** is located at 14723 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., south off County Road E17. This combination school and church was last actively in use in the 1960’s. Built in 1877, this limestone structure is a wonderful example of local building styles of the period. It was listed in the NRHP in 1979. The 0.6-acre site is open daily year-round. Building access is available by appointment. This site is owned and managed by the Jackson County Conservation Board.



**Canton Church School** Photo Credit: JCC

The limestone **Millrock School** was built in 1867 and is typical of the one-room schools that once dotted the countryside. The school served the town of Mill Rock until 1910. It’s one-acre site is 1.5 miles south of Baldwin at 2980 53<sup>rd</sup> Ave. The school is filled with items common to its time period: desks, chairs, books, lunch pails, Victrola, wood burning stove, and more. There are two outhouses on site. Tours are available upon request. This site is owned and managed by the Jackson County Conservation Board.



**Millrock School** Photo Credit: JCC

The **Jackson County Insane Asylum** is listed on the NRHP, is a site in the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area, and has an Iowa Great Places designation. The Insane Asylum is located north of Andrew on 250<sup>th</sup> Ave. Guided tours are by appointment only.<sup>23</sup> It is the only remaining building on the site of the Jackson County Poor Farm. The asylum was constructed in 1870 of local limestone.<sup>24</sup> This site is owned by the Jackson County "County Farm", in care of the Jackson County Board of Supervisors.



**Jackson County Insane Asylum** Photo Credit: Jackson County Beacon GIS

<sup>23</sup><https://www.silosandsmokestacks.org/attraction/limestone-asylum/>

The **Hurstville Lime Kilns** were once part of the company town of Hurstville. They are located at 7301 Hurstville Road two miles north of Maquoketa. This three-acre historic site features the four restored lime kilns and a roadside rest area with a picnic shelter. Interpretive signs tell the story of the kilns and a stairway allows visitors to walk up around the kilns. The site is open daily year-round. Owned by the Jackson County Historical Society, the site is managed by the Jackson County Conservation Board.

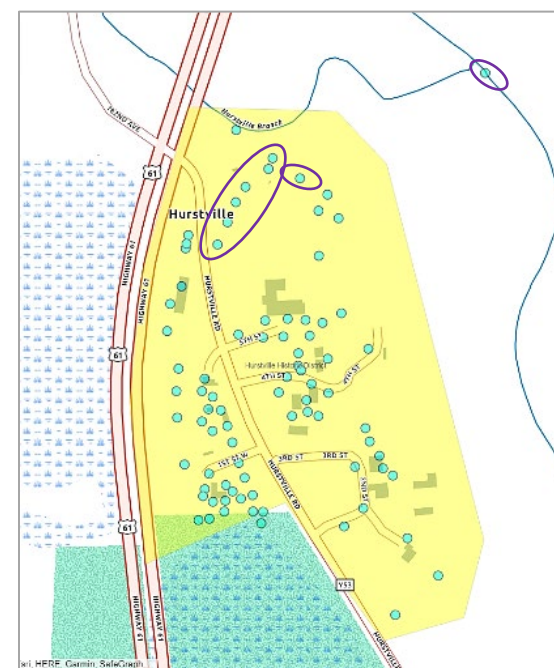
<https://www.mycountyparks.com/county/Jackson/Park/Hurstville-Lime-Kilns.aspx>



**Hurstville Lime Kilns** Photo Credit: Maquoketa Chamber of Commerce

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016630510/>

The kiln site is located in the 39-acre Hurstville NRHP Historic District, which was listed in 1979 with 84 resources shown as green dots in Figure 10.9. In 2023 the few remaining resources (circled) include the four lime kilns, and rock-crushing building, water tower, and part of the narrow-gauge railway bridge that once crossed the Maquoketa River.



**Figure 10.9 Hurstville NRHP Historic District**  
Source: I-Sites Public Data Web Map, November 2023



**ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES**

“Archaeology is the study of the ancient and recent human past through material remains. In Iowa, archaeologists identify and study the sites, artifacts, and physical remains that make up the past 13,000 years of human settlement.”<sup>25</sup>

Iowa Code requires everyone to report findings of all human remains. Visit <https://archaeology.uiowa.edu/archaeology-basics/state-and-federal-laws>

Archeological sites must remain confidential by Iowa Code Section 22.7, subsection 20. The I-Sites Public Data Web Map shows recorded archaeological sites in one-square-mile sections in Iowa counties. Non-archaeologists can search I-Sites for general details (site type, cultural affiliation, and associated burial data if present) but cannot access confidential locational within the one-mile buffer. Learn more at <https://archaeology.uiowa.edu/services/i-sites>

<sup>25</sup><https://archaeology.uiowa.edu/archaeology-basics>

***Ancient Burial Mounds***

The Jackson County Historic Preservation Commission and the Jackson County Board of Supervisors have supported two projects to identify and protect Native American burial mound sites in the county.

Both projects were initiated by Jackson County due to concerns that mounds cannot be protected in accordance with Iowa Code Chapter 263B and Iowa Administrative Code 685-11 if they are not properly identified.

The first project was an inventory and assessment that identified 26 mound sites in Jackson County in 1997.

The second project was focused on locating, assessing, and mapping ancient mound sites in 1998. The total increased to 34 known mound sites as a result.

Resolution # 184-12-07-99 adopted by the Jackson County Board of Supervisors established certain procedures to guard against destruction of ancient burial

mounds in the course of developments which require specific approval of the Board of Supervisors or the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The Resolution also required that the official Mound Potential Map signed by the Board of Supervisors, which designates portions of Jackson County with significant potential for the existence of mounds, be available for public reference.

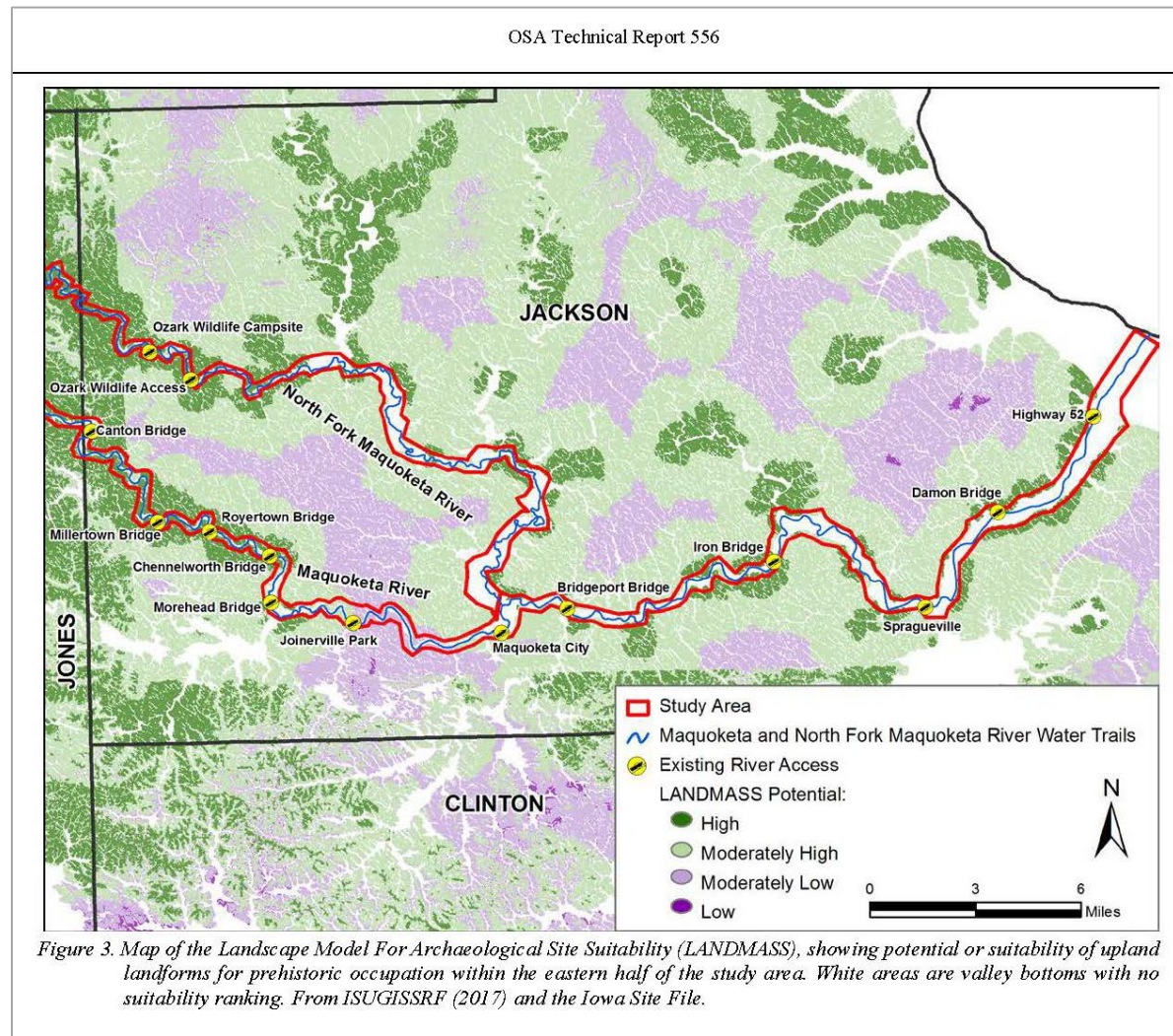
***Pioneer Cemeteries***

In Iowa Code Section 331.325, “pioneer cemetery” means a cemetery where there have been twelve or fewer burials in the preceding fifty years.

The Jackson County IAGenWeb maintains a list and a map of the cemeteries in Jackson County, including pioneer cemeteries, on their website at <https://iagenweb.org/jackson/cemeteries/>

“In 2017, The University of Iowa’s Office of the State Archeologist conducted a Phase I-A archaeological reconnaissance survey along the Maquoketa River and North Fork of the Maquoketa River through Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson Counties. The resulting report, referred to as OSA Technical Report 556, summarizes previously documented archeological resources and discusses the potential for previously unidentified archeological resources along the water trail corridors. The OSA team identified 121 previously recorded archeological prehistoric and historic sites in the study area including 27 prehistoric rock shelters and nine historical cemeteries.”<sup>26</sup>

Figure 10.10 is a map from the 2017 OSA Technical Report 566 showing the Landscape Model for Archeological Site Suitability (LANDMASS) in Jackson County. The model shows potential (suitability) of upland landforms for prehistoric occupation, color-coded from High in dark green to Low in purple. White areas have no ranking.



**Figure 10.10 Map of Archeological Site Suitability Model for Jackson County (2017)**

Source: 2017 OSA Technical Report 556, p.42

<sup>26</sup> 2021 Jackson County Water Trails Plan, p.30

**VOLUNTEER SUPPORT**

*Jackson County Historical Society*

The Jackson County Historical Society is a private non-profit corporation located in Maquoketa. Its mission is to seek out, preserve and tell the story of the rich heritage of this area. The 12 Board members are appointed by the Jackson County Board of Supervisors. The Society operates two museum sites.

The **Jackson County Museum** is located inside the Pearson Memorial Center on the County Fairgrounds at 1212 E. Quarry Street in Maquoketa. Its two floors of facts, photos, and artifacts collectively share the story of Jackson County. The Hall of Fame Wall recognizes men and women important to the county. Also at this site, the Penningroth Machine Shed tells the story of agriculture from when settlers first arrived, through the eras of horsepower and steam engines.

The **Clinton Engines Museum** is located in Maquoketa on the site of the former Clinton Machine Company at 607 E. Maple Street in Maquoketa. The former administration building houses this

museum highlighting the history of one of the largest manufacturers of small gasoline engines. Also at this site, the Agricultural Heritage Center picks up the story of agriculture from where the Penningroth Machine Shed leaves off. The La Motte Depot built in 1911 was relocated to the museum site in 2015.

The Historical Society maintains an extensive research and family history library in the museum in partnership with the Jackson County Genealogical Chapter. Learn more at <http://www.jciahs.com/>



**Clinton Engines Museum at night.**  
Photo Credit: Jackson County Historical Society Facebook page.

*County Historic Preservation Commission*

This seven-member Commission is appointed by the Jackson County Board of Supervisors to recognize and promote

historic sites in Jackson County. The Commission conducts and supports studies to identify and designate National Register historic districts and sites. The Commission advises Board of Supervisors and residents on matters related to historic preservation and undertakes special projects in the county. Visit <http://www.jacksoncountyhp.org/>

*County Pioneer Cemetery Commission*

In accordance with Iowa Code, the Jackson County Board of Supervisors created this nine-member Commission to assume jurisdiction and management of the care, repair, and restoration of the pioneer cemeteries in the county.



**Commissioners and volunteers at work with the repair and restoration of a pioneer cemetery.**  
Photo credit: Jackson County Pioneer Cemetery Commission Facebook page

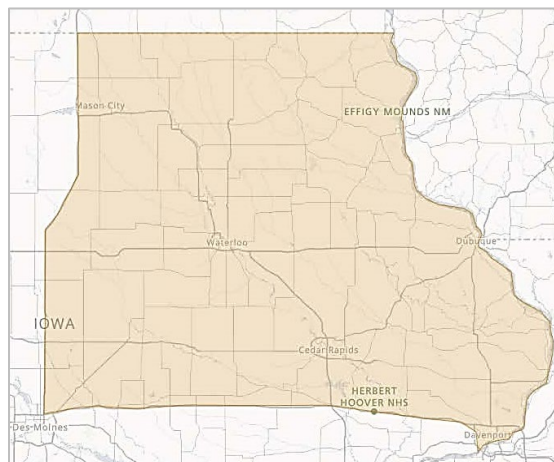
**PARTNERS FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES**

***Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA)***

“National Heritage Areas are places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes.”<sup>27</sup> “Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA) preserves and tells the story of American agriculture and its global significance through partnerships and activities that celebrate the land, people, and communities of Northeast Iowa.”<sup>28</sup>

SSNHA is a 37-county region covering over 20,000 square miles in Iowa (see Figure 10.11). The attractions, sites and communities are partners in developing the SSNHA and sharing its many stories. SSNHA partner sites in Jackson County eligible for funding and other resources are: Historic Limestone Insane Asylum, Hurstville Interpretive Center, Hurstville Lime Kilns, and Jackson County Museum. <https://www.silosandsmokestacks.org/>

<sup>27</sup><https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/index.htm>



**Figure 10.11 Map of SSNHA**

Source: National Park Service

***Certified Local Government Program***

The Jackson County Historic Preservation Commission is part of Iowa’s Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, which fosters a local commitment to preservation and establishes partnerships between local, state, and federal governments. As a CLG, Jackson County is eligible for funding, training, technical assistance, and networking resources. <https://culture.iowaeda.com/certified-local-governments/>

<sup>28</sup><https://www.nps.gov/places/silos-and-smokestacks-national-heritage-area.htm>

***Scenic Byways***

Iowa’s 11 state-designated and three national scenic byways are a great way to experience the State’s natural beauty, history and culture. Jackson County’s byways are the Great River Road National Scenic Byway along the Mississippi River and the Grant Wood Scenic Byway between Stone City and Bellevue.

<https://iowadot.gov/iowasbyways>

***Grant Wood Loop***

The Grant Wood Loop provides an online guide at <https://gwloop.com/> of the natural resources and thriving arts and culture in Dubuque, Jackson, and Jones Counties, to experience these amenities:

- Dramatic, timeless landscapes,
- Inspiring parks and pathways,
- Rivers, creeks and lakes,
- Arts, culture and history,
- Historic communities and places,
- Local food and agriculture,
- Interpretive, educational and recreational programs for all ages.

**LOCAL, STATE, & FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

Programs are listed by category.

*All Categories*

The **Alliant Energy Community Tree Planting Program** provides grants up to \$5,000 for community-based, tree-planting projects - like parks, gateways, cemeteries, nature trails, libraries, nursing homes, schools, and more. <https://www.alliantenergy.com/communitysupportandsafety/communityprograms/onemilliontrees/communitytreeplantingprogram>

The **Black Hills Energy Power of Trees** program provides grants up to \$5,000 for public and private tree-planting projects like schools, parks, nursing homes, street trees, residential plantings, and replacement of storm-damaged trees. <https://treesforever.org/power-of-trees/>

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) **Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT)** program assists communities with up to 15% of total project costs for of multiple purpose attraction or tourism facilities available

for public use. Examples are museums, theme parks, cultural and recreational centers, recreational trails, heritage attractions, and sports arenas.

<https://www.iowaeda.com/enhance-iowa/>

The IEDA **Rural Enrichment Grant Program** supports small quality of life projects in rural communities. Iowa businesses, colleges, universities, cities, counties, nonprofits, and foundations are eligible for grants of \$1,000 to \$20,000. <https://www.iowaeda.com/empower-rural-iowa/rural-enrichment/>

Iowa's **Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)** program invests in the enhancement and protection of the state's natural and cultural resources. REAP funds are allocated to conservation education, roadside vegetation, historic resources, city parks and open spaces, soil and water conservation, county conservation, and open space protection. <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/REAP>

The **Iowa Great Places** program provides designation and supports development of

new and existing infrastructure intended to cultivate the unique qualities of neighborhoods, communities, and regions. Designated communities may receive an average of \$227,355 with a required 1:1 match through the grant program. <https://iowaculture.gov/about-us/about/grants/iowa-great-places>

The **Community Foundation of Jackson County** awards grants for community development, diversity, education, environment, health and human services, children, youth, families, senior citizens, arts and culture, historic preservation, and wellness projects. Nonprofits, public institutions, and/or organizations without nonprofit status partnering with a fiscal sponsor organization are eligible. <https://dbqfoundation.org/grants#community-foundation-of-jackson-county-grants>

*Parks and Recreation*

The Iowa DNR's **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** is a federally-funded program that provides 50% matching funds for outdoor recreation area development and acquisition.

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/InsideDNR/GrantsOtherFunding/LandWaterConservationFund.aspx>

The **People For Bikes Community Grant Program** supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride with grants at 50% of project budget up to \$10,000. <https://www.peopleforbikes.org/grants#application>

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) administers the **Federal and State Recreational Trails Programs**. Funding up to 80% of project cost is available to counties, cities, private organizations, and nonprofits to provide and maintain motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and related projects. [http://www.iowadot.gov/systems\\_planning/fedstate\\_rectrails.htm](http://www.iowadot.gov/systems_planning/fedstate_rectrails.htm)

### **Cultural Resources**

The Jeffris Family Foundation assists the development of historic sites for non-profit organizations in small towns and cities. **Jeffris Heartland Fund** – \$5,000 to \$50,000 to cover 50% the cost of an

Historic Structure Report, and must be matched with cash. **Capital Campaign Challenge Grants** – \$50,000 to \$2 million, but typically \$250,000 to \$500,000.

<https://www.jeffrisfoundation.org/>

Grants from **National Trust Preservation Funds (NTPF)** encourage preservation at the local level by providing seed money of \$2,500 to \$5,000 for preservation projects. Membership requirements must be met to receive funding from the NTPF. <https://savingplaces.org/preservation-funds>

The State Historical Society of Iowa's **Country School Grant Program** provides matching grants up to \$5,000 to nonprofits, governments, individuals, and for-profits to help preserve and maintain one-room or two-room country schools. <https://history.iowa.gov/about-us/about/grants/country-school-grant-program>

The State Historical Society of Iowa's **Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP)** provides matching grants up to \$50,000 to nonprofits, governments, individuals, and for-profits

to help preserve, conserve, interpret, enhance, and educate the public about Iowa's historical assets. The HRDP provides funding for documentary collections, historic preservation and museums. <https://history.iowa.gov/about-us/about/grants/historical-resource-development-program>

Iowa's **State Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program** offers a 25% state income tax credit to developers to ensure character-defining features and spaces of historic buildings are retained. Project must comply with federal standards. <https://www.iowaeda.com/historic-preservation-tax-credit/>

The **Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program** offers a 20% federal income tax credit for rehabilitation of income-producing historic structures in compliance with federal standards. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/about.htm>

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

*Environmental Education*

**Issue:** The county’s 2023 Environmental Education Plan states that: “The desired outcome of environmental education is environmental literacy. The environment sustains all life on earth. We all need to know how ecological systems work and function. We need to understand how natural systems are intertwined. Environmental education gives us the tools and knowledge we need to make informed decisions about environmental issues and problems in our communities. Whether it be understanding water quality and pollution in a local stream, strategic planning for sustainable development, combating invasive species, the landscape, or addressing climate change.”

**Opportunities For Children:** The county’s 2023 Environmental Education Plan notes that environmental education can:

- Improve academic achievement and test scores in all subject areas.

- Capture students’ attention and engaged students who are the hardest to reach.
- Get children outdoors and more active, improving health, addressing obesity, attention deficit disorder, and depression.
- Incorporate STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) to help meet 21<sup>st</sup> century needs, such as questioning, critical thinking, investigating, interpreting, and problem solving.

**Opportunities For Adults:** The county’s 2023 Environmental Education Plan notes that environmental education can:

- Promote outdoor lifestyles, and ensure healthier individuals and communities.
- Ensure people are informed about sound science and equipped to make decisions that help protect our natural resources on which our lives depend.
- Create a higher degree of pro-environment and conservation

behavior. The more people know, the more likely they are to recycle, be energy efficient, conserve water, etc.

*Outdoor Recreation and Conservation*

**Issue:** Outside funding sources are vital to future development of outdoor recreation and conservation enhancements. The Jackson County Conservation Department will continue to seek outside funding sources to leverage local dollars for these efforts.

**Opportunities:** The county’s 2023 Outdoor Recreation Plan provides:

- A guideline for future development and acquisition projects;
- Management plans for forest and prairie ecosystems; and
- A 5-year development plan for: campgrounds and parks, wildlife areas, historic structures, trails, river accesses, restoration and enhancement of habitat, and other capital development projects that will enhance recreational activities.

***Honor Cultural and Natural Resources***

A priority goal of the 2022-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) five-year plan for Cedar, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson Counties is: Honoring our cultural and natural resources.

**Issue:** Diversity remains a priority, encouraging more inclusive activities and recruiting a more diverse population overall to the CEDS region. This region continues to have a relatively low diverse population with less than 5% overall in minority population.

Efforts to recruit remain strong but we continue to lack the cultural resources and support systems in place to maintain a diverse population in the CEDS region. Funding for natural, cultural, and tourism related projects has decreased at both the State and Federal levels leaving it to the region to secure funding for many of its cultural and natural resource related projects.

**Opportunities:** Public-private partnerships are important to move forward many of the cultural and natural

resource projects in the CEDS region and to secure any type of grant funding.

Convention and visitors bureaus, economic development organizations, and Chambers of Commerce will continue to play a vital role in recruiting and retaining households and to maintain the workforce which is critical to the needs of our regional businesses.

Continued sensitivity, diversity, and equity training needs to remain a priority across the CEDS region providing for a more open and inclusive environment encouraging a diverse population. This training needs to come from the top down to encourage all participation.

***Regional Collaboration***

The Grant Wood Loop Master Plan updated in 2022 is a roadmap and living document for collaboration toward a shared vision within the three-county region of Dubuque, Jackson, and Jones Counties over the next 20 years. This collaboration is working together to erase the boundaries and “enhance, promote, sustain, and connect” the region’s cultural, natural, and park assets.

**Issue:** Communities in the Grant Wood Loop region were able to complete the region’s top priority park and recreation projects through the Grant Wood Loop Master Plan. With the initial set of projects completed, additional priorities and projects that will continue to move the region closer to its vision for the future have been identified.

**Opportunities:** The updated Grant Wood Loop Master Plan is meant to highlight the region’s assets, identify our opportunities as a community, and advocate for and support the effort of all groups in the region who are working on connecting people to each other and to great spaces and great experiences. The Master Plan is a collection of projects and initiatives. The region must work together across jurisdictions to implement the shared vision and bring new and expanded opportunities to our communities.



**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

*Environmental Education*

10.1 Implement the 2023 Jackson County Conservation Environmental Education Plan’s 5-Year Plan for programming:

- Increase interpretive signage at Prairie Creek Recreation Area and Jackson County Recreation Trail.
- Host all 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Jackson County in School of the Wild by 2024-2025 school year.
- Work more with upper-level students to increase knowledge of natural resources and conservation.
- Connect with middle and high school teachers, and local college professors, to help enhance their curriculum with outreach programs or field trips to natural areas.
- Design and construct a large new exhibit at the Hurstville Interpretive Center to tell the story of Iowa’s natural history and celebrate the Center’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024.

*Outdoor Recreation and Conservation*

10.2 Implement Jackson County Conservation’s 2023 Outdoor Recreation Plan for:

- Future development and acquisition projects;
- Management plans for forest and prairie ecosystems; and
- A 5-year development plan for: campgrounds and parks, wildlife areas, historic structures, trails, river access, restoration and enhancement of habitat, and other capital development projects that will enhance recreational activities.

*Honor Cultural and Natural Resources*

10.3 Enhance quality of life through honoring arts and cultural events and natural resources in our CEDS region.

- Improve the livability factor and desirability of the region as a destination for business by enhancing and expanding access to arts/cultural events, rivers, trails,

and other recreational and national excursion areas.

10.4 Promote celebration of the arts and cultural events.

- Support and assist our partners to increase investments in cultural and arts events, organizations, and institutions.
- Promote quality and artistic renewal by encouraging commission of murals and other artwork throughout the region.
- Educate elected officials and citizens on values of developing and funding quality of life amenities to attract and retain workforce throughout the region.

10.5 Ensure cultural sustainability for the wellbeing of all.

- Integrate culture within daily activities, policies, and programs.
- Ensure equal access to and participation in activities and events within the region.

- Mobilize culture by promoting events as inclusively as possible.

10.6 Enhance access to natural excursion areas and recreational activities.

- Continue to expand the level of public awareness of parks available by promoting sites like: <http://www.gwloop.com/>.
- Enhance and expand walking, biking, running, and other recreational facilities in the region.
- Expand and enhance the region’s existing recreational tourism activities, areas and facilities with maximum effectiveness recognizing budget constraints and the need for grant and local funding.
- Continually strive to improve existing facilities while seeking opportunities for future development.

*Regional Collaboration*

10.7 Implement the updated Grant Wood Loop Master Plan’s Future Priorities:

- Expand programming in and around parks and trails including natural resource education, nature and cultural interpretation, and outdoor recreation.
- Expand marketing of outdoor recreational parks and assets that also incorporates experiential tourism and ecotourism efforts.
- Expand outdoor education opportunities and connect more with the natural environment.
- Reforest areas and cities devastated by storms and pests such as the derecho and Emerald Ash Borer.
- Promote outdoor recreation and parks friends’ groups to grow the base of advocates and volunteers for natural resources and programming.

- Preserve and/or acquire unique natural, cultural, and recreational assets of the region, especially those containing sensitive environmental spaces.
- Preserve and/or acquire areas affected by creeks and rivers and by weather, rain, and flood events to increase resiliency and decrease devastation.
- Promote the relationship between outdoor spaces and public health, especially brain health.
- Preserve and/or acquire unique areas related to the Mississippi River Corridor.

**PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES PROJECTS**

Table 10.3 shows the 2022-2027 CEDS Action/Implementation Plan for *Goal 4: Honor Cultural and Natural Resources* relating to the three High Priority projects in Jackson County.

Table 10.4 lists the 2022 Update of the Grant Wood Loop Master Plan’s future projects in Jackson County, found on

pages 12-13 of the plan. Projects are grouped by the primary sponsor of the project. The table lists project cost estimates, if one is available, the amount of funding that has already been committed to the project, and the amount of additional funding needed to complete the project.

**Table 10.3 2022-2027 CEDS Action/Implementation Plan for Goal 4: Honor Cultural and Natural Resources: Projects in Jackson County**

| Objective   | Tasks/Projects   | Lead Agency                               | Funding Source/Agency                                 | Timeframe | Priority | Investment  |
|---|--|---|---|-----------|----------|-------------|
| <b>Increase # of KIB communities; Increase # of active projects</b> | Secure additional Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) funding – in 2021, started new KIB contract in Jackson County  | ECIA, Cities                              | Keep Iowa Beautiful; Respective Cities                | 2021-2027 | High     |             |
| <b>Prairie Creek Development</b>                                    | Develop Prairie Creek in Jackson County and secure funding for project. City partnering with Jackson County Conservation. Secured \$750,000 Destination Iowa Grant | Maquoketa and Jackson County Conservation | Maquoketa, Jackson County Conservation, State of Iowa | 2023-2026 | High     | \$2,000,000 |
| <b>Expand Grant Wood Loop</b>                                       | Secure additional funding for Grant Wood Loop to continue doing park and trail projects  | ECIA, Grant Wood members                  | ECIA, Grant Wood members                              | 2022-2025 | High     |             |

Source: 2022-2027 CEDS five-year plan, p. 29

**Table 10.4 Grant Wood Loop Master Plan: Future Projects in Jackson County**

Source: 2022 Update Grant Wood Loop Master Plan

| Project Title   | County  | Sponsor             | Project Description  | Total Est. Cost | Committed Funding | Funding Needed |
|---|---------|---------------------|--|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Quarry Trail Paving                                   | Jackson | Bellevue State Park | Finish paving the Quarry trail from the Butterfly garden to Felderman Park.  | -               | -                 | -              |
| Nelson Unit to Dyas Unit Trail                        | Jackson | Bellevue State Park | Construct a trail connecting the Nelson Unit and the Dyas Unit of Bellevue State Park.   | -               | -                 | -              |
| Bellevue Bike Rental Program                          | Jackson | City of Bellevue    | Bellevue Bike Rental Program. Bellevue BIG is researching ideas and how other communities use a bike rental program.   | -               | -                 | -              |
| Bellevue Municipal Boat Ramp and Parking Improvements | Jackson | City of Bellevue    | City of Bellevue Municipal Parking Lot Improvements: Boat Ramp (completed) & dry handicap loading ramp (waiting CORE application approval) both through DNR grant. Lifejacket rental program (Bellevue BIG, waiting CORE approval).                      | \$200,000       | \$200,000         | \$0            |
| Bellevue State Park Butterfly Garden Improvements     | Jackson | City of Bellevue    | State Park, butterfly garden improvements, ongoing. A group of volunteers started improvements last fall and look to continue to improve the area.   | -               | -                 | -              |
| Bellevue Tree Improvements                            | Jackson | City of Bellevue    | City of Bellevue Tree Board, tree planting in city parks. Ongoing effort to replant diversity and correct trees due to Emerald Ash Borer taking out so many trees in town. We have an active Tree Board and plan in place for future trees in the parks. | -               | -                 | -              |
| Ensign Playground                                     | Jackson | City of Bellevue    | Small playground equipment at Ensign Ball Diamonds in Bellevue. This is a goal for the Bellevue Ball Association.  | \$25,000        | \$0               | \$25,000       |
| Felderman Park Improvements                           | Jackson | City of Bellevue    | Felderman Park improvements. Committee has been formed and project ideas have been received. Completion time depends on funding sources & moving compost sight.  | -               | -                 | -              |
| Mill Creek Riverbank Improvements                     | Jackson | City of Bellevue    | Felderman Park: bank erosion & stabilization project. Will take place as weather allows. Funding through DNR REAP grant.   | \$39,500        | \$39,500          | \$0            |
| Riverview Park Gazebo                                 | Jackson | City of Bellevue    | Bellevue, north Riverview Park, new gazebo. The Medinger family donated land that extends the Riverview Park and they would like to look at putting up a gazebo in their family's honor.   | -               | -                 | -              |
| Downtown Trail  | Jackson | City of Preston     | Trail connecting Genos (ball diamonds) to downtown   | -               | -                 | -              |
| Peppermint Park Improvements                          | Jackson | City of Preston     | The goal is to revamp and re-organize the layout of Peppermint Park, eliminate safety issues that pose risk to the community, create an environment that is inviting and usable to individuals and families of all ages by updating the play equipment.  | \$60,000        | \$27,000          | \$33,000       |
| Westside Park Ninja Course                            | Jackson | City of Preston     | Adding a Ninja Course (Fit Core Course) to Westside Park. It included 15 pieces of equipment that promote strength and agility for all ages.   | \$112,000       | \$16,797          | \$95,203       |
| Horseshoe Pond Master Plan                            | Jackson | City of Maquoketa   | Continued dog park development, walking path around pond, dredging the pond, annual stocking (IKES), removing invasive species, adding name plates for plantings, new blacktop, and possible walking bridge over creek                                   | -               | -                 | -              |

10. PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

**Table 10.4 Grant Wood Loop Master Plan: Future Projects in Jackson County**

Source: 2022 Update Grant Wood Loop Master Plan

| Project Title                              | County  | Sponsor           | Project Description   | Total Est. Cost    | Committed Funding  | Funding Needed     |
|--|---------|-------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Parks Master Plan                          | Jackson | City of Maquoketa | Removing and replacing old/dated park equipment, new walking paths, benches, plantings, etc.  | -                  | -                  | -                  |
| YMCA Facility Upgrades                     | Jackson | City of Maquoketa | The project will address key facility needs including indoor pool updates, painting, flooring, and equipment replacement.   | \$1,041,490        | \$755,050          | \$286,440          |
| Sabula Municipal Dock                      | Jackson | City of Sabula    | Improvements to the Sabula Municipal Boat Landing including pavilion, ramp, dock, and restrooms.  | \$350,000          | -                  | \$350,000          |
| Bridgeport Access Improvements             | Jackson | Jackson County    | Water Trails - Bridgeport Access 2 phases. 1. Grade and place paved ramp. 2. Pave parking are and access road. Place latrine. Planning and design in process.   | \$300,000          | \$0                | \$300,000          |
| Canton Access improvements                 | Jackson | Jackson County    | Pave Ramp, pave parking lot and lane, place latrine, sidewalk along placed fishing habitat.   | \$300,000          | \$0                | \$300,000          |
| Hurstville Trail Phase 3                   | Jackson | Jackson County    | Connect trail from 55th St. to 63rd St.   | \$500,000          | \$0                | \$500,000          |
| Joinerville Park Improvements              | Jackson | Jackson County    | Replace boat launch and build parking area.   | \$50,000           | \$0                | \$50,000           |
| North Fork Maquoketa River Access          | Jackson | Jackson County    | Acquire land. Build primitive access along Teeters Bridge on the North Fork Maquoketa River.  | \$50,000           | \$0                | \$50,000           |
| Papke Wildlife Area Improvements           | Jackson | Jackson County    | Papke wildlife area. Build fishing ponds. Land access.  | \$150,000          | \$90,000           | \$60,000           |
| Pine Valley Land Acquisition               | Jackson | Jackson County    | Land acquisition Pine Valley WMA. 20 acres to provide public access to north half of area   | \$100,000          | \$12,000           | \$88,000           |
| Prairie Creek Recreation Area Enhancements | Jackson | Jackson County    | Improvements to Prairie Creek Recreation area. Prairie Creek water quality and recreation improvements, shelter, restrooms, parking, expanded trail system with pedestrian bridges, and disk golf course. | \$2,000,000        | -                  | \$2,000,000        |
| Royertown Access Improvements              | Jackson | Jackson County    | Pave lane and parking area. Upgrade access.   | \$200,000          | \$0                | \$200,000          |
| Sabula Lake Improvements                   | Jackson | Jackson County    | Middle Sabula Lake renovation. Sallow lake fish control structure. Dredge over wintering areas. Build parking and ramp. Create shore fishing access.  | \$20,000           | \$0                | \$20,000           |
| Spruce Harbor Renovation                   | Jackson | Jackson County    | Replace existing Boat ramp. Extend Parking Area. Replace south wall of Harbor.  | \$500,000          | \$10,000           | \$490,000          |
| <b>Jackson County Total</b>                |         |                   |   | <b>\$5,997,990</b> | <b>\$1,150,347</b> | <b>\$4,847,643</b> |