

# Parks and Recreation

## Overview

Boone County has a variety of parks and natural areas within its boundaries. The County hosts regional attractions such as Ledges State Park and the Don Williams Recreation Area along with preservation areas for wildlife watching, fishing, hunting, and camping. Regional trails are a major part of recreation within the County, including the iconic High Trestle Trail Bridge located in the middle of High Trestle Trail. Each type of space allows residents to get closer to nature, benefits the local and regional economy, and provides areas for active recreation. This plan, and specifically this section, aims to enhance current parks, plan for expansion to new areas, and allow for more options in activities throughout Boone County.

## Parks Goals

- Goal 1: Encourage active and outdoor recreation opportunities
  - Create unique areas and regional attractions.
  - Identify areas without nearby parks.
  - Host charrettes to see what activities community members want.
  - Add more trails and trail connections between popular trails in Boone County and beyond.
- Goal 2: Build recreation areas that accommodate different age groups and the disabled
  - Setup workout equipment targeted towards the elderly.
  - Invest in playgrounds that are ADA accessible.
  - Identify locations for restrooms and drinking fountains.
  - Explore and implement appropriate safety features for parks and trails.
- Goal 3: Expand the focus on natural resources throughout the park system and promote the conservation of Boone County's natural amenities
  - Expand programming to leverage the natural area and include nature-based recreation.
  - Partner with soil, water, and other conservation groups to preserve the natural beauty of the County.
  - Encourage the use of rain gardens and other low impact stormwater systems within the park system.

## Existing Parks and Trails

Boone County has high quality recreational areas that give the County a sense of pride, such as the iconic High Trestle Trail Bridge, that attracts visitors from all around the region. Boone County currently has a wide range of local, county, and state parks, and wildlife management areas. Along with those amenities, Boone County also has rivers, trails, and campgrounds that give residents and visitors areas to explore its natural beauty. Figure 6.1 shows where existing open spaces, parks, and trails can be found in Boone County.

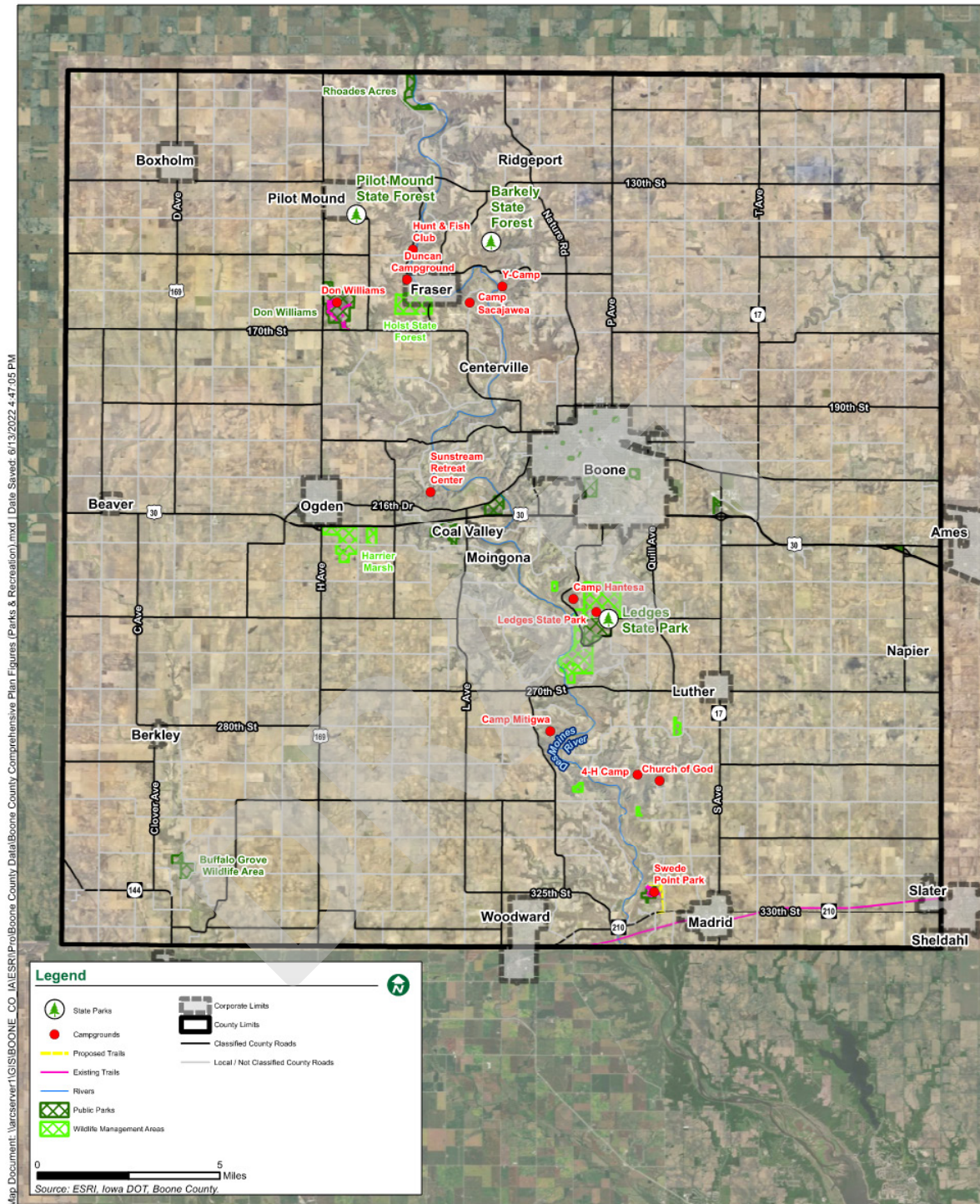


Figure 6.1 – Existing Parks and Recreation Areas

Source: Boone County Data

Created: Bolton & Menk Inc.



### Barkely State Forest:

Barkely State Forest is 40 acres of greenspace used primarily for hunting and nature study. This State Forest is located along the Elkhorn Creek, east of Holst State Forest.

### Beaver Creek Wildlife Area:

Beaver Creek Wildlife Area is one of many wildlife areas in the County. It is a 25-acre, year-round natural wildlife area that is open for public hunting. This area is located 1/2 mile east of Berkley at 315 Co Hwy E57 (280th St.), Perry, IA 50220.

### Buffalo Grove Wildlife Area:

Buffalo Grove Wildlife Area is a 127-acre, year-round natural wildlife area that is open for public hunting. Buffalo Grove Wildlife Area is located at 2200 Deer Ave Perry, IA 50220.

### Des Moines River Water Trail:

The Des Moines River Trail is 38-miles of river going North to South in the middle of Boone County. Along the river there are eight boat ramps into the water. The water trail is adjacent to Ledges State Park, Holst State Forest, and Rhodes Acres. Currently, no walking and cycling trail exists on this portion of the river.

### Dickcissel Park:

Dickcissel Park totals at 38-acre with a 15-acre pond stocked with largemouth bass and yellow perch at the center of it. Fishing is allowed but hunting is prohibited. Located at 1799 219th Ln Boone, IA 50036 near the Central Iowa Expo Center.



Figure 6.2 – Dickcissel Park

*Source: Boone County*

### Don Williams Recreation Area:

Don Williams Recreation Area currently is a 600-acre park featuring a campground, playground, several trails, and a 150-acre lake. Along the lake there currently is a beach open for swimming, bait shop, and 9-hole golf course. This recreation area is located at 610 H Ave Ogden, IA 50212.

### Grant's Woods:

Grant's Woods is a 28-acre, year-round nature area that is currently under development to add amenities for visitor use. It currently features a multi-use rock trail and a wildlife viewing area. For those looking to use trails in the area, Grant's Woods has one of the closest parking lots to the High Trestle Trail Bridge. These woods are located at 2335 Qf Ln, Madrid, IA 50156 .



Figure 6.3 – Don Williams Recreation Area

*Source: Boone County*

### Harrier Waterfowl Production Area:

The Harrier Waterfowl Production Area is 420-acres of marsh and grassland containing pheasant, waterfowl, and doves. This beautiful marsh area is located at 700 230th St, Ogden, IA 50212.

### High Trestle Trail:

A 10-mile multi-use trail with a parallel natural trail, useful for equestrian riders, and along it has the High Trestle Trail Bridge. This trail connects to over 100 miles of Iowa trails outside Boone County.

### Holst State Forest:

Holst State Forest hosts 313-acres of forest used primarily for research, vegetation studies, and nature experiments. This State Forest begins at 614 Kale Rd. Boone, IA 50036.

### Iowa Arboretum:

Iowa Arboretum is 348-acres of land hosting a variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers, along with nature trails. This Arboretum holds one of the largest collections of Native Iowa vegetation in the state. It is located at 1875 Peach Ave, Madrid, IA 50156.

### Jay Carlson Wildlife Area:

Jay Carlson Wildlife Area is a 156-acre, reconstructed sand prairie and woodlands wildlife area with a 22-acre lake containing bluegill, catfish, crappie, bass, and rough fish. It is a highly sought after place for all forms of recreational fishing. Jay Carlson Wildlife Area can be found at 1168 Old Hwy 30, Boone, IA 50036.

### Kate Shelley Trail:

The Kate Shelley Trail is a 0.85-mile, shared-use trail that follows an abandoned rail corridor in Boone, IA. Along the trail is Linwood Cemetery Stone Railroad Bridge, Geoppinger Field, Herman Park, and McHose Park.

### Ledges State Park:

Ledges State Park is a 1,000-acre state park featuring overviews of the Des Moines River, camp grounds, four miles of trails, and seasonal hunting locations. It is host to many wonderful wildlife views and is a common location for marriage proposals from Iowa Natives.

### Mabaska:

Mabaska is a 17-acre nature area with a large pond. Hunting and fishing isn't allowed in the area but is a common area for sight-seeing. It is located at 2200 230th St, Ames, IA 50014.

### Ogden Community Trail:

The Ogden Community Trail is a 1.1-mile trail located in Ogden, IA. Along the trail is the Leonard Good Community Center, Beaver Creek, Glenwood Cemetery, and Ogden High School.

### Pilot Mound State Forest:

Pilot Mound State Forest is 33 acres of forest used primarily as a nature area and hunting grounds. Within the forest is the mound which the City of Pilot Mound is named after.

### Rhoades Acres:

Rhoades Acres is 160 acres of public hunting land containing deer, turkeys, pheasants, rabbits, and squirrels. This land is host to all forms of seasonal hunting allowed in the State of Iowa.

### Swede Point Park:

Swede Point Park is a 128-acre park featuring a campground, hiking trails, shelters, a playground, and a volleyball court. It is commonly known for camping events and is located at 1601 322nd Lane Madrid, IA 50156 along the Des Moines River.

## Proposed Parks and Trails

### Beaver Creek Trail:

This potential 36.5-mile trail would run along Beaver Creek. The trail would complete a necessary connection that would bring Boxholm, Beaver, and Berkley together.

### Des Moines River Trail:

This potential 38-mile trail would run along the Des Moines River corridor. The trail would connect communities of Fraser, Boone, and Madrid together and would also connect to the High Trestle Trail just west of Madrid.

### Kate Shelley Trail Extension:

This potential 7.6-mile trail would follow the already abandoned rail corridor. The trail would connect to the City of Boone and Ogden to one another along with the proposed Des Moines River Trail.

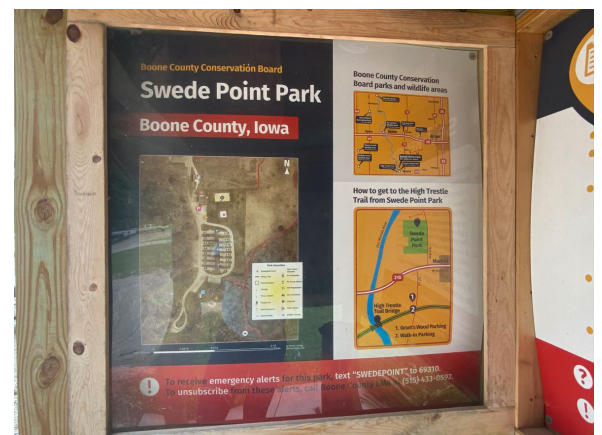


Figure 6.4 – Swede Point Park

Source: Boone County

## Survey Responses

The survey found that 89.6% of respondents used Boone County's parks at least a few times a year and that 83.6% used trails yearly within Boone County. The most popular responses from the survey were about how Boone County could improve their park and trail system. Specifically through additional trails, better connections, more restrooms, and updating current facilities. The survey results show that people often use the current facilities and desire a continuation of the trail system. All of these findings have been reflected within the parks section goals.

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