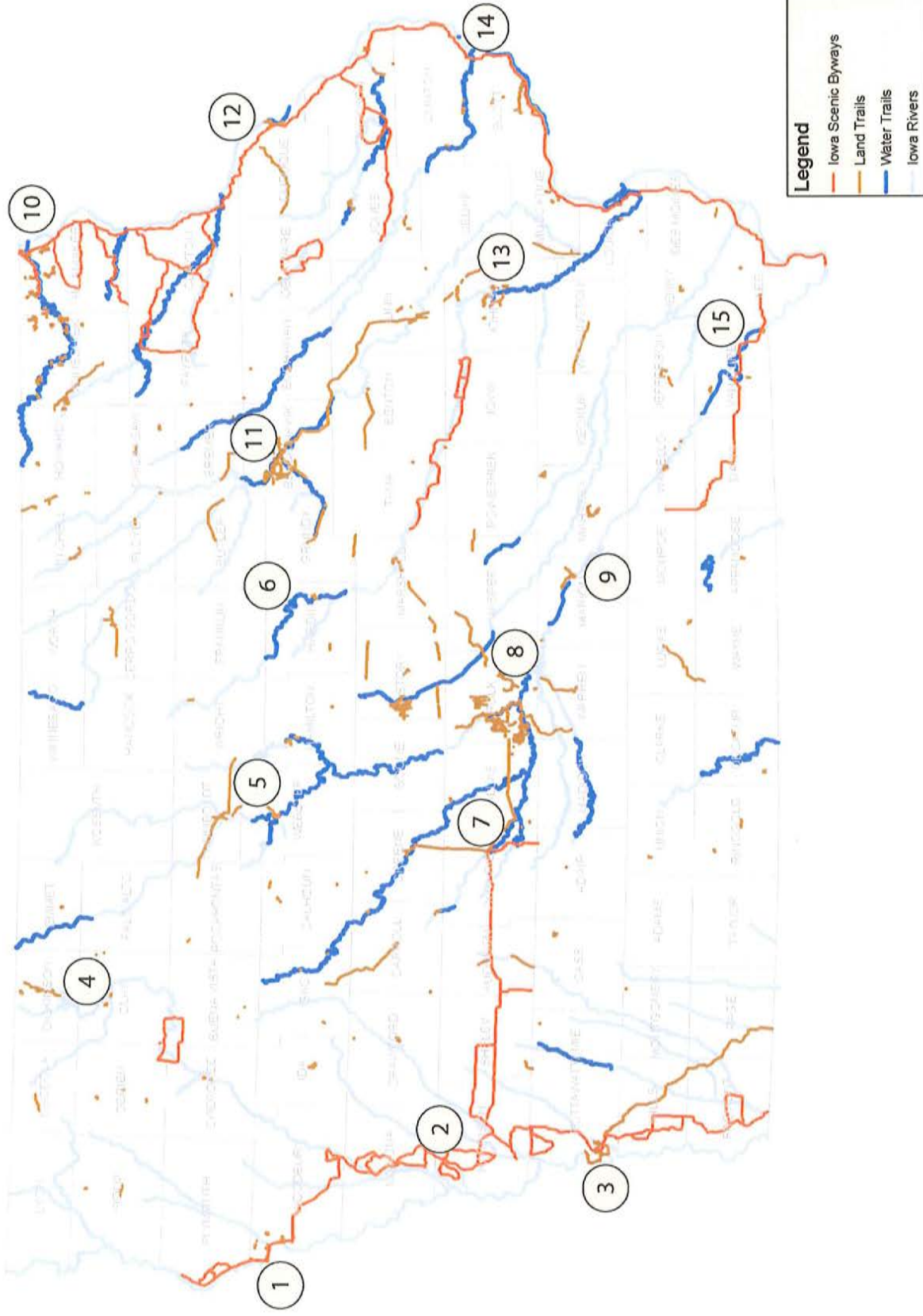




Bikes + Waterways: Destination Vacations



Biking and paddling have a natural connection. Both are typically powered by human energy alone and are natural forms of transportation. They both use large muscle groups in the arms, legs and back and, thus, are heart-healthy activities. They are sustainable activities as they use existing paths, including rivers, roads and trails built along former railroads. The only energy you'll require is the great food you will find along the way.

In Iowa, there is a huge number and variety of options for connecting bikes and rivers. Across Iowa, you can paddle a canoe or kayak, catch a ride on a river boat, and bike on trails and roads that often parallel rivers. Iowa's roads and trails are typically well-marked and, with the increasing number of water trails, we enjoy some well-marked rivers and access points. We have included references to Iowa's Scenic Byways here because they are specially marked rural routes and loops that are perfect for cycling trips, training routes or just good places to explore. They are scenic because they follow the lay of a land carved by rivers and ancient glaciers.

- Choose a destination where you can paddle one day and cycle (or explore) the next. Check online at Iowa Rivers Revival or Iowa DNR for river outfitters; check Iowa Bike Routes/Cycle Central Iowa maps for information on trails and loops.
- Combine a bike *and* river trip with a bike shuttle. Drop a bike at the river access where you will take out your boat (make sure you lock your bike!) and then drive to the put-in. Enjoy your float trip and then, at the take-out, hop on your bike and cycle back to the start point. If you have a folding bike or enough room in your boat, you could *carry your bike on board*, choose any take-out, and bike back to the put-in.

<u>Map</u>	<u>Town/Area</u>	<u>River</u>	<u>Trail/Route</u>	<u>Transportation Options/Highlights</u>
1	Sioux City, IA	Missouri River Big Sioux River	12-mile Riverfront Trail River Drive Trail Perry Creek Trail Floyd River Trail	Bicycling, paddling and motor boating <u>Highlights:</u> Start at Riverside Park in Sioux City and cycle north along the Missouri and Big Sioux Rivers to South Sioux City, NE, or Sergeant Bluff, IA. You'll soon pass Dakota Point where Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota converge. If you cycle up the Perry Creek Trail and then Stone Park Boulevard, you can explore Stone State Park and get a great view of the wide Missouri River Valley and Loess Hills. Be sure to visit the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and learn about Sioux City's role in Lewis and Clarks' grand adventure. http://www.inhf.org/trails/sioux-city-river.cfm http://www.siouxcitylcic.com/
2	Loess Hills in Harrison County	Missouri River	220-mile Loess Hills Scenic Byway	Bicycling and driving <u>Highlights:</u> Stop at Murray Hill in Harrison County and climb to the top to get one of the best views of the Missouri River Valley and Loess Hills.
3	Southwest Iowa	East and West Forks of the Nishnabotna River	63-mile Wabash Trace Nature Trail West Nishnabotna River Water Trail 140-mile Western Skies Scenic Byway	Bicycling, driving and paddling <u>Highlights:</u> Whether you bike or paddle, these trails and rural byways will give you a wonderful introduction to western Iowa. http://www.inhf.org/trails/wabash-trace.cfm ;
4	Lake Okoboji and the Glacial Trail	Little Sioux River Waterman Creek Lake Okoboji Spirit Lake	10-mile Spencer Recreation Trail Little Sioux River Water Trail 36-mile Old O'Brien Glacial Trail Scenic Byway Iowa Great Lakes Trail	Bicycling, paddling and driving <u>Highlights:</u> This corner of Iowa has some fascinating glacial remnants. Paddle the Little Sioux River from Cayler Prairie State Preserve past Freda Hafner Kettlehole State Preserve to Horseshoe Bend Recreation Area and beyond. Waterman Creek flows through a restored prairie habitat and the water is amazingly clear compared to the Little Sioux River. Bike or walk trails through Spencer's Stolley Park and Riverview Park. Both are situated on the Little Sioux River and are connected by city streets. There are miles of land trails around Lake Okoboji and Spirit Lake, Iowa's only natural lakes. http://www.inhf.org/trails/spencer-recreation.cfm http://www.co.dickinson.ia.us/departments/Trails/2011%20map.pdf
5	Boone River	Boone River	Boone River Water Trail Briggs Woods Trail	Bicycling, paddling and fishing <u>Highlights:</u> The Boone River is as sweet a stream as you'll see in central Iowa. Paddle below Webster City to Briggs Woods County Park. Bike the trail back to downtown Webster City or spend the night in a park cabins. For a longer paddle put in at Riverside Park, paddle to Tunnel Mill access, and ride back up Tunnel Mill Road to Riverside Park (45 minutes).

				<p>Check out the Hamilton County Conservation parks list for more information about other public lands along the Boone River. There are accesses about every 6-8 miles from the city park in Webster City to Bells Mill Access near the mouth. The Boone has clear water, gravel bottom and rock ledges and is always interesting.</p> <p>http://www.mycountyparks.com/Parks/Default.aspx</p>
6	Iowa Falls and Hardin County	Iowa River	Iowa River Water Trail	<p>Bicycling and paddling</p> <p><u>Highlights:</u> Iowa River Greenbelt: Paddle from Alden Dam to Dougan’s Landing in Iowa Falls or take out at Camp David Restaurant where you can take the elevator up to the restaurant.</p> <p>You can also put in below Iowa Falls and paddle to Pine Lake State Park in Eldor; for another spectacular paddle trip. You’ll also float under the startlingly high Highway 20 Bridge.</p> <p>http://www.hardincountytrails.org/map.html</p>
7	Raccoon River Country	Middle Raccoon River North Raccoon River Raccoon River	Raccoon River Trail Raccoon River Water Trail	<p>Bicycling and paddling</p> <p><u>Highlights:</u> Middle Raccoon River: This is another favorite for paddlers and anglers due to the clear water, gravel bottom, rock ledges and boulders left by the last glacier. Put in below the Panora Dam and float to Redfield or start below the Redfield Dam and float down to DNR’s Pleasant Valley Access upstream from County Road P58.</p> <p>Paddle the Raccoon River Trail from Jefferson to Des Moines Water Works Park and then bike back, or do a shorter stretch in between. Also, cycle from Jefferson to Adel along the Raccoon River – lots of great sand bars.</p> <p>http://www.inhf.org/trails/raccoon-river-valley.cfm</p>
8	Des Moines and Polk County	Raccoon River Des Moines River	Regional Trail System Raccoon River Water Trail Des Moines River Water Trail	<p>Bicycling and paddling</p> <p><u>Highlights:</u> Bike the High Trestle Trail from Madrid to Woodward. Stop on the High Trestle Bridge to enjoy the expansive view of the Des Moines River Valley. Paddle the Des Moines River between Highway 30 west of Boone and Highway 210 west of Madrid, a route that brings you in site of the High Trestle Trail Bridge.</p> <p>Pedal and Paddle: Bike to a lake and then paddle. In Des Moines, you can bike area trails to Grays Lake and then rent a canoe and paddle around Grays Lake, or you can bike the trail around Raccoon River Park in West Des Moines and paddle Blue Heron Lake. Bicycle rental service is available at Gray’s Lake concession stand. In addition, you may rent a B-Cycle at several locations in downtown Des Moines (short trips-connecting to transit). There are plenty of trails, bridges and streets that make an urban assault great fun!</p> <p>Neal Smith Trail: Paddle the Des Moines River from Cottonwood Recreation Area or Sycamore Access below Saylorville Lake to Birdland Access and then bike back.</p> <p>http://www.inhf.org/iowa-trails.cfm http://dsmbikecollective.org/mapcentral</p>
9	Lake Red Rock	Des Moines River Lake Red Rock	Lake Red Rock area trails Lake Red Rock Water Trail	<p>Bicycling and paddling</p> <p><u>Highlights:</u> Paddle the Lake Red Rock Water Trail along the south edge of the lake. Bike along the various trails below Red Rock Dam (at Howell Station) and between the lake and city of Pella.</p> <p>http://www.redrockarea.com/see-and-do/recreation/?search=1&subcategory%5B%5D=21</p>
10	Driftless Country	Upper Iowa River Turkey River Volga River Yellow River Mississippi River	100-mile Driftless Area Scenic Byway Turkey River Water Trail 109-mile River Bluffs Scenic Byway	<p>Bicycling, padding and driving</p> <p><u>Highlights:</u> This is definitely God’s country! Paddle the Upper Iowa River from Kendallville to Bluffton for the most impressive river stretch in Iowa or take advantage of river camping opportunities and continue floating to the Mississippi River. The Turkey and Volga Rivers, both beautiful with lots of wildlife. You’ll get some exercise cycling in this driftless country, an area not carved by glaciers.</p>

11	Black Hawk County Cedar Falls- Waterloo	Cedar River	52-mile Cedar Valley Trail	Bicycling and paddling <u>Highlights:</u> The Cedar Valley Trail is a linear park that follows a route through the Cedar River bottomlands, along forested banks of the river and across open prairie. A good spot to observe birds and other wildlife.
12	Maquoketa River	Maquoketa River Mississippi River	Maquoketa River Water Trail 68-mile Grant Wood Scenic Byway 44-mile Delaware Crossing Scenic Byway	Biking, driving and paddling <u>Highlights:</u> The Maquoketa River from Monticello to Royertown Access at County Road Y34 provides a beautiful and intimate river experience. The North Fork of the Maquoketa River from Cascade to Ozark Bridge Access at 21 st Street in Jackson County is the longest wild stretch of river in Iowa, 18 miles with no bridges. Incredible!
13	Iowa City, Coralville and Johnson County	Iowa River	70-mile Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Iowa River Water Trail Iowa City-Coralville Trails	Bicycling, driving and paddling <u>Highlights:</u> The Iowa River corridor through Coralville and Iowa City offers lots of trail riding opportunities. If you want to paddle, put in at Surges Ferry Park. The Iowa River Water Trail flows to the Mississippi River. http://www.coralville.org/index.aspx?NID=294 http://www.icgov.org/default/?id=1055
14	Quad Cities and Scott County	Mississippi River	3,000-mile Mississippi River Trail 2,069-mile Great River Road	Bicycling, driving, paddling and motor boating <u>Highlights:</u> Bike and boat the Mississippi River on both the Iowa and Illinois shores. In the Quad Cities, the MRT is on the Iowa side, some on and some off-road, and is off-road on the Illinois side. Bike, kayak or enjoy a river boat cruise. There are scenic campgrounds and river towns all along the Iowa border. The Mississippi River Network has declared 2012 the year of paddling the river and 2013 will be the year of biking. Bike or drive across the river on the Cassville Ferry above Dubuque. http://www.imtrails.com/mrtcentral/ http://www.ehow.com/list_6538829_mississippi-river-cruises-iowa.html http://www.cassville.org/ferry.html
15	Van Buren County	Des Moines River	85-mile Historic Hills Scenic Byway Des Moines River Water Trail	Bicycling, driving and paddling <u>Highlights:</u> Van Buren County has something for everyone. A paddle trip, scenic bike trip, river town history and cultural offerings at the Villages Folk School. http://villagesofvanburen.com/ or http://villagesfolkschool.com/

Helpful links:

- Iowa Rivers Revival – Statewide Outfitters: <http://www.iowarivers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=0eMdl07NWVw%3d&tabid=124>
- Iowa DNR – Statewide Outfitters: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Recreation/CanoeingKayaking/PaddlerResources/Outfitters.aspx>. DNR Web site also provides a list of designated water trails and maps for each.
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation has been critical to the development of many Iowa trail systems. <http://www.inhf.org/iowa-trails.cfm>
- <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Recreation/CanoeingKayaking/WaterTrails/WaterTrailMapsBrochures.aspx>
- Scenic byways typically follow rural county roads with great scenery and are perfect for a bicycling trip: <http://www.iowadot.gov/iowasbyways/index.aspx> for more information.
- Mississippi River Trail and associated trails: <http://www.mississippirivertrail.org/> (download the Mississippi River Trail Guidebook).
- Iowa biking information: <http://www.bikeiowa.com/>.
- *Paddling Iowa* by Nate Hoogeveen – a book of 96 great canoe and kayaking trips. Find a copy at your favorite bookstore or online at Amazon or eBay.
- Des Moines Parks & Recreation for city trail information: <http://www.dmgov.org/Departments/Parks/trails/default.aspx>
- The Des Moines Bike Collective – for other great bicycling trip ideas: <http://dsmbikecollective.org/> (link to the Central Iowa Trail Map)
- Whether cycling or paddling, the Iowa Atlas and Gazetteer by DeLorme is a great resource, full of topographic and road details, and is available at many book stores: <http://www.amazon.com/Iowa-Atlas-Gazetteer-DeLorme/dp/0899333362>.
- Paddling resources: <http://www.paddlingiowa.com/>. Find a paddling club near you for support and information.
- Find information about river levels at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ia/nwis/rt>.
- Check out City and County Conservation Board Web sites for trail maps and trail information
- Visit Iowa Rivers Revival (www.iowarivers.org) for bike/river adventures information/testimonials AND share your biking + river stories and ideas (e-mail: rlehman@iowarivers.org).