

# 2024 Guidebook

Family or Group Name: _	
Number of Adults:	
Number of Children:	

www.turkeyrivercorridor.com

#### The Turkey River Safari was created by:

- Turkey River Recreational Corridor Board
- Clayton County Conservation
- Fayette County Conservation

#### With gratitude towards:

- Winneshiek County Driftless Safari (driftless-safari.org)
- AJ Perling (Snowball Creative Services)
- Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development
- Clayton County Conservation staff
- Fayette County Conservation staff
- Clermont Public Library
- Elgin Public Library
- Elkader Public Library
- Hawkeye Public Library
- West Union Public Library
- Osborne Welcome Center
- Gilbertson Nature Center

Thank you for joining us on our 2024 Turkey River Safari adventure!



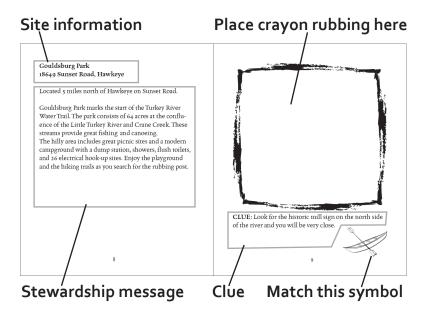
#### **WELCOME**

Welcome to the 2024 Turkey River Safari! From Memorial Day to Labor Day, this is a summer-long adventure that will take you and your family to new and favorite places along the Turkey River Corridor. The Turkey River Recreational Corridor is a joint effort between Fayette and Clayton counties and the communities of Clermont, Elgin, Elkader, and Motor Mill Historic Site. As one of Iowa's Great Places, the Turkey River Recreational Corridor is working to create great outdoor adventures throughout the Turkey River Valley.

This is your guidebook. You may visit the sites in any order, and we highly recommend for you to be creative in the ways you get to each site when it is safe to do so—try bike riding on the trails, roller blading, or even paddling!

At each site, you'll be looking for a post like this. The symbols on the pages of this book match the symbols on the rubbing post you will find at specified safari sites. Make a rubbing–crayons work best—in the space provided on the page.

Enjoy! Each site is a chance for you and your family and friends to grow closer, play outside, learn, and enjoy the beauty of the Turkey River Corridor!



#### How to Make a Rubbing

- I. Find the correct page in your guidebook.
- Place the designated area of the corresponding page over the symbol.
- 3. Rub the side of the crayon slowly over the paper and watch the symbol take form!

#### Tips for Enriching Your Experience:

- Talk to the locals! If you are visiting a site for the first time, explore your community and speak to a trusted adult who works at the site! Some key people to meet may include a park ranger, tour quide, historian, or city staff person.
- Be prepared—always! Keep your guidebook and map with you in your car or backpack all summer long; an adventure is always around the corner!
   Be sure you don't end up on any level B or C roads!
- Remember: It's summer! We want you and your family to be safe this summer! Remember to wear sunscreen and sun-resistant clothing, bring plenty of water and snacks, and don't forget your camera, first-aid kit, and insect repellent!
- Be a good steward! We care about all living things and want to protect the land, animals, and fellow human beings so that future generations will have wild and precious places to explore!

#### Things to Do At Each Site

Here are some extra activities you and your family can enjoy practically anywhere!

- i. Check ahead of time and see if there is a class or activity happening. Many of the sites have terrific websites to let you know what is offered!
- 2. The limestone bluffs that surround the Turkey River Valley are a great place to look for fossils and interesting rocks. Start a collection of your own!
- 3. Visit your local farmer's market before your adventure and pack a picnic!
- 4. Bring your fishing pole and catch your supper!
- 5. Bald eagles and many other native birds can be seen all along the Turkey River. Start a journal to record all that you see during your safari adventure!
- 6. Go to your local library to find out the history and stories surrounding Clayton and Fayette Counties.

Visit www.turkeyrivercorridor.com to find links to trail maps, local events, and more! We would love to see your pictures as you are exploring. To share pictures with us, please visit our Facebook page, follow us on Instagram, or email them to us at turkeyrivercorridor@gmail.com.

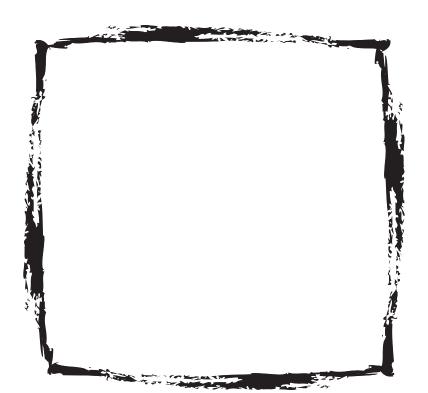
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Let the safari begin!

#### Elkader Opera House

207 N Main Street, Elkader

Completed in November 1903, the Elkader Opera House emerged from the ashes of the Turner Opera House, which succumbed to fire earlier that year, thanks to a swift community effort that raised \$10,000 in just four days. Described as "50x2102 feet, with a handsome front of pressed brick" in the April 16, 1903 issue of the Elkader Register, the new building swiftly became a cultural hub. By fall of the same year, George M. Cohen's musical, The Governor's Son, graced its stage, drawing audiences from near and far, with special trains arranged to accommodate them. Despite evolving from hosting touring acts to fulfilling various civic roles including club space, dance hall, and city hall, the opera house retained its significance in Elkader's social fabric. Home to the Keystone Barbershop Chorus and the Opera House Players, it underwent extensive restoration in 2003, reclaiming its historic splendor and solidifying its reputation as one of the Midwest's premier small theaters.



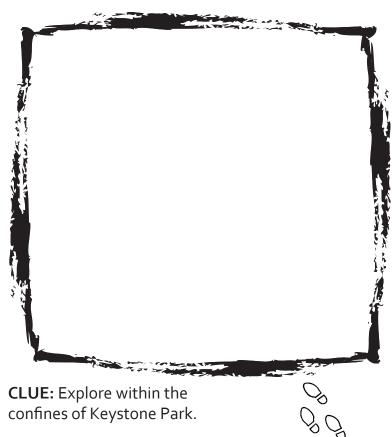
**CLUE:** Follow the pathway through the pocket park next to the Opera House.



#### **Keystone Bridge**

103 S Main Street, Elkader

At the turn of the century, Clayton County engaged various firms and individuals to construct bridges spanning its numerous streams and rivers. Iron or steel trusses were favored for longer crossings, while timber stringer structures were common for shorter spans. Yet, the county also utilized locally quarried limestone to erect enduring stone arch bridges. Among these was the Keystone Bridge, built over the Turkey River in Elkader between 1888 and 1889. Despite a base price of \$13,000, additional expenses for extra mortar and finishing raised the total cost to \$16,282.49. Standing at a height of 27.9 feet above the stream bed upon completion and weighing over 18 million pounds, the bridge has served traffic for over a century with remarkable integrity. Scheduled for rededication in May 2024 following a \$7.3 million rehabilitation project, this event marks the 135th anniversary of the bridge's original construction.

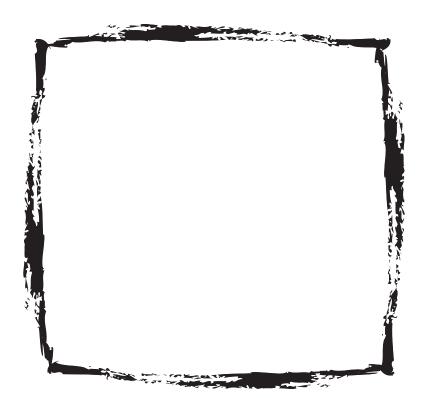


## **Turkey River Overlook**

402 North High Street, Elkader

This overlook is located just down river from the Clayton County Development Office, where you can learn about all the fun things to do in Clayton County and the Turkey River Recreational Corridor!

The Turkey River Water Trail in Northeast lowa offer outdoor enthusiasts a captivating blend of natural beauty and recreational adventure. Nestled along the scenic Turkey River, offering both exciting rapids and tranquil stretches ideal for leisurely floats, fishing, and wildlife observation. The water trail meanders through picturesque landscapes, flanked by lush forests and limestone bluffs, offering paddlers a serene escape into nature's embrace. With convenient access points and amenities, including camping facilities and picnic areas, the river and its surrounding communities are a premier destinations for outdoor enthusiasts seeking both excitement and tranquility amidst Northeast lowa's breathtaking scenery.



**CLUE:** Follow the Elkader Riverwalk trail from the Tourism Office down river to find an overlook.



#### **Deer Run Resort**

Travel Hwy 13 between the S High St. and E Bridge St. Intersection.

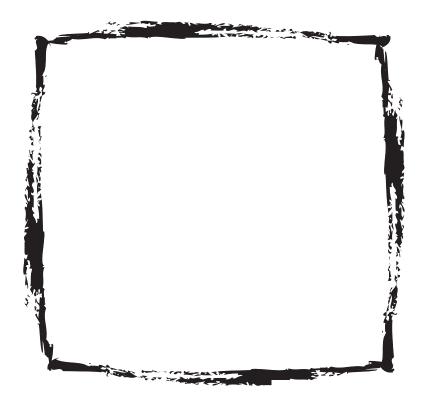
Pull in at the red gate (on the west side of the road)

Deer Run Resort is nestled in historic Elkader. The resort is family-owned by locals from Elkader and St. Olaf, deeply rooted in the community, and dedicated to providing memorable experiences for visitors.

The facility offers a large lake, picnic tables, wooded areas, paved roadways and hard-surface sidewalks, a shower

house with restrooms, and laundry facilities.

A flower field is planted between the lake and Elkader City Park to offer a beautiful backdrop for photos and an opportunity to enjoy the beauty in nature.



**CLUE:**You'll find the post near the red gate.



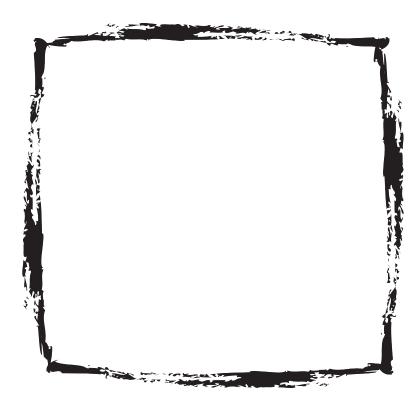
#### **Elkader City Park**

707 High Street SE, Elkader

Elkader City Park offers a serene retreat on its lush 3-acre grounds. Amidst the park's shaded beauty lies the solemn Veteran's Memorial, bridging the gap between the park and the inviting City Pool. Within this idyllic setting, visitors can explore the Rural Heritage Museum and the Train Depot Museum, set to open in 2023. The park boasts an array of amenities, including a campground and bathhouse. Embracing a first-come, first-served policy, campers enjoy flexibility with no assigned spots, while the campground operates from April 1st to November 1st, weather permitting.

Additionally, the park offers five open shelters and an enclosed shelter available for rent, ideal for hosting special events.

New in 2024: Pickleball Courts!



**CLUE:** Follow the road back to the tennis/pickleball courts and look near the 'Lions Club' shelter.



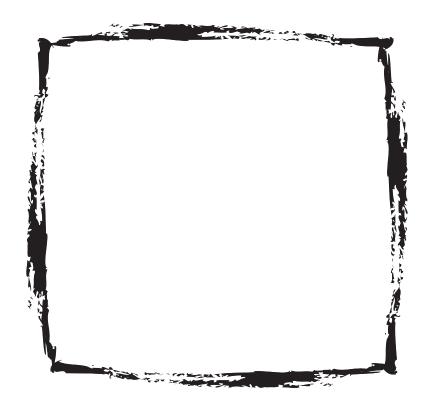
#### **Robert's Creek Canoe Access**

Just North of the intersection of 230th St. and Fawn Hollow Road, Elkader

Roberts Creek Access is a unique part of the Turkey River. It is the only access not located directly on the 98-Mile Turkey River Water Trail. This is a great option for an advance paddler when water conditions are suitable and is approximately 5.2 miles from the Turkey River.

The Turkey River Water Trail is connected through signs, maps, and river access points that provide an enjoyable, scenic and educational experience for recreational users. The water trail begins on the Little Turkey River at Gouldsburg Park and flows southeast through Fayette and Clayton Counties toward the Mississippi River. The Water Trail features beautiful scenery, diverse wildlife species, a whitewater feature, and numerous historic landmarks.

The Turkey River Water Trail Map & Guide is available online at www.turkeyrivercorridor.com/water-trails/ or for pick up at several Northeast Iowa locations. You can also check out an Interactive Paddling Map that includes potential hazard locations and links to 360° videos of various sections and accesses.



**CLUE:** Find the water trail access sign.

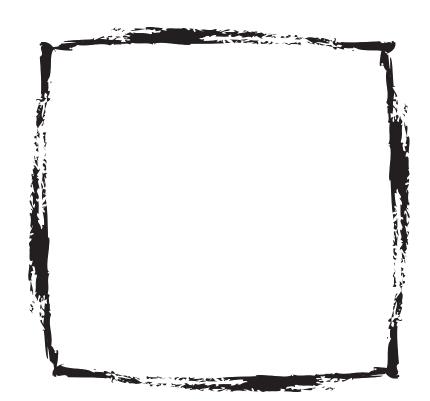
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## Motor Mill Historic Site 28515 Galaxy Road, Elkader

The Motor Mill Historic Site is a peaceful natural area that features a six-story limestone flouring mill and four related stone buildings dating from the late 1860's. One of these four structures is the newly restored, three-story Motor Mill Inn. While the main floor is used as a visitor center, gift shop, public restroom and foundation office the remaining upper two floors can be rented for lodging up to 12 people.

The Inn at Motor Mill can also serve as an idyllic retreat destination for small groups such as quilting clubs, artisans, and small business. Wi-Fi connectivity means that hosting a meeting and hosting a virtual guest speaker is possible. Remote learning and remote working can be accomplished from the Inn. Rentals are available by calling 563-245-1516 or by visiting mycountyparks.com and searching "The Inn at Motor Mill" on the website.

Guided tours of historic Motor Mill are offered Noon-5:00 PM every weekend Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend.



**CLUE:** Look near the entrance to the first floor of the Motor Mill Inn.

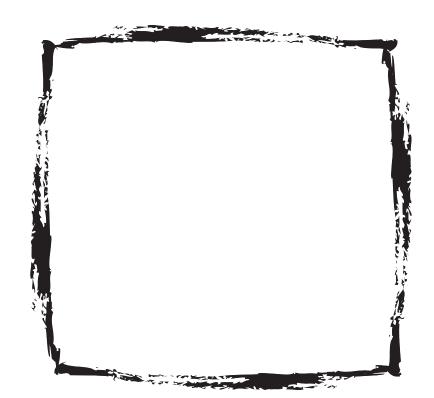


#### Chicken Ridge Overlook

Travel South on Hwy 13 from Elkader and turn left onto Chicken Ridge Road, then take the first left at the gravel drive

A literal high point of the River Bluffs Scenic Byway in Clayton County along Highway 13, this overlook offers views of the rolling hills and valleys of the Driftless Area. It is a great picnic spot for byway travelers. A wooden platform provides additional elevation and offers interpretation of the prehistoric past, modern farm uses, and local fauna and flora.

The site is named for the prairie chicken, recently rediscovered on an adjacent road known as Chicken Ridge. Native prairie has also been restored at the site. The views from this overlook and the associated stretch of the River Bluffs Scenic Byway are particularly stunning in the summer when the many greens of the Driftless landscape's grasslands, forests, and prairies are vibrant, which is why the valley to the left (as you are standing on the viewing platform) is known locally as the Emerald Valley.



**CLUE:** Find some educational materials and you'll be close.



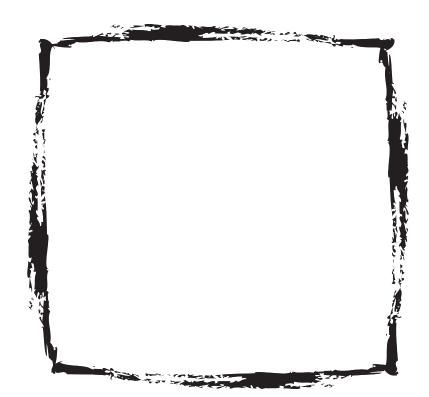
#### Osborne Pond

29458 IA Hwy 13, Elkader

Constructed in the 1970s, Osborne Pond stands as a testament to the enduring allure of fishing, offering a tranquil spot for anglers of all ages to hone their skills. Recently revitalized with dredging, the installation of fish habitats, and the stocking of fish, the pond beckons enthusiasts to cast their lines and indulge in the timeless art of angling.

A kayak launch invites visitors to test their paddling prowess before embarking on the adventure of the Turkey River Water Trail, while swimming is respectfully prohibited to maintain the ecological balance of the pond. Nestled nearby amidst the idyllic surroundings, an 18-hole disc golf course meanders through the lush expanse of forest and prairie, providing a refreshing outdoor activity for all skill levels

For families, a playground offers a delightful respite, ensuring that Osborne Pond remains a cherished destination for recreational enjoyment and natural splendor.



CLUE: Look near the shelter.



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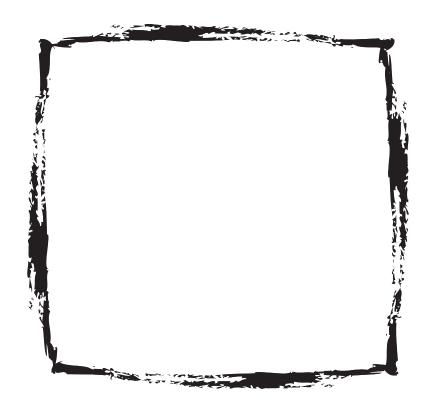
#### Osborne Welcome Center

29862 Osborne Road, Elkader

The Osborne Nature Center is a sanctuary for both wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers alike. As you step onto the grounds, the Clayton County Conservation Board offices welcome you with open arms, inviting you to become part of their mission. The wildlife exhibit boasts residents such as the majestic Black Bear, elusive Mountain Lion, and the cunning Fox, alongside a diverse aviary of raptors. Trails meander through the landscape, inviting exploration both near the nature center and around the serene pond.

The brochure room within the welcome center serves as a gateway to the wider wonders of lowa, while the lowa Room Gift shop tempts with locally made treasures and eclectic finds. Venture into the depths of the building to discover the reptilian and amphibian residents of the nature center's basement.

Coming Soon: Osborne Campground!



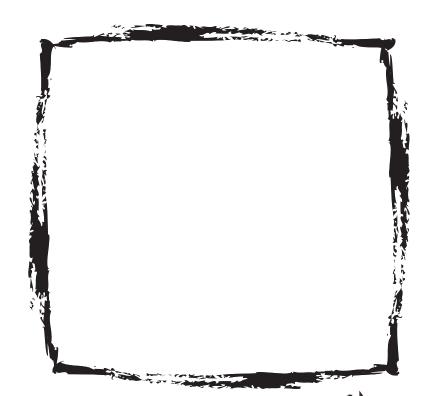
**CLUE:** Find a large map in the parking area.



#### Lima Church and Cemetery 16550 Heron Road, Fayette

The Lima Church and Cemetery stand as a serene sanctuary overlooking the Volga River Valley, the sole remnants of the once-thriving Lima community, which boasted a school, general store, saw mill, railroad, and numerous farms. Despite aspirations to become Fayette County's county seat, Lima's dreams were dashed by a mere 35 votes, leading to the sale of courthousedesignated land to the Lima Union Church Builders for the church's establishment. The church saw various denominational transitions until the formation of the Lima Union Church Builders Association in 1882, which oversaw the construction of the present church, enhanced in 1914 with a belfry, bell, and stained glass windows. While regular services ceased in 1949, the church remains a focal point for community events, gatherings, and cherished traditions like Lima Leaf Day, available for reservation through Patricia Baumler: 563-425-3206.

**Note:** Please do not visit after 1:00pm on Memorial Day due to church and cemetery services.

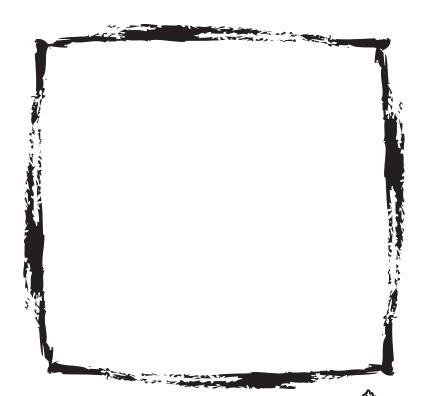


**CLUE:** Look by a sign near the entrance to the cemetery.



# **Volga River State Recreation Area** 10255 Ivy Road, Fayette

Volga River State Recreation Area sprawls across 5,700 acres near the City of Fayette, nestled amid forested, undulating terrain along the Volga River and encompassing the 138-acre Frog Hollow Lake, better known as Volga Lake. Renowned for its boating and fishing opportunities, the park features a three-lane boat ramp at the lake and welcomes canoes and kayaks along the river's course. The lake, with its floating pier and jetties, teems with bluegill, channel catfish, crappie, largemouth bass, and yellow perch. Moreover, the park boasts 22 miles of versatile trails for hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and winter sports like cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. Accommodation options include the contemporary Lakeview Campground and the equestrian-friendly Albany Campground. Hunting is permitted throughout the area, complemented by a seasonal archery range near the Albany Campground.



**CLUE:** Find a bench near the water.



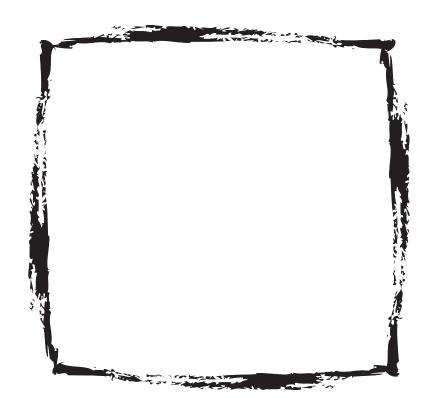
#### Echo Valley State Park 9672 Echo Valley Road, West Union

Echo Valley is a 100-acre natural area owned by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and managed by the Fayette County Conservation Board.

The park preserves many historical structures handbuilt by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. Recreational opportunities include picnicking in the shelter house, trout fishing in two separate trout streams, hiking the Jensen Trail, or camping at one of the park's primitive campsites.

Hunting is not allowed in the park but the adjacent state-managed Glovers Creek Fish and Wildlife Area is open for public fishing and hunting.

One of the most popular features of the park is the universal fishing access at Glovers Creek.



**CLUE:** Turn left as you enter the park to find a gate leading to the universal fishing access.



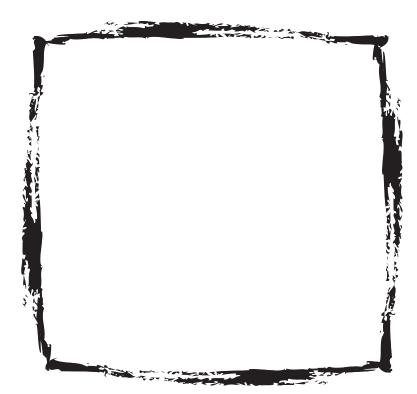
#### **Clermont Trail Kiosk**

At the intersection of Great River Road and Hwy 18, Clermont

The Turkey River Recreational Trail is part of the Turkey River Recreational Corridor. This scenic 6+ mile paved bicycle trail winds along the Turkey River from Gilbertson Conservation Education Area up past the city of Clermont. The trail features exceptional views of the Turkey River valley and includes an a sculpture of an eagle's nest between Elgin and Clermont.

The Turkey River Recreational Corridor is an Iowa Great Place made up of the communities of Clermont, Elgin and Elkader and historic Motor Mill in Fayette and Clayton Counties. These locations are linked by the special, scenic beauty of the Turkey River.

In Clermont, you'll find information kiosks along the trail route, providing information about the historic Brick City and the trail route itself.

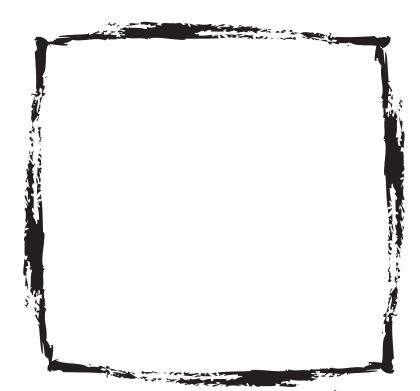


**CLUE:** Look for an informational kiosk just as you turn onto the trail from Hwy 18.



#### Montauk Historic Site 26223 Harding Road, Clermont

The Montauk Historic Site in Clermont, Iowa, holds significant historical importance as the former estate of Governor William Larrabee, a prominent figure in Iowa's political and agricultural history. This site preserves the beautifully restored mansion, built in 1874, along with several outbuildings and meticulously landscaped gardens, providing visitors with a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of the late 19th century upper class. Beyond its architectural charm, Montauk serves as a cultural hub, hosting various events, educational programs, and guided tours that delve into the estate's rich past, offering insight into both the personal life of the Larrabee family and the broader socio-economic context of the era. With its blend of historical significance and natural beauty, the Montauk Historic Site stands as a cherished landmark in Iowa's heritage landscape, inviting visitors to step back in time and explore its enduring legacy.



**CLUE:** Don't stray too far from the parking lot, it is close by.



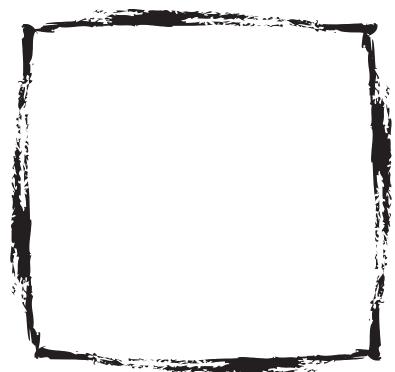
#### **Clermont City Park**

813 State Street, Clermont

The park boasts two shelters equipped with electricity, along with grills, benches, and picnic tables, offering ample space for leisurely meals or family reunions. Children can frolic on the playground equipment while adults enjoy the modern restroom facilities and fresh water access.

The park will be one of the locations the city will hosting its 175th Celebration in July of 2024. The celebration will include live music, activities and games for kids and adults, and delicious food and drink for all!





**CLUE:** Wander near the little library in the park.



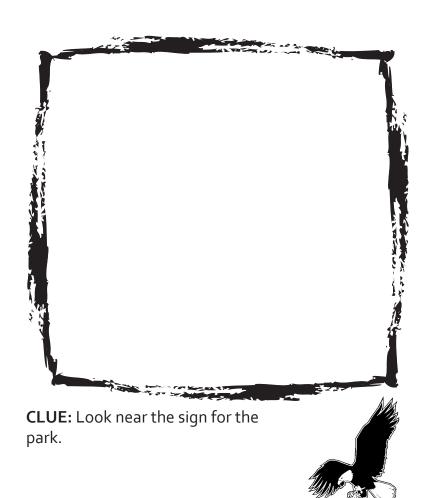
#### Schori Park

511 Franklin Street, Elgin

Constructed in the 1990s on the site of the former Elgin Elementary School, Schori Park offers a variety of recreational amenities, including a baseball diamond, basketball court, tennis court, and sand volleyball area.

The park underwent significant enhancements over the years, with a playground renovation spearheaded by volunteers in 2017 and the addition of a climbing wall in 2022.

Looking ahead, 2024 promises further expansion with the introduction of pickleball facilities and a captivating public art installation, enriching the park's offerings for the enjoyment of the community.



**FAYETTE COUNTY SITE** 

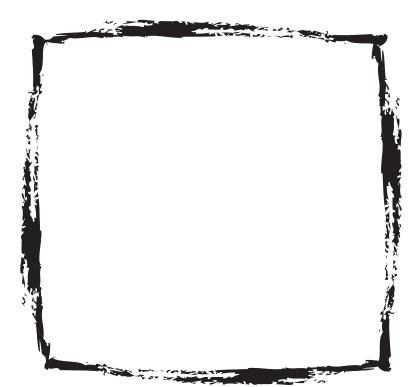
## Elgin Historical Museum

231 Center Street, Elgin

The community of Elgin proudly upholds its cultural and historical heritage. Managed by the Elgin Historical Society, the Elgin Historical Museum offers a wealth of historical information, catering to history enthusiasts and those seeking genealogy and obituary records since its establishment in 1990 and listing on the National Registry of Historic Places in 2008.

The Tribes of the Turkey River Interpretive Center project aims to restore the museum's second floor and develop an interpretive plan to honor Native American history along the Turkey River, fostering understanding and empathy through educational exhibits.

Find more information about the project at www. elginia.com/tribes-of-the-turkey-river



**CLUE:** Look near the large clock tower nearby.

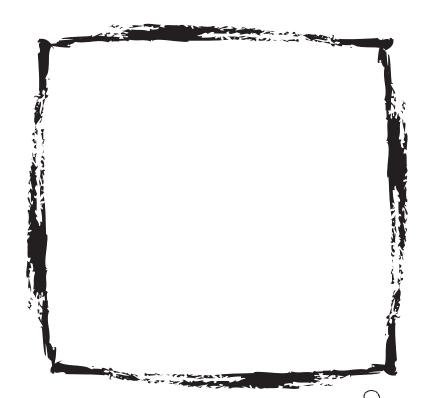


#### TRRC Trail Bridge

Travel to the East edge of Elgin before you cross the bridge into Gilbertson Park, Elgin

In 2019, Fayette County Conservation worked with a multitude of partners to construct a new segment of the Turkey River Recreational Corridor Trail that connected the existing Trail to numerous recreational, historic and cultural amenities. This new segment of the pedestrian/bicycle trail started at the eastern side of Elgin and crossed over the Turkey River to connect to the 1,000+ acre Gilbertson Conservation and Education Area. This segment of the Trail included a lighted trail bridge over the Turkey River, allowing walking and biking residents and visitors to move freely and safely between Elgin and Gilbertson Park. It also improved the pedestrian and bicycle access to four Turkey River Water Trail access points and connected to three other land trails.

The hope is to eventually connect this trail into Clayton County to the City of Elkader.



**CLUE:** Find an interpretive sign along the trail on the Elgin side of the bridge.

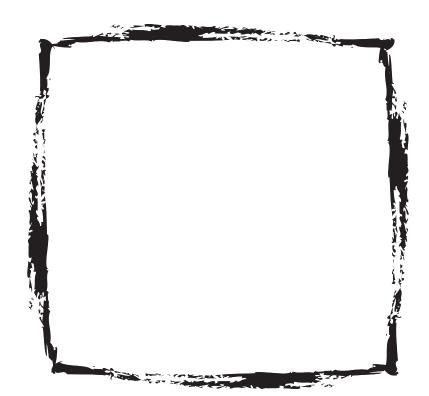


# Gilbertson Conservation Education Area 22580 A Avenue, Elgin

Enjoy the petting zoo and pet the goats, donkey, kittens, and bunnies and have a picnic. Walk the Turkey River Recreational Trail to the campground and spend time primitive or RV camping. Continue on foot or on horseback on the 10+ miles of nature trails. Practice your paddling skills on the pond with the kayak launch or walk out on the dock to catch some fish.

Walk along the natural trails to the nature center and experience a live beehive, turtles, snakes, and educational games. Head outside to the new certified natural playscape to play some music, crawl through a log, and dig up a dinosaur!

Walk through the Mavis and Conner Dummermuth Historical Building and see what life was like "back in the day" at the Hart Dummermuth Historical House. Check out the timber sawmill, reconstructed to help tell the story of the timber industry in Iowa.



**CLUE:** Find a sun-dependent calendar outside of the nature center.



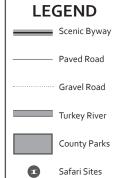
#### **Conservation Tips**

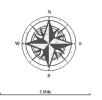
- Ride your bike or walk.
- Turn off the light as you leave each room.
- Conserve water when you do the dishes, brush your teeth, and shower.
- Recycle paper, plastics, and metals.
- Reuse what you can't recycle.
- Eat locally to save transportation costs.
- Spend time in nature.
- Limit the time you watch TV to one hour a day.
- Plant a garden.
- Open a window instead of using the air conditioner.
- Donate items you no longer need.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Compost leftover food waste.
- Visit a farmer's market



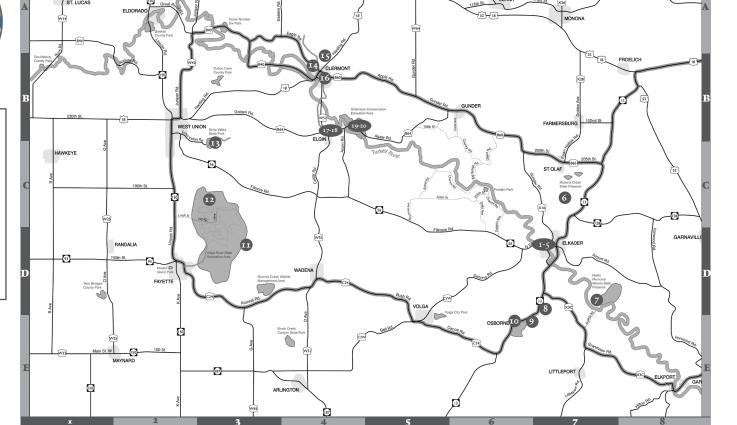
This guidebook was printed on recycled paper and is part of our journey to save the environment. We ask that you try to reduce, reuse, and recycle as well!







\_1 Mile\_



## Turkey River Safari Site List

2024
🖸 Elkader Opera House D7 p
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Deer Run Resort
S Elkader City Park
6 Robert's Creek Canoe Access

TRRCTrail Bridge ..

20 Gilbertson Conservation Education Area ...

#### Motor Mill Historic Site... 8 Chicken Ridge Overlook .. Osborne Pond .. Osborne Welcome Center... 😡 Volga River State Recreation Area ... ..C<sub>3</sub> p Echo Valley State Park... ..C3 p (I) Clermont Trail Kiosk. Montauk Historic Site. Clermont City Park .. Schori Park... Elgin Historical Museum...

For the purposes of clarity, not all roads are shown on the map.



## **Color Your Adventure**

Draw a picture to help you remember the Turkey River Safari!

## Thank you to our Sponsors!

## **Platinum**

Mark and Denise Nelson Motor Mill Foundation Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism

## Gold

Elgin Community Betterment Club Brian Balster TJ's Pizza

## Silver

Bank 1st
Body Kneads
Mrs. Catherine T Britt
Clayton County Development Group
Elgin State Bank
Fennelly's Irish Pub
Freedom Bank (Elkader)
Palmer Lutheran Health Center
ThINK Custom
Torkelson Motors, Inc.
Valley Fresh Market
West Union Main Street/Chamber

## **Bronze**

Andy and Maureen Johnson Deer Run Resort Elkader Area Chamber of Commerce Skip-a-Way Resort & Quarry Lodge

