



TURKEY RIVER
SAFARI

2026 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
- Osborne Welcome Center
- Gilbertson Nature Center

Thank you for joining us
for your 2026
Turkey River
Safari adventure!



Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication. The Turkey River Recreational Corridor, Northeast Iowa RC&D, and their partners assume no liability or responsibility for the use or misuse of the maps and information contained herein.

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2026 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!



Site information

Gouldsburg Park
18649 Sunset Road, Hawkeye

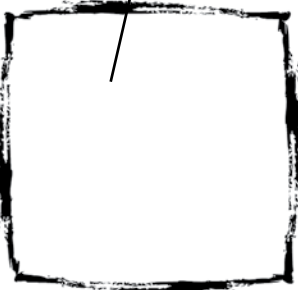
Located 5 miles north of Hawkeye on Sunset Road.

Gouldsburg Park marks the start of the Turkey River Water Trail. The park consists of 64 acres at the confluence of the Little Turkey River and Crane Creek. These streams provide great fishing and canoeing. The hilly area includes great picnic sites and a modern campground with a dump station, showers, flush toilets, and 26 electrical hook-up sites. Enjoy the playground and the hiking trails as you search for the rubbing post.

8

Stewardship message

Place crayon rubbing here



CLUE: Look for the historic mill sign on the north side of the river and you will be very close.



9

Clue Match this symbol

How to Make a Rubbing

1. Find the correct page in your guidebook.
2. 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 guide, 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 and we want you and your family to be safe! 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!

1. 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.

Table of Contents

Pages

Osborne Welcome Center/Nature Center	8–9
Chicken Ridge Overlook	10–11
Motor Mill Historic Site.....	12–13
Elkader Golf and Country Club	14–15
Elisha Boardman Cabin Marker.....	16–17
Clayton County Development Office	18–19
Clayton County Courthouse.....	20–21
Founders' Park	22–23
Elkader Opera House.....	24–25
Big Spring Fish Hatchery	26–27
Gilbertson Conservation Education Area	28–29
Lighted Trail Bridge	30–31
Elgin Historical Museum.....	32–33
Schori Park.....	34–35
Eagle's Nest Art Installation.....	36–37
Valley Canoe Launch	38–39
Pleasant Valley Sports Club	40–41
Lincoln Park	42–43
Clermont City Park	44–45
Montauk Historic Site.....	46–47

Let the safari begin!

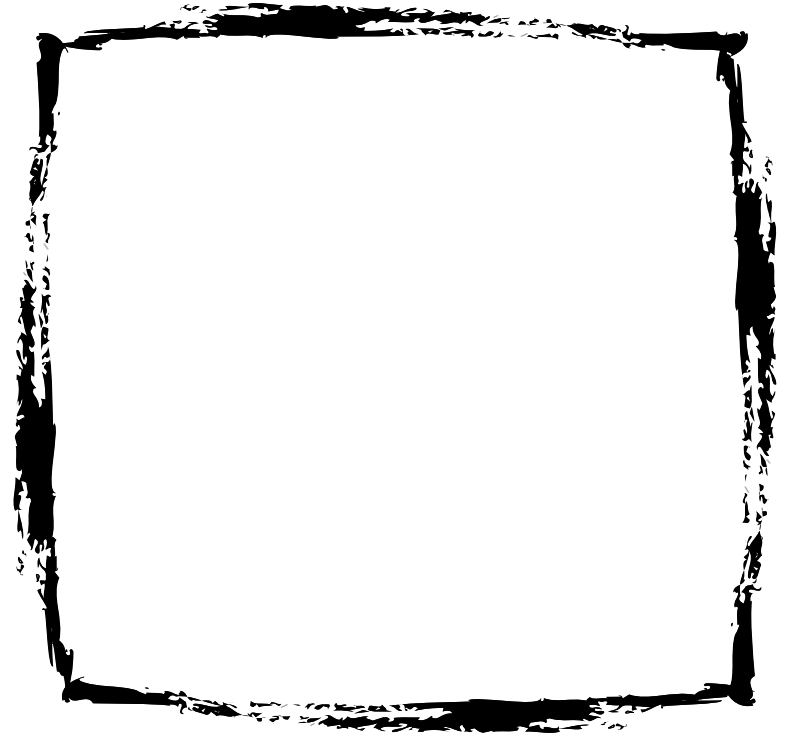
Osborne Welcome Center / Nature Center

29862 Osborne Road, Elkader

Start your adventure with a visit to the Osborne Nature Center, where learning and exploration come together in one beautiful setting. Inside, you'll find hands-on exhibits that introduce you to the plants, animals, and ecosystems that make northeast Iowa so unique. It's a great place to ask questions, spark curiosity, and get a better understanding of the natural world before heading out to explore it.

Step outside and the experience continues. Trails wind through peaceful woods, native prairie, and open spaces where wildlife is always nearby. Be sure to make your way toward the buffalo pen shelter, where you might spot an eagle's nest tucked high in the trees. Keep your eyes on the sky and treetops, and you just might see one of these incredible birds in flight. It's a powerful reminder of the thriving wildlife in this region.

Whether you're learning indoors or exploring outside, this stop offers something for every age and is a perfect way to begin your Safari journey.



CLUE: Look near the buffalo pen.



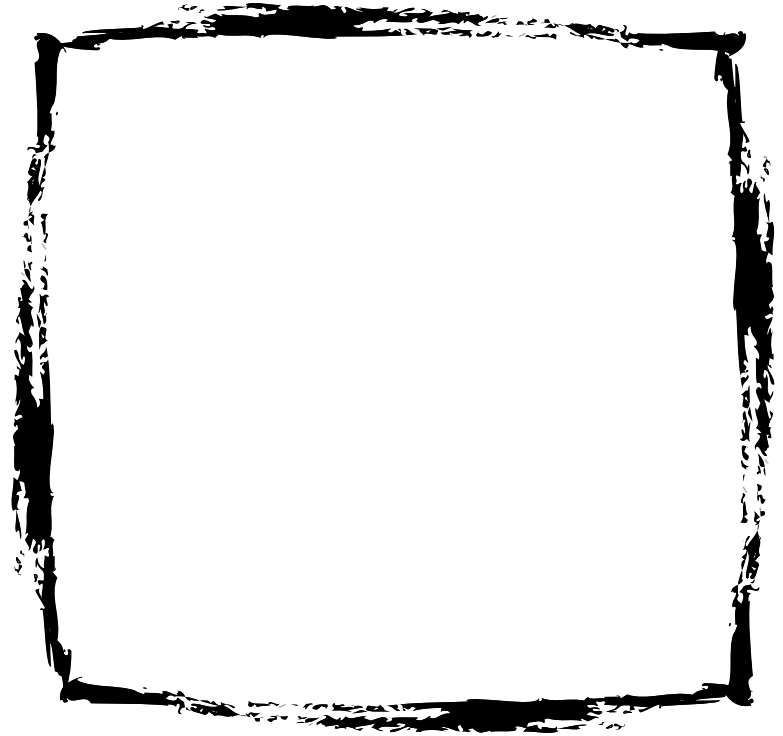
Chicken Ridge Overlook

19681 Chicken Ridge Road, Elkader
(along Hwy 13 between Elkader and Osborne)

Chicken Ridge Overlook offers one of the most stunning views along the Turkey River Valley. From this vantage point, you can see rolling hills, towering limestone bluffs, and the winding river carving its way through the landscape. It's the kind of place that invites you to slow down, take a deep breath, and really take in your surroundings.

This stop is also part of the River Bluffs Scenic Byway, and the interpretive signs here help tell the story of how this landscape was formed. Learn about the Driftless Area, where glaciers never flattened the land, leaving behind the dramatic hills and valleys you see today. It's a great opportunity to connect what you're seeing with the natural history that shaped it.

Take a moment to enjoy the view, snap a photo, and imagine how this valley has changed over time .



CLUE: Head toward the overlook where you can see the valley below.



Motor Mill Historic Site

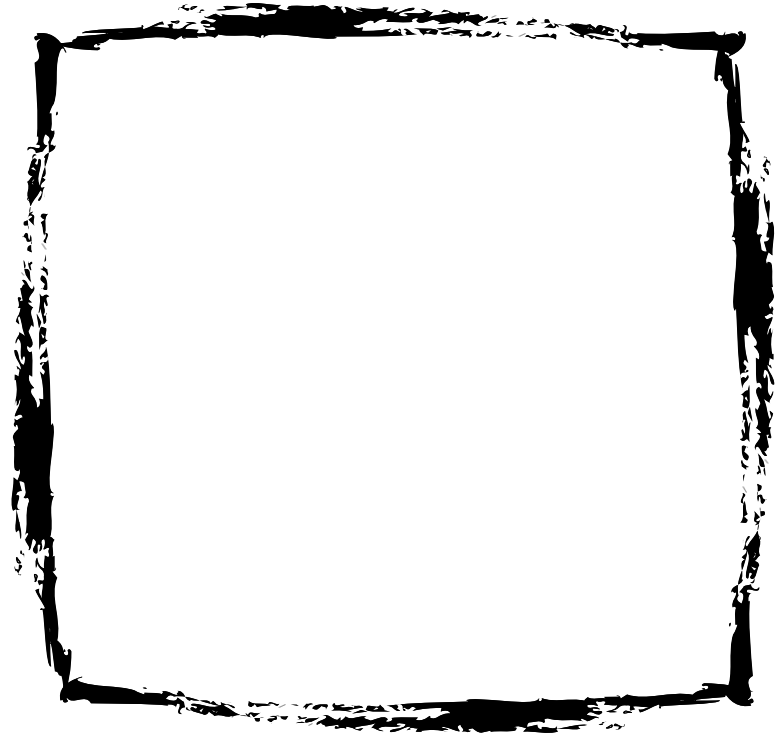
28814 Galaxy Road, Elkader

Step into the past at one of the most iconic landmarks in the Turkey River Valley. Built in the 1860s, Motor Mill once served as a bustling hub where grain was ground into flour for nearby communities. Today, its towering limestone walls stand as a reminder of early industry and ingenuity.

The surrounding landscape is just as fascinating. The hills above the mill feature a unique mix of prairie, oak savanna, and forest, each supporting different plants and wildlife.

The grassy field near the stable will soon be transformed into a future forest. Over the coming years, thousands of tree seedlings will create valuable wildlife habitat and enhance the natural landscape.

This blend of history and ecology makes Motor Mill a place where the past and future come together in one unforgettable stop.



CLUE: Look near the stable (not far from the Inn)!



Elkader Golf and Country Club

24361 Gunder Road, Elkader

Enjoy the peaceful setting of the Elkader Golf and Country Club, where rolling greens and scenic views create a relaxing stop along your journey. Even if you're not golfing, it's a great place to stretch your legs and take in the surrounding landscape. Families can enjoy the open space, practice a few swings, or simply appreciate the quiet beauty of the area.

Green Fees

Monday–Thursday

9 holes: \$20.62 (cash discount available)

18 holes: \$25.77 (cash discount available)

Friday–Sunday & Holidays

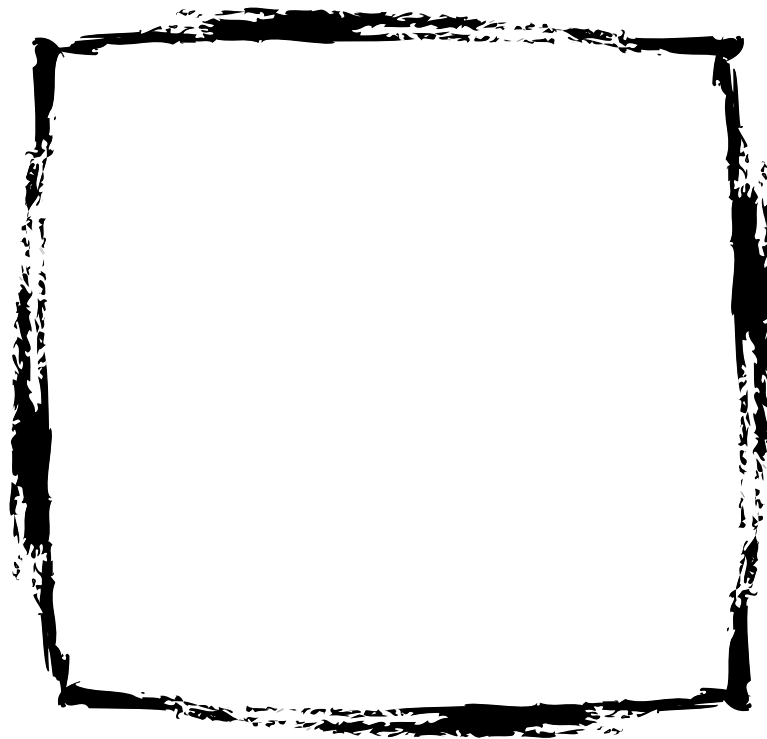
9 holes: \$25.77

18 holes: \$30.93

Cart Rental

9 or 18 holes: \$13.40 per golfer (cash discount available)

Member and Junior Rates are also available



CLUE: Check near the clubhouse where golfers begin their round.



Elisha Boardman Cabin Marker

601 High Street SE, Elkader
(Elkader City Park)

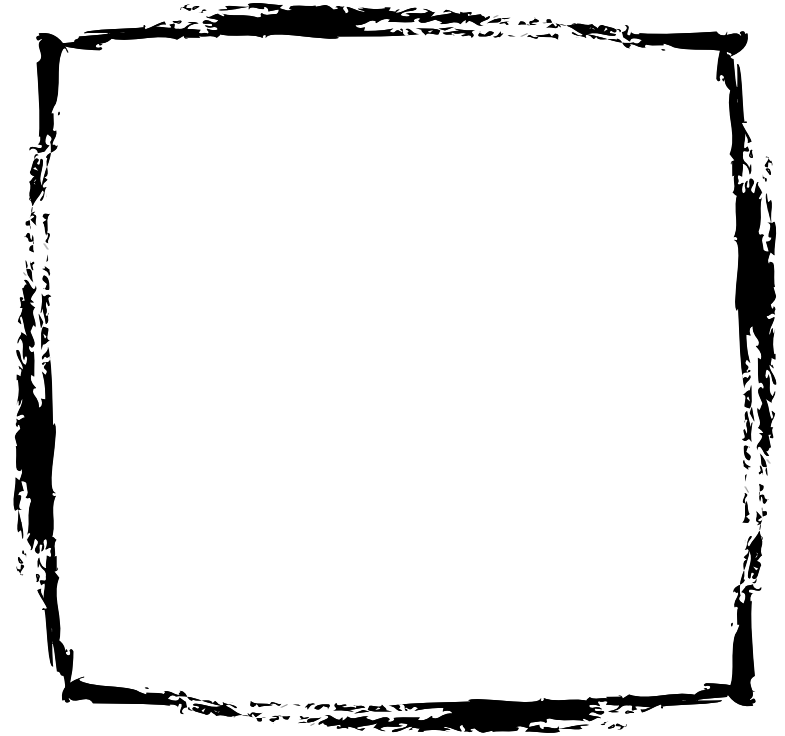
Step back in time at the Elisha Boardman Cabin Marker, which tells the story of one of the earliest settlers in the area. This site marks where a simple log cabin once stood, offering a glimpse into pioneer life.

Elkader's first permanent residents arrived in 1836 when Elisha Boardman and Horace Bronson settled on the banks of the Turkey River in Pony Hollow. Boardman established the first farm and together with other early settlers built the first schoolhouse.

Timothy Davis, John Thompson and Chester Sage laid out a plan for their community which was officially platted on June 22, 1846.

Elisha Boardman is credited as the first white settler of Boardman Township. In 1836, he built a cabin on the north side of the Turkey River.

This marker is placed in memory of Boardman's cabin.



CLUE: Look for the historic marker (near a large military tank) that shares the story of the cabin.



Clayton County Development Office

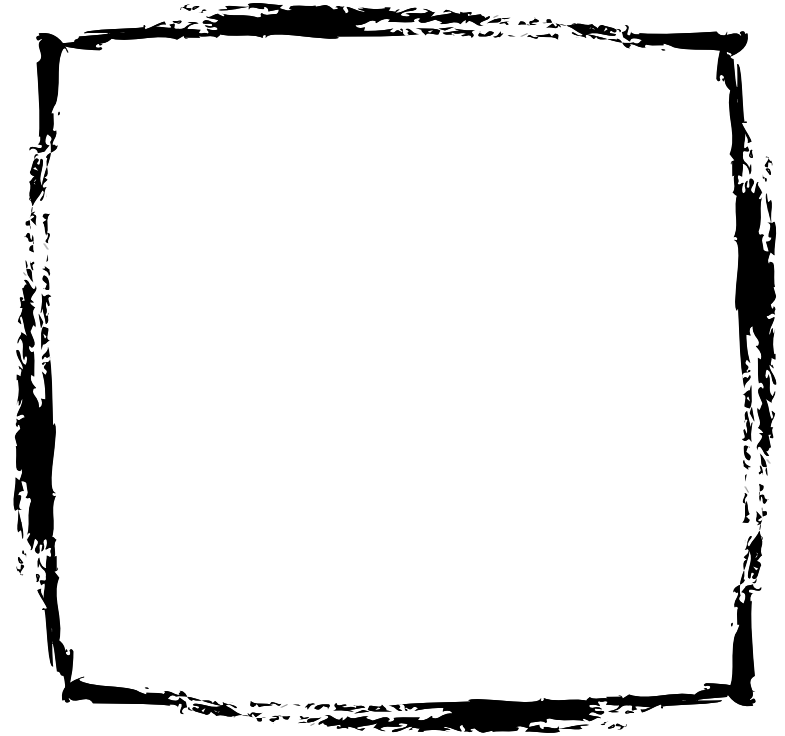
200 E Bridge Street, Elkader

This stop may look simple from the outside, but it represents the future of Clayton County. The Development Office works behind the scenes to support local businesses, strengthen communities, and create opportunities for growth. Every new project, business expansion, or community improvement often starts with the kind of work done here.

As you travel through the Turkey River Corridor, you're seeing the results of thoughtful planning and collaboration. From trails and parks to thriving downtowns, this office plays a role in helping ideas become reality. It's a great place to think about how communities evolve and how people work together to make them even better.

As you are traveling, you can find a visitors guide from inside during open hours or outside near the door to tell you everything you need to know about Clayton County!

Nearby, you'll also find the beginning of the Elkader Riverwalk, a beautiful riverside trail



CLUE: Search near the front of the building where visitors are welcomed.



Clayton County Courthouse

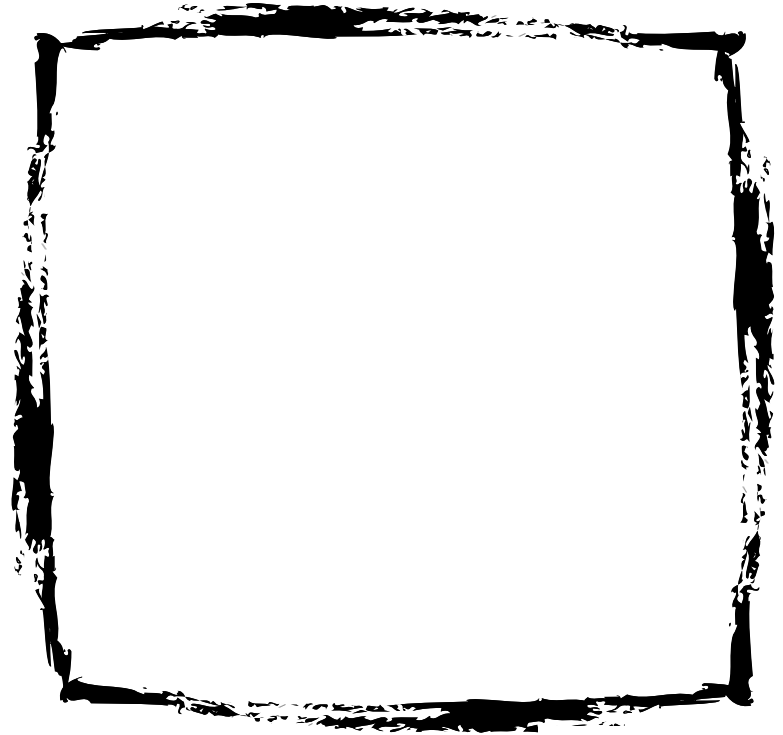
111 N High Street, Elkader

The Clayton County Courthouse stands as a proud symbol of history, leadership, and community.

Located in the heart of Elkader, this building has served generations of residents and continues to be a place where important decisions are made.

Take a moment to look up and admire the beautifully rehabilitated wooden clock tower, a standout feature that adds both character and history to the structure. Its restoration reflects the community's commitment to preserving landmarks that tell their story.

As you explore, think about the many conversations, decisions, and moments that have taken place here over the years. It's more than just a building, it's a cornerstone of the community.



CLUE: Look near the main entrance where visitors first walk in.



Founders' Park

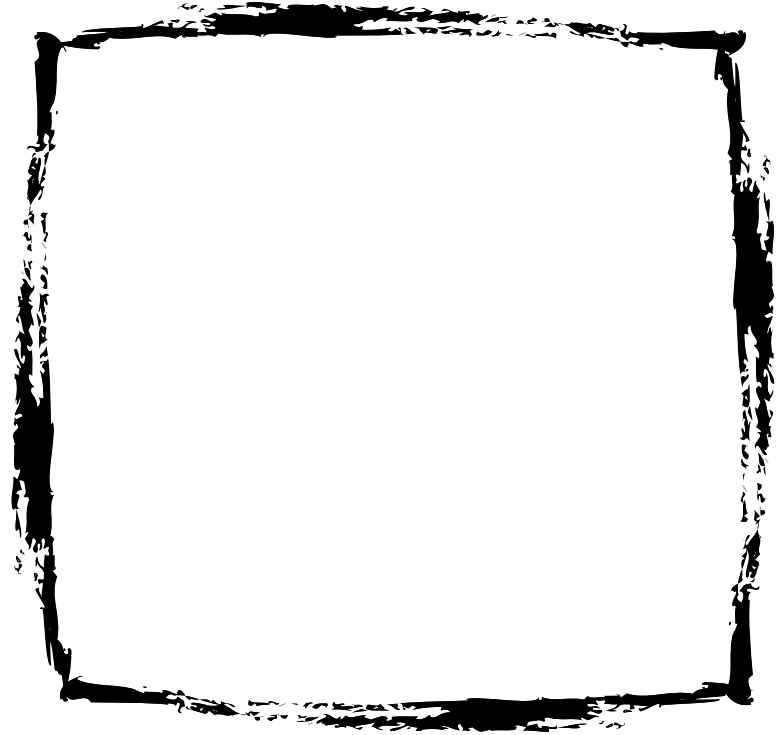
408 S Main Street, Elkader

Nestled along the Turkey River, Founders' Park is a peaceful place to relax and reflect. With its open green space, river views, and inviting atmosphere, it's a great spot to take a break and enjoy the natural beauty around you.

This park also celebrates community and creativity. Each fall, Art in the Park brings the space to life with local artists, crafts, and activities that draw people together. It's a wonderful example of how this park continues to be a gathering place for both relaxation and celebration. This year's event will be held October 3 and 4, 2026.

Find more information about the event at artintheparkelkader.com.

Whether you're enjoying a quiet moment by the river or visiting during a lively event, Founders' Park offers something special for everyone.



CLUE: Look near the entrance to the park near a large rock.



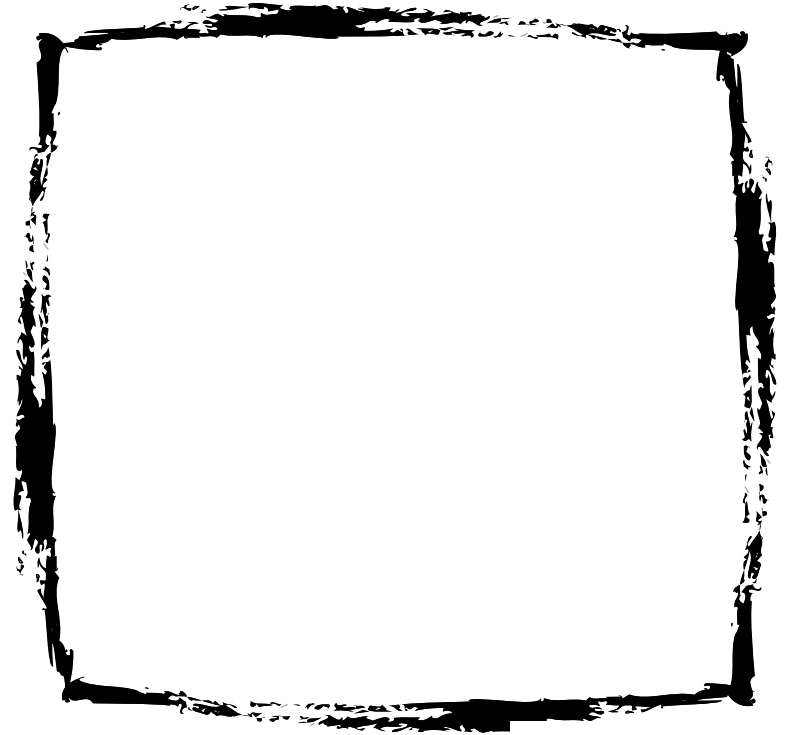
Elkader Opera House

207 N Main Street, Elkader

The Elkader Opera House is a place where history, culture, and community all come together. For generations, it has been a gathering place for performances, celebrations, and shared experiences. Built in 1903, this historic building has served many purposes beyond the stage. Over the years, it has been home to City Hall, the public library, a senior meal site, the police department, and even the fire station. Today, the lower level continues that tradition of service, housing Elkader City Hall, the Elkader Police Department, Main Street Elkader, and the Elkader Area Chamber of Commerce.

This year also marks an important milestone as the community celebrates the 135th anniversary of Elkader's incorporation. While the town was first planned in 1846, it was not officially incorporated until May 29, 1891. Before that, decisions about roads, bridges, and services were handled at the county level.

As you stand here, imagine all the roles this building has played and the many stories it holds.



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



Big Spring Fish Hatchery

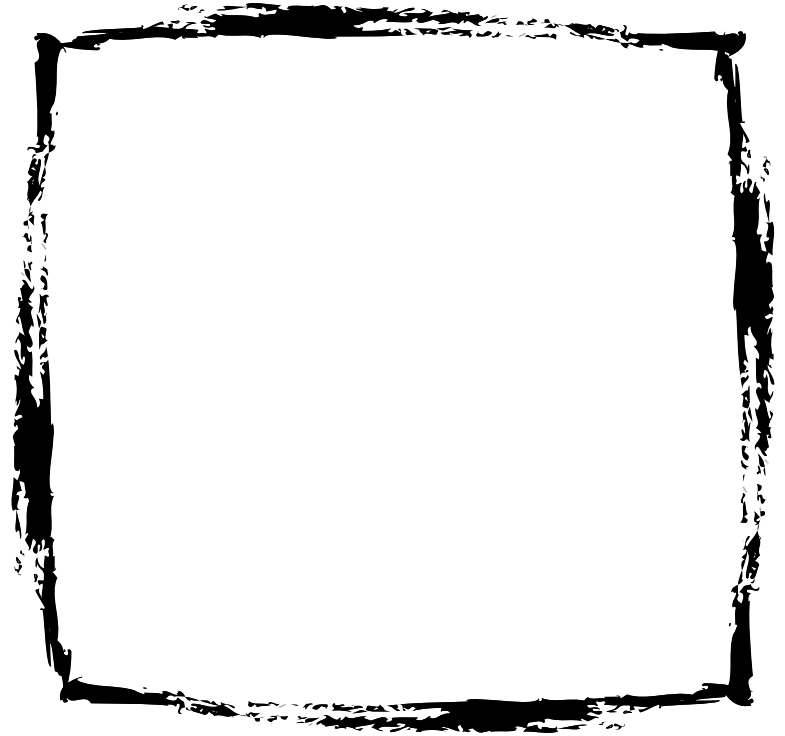
16212 Big Spring Road, Elkader

At Big Spring Fish Hatchery, you'll get a close-up look at how fish are raised and cared for before being released into Iowa's rivers and lakes.

Long rows of raceways hold fish at different stages of growth, giving visitors a unique view into this important conservation work.

Kids will enjoy watching the fish swim and compete for food, while adults can learn about how hatcheries help maintain healthy fish populations across the state. It's a fascinating blend of science, nature, and hands-on observation.

Take your time walking through the area and notice the different sizes and movements of the fish. It's a simple experience that offers a deeper appreciation for the work that goes into protecting natural resources.



CLUE: Keep an eye out as you approach the entrance to the hatchery.



Gilbertson Conservation Education Area

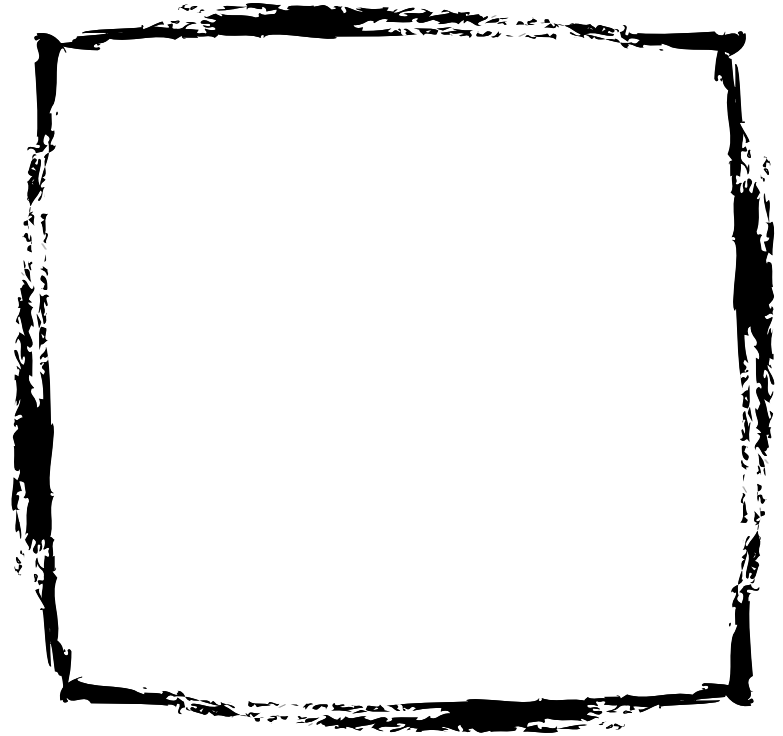
22580 A Avenue, Elgin

Gilbertson is one of the most interactive and family-friendly stops on the Safari. With trails, exhibits, and open space to explore, it's a place where learning happens through doing.

One of the highlights is the petting zoo, where kids can get up close with animals and enjoy a hands-on experience that's both fun and memorable. It's often a favorite stop for younger visitors and a great way to connect with agriculture and animal care.

Beyond the animals, you'll find opportunities to explore nature, learn about conservation, and enjoy the outdoors at your own pace. It's a place where curiosity leads the way and every visit feels a little different.

Between the animals, the nature center, and the outdoor spaces, there's something here for everyone to enjoy.



CLUE: Look near the parking lot next to the petting zoo.



Lighted Trail Bridge

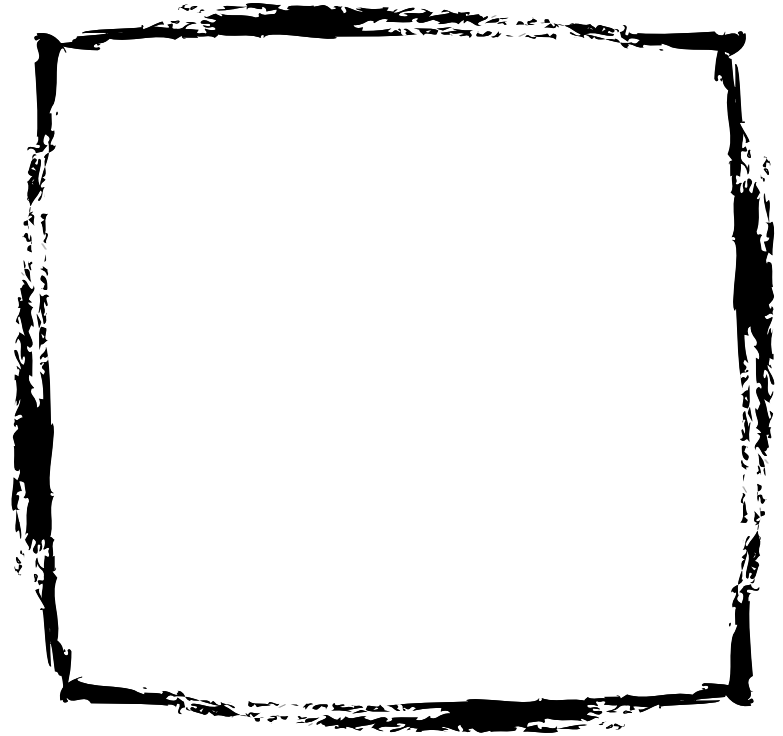
1810 Agate Road, Elgin

The Lighted Trail Bridge adds a unique and memorable experience to your journey. As you cross, you'll notice lights built right into the railings, creating a soft glow that guides your way, especially in the evening hours.

It's more than just a crossing point. It's a place to pause, look around, and enjoy a different perspective of the trail and surrounding landscape. The combination of movement, light, and scenery makes this stop feel a little special.

Whether you're walking, biking, or just taking it all in, the bridge offers a moment to enjoy the journey itself.

This bridge is a part of the larger Turkey River Recreational Corridor Trail, connecting Elgin to and beyond the community of Clermont.



CLUE: Look on the park side of the bridge.



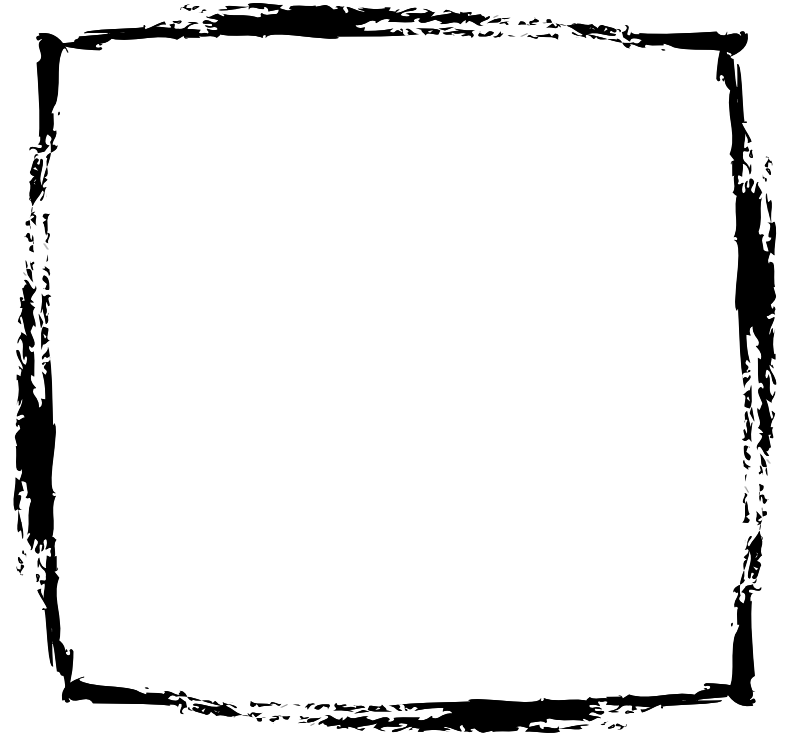
Elgin Historical Museum

229 Center Street, Elgin

Step into the Elgin Historical Museum and explore the stories that shaped the community. Inside, you'll find artifacts, photographs, and exhibits that bring the past to life in a meaningful way.

Be sure to head upstairs to see the nearly complete Tribes of the Turkey River Interpretive Center. This space shares the deeper history of the region, highlighting the people and cultures that were here long before modern settlement. It adds an important layer to understanding the land you're exploring.

Take your time as you walk through. The stories here connect generations and offer a richer perspective on the area.



CLUE: Look near the clock tower outside the museum.



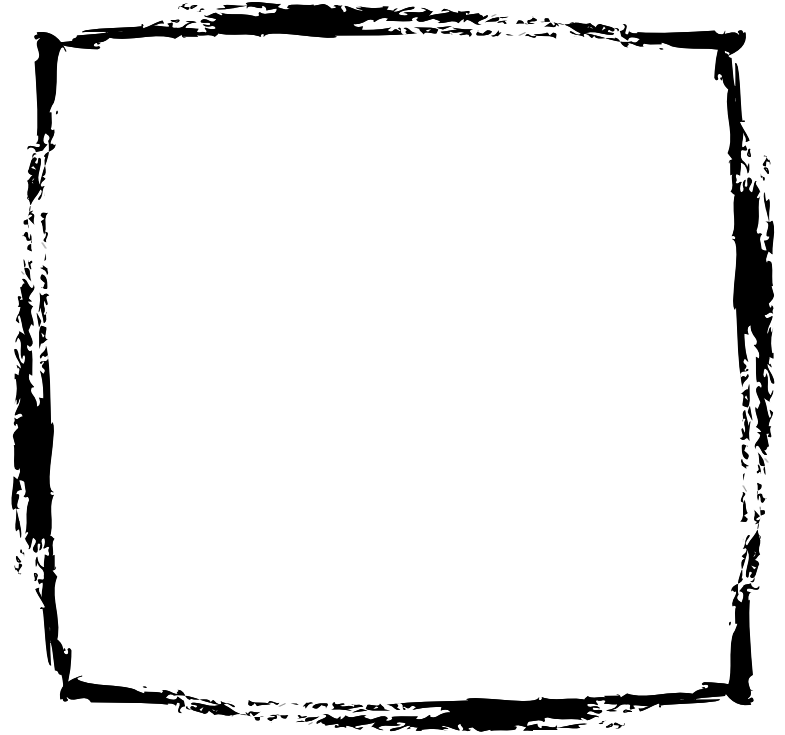
Schori Park

511 Franklin Street, Elgin

Schori Park is a great place to relax, play, and enjoy the outdoors. With open space and scenic surroundings, it's a welcoming stop for families along the route.

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.

In 2024, pickleball courts added a fun, active option for visitors of all ages. Whether you're playing a game or just watching, it's a lively addition to this community park.



CLUE: Look near the sign for the park.



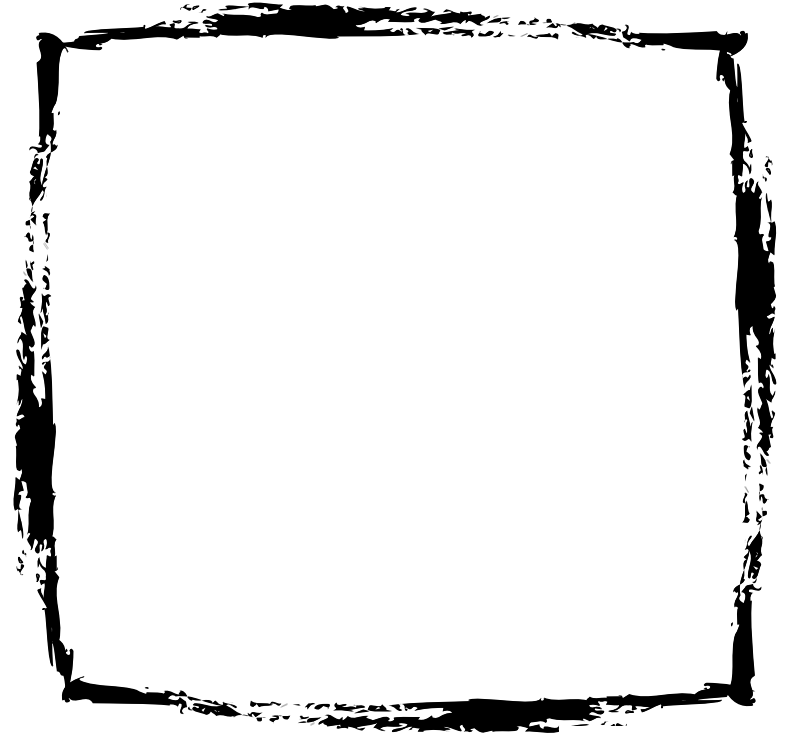
Eagle's Nest Art Installation

23493 Canoe Road, Elgin

This striking art installation combines creativity with one of the best views in the region. Perched in the center of the valley, the Eagle's Nest invites you to step inside, look out, and see the landscape from a new perspective.

It also holds a special place in Iowa's public art story, serving as the inspiration for the Byways of Iowa Public Art project, completed in 2019. Its design reflects both the natural surroundings and the idea of connection between people, places, and creativity.

Take a moment to stand within the structure and take in the view. It's a place where art and nature come together in a powerful way.



CLUE: Trek the trail between Elgin and Clermont.



Valley Canoe Launch

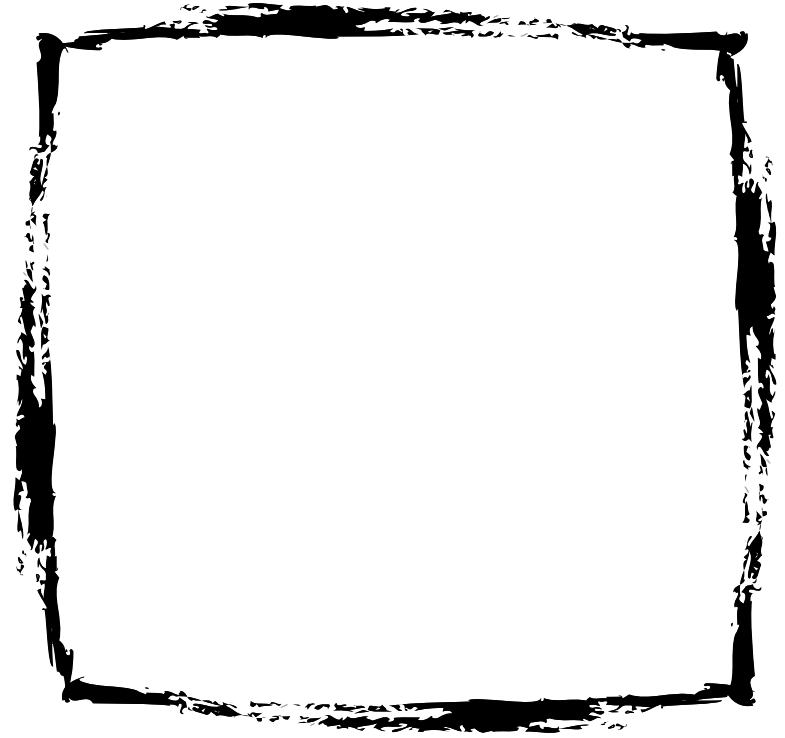
Intersection of Canoe Road & Diamond Road, Elgin

The Valley Canoe Launch is where river adventures begin. From here, paddlers set off to explore the Turkey River Water Trail, following its winding path through the valley. Even if you're not getting on the water, it's exciting to watch others begin their journey.

Spend a few moments near the river's edge and imagine where the water might take you.

You'll also notice a dog waste station nearby, donated by Kristy and Kevin Meyer in memory of their dog Dallas. It's a thoughtful addition that helps keep the area clean and welcoming for everyone.

This stop is all about movement, adventure, and connection to the river.



CLUE: Head down towards the river access and find some large rocks.



Pleasant Valley Sports Club

24749 Canoe Road, Clermont

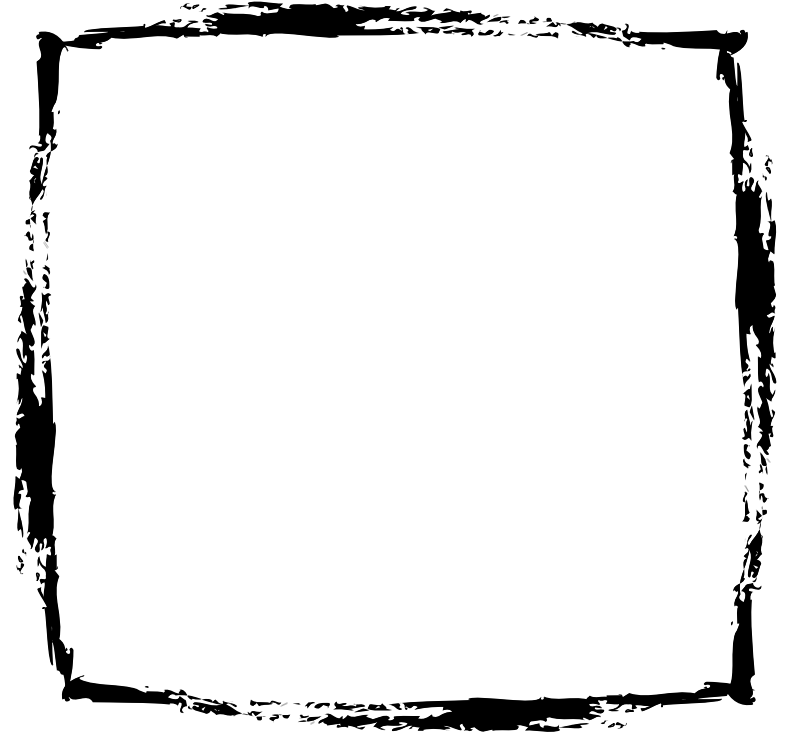
Pleasant Valley Sports Club is a place where outdoor recreation and community come together. It offers space for activities that bring people outdoors and connect them with the land. Take a moment to look around and appreciate how spaces like this support both recreation and community traditions in northeast Iowa.

Green Fees
Monday–Thursday
9 holes: \$10.00
All day: \$20.00

Friday–Sunday & Holidays
9 holes: \$17.00
All day: \$30.00

Cart Rental
9 holes: \$20.00
All day: \$30.00

Member and Junior Rates are also available



CLUE: Look near the clubhouse area.



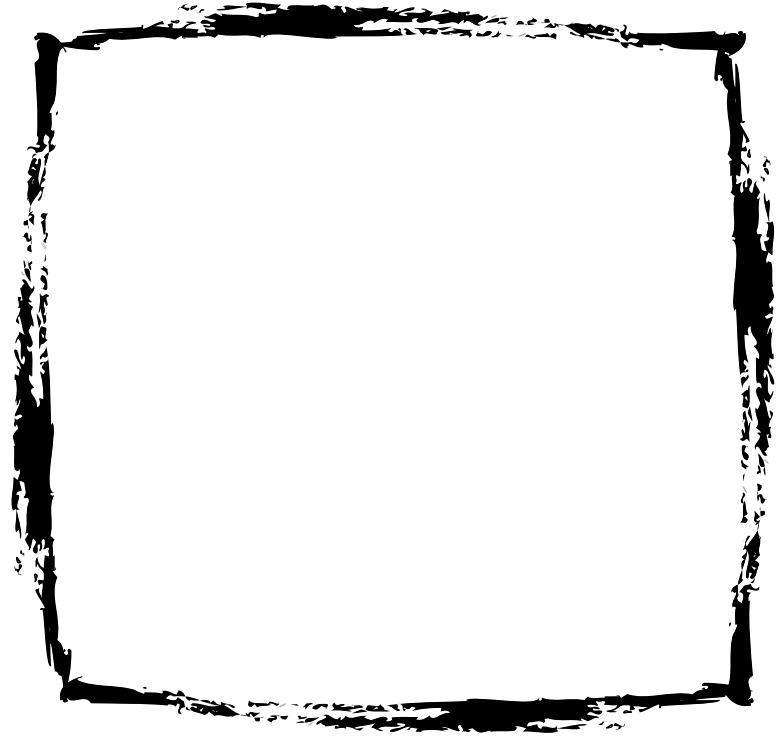
Lincoln Park

Travel East out of Clermont, turn right on Stone Street/Apple Road (the park will be on your right)

Lincoln Park is a quiet, shaded space that invites you to slow down and enjoy your surroundings. Large, mature trees provide plenty of shade, making it a great place for a short walk or a peaceful break.

Ex-Governor and Mrs. William Larrabee led a movement whereby the citizens of the whole township devised plans to raise funds for the erection of a Soldiers' Monument in Clermont. Lots were secured across from the Rock Island Depot.

Mr. and Mrs. Larrabee had seen a handsome bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln on their travels in Edinburgh, Scotland, and they secured the services of the same sculptor to duplicate this great piece of work for Clermont's Lincoln Park.



CLUE: Look among the large trees where there's plenty of shade.



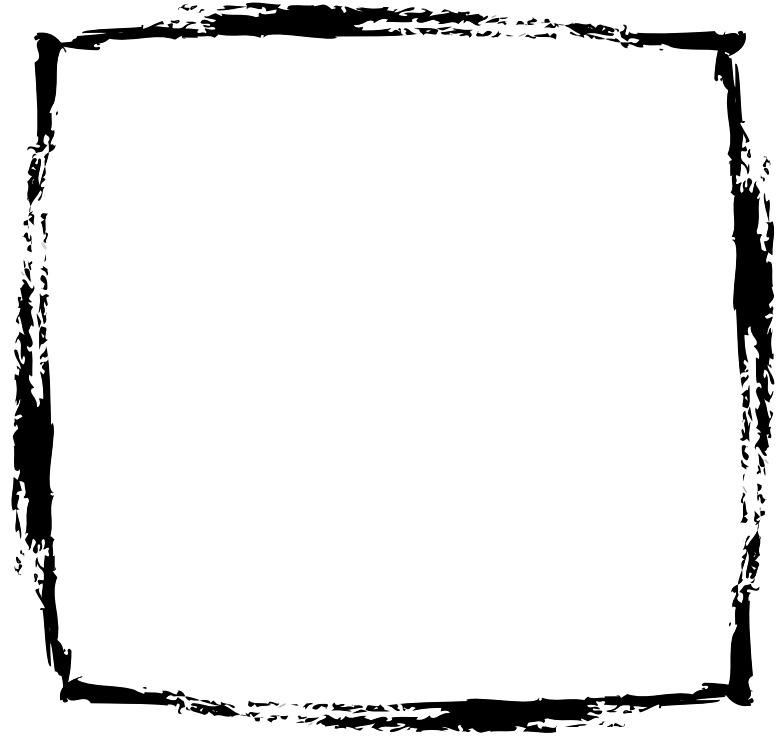
Clermont City Park

813 State Street, Clermont

Clermont City Park is a welcoming and relaxing stop along your journey. With open green space, shade trees, and room to play, it's a great place for families to pause and recharge.

Kids can run and explore while adults enjoy a quiet moment in a peaceful setting. Whether you're enjoying a snack, stretching your legs, or simply taking a break, this park offers a comfortable place to slow down.

It's a reminder that sometimes the best parts of an adventure are the simple moments spent together outdoors.



CLUE: Search near the playground area where families gather.



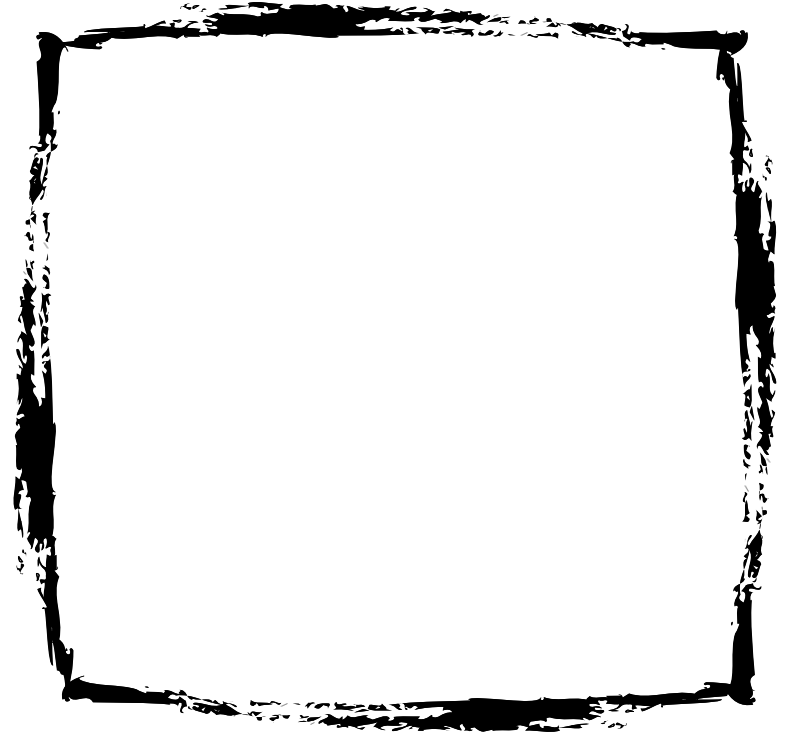
Montauk Historic Site

26223 Harding Road, Clermont

The Montauk Historic Site in Clermont 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.

Guided tours that delve into the estate's rich past offer 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.

In 2025, Montauk was named Site of the Year by Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area, recognizing its importance and the care taken to preserve it.



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



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

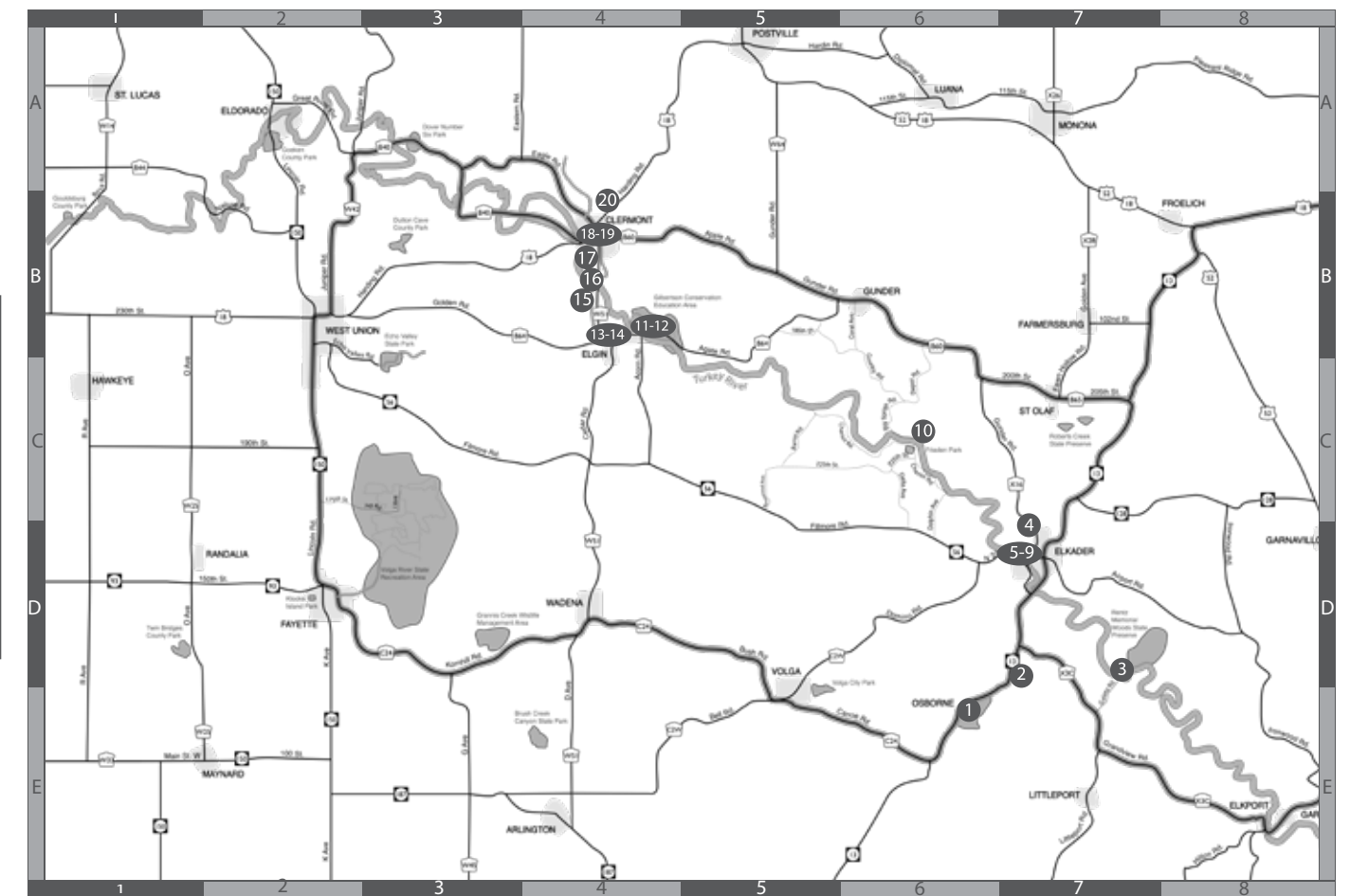
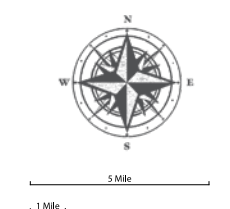


This guidebook was printed on recycled paper and is part of our journey to save the environment. We ask that you try to reduce, reuse, and recycle as well!



LEGEND

- Scenic Byway
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Turkey River
- County Parks
- Safari Sites



**Turkey River Safari Site List
2026**

1 Osborne Welcome Center/Nature Center.....	E6 p
2 Chicken Ridge Overlook	D7 p
3 Motor Mill Historic Site.....	D7 p
4 Elkader Golf and Country Club.....	D7 p
5 Elisha Boardman Cabin Marker.....	D7 p
6 Clayton County Development Office	D7 p
7 Clayton County Courthouse.....	D7 p
8 Founders' Park	D7 p
9 Elkader Opera House.....	D7 p
10 Big Spring Fish Hatchery	C6 p
11 Gilbertson Conservation Education Area	B4 p
12 Lighted Trail Bridge	B4 p
13 Elgin Historical Museum.....	B4p
14 Schori Park.....	B4 p
15 Eagle's Nest Art Installation.....	B4p
16 Valley Canoe Launch	B4 p
17 Pleasant Valley Sports Club	B4 p
18 Lincoln Park	B4 p
19 Clermont City Park	B4 p
20 Montauk Historic Site.....	B4 p

*General Reference Map: Not for Navigational Use
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
Allamakee-Clayton REC/Dairyland Cooperative
Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism

Gold

Brian Balster
Elgin Community Betterment Club (ECBC)
TJ's Pizza

Silver

Alpine Communications
Bank 1st
Body Kneads
Clayton County Development Group
Fennellys' Irish Pub
Freedom Bank (Elkader)
Motor Mill Foundation
ThINK Custom
Torkelson Motors, Inc.
Valley Fresh Market
West Union Together

Bronze

Andy and Maureen Johnson

