

MIDDLE RIVER

WATER TRAIL



ADAIR & MADISON COUNTY, IOWA
www.madisoncountyparks.org

Made possible through the efforts of the following agencies and organizations;

Iowa DNR Water Trails Program
Adair County Conservation Board
Madison County Conservation Board
Madison County River Alliance
Madison County Covered Bridge Preservation Association
Madison County Foundation for Environmental Education



CONTACT INFORMATION
Iowa DNR
515-281-5918
www.iowadnr.gov

EMERGENCY
Adair County Sheriff Department
641-743-2148



Adair County Conservation Board
641-743-6450
adairccb@iowatelecom.net

Madison County Sheriff Department
515-462-3575



Madison County Conservation Board
515-462-3536
www.madisoncountyparks.org

Madison County Hospital
515-462-5100



Madison County Area Tourism
515-462-1185

Madison County Ambulance Service
515-462-2253
911 - Emergency

KEEP YOUR RIVERS CLEAN

Always carry a trash bag (mesh bag works better than plastic) in your canoe. Practice carry-in/carry-out with all the items that you bring with you. In addition to your own items, it is always recommended that you practice a "water-trail" version of "leave-no-trace" by picking up any litter that you see along your route. If you pick up an old tire(s), place such in the parking area of your exit access. The Madison County River Alliance will collect the tires and pay for the recycling fee.



Madison County River Alliance

NON-MEANDERED STREAMS, FENCES, THE LAW & YOUR CANOE

Middle River is classified as a non-meandered stream. Paddler's rights using non-meandered streams are limited. The State owns the water, but does not own the riverbed. This allows paddlers to use the stream by floating. Trespass technically occurs when the individual steps out of the craft onto the streambed, sand bars, either bank or adjacent fields. Seek permission ahead of time if you know of a spot where you desire to camp, hike or hunt. Fences are legal across such streams and rivers. Most of the time the water has removed the fence or it is constructed in a manner that you can slip underneath the wire. Portage if necessary, but do not harm or remove the fence.

WELCOME to the Middle River Water Trail.

American Rivers have always shaped the migration of this continent's earliest civilizations and their **Cultural Growth**

CULTURAL HISTORY

Rivers have historically been the magnet of all human activity, especially our earliest civilizations and pioneers. River corridors provided the rich habitats for thousands of species of plants and animals. The rivers were the transportation corridors for exploration and our historical westward migration. Rivers provided the water, food and shelter for our earliest inhabitants, adventuresome explorers and eventual homesteaders. Over time, these transportation needs changed from simple exploration to a necessary mode of travel to move thousands of people as well as tons of commodities. Our rivers also evolved into providing sources of power.

Today, rivers are still important for these same reasons plus they provide all of us with recreational opportunities. Through the

enjoyment of modern day recreational uses on our rivers, we need to keep in mind the historical importance of our rivers and continue to protect those features that tell a story of our past and serve as rich reminders to us to be good stewards of such a vital resource.

Historically, we tend to focus on objects and structures. But it is the people, who were our earliest settlers, who define our historic culture. The people came for the rich soil they called the Hoosier Prairie, and the abundant streams. There were forests along these streams of sugar maple, black walnut and towering cotton woods. Buffalo, elk and deer roamed the woods and prairie. There was lumber and stone for building. Prairie Rivers like the Middle River are living representatives of the resources that provided for the life we now enjoy.

One of the richest historical and cultural aspects along Middle River are the Covered Bridges of Madison County. The Hollivell Bridge (1880) and Roseman Bridge (1883) were two of the first covered bridges built in Madison County and they stand stoic today in their original locations. These remaining covered bridges paint a story of pioneer people who took what they had and did the most with it. These structures are a tribute to a generation of pioneers who left a land better than they found it and leaves to us a link with a romantic past.



The Middle River has its origin in south-central Guthrie County. However, the navigable section of Middle River begins in east-central Adair County near Middle River Forest County Park. Middle River is a scenic stream that flows easterly through a mixture of lazy country side of croplands and pasture, rolling forested hills and limestone bluffs. It twists and turns through these landforms creating a moderately challenging paddle with occasional chutes and ledges that can be navigated with moderate effort. Water levels are most enjoyable for paddling in spring, early summer and fall.

Along with the natural beauty found along Middle River, there are also a few man-made attractions that add to the scenery and water-trail experience. Spanning the river is two of Madison County's famous "Bridges of Madison

County", Roseman Covered Bridge and Hollivell Covered Bridge. Paddlers must also portage around the historic "ford" at Pammel Park that was built in the early 1900's, and while making this portage one can also catch a glimpse of the "Harmon Tunnel" originally constructed in 1858.

Middle River Water Trail begins at Middle River Forest County Park in Adair County and currently ends at the historic Hollivell Covered Bridge located approximately 3 1/2 miles SE of Winterset, covering a distance of just over 45 miles. Enjoy your exploration of Middle River!

FISH & WILDLIFE

Fishing

There are numerous fish species found in Middle River. The most abundant game fish are Channel Catfish and Flathead Catfish. Other game fish found in Middle River, but less abundant are Walleye and Bluegill. Channel Catfish and Flathead Catfish can be caught in abundance throughout the length of Middle River, however, from early May through June a significant concentration of Channel Catfish and very large Flathead Catfish are found in the section of river directly below the ford at Pammel Park.

Wildlife Viewing

Wildlife in and along the Middle River is abundant. During early spring many raptors such as the Red-Tailed Hawk and the Broad-Winged Hawks can be viewed soaring over the river valley busily tending nests in large trees that over-hang the river. Keep an eye out for Bald-Eagles as they become more common residents of this area. During mid to late spring, waterfowl begin migrating through with many sightings of Wood Ducks, Teal and Canada Geese - please don't disturb their shore-line nests. During the summer common bird species that you will see are the blue bird, bank swallow, great blue heron, green heron, king

fisher, barred owl, great-horned owl, woodpeckers, cardinal, wild turkey and of course the high soaring turkey vultures.

Some species of mammals that you may see are the beaver, muskrat, raccoon, opossum, whitetail deer, coyote, fox, bobcat, badger, ground hog, skunk, fox squirrel, bats, mink, weasels and many other small rodents.

The river is also home to several species of freshwater clams, crayfish, snails, frogs, toads, snakes and turtles. The most common reptile sighting would be the soft-shell turtle - often seen scurrying back into water ahead of you as you round a bend in the river.

When you pass through Pammel Park make sure to stop and do some wildlife watching, as Pammel Park is part of the central-Iowa Makoke Birding Trail.

region becomes most striking when canoeing our rivers. Dispersed primarily through the central region of Madison County, majestic limestone walls and cliffs, with intermixed layers of shale, great river users, with the most prominent high cliffs found along Middle River just above Pammel Park

Close inspection of limestone base layers immediately adjacent to the river banks reveal fossilized aquatic organisms from the carboniferous sea era. Clam shells, and rocks containing fascinating animal and aquatic plant fossils can be found on most of the river's many sand & rock bars.



Fossilized fossils (looks like rice) embedded in limestone & Mollusk Shell fossil

GEOLOGY

The Adair and Madison County region escaped the most recent glaciations of approximately 12,000 to 15,000 years ago and is thus part of the Southern Iowa Drift Plain. The visual appearance of this region is prominently dominated by the rolling hills made up of layers of loess and glacial till which are shaped and supported by thick layers of limestone and shale formed millions of years ago during the era when a vast area of the Midwest was part of the Carboniferous Sea.

The rolling terrain became further defined and accentuated by the many beautiful meandering river valleys (Grand River, North River, Middle River, Jones Creek and Clanton Creek) that transect Adair and Madison County. The geology of this

river from the Pammel Park Bridge on river right adjacent to the gabion rock retaining wall. The short distance between these two access



points provides for a fun short trip for families and beginning paddlers and doesn't require a vehicle shuttle. Expect the remaining section down river from Access #61 to be an easy to moderate paddle as you encounter a few rock riffles and chutes, but are mostly treated to a shaded meandered course through timbered banks and open country side. Expect to encounter numerous fallen trees/snags between the Highway 169 Bridge and the Middle River County Park access. The next access is approximately 9 miles downstream at Middle River County Park, which is located on the south edge of Winterset.

Middle River County Park Access (#54) to Hollivell Covered Bridge Access (#50):

The river remains fairly shaded with a lot of timber edge and the gradient begins to flatten

out, but remains challenging due to a higher degree of meandering. Expect to find more downed trees and snags in this final section. The final access on the Water Trail is approximately 4 river miles downstream and located on river left immediately adjacent to the northwest corner of Hollivell Covered Bridge.

Hollivell Covered Bridge Access (#50):

This is the last developed access on the Middle River Water Trail. The river below Hollivell is very navigable and remains highly meandered. Paddlers should be aware that access to Middle River below this point is limited to bridge crossings which can be difficult to negotiate due to steep-banked slopes and dense vegetation.



RIVER ROUTES



Access (river left) is the Trail-head access to the water-trail. You should expect a moderately challenging paddle as you navigate through the natural beauty of limestone outcroppings, woodlands, abundant wildlife and numerous river bends and riffles. Schildberg Access is approximately 11 miles downstream.

Schildberg Access (#78) to Roseman Covered Bridge Access (#71)

This stretch of river travels through both timbered valleys and open pasture. A few chutes and riffles are scattered throughout this section, with a moderately challenging drop-off created by a ledge of shale which is located a few hundred yards upstream of the P-53 Bridge. Roseman Covered Bridge Access is approximately 7 river miles downstream.

Roseman Covered Bridge Access (#71) to Pammel Park Ford Access (#63)

This section twists and turns through the most scenic portion of river in Madison County, featuring a myriad of natural attractions, from majestic limestone bluffs and dense woodlands, to gently rolling grasslands. As the gradient suggests, you should expect a moderately challenging paddle as you drop down through numerous chutes and ledges. You will encounter more rock bluffs and longer fast-water chutes as you approach Pammel Park. The Pammel Park Ford Access is approximately 8 miles downstream. Be prepared to exit river-left for the short portage route around the Pammel Park Ford.



Pammel Park Ford Access (#63) & Pammel Park Access (#61) to Middle River County Park Access (#54)

This section begins at the Pammel Park Ford Access #63 (accesses located on both sides of the river), makes an extended oxbow bend around the landmark limestone backbone ridge and re-enters Pammel Park briefly on the east side of Harmon Tunnel. Pammel Park Access #61 is located a few hundred yards down

WATER-TRAIL CHECKLIST

MAMMALS:

- ___ Woodchuck
- ___ Raccoon
- ___ Bat
- ___ Muskrat
- ___ Fox Squirrel
- ___ White-Tailed Deer
- ___ Beaver
- ___ River Otter
- ___ Mink

REPTILES/AMPHIBIANS

- ___ Northern Water Snake
- ___ Garter Snake
- ___ Black Flat Snake
- ___ Tadpoles
- ___ Frogs or Toad
- ___ Painted Turtle
- ___ Snapping Turtle
- ___ Soft-Shelled Turtle

BIRDS:

- ___ Wood Duck
- ___ Great Blue Heron
- ___ Bald Eagle
- ___ Hawks
- ___ Bank Swallow
- ___ Belted Kingfisher
- ___ Canada Goose
- ___ Green Heron
- ___ Woodpeckers
- ___ Owls

INSECTS & INVERTEBRATES:

- ___ Water Beetle
- ___ Leech
- ___ Crayfish
- ___ Clam (live & old shells)
- ___ Dragon Fly
- ___ Damselfly
- ___ Spider Web
- ___ Butterfly

FISH:

- ___ Carp
- ___ Channel Catfish
- ___ Flathead Catfish
- ___ Walleye
- ___ Bluegill
- ___ Suckers
- ___ Minnows

OTHER:

- ___ Fossils
- ___ Animal Tracks
- ___ Early-American Artifacts
- ___ Old Pottery (chips & pieces)
- ___ Fossilized Bones

Please do not harm any of our wildlife or disturb their nest and dens.

SAFETY ON THE RIVER

Although Middle River is generally a safe and easy river to navigate, there are always safety precautions you need to practice:

- Wear a life jacket! Each person in your vessel is required to have at least one type of personal flotation device (Type I, II, III or IV). Remember, it doesn't work if you don't wear it!

- Don't boat under the influence! For your safety, don't use alcohol or drugs on the water.

- Watch for hazards! On rivers, hazards like low-head dams, fences, snags, sweepers, rocks and bridge abutments may be present. Low-head dams can be killers. Avoid them!

The ford in Pammel Park is the only low-head dam type of obstacle found on Middle River and its location is shown on the water-trail map. When approaching the ford, watch for signs directing you to exit "river-left" so that you can safely portage around the ford and re-enter the river just downstream of the ford.

- While navigating the river, watch for rocks and logs just below the surface. The hidden obstacle is always a few feet upstream of the rippled water. Look for a "V"-shaped current that marks the best water flow between objects.

- Pay attention to the river bank. Sweepers or strainers are low hanging limbs or logs that extend out from the bank and over the river. These obstructions can capsize you and cause you to become entrapped, a common cause of river fatalities. Log jams/floating debris piles create the same life threatening hazards as sweepers/strainers. Snags & debris hidden below the surface of the log-jam can entrap you. When approaching these obstacles, plan ahead - usually the inside bend of a river is the safest and shallowest course to avoid such hazards.

- Check on river conditions by contacting one of the County Conservation Boards. Know your paddling ability and use common sense when deciding when river levels are too hazardous. Never paddle when the river is quickly rising, or is at or near flood stage.

- Plan to get wet! You may capsize, so dress for the weather. Even at low-water levels, your feet will get wet. Wear proper foot wear to guard against sharp rocks and other objects.

- Bring a dry-bag! Use the dry-bag to store an extra set of clothes, flash light, and cell-phone - and make sure you tie your dry-bag securely to your vessel.

- Carry a spare paddle, and secure it to the vessel.



CAMPING

Middle River Forest Park
 - **Adair County Conservation**
 Primitive tent camping
 Primitive trailer camping
 No utility services/restrooms

Pammel Park
 - **Madison County Conservation**
 Modern RV/Trailer camping
 Electric/Water Utilities
 Dump Station
 Tent Camping
 Yurt Cabins (2)
 Modern Shower/Bathroom

Winterset City Park
 - **Winterset Park & Recreation**
 Modern RV/Trailer camping
 Electric/Water/Sewer Utilities
 Dump Station
 Tent Camping
 Modern Shower/Bathroom

CANOE & KAYAK RENTAL INFORMATION

Raccoon River Valley Adventures
 515-422-6420

Des Moines Rental, Des Moines
 515-277-4401

Canoesport Outfitters, Indianola
 800-257-6080

"The movement of a canoe is like a reed in the wind. Silence is part of it, and the sounds of lapping water, bird songs, and wind in the trees . . . man is part of his canoe and therefore part of all it knows . . . there is magic in the feel of a paddle and the movement of a canoe, a magic compounded of distance, adventure, solitude and peace. The way of a canoe is the way of the wilderness and of a freedom almost forgotten, the open door to waterways of ages past and a way of life with profound and abiding satisfactions."

~ Sigurd F. Olson

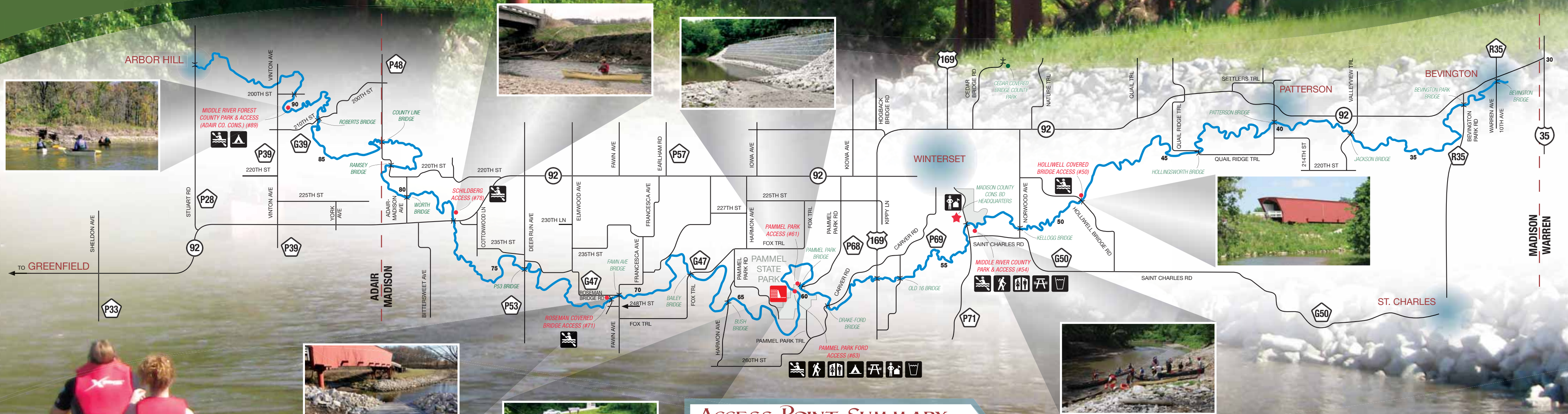
LOCAL AMENITIES & SERVICES

Winterset

Breadeaux Pizza	515-462-1888
Pizza Hut	515-462-1133
Godfather's Pizza	515-462-9441
Sports Page Bar & Grill	515-462-4673
Hardee's	515-462-1370
China Café	515-462-2828
Mi Pueblito Mexican	515-462-1640
The Cellar Coffee House	515-462-4776
Espresso Yourself Coffee Shop	515-462-5962
The Bakery Unlimited	515-462-2261
Northside Café	515-462-1523
Rudy's Restaurant	515-462-3160
Subway	515-462-1978
Maid Rite	515-462-1303
Frostee's Dairy Sweet	515-462-2777
Fareway Grocery Store	515-462-2216
Breadings Tru-Value Hardware	515-462-2984
Pamida	515-462-1030
Family Center Farm & Home	515-462-1855
Casey's General Store North	515-462-9906
Casey's General Store South	515-462-9904
Kum & Go	515-462-2921
Git-N-Go	515-462-4062
Super 8 Motel	515-462-4888

Greenfield

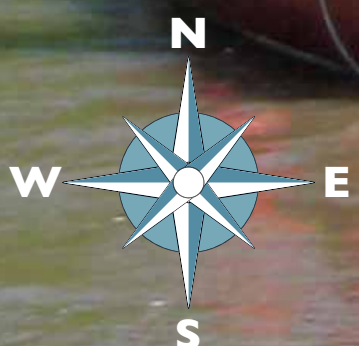
Nodaway Diner	641-343-7083
The Old Hotel	641-743-8300
Subway	641-743-6688
Greenfield Bowl	641-743-2160
The Smokehouse Bakery	641-743-2795
Casey's General Store	641-743-2248
Kum & Go	641-343-7092
Back in Thyme B & B	641-743-6394
Brass Lantern B & B	641-743-2031
Weiland's B & B	641-743-6403



ACCESS POINT SUMMARY

Access Name	County	Access Number	Distance to Next Access	Elevation (feet)	Gradient (feet)	Estimated Time (hours)*	Access/Ramp Type	Camping	UTM Easting	UTM Northing
Middle River Forest Park	Adair	89	11	1092			Canoe, Carry-down, Natural Surface	Primitive	392780.00	4578665.00
Schildberg	Madison	78	6.9	1044	4.44	3.5	Canoe, Carry-down, Gravel	No	398450.00	4574698.00
Roseman Covered Bridge	Madison	71	8.7	1012	4.63	2	Canoe, Carry-down, Paved	No	403722.00	4571912.00
Pammel Park Ford	Madison	63	2	960	5.97	2.5	Canoe, Carry-down, Gravel	Modern	410030.00	4572133.00
Pammel Park	Madison	61	7	947	6.5	0.75	Canoe, Carry-down, Gravel	Modern	410120.00	4572233.00
Middle River County Park	Madison	54	4	910	5.28	2.25	Canoe, Carry-down, Gravel	City Park	415950.00	4574260.00
Hollivell Covered Bridge	Madison	50		897	3.3	1.5	Canoe, Carry-down, Paved	No	419700.00	4575058.00

*Based on optimum flow/river levels: CFS (cubic feet/sec) output should be reading between 600 to 900 at the Indianola Station for optimum flows in Adair/Madison County. Go to USGS Real-Time Water Data for Middle River to obtain the CFS reading; (<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ia/nwis/u/v>)



LEGEND

Canoe Access	Trail	Picnic Facilities	Drinking Water
Park Office	Camping	Restrooms	Dam