

BOONE RIVER

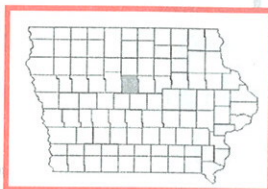
Webster City to the Des Moines River

THE BOONE RIVER HAS ITS SOURCE in Hancock County and zigzags nearly 100 miles through Wright and Hamilton counties before emptying into the Des Moines River north of Stratford.

THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES has designated the 26-mile stretch from Webster City to its confluence with the Des Moines River as a Protected Water Area because of its outstanding scenic and natural qualities. Throughout this stretch, the stream bed gradient becomes increasingly steeper and cuts through a deep, heavily-

wooded valley. The frequent riffle-pool areas provide excellent fishing for small-mouth bass and channel catfish. Walleye and northern pike are periodically caught and an occasional flathead catfish is taken from the deep pools associated with outside bends in the river.

SEVERAL MILLS WERE BUILT on the Boone River during the mid-1800s and give this stretch an intriguing historical background. One mill was located near Bever Bridge and was called the Bone's Mill. This mill, built in 1854, had a colorful



history, including its continual battle with ice and flood waters, its important business function, a dash of romance, an unsolved murder and the thunderous explosion which ended its existence.

TUNNEL MILL ACCESS, LOCATED ABOUT 16 miles downstream of Webster City, is at the site of the mill built by Robert Watson in the mid-1800s. The 400-foot tunnel was built to bypass a sweeping horseshoe curve, thus increasing the natural current by a steeper fall to the turbine. Remains of the dam can still be seen on the north side of the ridge.

BELLS MILL PARK IS THE SITE of a mill built in 1853 by Methodist preacher David Eckerson, which found its way to the Bell family. In 1888, flood waters swept away the dam, stopping the wheels of the mill. Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Bell donated the land for the present park as a memorial to pioneers who settled this area.

THE SECOND BRIDGE DOWNSTREAM from Bells Mill is Vegors Bridge. High on a scenic hill to the north and west is Vegors Cemetery, a historic spot of early Indian and white burial.

CANOEISTS CAN END THEIR TRIP on the Boone, a short distance above the confluence with the Des Moines River, at the Boone Forks Wildlife Management Area.

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Distance from Previous Access	Access Name	Location
0 miles	1. Riverside Park	Webster City
4.6 miles	2. Briggs Woods Park	2 mi S Webster City
3.5 miles	3. Albrights Canoe Access	3 mi S Webster City
2 miles	4. Bever Bridge	4mi S Webster City
7.6 miles	5. Tunnel Mill	7 mi S Webster City
4.9 miles	6. Bells Mill Park	5 mi NE Stratford
5.2 miles	7. Boone Forks Wildlife Area	2 mi N Stratford

