

DES MOINES RIVER

Dolliver State Park to Saylorville

THE DES MOINES RIVER is Iowa's largest interior stream, traversing more than 500 miles across Iowa to the Mississippi River. The stretch above Dolliver State Park in Webster County has limited access, so this portion will begin at Dolliver State Park, north of Lehigh.

DOLLIVER STATE PARK extends along the west bank and is a convenient put-in and stop for canoeists with a shelterhouse and public camping grounds along the river. Of particular interest in this area are Boneyard Hollow and the Copperas Beds. Boneyard Hollow is a



deep ravine with sandstone ledges rising 50 to 75 feet. Legend says that in early days Indians drove buffalo, deer and elk over these cliffs. The Copperas Beds are found in a sandstone bluff 150 feet high. This is an unusual deposit of various mineral substances with many petrified plants exposed. Legend says that Indians used the multi-colored copperas powder for war paint and that early pioneers colored their clothing with these minerals.

THE DAM AT LEHIGH is easily negotiated with access points above and below the dam site. The river below Lehigh meanders lazily through central Iowa, passing by Brushy Creek. This area is not as scenic as the upper stretch, but offers good angling at several spots. The Deception Hollow area is a particularly good area for channel catfish.

IN SOUTHERN WEBSTER COUNTY, the Boone River joins with the Des Moines River. Below the confluence, the river dramatically increases in size and offers areas for boating, canoeing and fishing as well as areas of scenic and historic interest. The Carlson Recreational Area, a few miles downstream, offers camping, picnicking and restroom facilities near the river.

THE FRASER DAM is the next obstacle in this reach of the river. It is difficult to see and canoeists should be familiar with the area before floating this stretch. Portaging is necessary at the boat ramp above and below Fraser Dam and

strongly suggested at the Boone Waterworks boat ramps. The stretch between these two dams offers excellent fishing opportunities. There are a number of large pool areas, such as the Big Eddy, which have good habitat for channel catfish, walleye and bass. The dam areas afford excellent fishing opportunities and are particularly noted for flathead catfish.

THE BOONE VIADUCT (High Bridge) is billed as the longest and highest double-track railway bridge in the world and is another area of interest, as well as a good reference point along the river. Completed in 1901, it spans a length of 2,680 feet and stands 185 feet above the river. A few miles below the Highway 30 bridge is Ledges State Park. While at the Ledges, a short hike up Pease Creek will reveal limestone outcroppings for which the park is famous. The Ledges also has picnicking available close to the river and is another good stop-over point.

THE RIVER BELOW LEDGES is not quite as scenic as the upper stretches. It contains numerous "holes" and snags and has some of the best fishing waters available over this stretch of Des Moines. Points of reference are the E-57 bridge (Dogwood Ramp) and the Highway 210 and Highway 17 bridges entering the Saylorville Reservoir. Jester Park is located at the north end of the reservoir and is a convenient take-out point.

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| Distance from Previous Access | Access Name | Location |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 0 miles | 1. Dolliver State Park | 1.5 mi W, 1 mi N Lehigh |
| 2.2 miles | 2. Foster Park | .5 mi N Lehigh |
| .5 mile | 3. Lehigh | Lehigh |
| 3.1 miles | 4. Deception Hollow | 2 mi S, 1.5 mi E Lehigh |
| 8.8 miles | 5. Boone Forks Wildlife Area (on Boone River) | 2 mi N Stratford |
| 7.2 miles | 6. Boone Forks Wildlife Area Junction Access | 1 mi S, 3.5 mi E, .5 mi N Dayton |
| 3.2 miles | 7. Carlson Recreation Area Access | 1 mi S, 3.5 mi E, 2.5 mi S Dayton |
| 4.8 miles | 8. Norton's Ford River Access | 1 mi E, 1.5 mi N, .25 mi E Pilot Mound |
| 4.5 miles | 9. North Frazer Ramp | .25 mi S, .75 mi W Frazer |
| .2 mile | 10. South Frazer Ramp | .25 mi S Frazer |
| 2 miles | 11. Big Eddy Access | .75 mi E Frazer |
| 4.4 miles | 12. Waterworks Ramp (upstream) | 1 mi W, 1 mi N Boone |
| .2 mile | 13. Waterworks Ramp (downstream) | 1 mi W, 1 mi N Boone |
| 6.4 miles | 14. River Bend Ramp | 1.5 mi W Boone |
| 5.4 miles | 15. Ledges State Park | 5 mi S Boone |
| 2.2 miles | 16. Dogwood Ramp | 3.5 mi W Luther |
| 2.7 miles | 17. Sportsmen Ramp | 4 mi W, 2 mi S Luther |
| 5.8 miles | 18. Laurie Ramp | 2 mi W Madrid |
| 2.4 miles | 19. Sub--1 Ramp | 3.5 mi E Woodward |
| 7.6 miles | 20. Lewis A. Jester Park | 1.5 mi E, 1 mi N, .75 mi E Granger |

