

WEST FORK DES MOINES RIVER

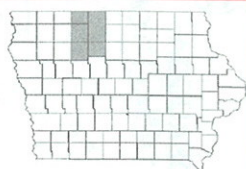
Petersburg, MN, to Humboldt

THE WEST FORK of the Des Moines River varies considerably in recreational potential as it flows from Iowa's northern border in Emmet County to its confluence with the East Fork in Humboldt County.

THE WEST FORK DISPLAYS many different characteristics on its southward journey. The river begins as a natural stream with wooded bluffs and cut

banks and takes on a ditch-like appearance in the lower one-half of Palo Alto and Pocahontas counties. It then returns to a natural meandering stream in Humboldt County. This diversity in habitat can affect the canoeing experience, fishing opportunities and aesthetics for the river traveler.

CHANNEL CATFISH IS THE predominant sport species throughout the West Fork. Snags and cut-bank habitat in Emmet, the upper one-half of Palo Alto County and Humboldt County, are home to catfish. Walleye can be found throughout the river; however, the most productive angling is near dams, rock riffles and the deep holes located in the upper and lower sections of the river. Below the



Humboldt Dam, northern pike are available as well as a healthy population of scrappy smallmouth bass.

SOME CANOEING SKILLS are needed to navigate the river efficiently, but due to the lack of fast water, skill can be minimal. Rock riffle areas in the upper and lower one-third of the West Fork may have to be portaged or walked through in low-water conditions and two major dams in the Rutland and Humboldt area have to be portaged.

THE WEST FORK of the Des Moines River offers very diverse canoeing and fishing opportunities to be experienced by the river traveler in a relatively short period of time.

WEST FORK OF THE DES MOINES RIVER

Petersburg, MN, to Humboldt

Distance from Previous Access	Access Name	Location
0 miles	1. Petersburg Access	Petersburg, MN
15 miles	2. 4th Street Bridge	Estherville
.5 mile	3. Mike Mickelson Park	Estherville
9.5 miles	4. Peterson Access	1/4 mi E Wallingford
16 miles	5. Basswood Recreation Area	1 mi N, 1/2 mi W Emmetsburg
10 miles	6. Mulroney Recreation Area	1 mi S, 2 mi W Rodman
8 miles	7. River Runner Access	1-1/2 mi S, 3-1/2 mi W West Bend
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11.5 miles	9. Stearn's Woods	4 mi E Rolfe
1.2 miles	10. Willows Access	SW edge Bradgate
9.9 miles	11. Rutland Utility Dam	S edge Rutland
4.1 miles	12. Izaak Walton Club	1 mi W Humboldt
.5 mile	13. Joe Sheldon Park	1-1/2 mi W Humboldt
1.4 miles	14. Des Moines River Boating Access	Humboldt
.2 mile	15. Humboldt Fish Hatchery	Humboldt
4.8 miles	16. Frank A. Gotch Park	2 mi S Humboldt

