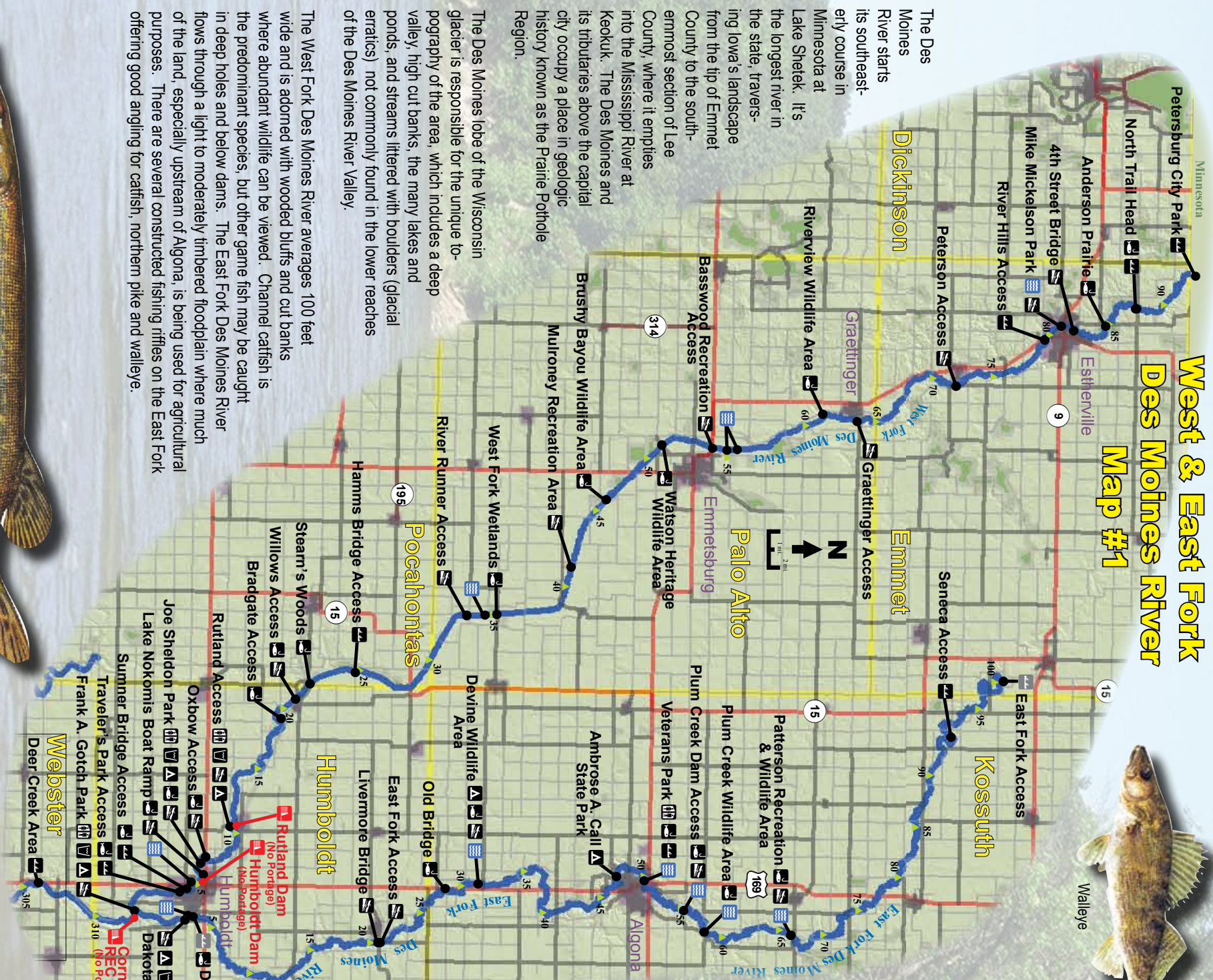


# West & East Fork Des Moines River Map #1



The West Fork Des Moines River averages 100 feet wide and is adorned with wooded bluffs and cut banks where abundant wildlife can be viewed. Channel catfish is the predominant species, but other game fish may be caught in deep holes and below dams. The East Fork Des Moines River flows through a light to moderately timbered floodplain where much of the land, especially upstream of Algona, is being used for agricultural purposes. There are several constructed fishing riffles on the East Fork offering good angling for catfish, northern pike and walleye.

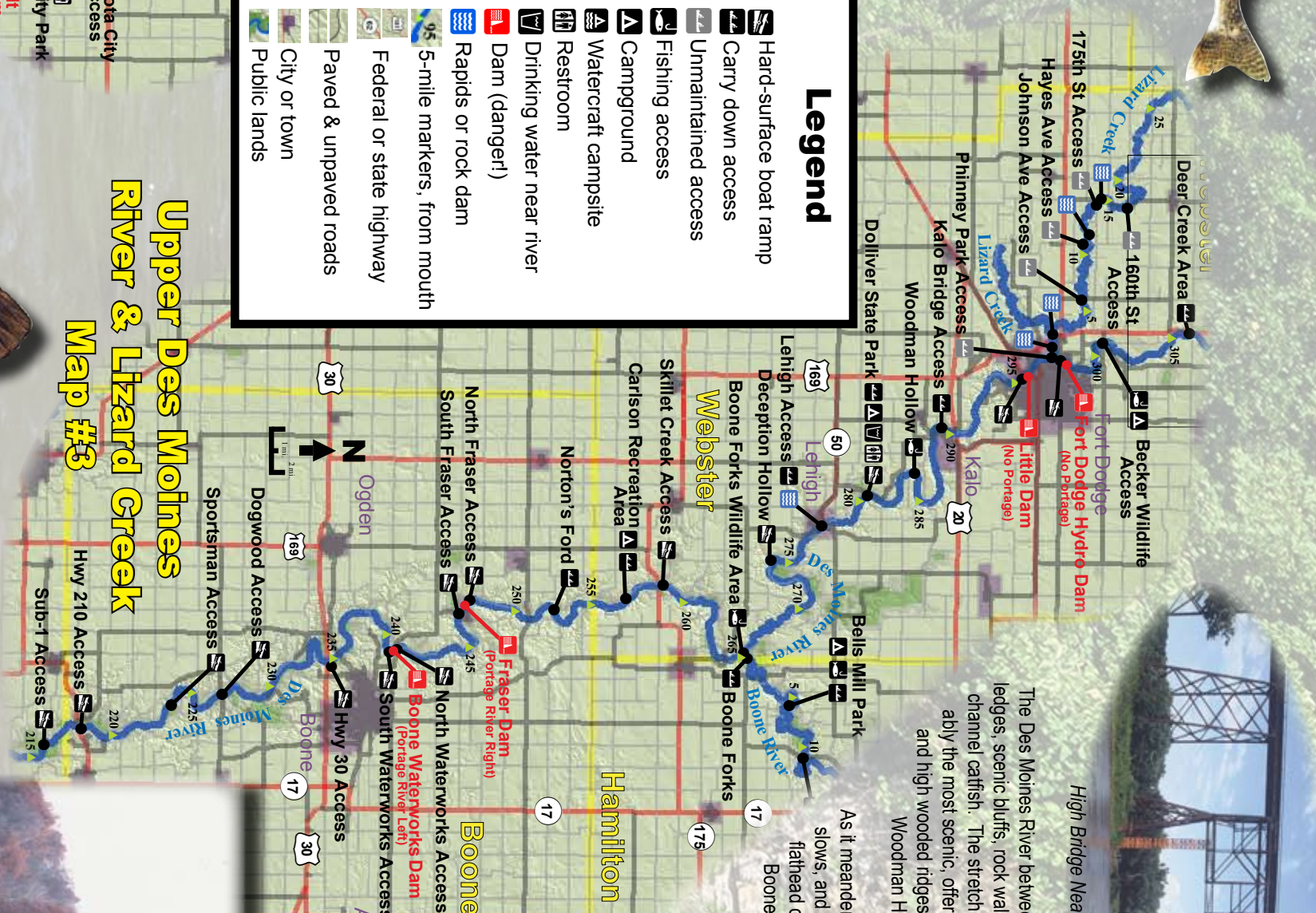
The Des Moines River starts its southeast-erly course in Minnesota at Lake Snetik. It's the longest river in the state, traversing Iowa's landscape from the tip of Emmet County to the southernmost section of Lee County, where it empties into the Mississippi River at Keokuk. The Des Moines and its tributaries above the capital city occupy a place in geologic history known as the Prairie Pothole Region.

The Des Moines lobe of the Wisconsin glacier is responsible for the unique topography of the area, which includes a deep valley, high cut banks, the many lakes and ponds, and streams littered with boulders (glacial erratics) not commonly found in the lower reaches of the Des Moines River Valley.

## Legend

- Hard surface boat ramp
- Carry down access
- Unmaintained access
- Fishing access
- Campground
- Watercraft campsite
- Restroom
- Drinking water near river
- Dam (danger!)
- Rapids or rock dam
- 5-mile markers, from mouth
- Federal or state highway
- Paved & unpaved roads
- City or town
- Public lands

# Upper Des Moines River & Lizard Creek River Map #3



High Bridge Near Boone on Des Moines River

The Des Moines River between Humboldt and Fort Dodge offers bedrock ledges, scenic bluffs, rock walls, and good angling for smallmouth bass and channel catfish. The stretch between Kalo and Dolliver State Park is arguably the most scenic, offering visitors views of its rugged sandstone cliffs and high wooded ridges deep within its narrow valley. Be sure to hike Woodman Hollow State Preserve if you have time.
















As it meanders south toward Polk County, the Des Moines slows, and widens to an average of 280 feet. Angling for flathead catfish is popular below the dams in Fraser and Boone. Walleye and channel catfish are also sought.

For those wanting to put their paddling skills to the test, Lizard Creek offers class I-II rapids after a rain. More like a small river, the Lizard has many riffles and rapids to keep you on your toes, but don't forget to take in the beautiful surroundings. It flows through a narrow, enchanting valley with rock outcroppings, wooded bluffs, and prairie lands. The last mile upstream of highway 169 is the most challenging section of rapids—not for beginners.



Des Moines River Above Fort Dodge

## Legend

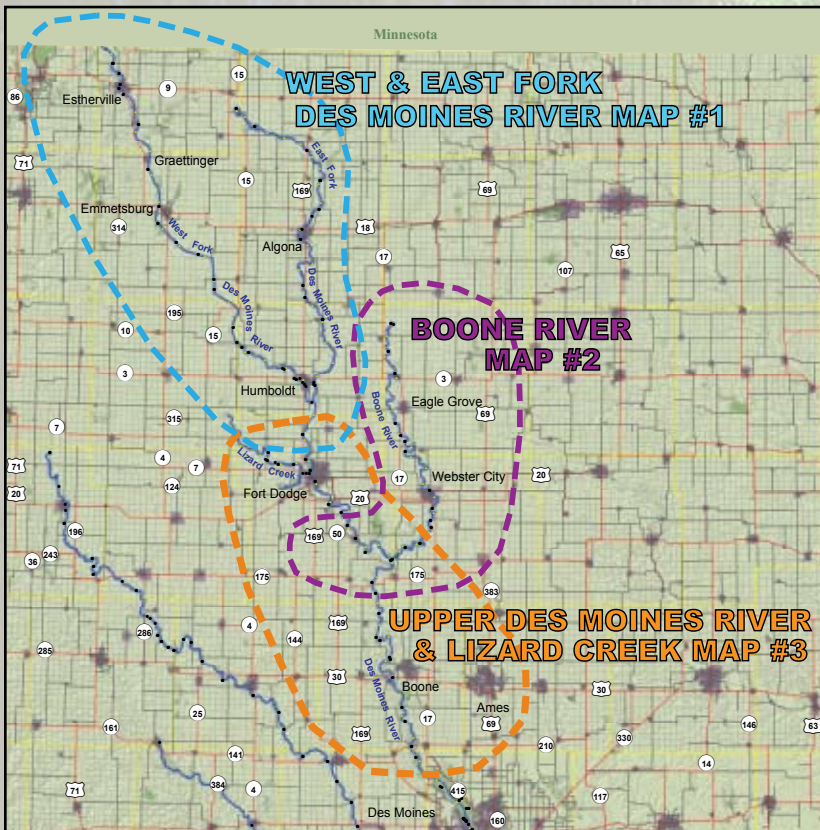
-  Hard-surface boat ramp
-  Carry down access
-  Unmaintained access
-  Fishing access
-  Campground
-  Watercraft campsite
-  Restroom
-  Drinking water near river
-  Dam (danger!)
-  Rapids or rock dam
-  5-mile markers, from mouth
-  Federal or state highway
-  Paved & unpaved roads
-  City or town
-  Public lands



The Boone River valley has natural beauty similar to that of the Des Moines River Valley in Webster County, but on a smaller scale. Above Webster City, infrequent access and the possibility of river-wide snags keep many off the river, but those who do visit will find heavily wooded banks and a tranquil setting. The most popular section for paddlers, however, lies between Webster City and the confluence with the Des Moines River, where the river courses through a deep wooded valley and over fun riffles and a couple rock ledges. This stretch will also appeal to the historic minded because of the number of old mills which once lined its banks in the 1850s, and Vegors Cemetery where both Native Americans and early white settlers are buried.



Frequent riffle-pool areas provide excellent fishing for smallmouth bass, channel catfish and walleye.



### Be safe out there!

#### Wear a life jacket!

They really do save lives. It won'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 dams, fences, snags, rocks, and bridge abutments may be present. Dams and snags in particular can be killers. Avoid them!

#### Plan to get wet!

You may capsize, so dress for the weather. When the water and/or weather get cold, warm-when-wet clothing and a wetsuit are needed.

Federal regulations prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap. State law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to the Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, Iowa, 50319.


### Stay legal!

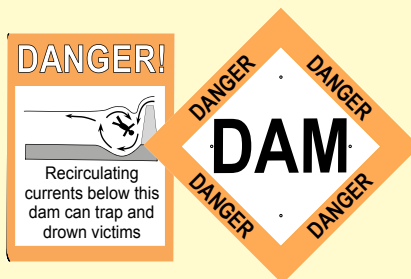
Camping on sandbars is allowed on the West Fork Des Moines River from Brushy Bayou Area to Humboldt, East Fork Des Moines River from Algona to Humboldt, and all of the Upper Des Moines River. Land along Lizard Creek, the Boone River, and areas upstream of Brushy Bayou and Algona is privately owned— these waters are navigable, but you *must* respect private property.

Littering is a crime – pack out everything you bring in. Report littering or dumping by calling 888-NOLITTR.

### Resources

Water trails and recent listing of canoe/kayak liveries  
[www.iowadnr.gov/watertrails/](http://www.iowadnr.gov/watertrails/)

There are seven low-head dams along the West Fork Des Moines and Upper Des Moines River, indicated with the dam icon: . Paddlers need to avoid these dams, landing well above and launching far below them. Dangerous currents below these dams are capable of trapping and holding you underwater for extended periods of time. Orange bordered signs on Iowa's rivers indicate the presence of a dangerous dam. However, signs are subject to high water events and may be absent.



West Fork Des Moines River,  
 East Fork Des Moines River,  
 Upper Des Moines River, Lizard  
 Creek, Boone River



# Expedition & Fishing Guide

