

CAMPING



RED OAK CABIN

Red Oak Cabin is a popular getaway for nature enthusiasts. The rustic cabin is

located on a bluff overlooking the Wapsipinicon River and offers a stunning view of the river valley. The cabin is located approximately ½ mile from the parking area and is accessible by foot only. The opportunity to “get away from it all” and the primitive amenities makes Red Oak Cabin a popular destination.

PRIMITIVE CAMPGROUNDS

Matsell Bridge has several options available for camping enthusiasts. All of the campgrounds are non-modern as electricity and water are not available. Potable water is available next to the maintenance shop.



EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUNDS

With an expansive equestrian campground and over 10 miles of equestrian trails, the historic Matsell Bridge Natural Area in Linn County is a destination for equine enthusiasts. The campground features hitching posts, water availability and a lot of space - situated with direct access to the equestrian trails in the park.

SHOOTING RANGE

This regionally unique public facility features three shooting ranges open to the public. The shooting range will be undergoing improvements for the next few years. Please call or check our website for current information. The pistol range was developed in partnership with the Linn County Sheriff's Department and the City of Marion Police Department. For details regarding hours and rules, please visit LinnCountyParks.com.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Matsell Bridge is the largest natural area in Linn County at nearly 2000 acres. The area offers numerous opportunities to pursue outdoor recreation activities. Camping, fishing, hunting, bird watching, horseback riding, hiking, cross-country skiing, and canoeing are all popular pursuits.

The Wapsipinicon River provides a scenic backdrop to the terrestrial habitats, but also offers additional wildlife opportunities. Many species of waterfowl use the river and its backwaters. In addition, the rocky shores, riffles and deep holes provide excellent habitat for smallmouth bass, channel catfish, walleye and many other fish species. A boat ramp is located just west of the Matsell Park Road bridge over the Wapsipinicon River.

Numerous wildlife species make Matsell Bridge Natural Area their home. Providing suitable habitat to meet wildlife's needs is a significant focus of the staff who maintains this area. Many game species including deer, squirrels, raccoons, pheasant, quail, waterfowl, and many furbearing animals are found here.



Three trails are located at Matsell Bridge providing over 12.5 miles of hiking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding opportunities. Red Oak Trail is 1.25 miles and is used to reach Red Oak Cabin. This trail starts near the shooting range and traverses upland red oak woodlands. The Pine and Prairie Trail is 10 miles with

various loops to provide many options for hikes or rides of varying lengths. The trail traverses open grasslands, prairies, bottomland forests and coniferous woodlands. The Ruffed Grouse Trail is 1.25 miles and bisects both upland grasslands and oak woodlands.

PARK HISTORY

The first acquisition of public land occurred at Matsell Bridge in 1956 by the Iowa Conservation Commission, but this part of Linn County has a rich history dating back hundreds, if not thousands of years. Matsell Bridge is named for George W. Matsell, a New York City chief of police from 1845-1857.

Legend has it that Matsell befriended some American Indians visiting New York City. They appreciated his kindness and invited him to visit them in Iowa. When he arrived, Matsell fell in love with the land and eventually built a mansion near the present-day equestrian camping area. Matsell fashioned his home after George Washington's Mount Vernon home that overlooks the Potomac River. At one time, his land holdings in this area included over 3,000 acres.

Additional buildings were added to the farmstead until there were a total of 11 buildings including livestock barns, grain storage, a gate keeper's house and an ice house. Over time, the buildings fell into a state of disrepair and were razed. Today, only the ice house remains.



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Reservations

Get full details, make reservations, and learn about activities at Pinicon Ridge Park and all Linn County Conservation facilities at LinnCountyParks.com.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Linn County Conservtion Board intends to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and all other local, state and federal laws pertaining to equal treatment. If anyone believes he or she has been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability, they may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Linn County Conservation Board or the Office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

MATSELL BRIDGE NATURAL AREA



CAMPING & CABINS

OUTDOOR RECREATION

TRAILS



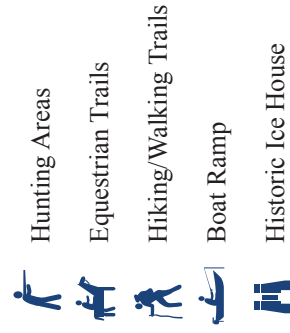
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Questions, comments or more information:
(319) 892-6450 email: Conservation@LinnCounty.org

Revised May 2013



Map Legend



Trail Locations

The letter and number combinations on the map indicate a location on a particular trail. For example, P-1 is a numbered post on the Pine & Prairie Trail.



Hours

Matsell Bridge Natural Area is open from 4:00AM until 10:30PM. However, roads may be closed during periods of winter/spring thaw when conditions are soft.

Rules

- Some park rules to remember:
- Keep all vehicles on roadways
 - Do not litter; carry out your trash
 - Build fireplaces in designated fireplaces
 - Observe speed limits
 - Park only in designated areas

Directions

Matsell Bridge Natural Area is located at 3745 Matsell Park Road, Central City, Iowa. Parking areas are located along Stone City Rd, Matsell Park Rd, Merritt Rd, Bearing Ln, and Hart Rd.

PARK INFORMATION