

Polk County Parks Geocaching Challenge Passport



Carney Marsh

GCGF3N4

NE 70th Ave., Ankeny

Great Western Trail

GCGF705

George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt

GCGF71F

8700 NE 126th Ave., Maxwell

High Trestle Trail

GCGF3P7

Polk St., Sheldahl

Sycamore Trail

GCGF75M

NE 66th St., Des Moines

Engeldinger Marsh

GCGF73E

11961 NE 118th St., Maxwell

Mally's Park

GCGF3QB

5788 NE Berwick Dr., Ankeny

Trestle to Trestle Trail

GCGFEF6

Lower Beaver Road., Des Moines

Gay Lea Wilson Trail

GCGF767

NE 54th Ave., Des Moines

Chichaqua Valley Trail

GCGF6Z0

NE 88th St., Bondurant

Yellow Banks Park

GCGF73T

68th St., Pleasant Hill

Brown's Woods

GCGEK22

195 SE Brown's Woods Ct., West Des Moines

Easter Lake Park

GCGFK3T

2830 Easter Lake Dr., Des Moines

Jester Park

GCGF71X

11407 NW Jester Park Dr., Granger

To claim your geocoin, return your completed passport to the Jester Park Office M-F, 8-4:30 or mail to 11407 NW Jester Park Dr., Granger, IA 50109

Name:

Fort Des Moines Park

GCGFK4N

7200 SE 5th St., Des Moines

Thomas Mitchell Park

GCGF74C

10509 NE 46th Ave., Mitchellville

Address:

Email:

Polk County Parks Geocaching Challenge



If this is your first time geocaching you probably have a lot of questions! To have a great experience and ensure others do too, please read the following:

Cache Location

Please do not move a cache from its original location. If you feel the cache may not be located in the correct location, please email Polk County Conservation directly or post a log on the cache listing page notifying us of your concern.

What's in the Cache Container?

In each Polk County Parks Geocaching Challenge container is a logbook, pencil, crayon, and popsicle stick with each cache word. If any of these components are missing, please log it on Geocaching.com or contact Polk County Conservation. If you find a container and it is missing the secret word, please call us at (515) 323-5339.

It's possible that geocachers may place additional small items/toys inside the containers - this is common in the geocaching world. But remember, if you take something, leave something of equal or greater value in return. You may find a small token/coin that has a number on it, these are called trackables or "Travel Bugs". If you trade for one of these, please take time to read about trackables at Geocaching.com.

Never place food/candy in a cache container. It attracts animals!

Take care when closing the container. This helps keep water out and the cache components in.

Activity Logs

Log your experience! The activity log is the perfect place to tell us how you liked a park or preserve, what you saw on the trail, and any fun anecdotes resulting from your adventure in the great outdoors. Just remember that geocaching is a family hobby and the language you use in your log should be polite and appropriate for all ages. Don't give away too many hints! We want new geocachers to still get the thrill of the hunt!

Who can participate?

Geocaching is free and fun activity! The Geocaching Parks Challenge is geared for all ages. Veteran and dog friendly! Dogs must be on a six-foot leash.

Geocaching Terms & Acronyms - The Basics

Geocachers have some special terms and acronyms they use in the activity logs. Here are some of them:

GC Code

A unique identifier associated with every geocache listing. The GC Code starts with the letters "GC" and is followed by other alphanumeric characters. The GC codes for the Polk County Parks Challenge are listed on the passport for each location.

TFTC

Thanks For The Cache. An acronym written by geocachers in a physical cache logbooks or online when logging cache finds.

TFTH

Thanks For The Hide

TNLN

Took Nothing, Left Nothing. Usually written in cache logbooks by geocachers who do not trade for material contents in a cache.

Multi-Cache

A Multi-Cache involves two or more locations. The final location is a physical container. There are many variations, but most multi-caches have a hint to find the second cache, and the second cache has a hint to the third, and so on.

Mystery or Puzzle Caches

This form of geocache has a puzzle that you will first need to solve to determine the coordinates of the cache container.

DNF

Did Not Find. An acronym used by geocachers to state they did not find a cache. This is also a type of online log on Geocaching.com and is useful for alerting cache owners of potential issues.

Questions?

Contact Heidi Anderson at heidi.anderson@polkcountyiowa.gov or (515) 323-5360.

Polk County Parks Geocaching Challenge



Location	Address	Directions	Description
Ankeny			
Carney Marsh	NE 70th Avenue, Ankeny, 50021	Located just east of Hwy 69 on NE 70th Ave.	This 40-acre wildlife area offers prime wildlife habitat for birds like herons, red-winged blackbirds, yellow-throated warblers, and various waterfowl. The Gay Lea Wilson Trail passes along the east side of Carney Marsh.
High Trestle Trail	Polk St., Sheldahl, 50243	Closest parking in Sheldahl. Park legally on a side street	This 25-mile trail connects Ankeny to Woodward. A former railroad bridge that spans across the Des Moines River, located between Woodward and Madrid, is the focal point of the trail.
Mally's Park	5788 NE Berwick Dr., Ankeny, 50021	From I-35, take Corporate Woods Dr. east to NE Berwick Dr. and turn south, park is on the west side of road	Mally's Park offers visitors an open air reservable shelter, playground, vault toilet, and drinking fountain. This park serves as a major trailhead intersection for the Gay Lea Wilson and Chichaqua Valley Trails
Bondurant			
Chichaqua Valley Trail	NE 88th Street, Bondurant, 50035	Park at the trailhead off NE 88th St., south of Hwy 65 and one mile east of Bondurant	This scenic recreational trail begins just west of Berwick and extends for 26 miles to the Jasper County town of Baxter. Along the trail, there are mile markers showing the distance to Kansas City for this former railroad route.
Des Moines			
Easter Lake Park	2830 Easter Lake Dr., Des Moines, 50320	Take Easter Lake Dr. east off of Indianola Avenue	The park opened in 1967 on the site of Polk County's last operating coal mine. Within the park you can find the Owens Covered Bridge, the only covered bridge in Polk County.
Fort Des Moines Park <i>*This is a multi-cache with two stages to complete!</i>	7200 SE 5th St., Des Moines, 50320	Take SE 5th St. south off of Army Post Road, park is on the west side of road	Fort Des Moines Park was originally part of "Fort Des Moines," established on 640 acres of land four miles south of downtown Des Moines in 1903. This area was a cavalry post, an officer training camp, Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) training center, US Army Reserve Center, and landfill site until the 1960's.
Gay Lea Wilson Trail	NE 54th Ave., Des Moines	From NE 14th St., turn east on NE 54th Ave., parking lot is just west of Four Mile Creek	The Gay Lea Wilson Trail, when completed, will extend for approximately 35 miles throughout the eastern and northern parts of Polk County.

Go to www.geocaching.com and create a free account to get the coordinates!

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Location	Address	Directions	Description
Des Moines			
Great Western Trail	George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines	From SW 63rd St., take Park Ave. east and turn north on George Flagg Pkway	This 16.5 mile recreational trail begins near Water Works Park in Des Moines and ends in the Warren County town of Martensdale.
Sycamore Trail	NW 66th Ave., Des Moines	Parking at NW 66th Ave., about 1 mile east of Beaver Ave. in Johnston	The Kempton Avenue Bridge on NW 66th St. will be under construction beginning June 22, 2016. The parking lot for the Sycamore Trail will remain open throughout this project, as well at least one lane on NW 66th.
Trestle to Trestle Trail	Lower Beaver Drive, Des Moines, 50310	Park at the trailhead on NW Lower Beaver Drive (just east of NW Beaver Drive)	The Trestle to Trestle Trail was constructed in 2007 and serves as a vital link between the Des Moines metro the northern Polk County suburbs.
Granger			
Jester Park <i>*This is a mystery cache with a puzzle that you need solve to determine the coordinates for the cache!</i>	11407 NW Jester Park Dr., Granger, 50109	Take exit 127 off I-80 and I-35 and travel 6.5 miles west on Hwy 141 to NW 121st St.	This 1,675-acre park on the western shore of Saylorville Lake and stretches from the Hwy 17 bridge north of Granger to the Mile-Long Bridge that crosses Saylorville Lake to Polk City.
Maxwell			
Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt <i>*This is a multi-cache with two stages to complete!</i>	8700 NE 126th Ave., Maxwell, 50161	Take Hwy 65 north and parking lot on the west side, just north of the Skunk River. Look for Chichaqua wildlife viewing signs.	Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt stretches for almost ten miles along the Skunk River in northeast Polk County. The area's natural features include old oxbow river channels and backwaters, marshes, and wetlands. Chichaqua also includes sandy upland hills with reconstructed prairies and native prairie remnants.
Engeldinger Marsh	11961 NE 118th St., Maxwell, 50161	Take Hwy 65 north and turn east on NE 118th St.	This 81-acre wildlife area has been described as a "geological and ecological museum" because of its rare prairie pothole and sedge meadow.

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Location	Address	Directions	Description
Mitchellville			
Thomas Mitchell Park	10509 NE 46th Ave., Mitchellville, 50169	East of Altoona on NE 46th Ave. Park entrance is on 4250 NE 108th St.	A tall, wooded ridge is the most prominent natural feature of this 179-acre park south of Mitchellville.
Pleasant Hill			
Yellow Banks Park	SE 68th Ave St., Pleasant Hill	Take SE Vandalia Road east from Hwy 65 and turn south on SE 68th St.	Resting on high bluffs overlooking the Des Moines River, Yellow Banks Park offers some of the most outstanding scenery in central Iowa. This 598-acre park features a 60-unit campground, three picnic shelters, 5-acre pond, and a boat ramp on the Des Moines River.
West Des Moines			
Brown's Woods	465 Brown's Woods Dr., West Des Moines, 50265	From Hwy 28/SW 63rd St., turn west on Veteran's Parkway and north on Brown's Woods Dr..	Brown's Woods, Iowa's largest urban forest preserve, offers more than four miles of trails to explore. This 486-acre forest in West Des Moines features a canopy of oak and hickory trees stretching from Brown's Woods Drive to the Raccoon River.

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