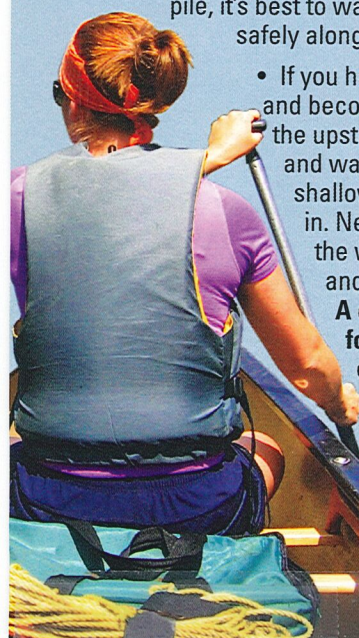


## Safety on the River

Although the Nishnabotna is generally a safe and easy river to navigate, there are some things you need to know:

- Always use your life jacket! Accidents happen, even in shallow water. **Remember, it doesn't work if you don't wear it!**
- Other safety apparel includes: footwear to guard against walking on sharp rocks and other objects; clothing that will protect against rain, sun or cold weather; sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat. **Pack a first aid case - just in case.**
- Following periods of heavy rain or snowmelt, the Nishnabotna becomes challenging. Do not attempt to canoe the river when it is quickly rising, or is at or near flood stage.
- While navigating the river in a canoe, watch for rocks and logs just below the surface. Look for a "V"-shaped current that marks the best water flow between objects.
- **Pay attention to the riverbank.** Most stretches of river have a "cutbank" side where the current is eroding the riverbank and "deposition" side where sand and silt are being deposited. You may want to keep to the cutbank side where there is less of a chance of getting stuck on the sand or mud. (Caution: entrance and exit points may be muddy.) However, if the current is moving quickly into a fallen tree, logjam or rock pile, it's best to walk or carry the canoe safely along the shallows or sandbars.
  - If you happen to tip a canoe and become swamped, stay on the upstream side of the canoe and walk it to shore or calm shallows before getting back in. Never position yourself in the water between a canoe and a downstream obstacle. **A canoe can exert a lot of force as it is swept into an object.**
  - We recommend taking a cell phone in a waterproof bag. In case of emergency, call 911.



## West Nishnabotna River Water Trail Pottawattamie County, Iowa

Made possible through the efforts of the following agencies and organizations:



- IDNR Water Trails
- Iowa West Foundation
- Schildberg Foundation
- Pottawattamie County Conservation Board
- East Pottawattamie County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce Convention & Visitors Bureau



### ENTRY POINTS CONTACT INFORMATION:

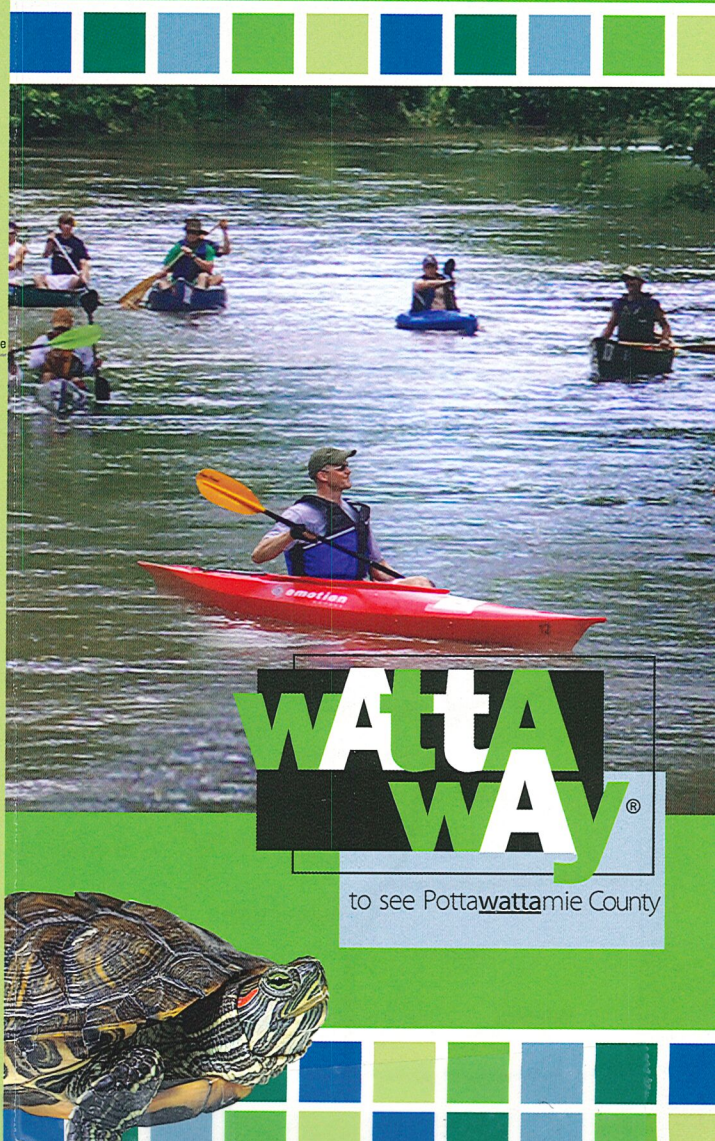
- Memorial Park, City of Avoca, Avoca, IA 51521 (712) 343-2424 • [www.cityofavoca.com](http://www.cityofavoca.com)
- Botna Bend Park  
42926 Mahogany Road, Hancock, IA 51536 (712) 741-5465 • [www.pottcoconservation.com](http://www.pottcoconservation.com)
- Chautauqua City Park, City of Oakland  
101 North Main Street, Oakland, IA 51560 (712) 482-6811 • [www.cityfoaklandiowa.com](http://www.cityfoaklandiowa.com)
- Millstone City Park, City of Carson  
316 S. Commercial Street, Carson, IA 51525 (712) 484-3636 • [www.carsonia.com](http://www.carsonia.com)
- Old Town Park (Contact Botna Bend Park)
- Western Iowa Development Association  
1911 N. LaVista Heights Road, Avoca, IA 51521 (712) 343-6368 • [www.wida.org](http://www.wida.org)
- Pottawattamie County Conservation Board  
223 South 6th Street • Council Bluffs, IA 51501 (712) 328-5638 • [www.pottcoconservation.com](http://www.pottcoconservation.com)
- Council Bluffs Convention & Visitors Bureau  
149 W. Broadway, Council Bluffs, IA 51503 (800) 228-6878 • [www.councilbluffscvb.com](http://www.councilbluffscvb.com)

### OUTFITTERS:

- Rubber Duck Outfitters  
(402) 201-6776 • [www.rubberduckoutfitters.com](http://www.rubberduckoutfitters.com)  
**tubes, tanks, canoes & kayak rentals**

## West Nishnabotna River Water Trail

Access points in the Western Iowa communities of Avoca, Hancock, Oakland, Carson and Macedonia



## Water Trail Checklist:

### MAMMALS:

- \_\_\_ Woodchuck
- \_\_\_ Raccoon (tracks)
- \_\_\_ Bat
- \_\_\_ Muskrat
- \_\_\_ Fox Squirrel
- \_\_\_ White-tailed Deer
- \_\_\_ Beaver

### BIRDS:

- \_\_\_ Wood Duck
- \_\_\_ Great Blue Heron
- \_\_\_ Bald Eagle
- \_\_\_ Goldfinch
- \_\_\_ Killdeer
- \_\_\_ Bank Swallow
- \_\_\_ Belted Kingfisher
- \_\_\_ Green Heron
- \_\_\_ Pileated Woodpecker
- \_\_\_ Canada Goose

### FISH:

- \_\_\_ Gar
- \_\_\_ Carp
- \_\_\_ Channel Catfish
- \_\_\_ Flathead Catfish
- \_\_\_ Minnows
- \_\_\_ Walleye

### OTHER:

- \_\_\_ Fossils
- \_\_\_ Animal Tracks



Belted Kingfisher

### REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS:

- \_\_\_ Fox Snake
- \_\_\_ Garter Snake
- \_\_\_ Northern Water Snake
- \_\_\_ Bull Snake
- \_\_\_ Tadpoles
- \_\_\_ Frog or Toad
- \_\_\_ Bull Frog
- \_\_\_ Painted Turtle
- \_\_\_ Smooth Soft-Shell Turtle
- \_\_\_ Leopard Frog

### INSECTS AND INVERTEBRATES:

- \_\_\_ Spider Web
- \_\_\_ Water Beetle
- \_\_\_ Butterfly
- \_\_\_ Leech
- \_\_\_ Mosquito
- \_\_\_ Crayfish
- \_\_\_ Clam (alive)
- \_\_\_ Dragonfly
- \_\_\_ Damselfly

## Nishnabotna Folklore

### Nishnabotna MEANS Canoeing

The singsong word Nishnabotna derives from a Native American utterance that scholars agree has something to do with canoeing. The word may have been Sioux, or it may have been Ojibwe.

One linguist said it meant "crossed in a canoe," referring to the river's depth at the time, but it also may have meant something more like "river where canoes are built." One Mormon record said it meant "good canoeing river."

In any case, early explorers had a difficult time spelling it, scribbling anything from "Nishnay Baton" to "Ichinpokina."

Nate Hoogeveen, Author  
*Paddling Iowa*



Muskrat

Common Carp



Channel Catfish



## What to Expect

As Nate Hoogeveen describes in *Paddling Iowa*, "Expect no dramatic bluffs or fast water on the West Nishnabotna - it is a very lazily meandering, tree-lined prairie stream, typically brown as cocoa for much of the season, with a sandy and occasionally muddy bottom."

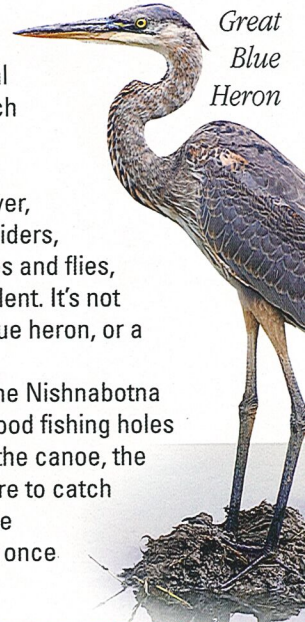
Pack a lunch and make it a day trip. Sandbars make good picnic stops, and for the treasure seeker, the Nishnabotna is always uncovering little bits of the past. Bones, fossils, rocks and teeth, give a person a small look at the history of animals that once did, and currently do, inhabit the area.

## Fish and Wildlife

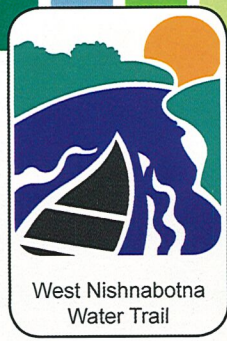
If relaxation and wildlife viewing is what you are after, pack your binoculars and field guides and try to count the number of species you see. The river is lined in several spots with wooded areas, which provide excellent habitat.

Possible sightings include: songbirds, white tail deer, beaver, turtles, coyotes, shorebirds, spiders, and insects such as mosquitoes and flies, so don't forget the insect repellent. It's not uncommon to follow a great blue heron, or a horned owl down the river.

Bring your fishing poles. The Nishnabotna River is always changing, so good fishing holes pop up everywhere. Fish from the canoe, the sandbar, or the bank-you're sure to catch something. Fish species include flathead catfish, carp, gar, and once in a while, a walleye.

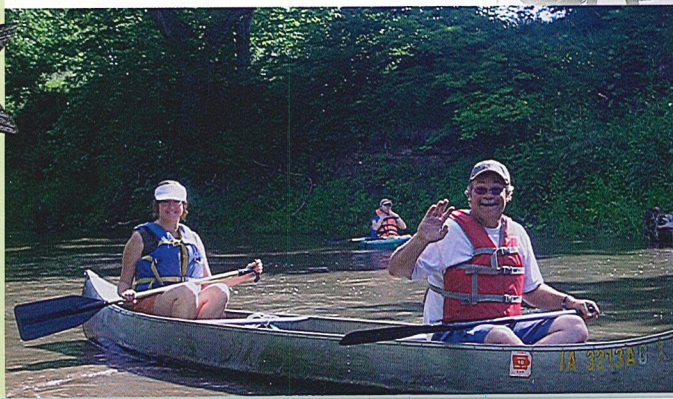


Great Blue Heron











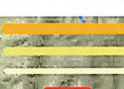
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

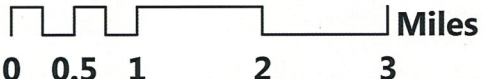
Council Bluffs Chamber  
800-228-6878  
[www.councilbluffscvb.com](http://www.councilbluffscvb.com)

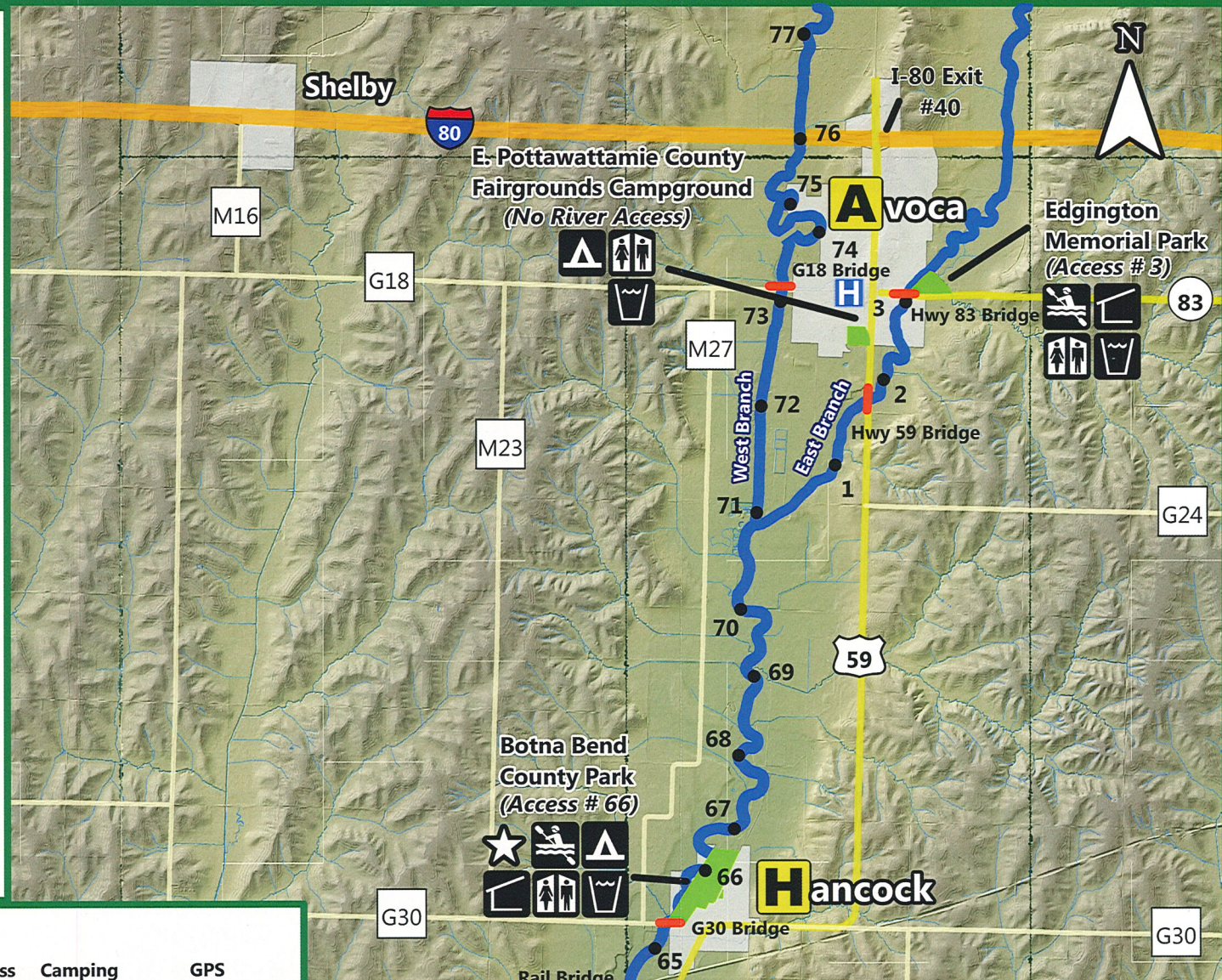


# WEST NISHNABOTNA RIVER WATER TRAIL

## Legend

-  West Nishnabotna River
-  City & County Parks
-  River Mile Markers
-  Canoe & Kayak Rentals
-  Carry-Down Access
-  Camping
-  Open Shelter
-  Restroom Facilities
-  Drinking Water
-  Medical Services
-  Cities
-  Interstate Highway  
County Route Bridge

 Miles



## Access Points

Access Point	River Mile	Distance to Next Access	Camping	GPS	
				Latitude	Longitude
Edgington Memorial Park	3 ( E. Branch)	8 mi	No	41.4769	-95.3296
Botna Bend County Park	66	8 mi	Yes	41.3918	-95.3688
Chautauqua City Park	58	7 mi	Yes	41.3057	-95.4035
Millstone City Park	51	4 mi	Yes	41.2368	-95.4251
Old Town County Park	47	N/A	Yes	41.1956	-95.4486

## Navigation Tip: **AHOCM**

As you navigate the river, access points are marked along the way. The access points are identified by a bright yellow sign with the first letter of the town name.

## Supplies:

Most river-side communities have convenience stores and restaurants, many within walking distance off access points.

