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 Vegos 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.

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.

Stay safe!

Camping on sandbars is allowed on the West Fork Des Moines River from Brandy Bay Outlet 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 Brandy Bay 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.

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.