



# County Park Adventure Series

Story Co. | McFarland Park



## McFarland Park

56461 180<sup>th</sup> St  
Ames, IA 50010

### About the Park

McFarland Park is Story County's nature paradise! Home to the Story County Conservation Center, this 200-acre park offers 5.5 miles of trails for all ages. Paved trails take you on a peaceful walk around the park's lake offering abundant picnic spots and scenic seating areas with ample opportunities for viewing wildlife. If you're feeling a little more adventurous, well-maintained dirt trails take you through the back acres of woods, prairies, and streams. This park offers great educational activities, so be sure to bring a lunch to keep your energy up during a packed day of fun at McFarland Park!

## Park amenities



Campground  
on site



Pets  
allowed



Picnic  
areas



Playground



To help keep this park, and all the wildlife in it happy and healthy, practice good park etiquette.

### Remember to:

- stay on the trails
- pick up any items you bring in the park with you
- do not take anything from the park that you didn't come with
- clean up after yourselves and your furry friends

This ensures the safety of the wildlife and makes the experience for those who visit the park after you as enjoyable as it was for you!

**Keep our parks clean and pristine! Leave no trace and keep nature in its place!**

## Bird Blind

Grades: K-6

Recommended Time: 10+ minutes

Suggested Hike: Follow the trail map back to the bird blind

Materials: Pen or pencil, paper, markers/crayons/colored pencils (optional)

### Instructions:

One of the great features of McFarland Park is the bird blind—a small shelter with a viewing window to bird feeders. This attracts many different birds from the park to this shelter and they won't be scared off by seeing people. Go visit the bird blind and spend just a few minutes (or a few hours!) watching the different birds stop by for a snack. When you see a bird draw a picture of what you see. Use the informational board in the bird blind to help you identify all the different birds you see. This is an excellent way to start a hike so you know what birds you may find in the park, or a perfect ending to rest your legs before heading home!



# Navigation 101

Grades: 3-8

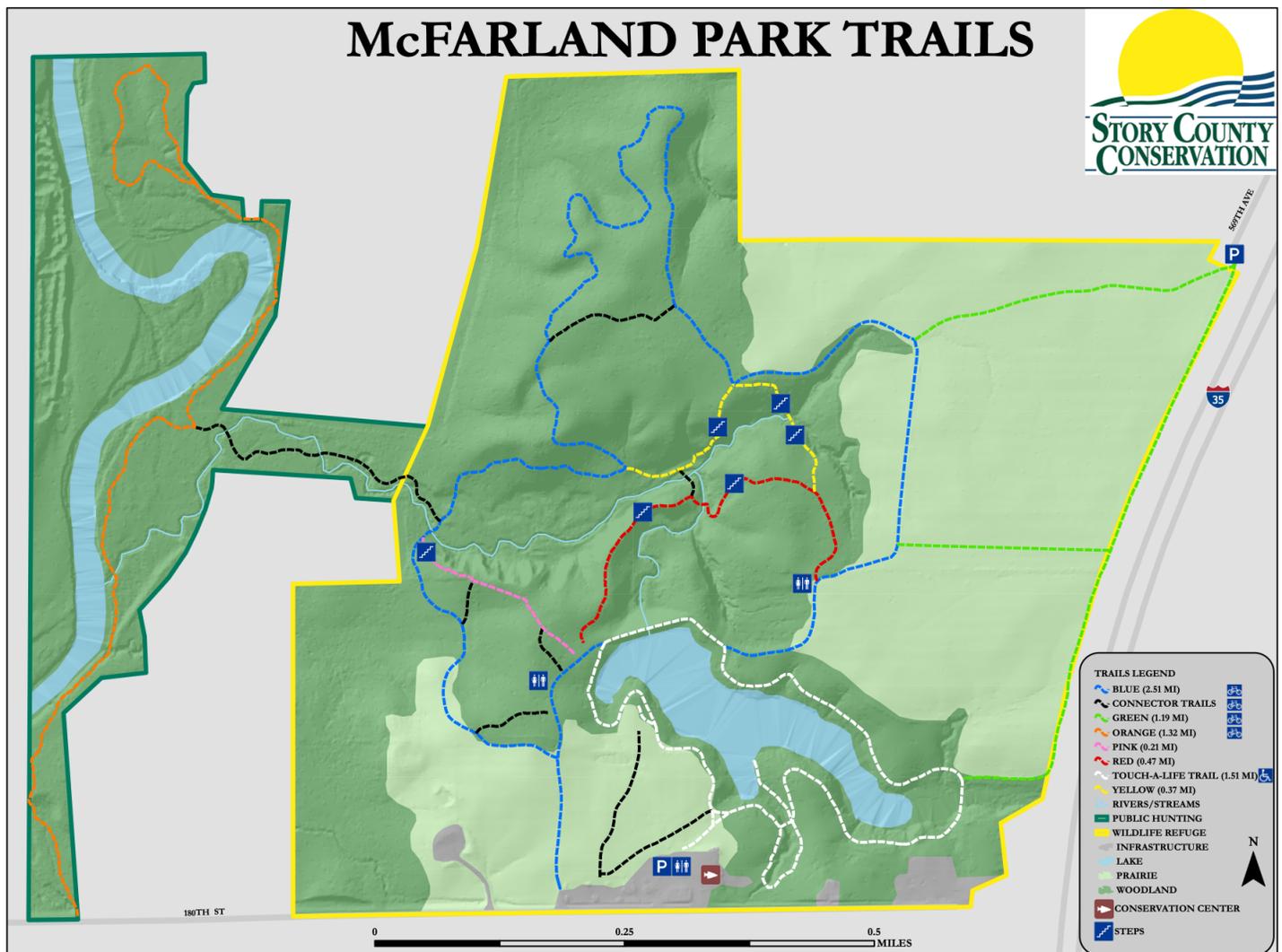
Recommended Time: 1-2 hours

Suggested Hike: Wherever your navigator takes you!

Materials: Park trail map (included in this document), compass, walking shoes

Instructions:

Take advantage of McFarland Park's extensive 5.5-mile trail system while learning how to read maps and find your way around a park! Use the attached map below that highlights several places to visit in the park. Use the map and compass to follow the correct trails to lead you to each destination with ease. Stop at each spot and take a picture of the park's spectacular ecosystems to share on social media and encourage your friends to visit their local parks! (Note: the Touch-a-Life trail (indicated in white on the map) is handicapped-accessible).



# Animal Track ID

Grades: K-4

Suggested Time: 30-60 minutes

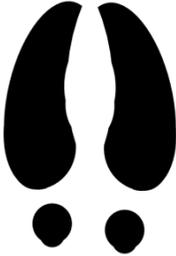
Suggested Hike: Touch-a-Life Trail (paved walking trail around the lake)

Materials: Animal tracks guide (included in this document)

## Instructions:

Take a peaceful stroll around the Touch-a-Life Trail! Along the trail, you'll find imprints in the pavement from a variety of different animals, stop at each set of imprints and see if you can use the attached guide to identify which animal made the tracks. A great addition to this activity is to keep an eye out to see if you can spot any of these animals moving around in the park!



| Animal  | Track   |
|---|---|
| <p data-bbox="493 470 586 506"><b>Deer</b></p>    |  A black silhouette of a deer track, consisting of two large, rounded hoof prints side-by-side, with two small, circular toe prints centered below the space between the hoof prints.                                 |
| <p data-bbox="469 821 607 856"><b>Coyote</b></p>  |  Two black silhouettes of coyote tracks. Each track has a large, triangular central pad and four smaller, rounded toe pads arranged in an arc above it.   |
| <p data-bbox="477 1125 599 1161"><b>Goose</b></p> |  Two black silhouettes of goose tracks. Each track is a V-shape formed by three distinct, pointed toe impressions.  |
| <p data-bbox="505 1499 574 1535"><b>Fox</b></p>   |  Two black silhouettes of fox tracks. Each track has a large, triangular central pad and four smaller, rounded toe pads arranged in an arc above it, similar to a coyote track but with a slightly different shape. |

The Water Rocks! County Park Adventure Series was produced by Iowa State University students participating in the 2020 Water Resources Internship Program. Water Rocks! is an award-winning statewide youth water education campaign based at Iowa State University. Through a combination of STEM and the arts, Water Rocks! challenges and inspires all Iowans towards a greater appreciation of our water resources. Key partners of Water Rocks! include: Iowa Department of Natural Resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency, Section 319 of the Clean Water Act), Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and personal gifts of support.

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