2026

Girl Scouts Love State Parks

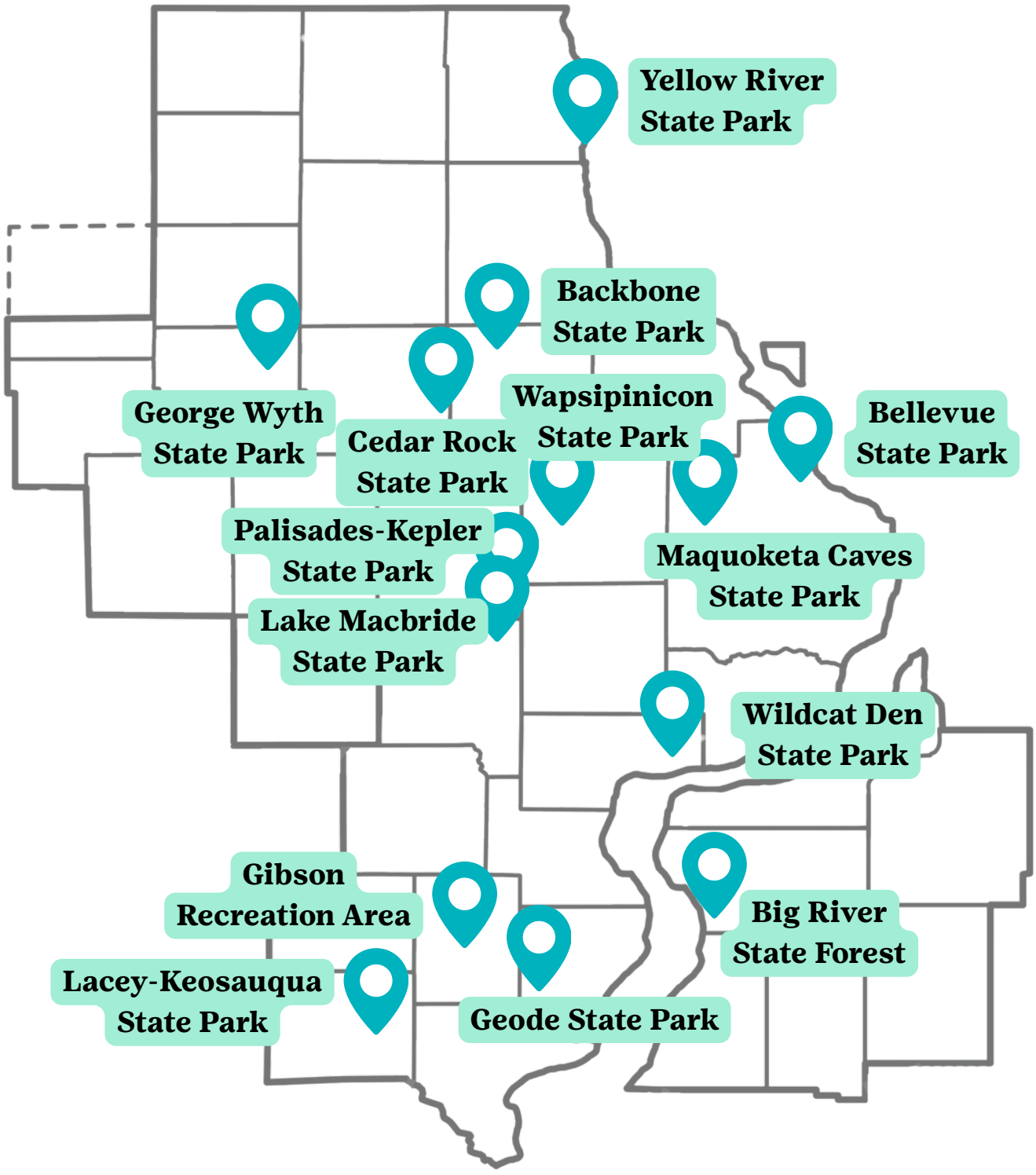
Welcome to the Girl Scouts Love State Parks patch program hosted by Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois! Girl Scouts Love State Parks weekend is September 12-13th and 19-20th, and troops, families, and friends of all ages are invited to participate in the fun activities hosted by state parks in our community. Follow along in this guide to learn more about participating parks and plan your Girl Scouts Love State Parks adventures!

If you can't make it to a state park on this weekend–don't fret! You can still earn your patch by visiting a state park anytime during the year

How to participate in Girl Scouts Love State Parks:

1. Take a look at all the state parks offerings and choose which state park (or parks) you will visit. For a flat fee of $8 Girl Scouts can participate in one or all of our state park events.
2. Visit https://bit.ly/4wSztaU to register for all parks you plan to visit.
3. Go on your adventure!
4. An official Girl Scouts Loves State Parks patch will be mailed to registered youth after both Girl Scouts Loves State Parks weekends have concluded.

For questions about Girl Scouts Love State Parks, contact Info@GirlScoutsToday.org.


Yellow River State Park
Backbone State Park
George Wyth State Park
Cedar Rock State Park
Wapsipinicon State Park
Bellevue State Park
Palisades-Kepler State Park
Maquoketa Caves State Park
Lake Macbride State Park
Wildcat Den State Park
Gibson Recreation Area
Big River State Forest
Lacey-Keosauqua State Park
Geode State Park

Participating State Parks

Wildcat Den State Park

1884 Wildcat Den Rd, Muscatine, IA 52761
Date: Saturday, September 12
Time: 11:00

Get ready for an exciting outdoor adventure! Explore the historic mill with a guided tour, then hit the trail for a 1.5-mile round-trip hike through beautiful natural scenery. This trail is perfect for Girl Scouts who love a challenge—there are some steep spots along the way, and it's rated "hard," so come ready to climb, explore, and cheer each other on.

Wapsipinicon State Park

21301 Co Rd E34, Anamosa, IA 52205
Date: Saturday, September 12
Time: 10:00

Explore the wonders beneath the surface during this exciting cave tour! Participants will discover fascinating animals native to the park while learning how they live and thrive in this unique environment. After the tour, families are encouraged to enjoy a picnic lunch together and continue the adventure by hiking the park's scenic trails.

Lake Macbride State Park

3525 Hwy 382 NE, Solon, IA 52333
Date: Saturday, September 12
Time: 9:00

Lace up your hiking shoes and join us for a scenic trek along the Beach to Dam Trail! Along the way, we'll enjoy the beauty of the park, soak in the views, and get moving outdoors. After our hike, we'll turn into environmental heroes by helping clean up the Dam/Spillway/Coralville boat ramp area. It's a great chance to give back, protect wildlife, and make a real difference—while having fun with friends!

Geode State Park

3333 Racine Ave., Danville, IA 52623
Date: Saturday, September 12
Time: 10:00-11:00

Join us for a rockin' adventure at Geode State Park! Girl Scouts will learn how geodes are formed, discover the history of Iowa's famous park, and get hands-on with real geodes to see and feel these sparkling natural treasures up close.

Participating State Parks

Gibson Recreation Area

1259 260th St. , Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
Date: Saturday, September 12
Time: 6:00-8:00

Twilight brings the Gibson Recreation Area to life, and your Girl Scouts get to dive right into it. Families will listen for owls, try fun activities that reveal the secrets of night vision, and stretch out under shimmering stars to hear the stories hidden in the sky.

Yellow River State Park

729 State Forest Rd,
Harpers Ferry, IA 52146
Date: Saturday, September 12th
Time: 10:00

Get ready to explore the outdoors! Girl Scouts will enjoy taking in scenic views and discover the beauty of nature along the way. As they explore, they'll learn about the different types of birds and other animals found in the area, connecting with the local ecosystem in a fun and engaging way. If time allows, Girl Scouts will also get to experience a brief cast iron cooking activity—a classic outdoor skill—and enjoy a delicious treat to top off their adventure!

Bellevue State Park

200 S 2nd St, Bellevue, IA 52031
Date: Sunday, September 13
Time: 10:00

Girl Scouts are invited to take part in an unforgettable outdoor adventure! Participants will get hands-on experience tagging butterflies while exploring the beauty of local wildflowers and learning how to collect seeds. It's a fun, up-close opportunity to connect with nature, contribute to conservation efforts, and discover how small actions can make a big impact on our environment!

Palisades-Kepler State Park

700 Kepler Dr., Mt. Vernon, IA 52314
Date: Sunday, September 13
Time: 12:30

Meet at the Cedar Cliff Trailhead for a scenic outdoor adventure! This guided hike covers approximately 1½ to 2 miles and is perfect for exploring the beauty of the park. A small snack for all participants will be provided along the way. Families are welcome to turn back after the initial hike or continue on for an optional, more strenuous guided trek for those looking for an extra challenge!

Participating State Parks

Maquoketa Caves State Park

9688 Caves Rd., Maquoketa, IA 52060
Date: Saturday, September 19
Time: 9:00

Delve into the natural wonders of the park on this guided cave tour! During the 45-minute experience, participants will explore the caves while learning about their unique history and geology. After the tour, families are invited to visit the open visitor center to get an up-close look at native animals and continue their park adventure.

Min/Max: 20 girls/10 adults (30 people max)-if strong interest can look into doing another tour

Big River State Forest

2877 County Hwy 3, Keithsburg, IL 61442
Date: Saturday, September 19
Time: 10:00

Enjoy a guided hike from Shady Pines Campground's Shelter South to the Mississippi River! Along the way, participants will learn about the plants and animals native to the region and discover what makes this ecosystem unique.

Backbone State Park

1347 129th St, Dundee, IA 52038
Date: Saturday, September 19
Time: 1:00

Get ready to explore the great outdoors like a true naturalist! Girl Scouts will get hands-on with real animal furs, skulls, tracks, and interactive games that bring wildlife to life in a fun and exciting way. If the weather cooperates, the adventure gets even better! We'll head to the water with nets in hand to try catching minnows and crawdads—just like field scientists. It might get a little muddy, but that's part of the fun!

Lacey-Keosauqua State Park

22895 Lacey Trail, Keosauqua, IA 52565
Date: Saturday, September 19
Time: 10:00

Watch as experts use a safe electrofishing method to temporarily stun fish near the shore, giving you a rare chance to see them up close. Learn to identify different species and discover more about their habitats before they're returned safely to the water!

Participating State Parks

Cedar Rock State Park

2611 Quasqueton Diagonal Blvd., Independence, IA 50644
Date: Saturday, September 19
Time: 2:00

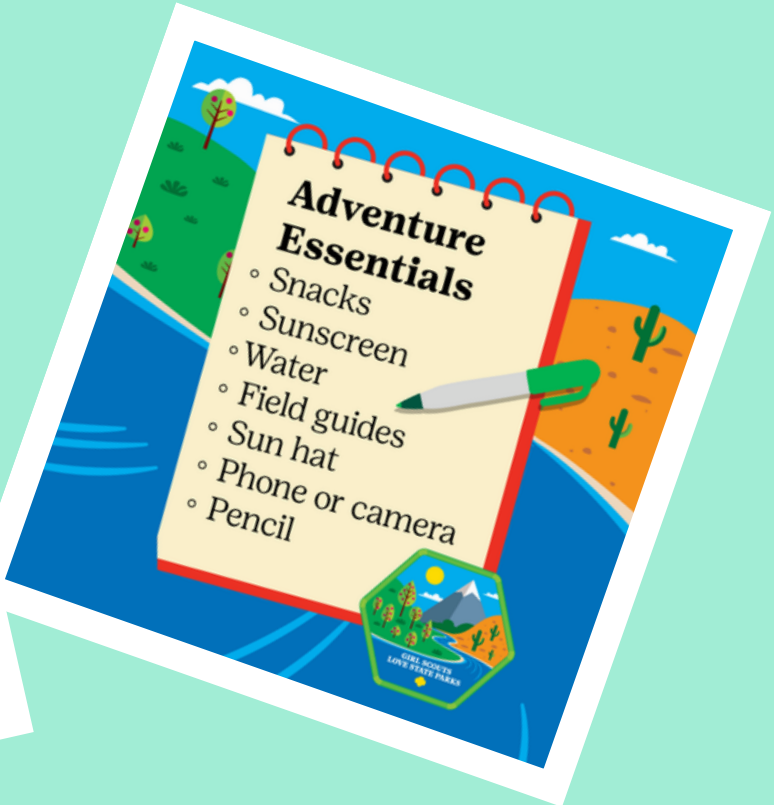
Explore the beauty of Cedar Rock State Park on this fun-filled Girl Scout adventure! Start at the visitor's center before heading out on a short hike to the iconic Frank Lloyd Wright house for a guided tour. Afterward, enjoy a cozy snack by the fire, then choose your own return—hike back through the scenic trails or hop on the trolley for a relaxing ride!

Min/Max: 25 girls/15 adults (40 people max)-has blocked off time at 2:00 and 3:00 for tours in case the first session fills up

George Wyth State Park

3659 Wyth Rd., Waterloo, IA 50703
Date: Sunday, September 20
Time: 1:00

Celebrate Girl Scouts Love State Parks with an outdoor adventure that blends exploration and inspiration! Participants will enjoy a guided hike while discovering the beauty of the park and learning about a past Girl Scout Silver Award project that made a lasting impact. Along the way, girls will see firsthand how leadership and service can help protect and enhance our natural spaces—sparking ideas for their own future projects!



All GSEIWI State Parks

Iowa

Yellow River State Park-Allamakee County
729 State Forest Rd., Harpers Ferry, IA 52146

Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area-
Benton County
4530 McClintock Rd., Palo, IA 52324

George Wyth Memorial State Park-
Black Hawk County
3659 Wyth Rd., Waterloo, IA 50703

Cedar Rock State Park- Buchanan County
2611 Quasqueton Diagonal Blvd.,
Independence, IA 50644

Pikes Peak State Park-Clayton County
32264 Pikes Peak Rd., McGregor, IA 52157

Backbone State Park-Delaware County
1347 129th St., Dundee, IA 52038

Geode State Park-Des Moines County
3333 Racine Ave, Danville, IA 52623

Mines of Spain State Recreation Area-
Dubuque County
8991 Bellevue Heights Rd., Dubuque, IA 52003

Volga River State Recreation Area-
Fayette County
10225 Ivy Rd., Fayette, IA 52142

Maquoketa Caves State Park-Jackson County
9688 Caves Rd., Maquoketa, IA 52060

Bellevue State Park-Jackson County
200 S 2nd St. , Bellevue, IA 52031

Lake Macbride State Park-Johnson County
3525 Hwy 382 NE, Solon, IA 52333

Wapsipinicon State Park-Jones County
21301 Co Rd E34, Anamosa, IA 52205

Palisades-Kepler State Park-Linn County
700 Kepler Dr, Mt Vernon, IA 52314

Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area-
Linn County
4530 McClintock Rd, Palo, IA 52324

Wildcat Den State Park-Muscatine County
1884 Wildcat Den Rd, Muscatine, IA 52761

Fairport State Recreation Area-
Muscatine County
3280 IA-22, Muscatine, IA 52761

Lacey-Keosauqua State Park-Van Buren County
22895 Lacey Trail, Keosauqua, IA 52565

Lake Darling State Park-Washington County
111 Lake Darling Rd, Brighton, IA 52540

Illinois

Black Hawk State Historic Site-
Rock Island County
1510 46th Ave., Rock Island, IL 61201

Johnson-Sauk Trail State Recreation Area-
Henry County
N 1200th Ave, Kewanee, IL 61443

Delabar State Park-Henderson County
R.R. #2, Oquawka, IL 61469

Big Forest State Forest-Henderson County
2877 County Hwy 3, Keithsburg, IL 61442