

1. The Mississippi River is a ribbon of life for people, plants and animals.



A wood structure will contain openings for 8 tanks or terrariums for live animals, such as local species of reptiles, amphibians, or insects.



A large wall graphic or painted mural depicts a cross section of a main river channel in the Driftless Area. Fish species are shown in their respective habitats. Dynamic, colorful, two-dimensional fish graphics, installed in front of the mural, add visual interest and a sense of visual spectacle to the area. Visitors are encouraged to spin each fish to find basic identification and facts on the backside of the panel.



A magnifying glass is positioned in front of the tightly coiled, $\frac{1}{4}$ " shell of a real Iowa Pleistocene Snail (protected by a small artifact vitrine), helping visitors take a closer look at a species that has been around for nearly 300,000 years.

2. As the river has influenced people, people have influenced the river.



As one of the earliest individuals to document, survey, and map major archaeological forms in the state of Iowa, Ellison Orr was a key figure in the preservation of the Effigy Mounds National Park. This graphic panel highlights Orr's work, as well as his colleague, Charles R. Keyes, the former director of the statewide Iowa Archaeological Survey.



An additional way to appreciate the unique beauty and bounty of the Driftless Area is to understand the history of its statewide and federal protection. The Upper Mississippi River, its tributaries, and floodplains were once used as a wasteland for homesteading, industry, and agriculture, greatly impacting the presence of fish, mussels, and migratory birds in the area. Due to conservation and management efforts since the late 19th century to the present day, visitors are able to enjoy and experience the recreational beauty of the Mississippi River and its tributaries for years to come.

3. The Mississippi River has nurtured prehistoric and historic cultures.



As visitors enter the second floor of the visitor center, they encounter a large, handpainted mural depicting a mound-building scene along the Mississippi River. The mural provides a contextual backdrop for interpretive graphic panels and artifact vitrines.



A rectangular artifact vitrine displays material culture recovered from Late Woodland period village sites, such as the Hartley Fort archaeological site in Allamakee County. Objects include ceramics, trade goods, gunflints, pipes, animal bones, and Paleo-Indian points.



In addition to providing visual context to the artifacts with the hand-painted mural, a small mark-making interactive helps visitors connect to potsherds recovered from archaeological sites. Visitors will practice pressing pieces of tethered cord or sticks into a small piece of memory foam, simulating decorative patterns that early cultures created with sticks and clay.

4. The Mississippi River inspires a variety of folk life, literary, fine art, and musical forms.

Today, Allamakee County is home to six towns including Lansing, Iowa; however, over 30 towns once functioned within the county's borders. This display area features local artifacts, history books, folk life, and photographs to provide a glimpse into the county's rich history.



Ice scratcher to help boat manovier in the winter.



Local celebration of Lansing Fish Days buttons.



The History of Black Hawk Bridge book.

5. The Mississippi River has profoundly shaped American history.



A large, colorful panel uses brief language to welcome visitors to the center and give a glimpse of the exhibit experience.

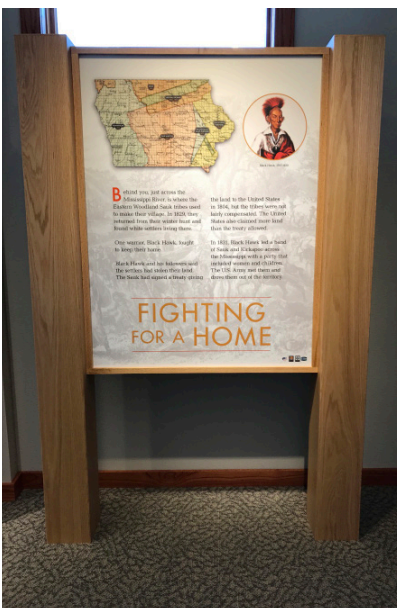


A visitor can flip transparent glacier graphics over a map of the Driftless Area. In order from oldest to youngest: the Nebraskan and the Kansan glacier period (grouped together as the Pre-Illinoian period), will flip first, representing a time frame between 500,000 years to over 2,500,000 years ago. Next, visitors will flip the Illinoian glacier to cover the region, representing a period between 130,000 to 300,000 years ago. Finally, the Wisconsin period (10,500 to 30,000 years ago) will complete the interactive.



A highly detailed, aerial map of the Driftless Area is sure to catch the attention of visitors as they walk through the entrance of the new visitor center. We take a bird's eye approach with the map's design, "carving out" the Mississippi River to transform the waterway as a walkway through the Driftless Area. The map serves as both a strong visual to anchor the entrance, and as an advanced organizer designed to give visitors a sense of place. The map includes landmarks and destinations on reading rails for travelers to look for on their travels along the Great River Road and the scenic Iowa byways.

6. The strategic importance of the Mississippi River has resulted in conflict between nations and peoples.

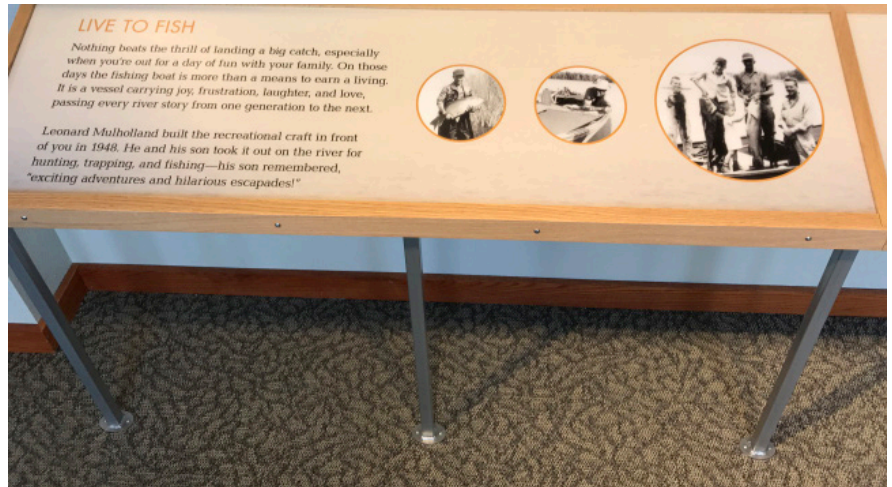


In this exhibit area, we provide an overview of cultural history from the Woodland, Mississippian, and Oneota people to about the 19th century. Visitors will be transported back in time to the sites and sounds of mound builders along the river, as well as a period of trading between tribes and Europeans. As the Mississippi River beckoned profitable industries in mid to late 19th century, Allamakee County's population swelled in new townships. Yet as the river changed, so did the towns that rose from mounds of sawdust along the water's edge.

7. Mississippi River architecture reflects distinctive styles affected by cultural and natural resources.



The Mississippi River is a major route for migrating birds in the fall and spring seasons. Visitors can learn how forests, wetlands, and grasslands provide sources of food and water for pelicans, double-crested cormorants, ring-billed gulls, and other migratory birds.



Many families made their living harvesting fish from the Mississippi River. Much like the reading rail on sport fishing, this interpretive panel will feature historic photographs of commercial fisherman and the equipment they used to bring in large hauls of fish every day. Both reading rails emphasize the craftsmanship of fishermen, including interpretation on the handmade boats hanging from the rafters of the visitor's center.

9. The history of Mississippi River transportation is a dramatic story reflecting the river's economic and commercial importance.



A 1950s boat owned and last used by fisherman Ted Hogan and business partner Jerry Seitz is suspended by the ceiling of the visitor center, hanging directly overhead the walkthrough map on the first floor. The placement of this boat in the mezzanine catches the eye of visitors below and entices them to visit the cultural history exhibits on the second floor. The interior of this 24' artifact will be clearly visible from a second floor vantage point, allowing visitors to take a peak at period-appropriate artifacts inside the boat, such as lunch pails or tackle.

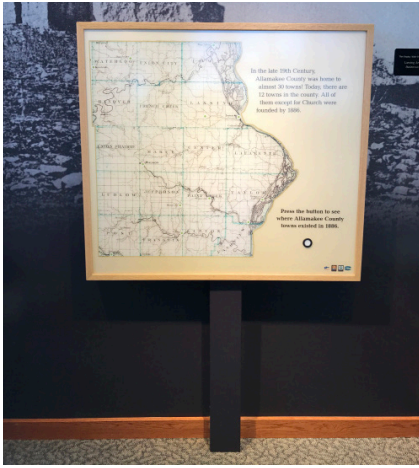


The fur trade involved different economic systems, including the cultural perception of value and the "real" value of objects. How did traders decide how much a pelt was worth? A flip door or card interactive helps visitors understand the pelt as a form of currency, often traded for items such as liquor or manufactured goods.



This kiosk explores the rise and fall of sawmills and logging operations in the Upper Mississippi River Valley, one of the top sources of income during its heyday.

10. Mississippi River towns and cities reflect mid-19th century life.



A large wall graphic of a historic Allamakee County map, embedded with LED lights, gives a dynamic visual of census data as the county's population grew, and illustrates the establishment and decline of townships and cities in the county. Visitors can push a series of buttons to visualize the changes of Allamakee County throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

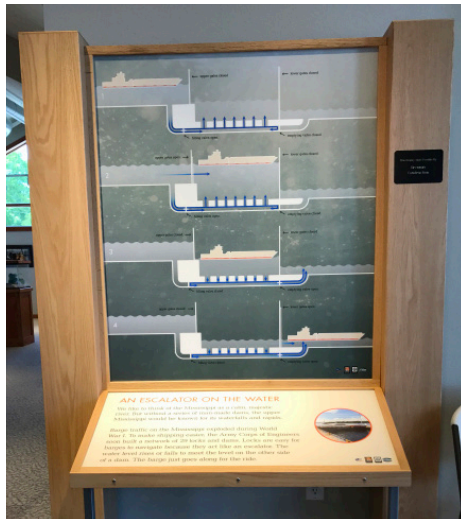


Beaver pelt hats became popular in England, France, and Germany during the 1800s. As beaver grew in demand in both European and American markets, hunters and trappers along the Mississippi responded in kind—nearly driving the beaver to extinction during the height of the trade.



A series of large graphic panels show how trade in the Upper Mississippi River Basin established, affirmed, and strained relationships between Indian tribes and European traders—as well as their political leaders.

11. The Mississippi River is a working river sustaining many industries.



A system of 27 lock and dams have changed the course of the river—and its wildlife habitats—forever. We illustrate how water levels were controlled and navigation improved for vessels traveling along the Mississippi River. A large graphic panel, shows the stair step effect of the chamber doors opening and closing on the river.



Put on your captain's hat and take the boat for a spin down the river. This display is designed for family audiences, encouraging younger visitors to imagine what it is like to steer a towboat. A large screen in front of the controls will feature a filmed scene from a first-person perspective overlooking the water as the boat takes a turn around the river bend, but the footage is not altered by the controls.

Exterior Photos of the
Driftless Area Education & Visitor Center



