AWARDS — FEES

1. There is a 50¢ fee per hiker to cover registration and trail maintenance.

2. A hike to Chief Wapello's Grave will be the minimum requirement to purchase an embroidered patch.
The trail may be hiked either way—from Ottumwa Park to Chief Wapello's Grave or Vice versa.
The colorful patches are $2.50.

These will not be replaced if lost or traded until the trail is hiked over again. They are not available to the public.

HOW TO MAKE APPLICATION

The Chief Wapello Trail Committee will send you two forms. The application to hike the trail is to be signed by the Unit leader and a member of your Unit Committee. The application is then forwarded for confirmation. The second form is to be completed for submission prior to starting the hike. Each unit must have a complete roster of hikers ready to turn in prior to hiking the trail, listing name and address and adult leader in charge.

It is suggested that you submit your application at least two weeks in advance to allow time for processing.

FOR ADDITION INFORMATION

Contact

CHIEF WAPELLO TRAIL
2628 Meadowdale
Ottumwa, Iowa 52501
Phone (641) 684-6255 or (641) 682-9834

For Qualified Members of the
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
Sponsored by:
Troop 11 and
Ottumwa Kiwanis Club
and operated in conjunction with the
CHIEF WAPELLO TRAIL COMMITTEE
Mid-Iowa Council
ABOUT THE TRAIL...

The Chief Wapello Trail derives its name from the area once occupied by Chief Wapello and his tribe. It starts in Ottumwa Park on land long favored as a camping site. Sharp bits of flint and many fine arrowheads found along the river in this area give mute evidence to the desirability of the ancient campsites. The first leg of the hike is a trip through Ottumwa Park and part of South Ottumwa to the Des Moines River. Hiking along the Des Moines River, where tepees once clustered beside these banks and redskins stalked their abundant quarry with canny arrow on virgin trails, we pass the Packing Co. (formerly John Morrell & Co. which was founded in 1878). Following the Des Moines River, you will cross Sugar Creek, where, according to history, the Indians camped across the river from the mouth of Sugar Creek. Heading on, you will pass Garrison Rock, hike through tall timber and thick underbrush abundant with deer and other wildlife. Here is an opportunity unexcelled for nature study. Horsethief Cave and the old Garrison Cemetery atop the bluffs near Garrison Rock will be viewed with interest.

Heading east the hike takes you to Chief Wapello's Grave at the southeast edge of Agency City. Chief Wapello requested long before he died that he be buried by the side of his white friend and “Father,” General Street.

WAPELLO COUNTY

The Des Moines River runs through the county fed by placid streams and rippling brooks, springs abound. All are surrounded by fertile plains and wooded hills studded by rocky cliffs. Wild game thrives.

This was the settling place for the Fox and Sac Indians. Thought to be war-like, they see the futility of resisting the White Man and made lasting friendships with some of them.

The Fox and Sac were nature lovers and became quite attached to scenic Wapello County.

WAPELLO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Formed in 1959, it now has over 300 members and is located in Ottumwa. The Society is dedicated to selling the historical story of Wapello County with items from Wapello County, including furniture of the period to archeological treasures.

CHIEF WAPELLO

Wa-Pel-La was the Indian name for Wapello, chief of the Foxes and second in command of the federated tribes of Sacs and Foxes. He brought his people to the Des Moines River in 1838. Realizing the futility of resisting the White man, he attempted to lead his people in peace, thus earning a place among our Indian Ancestors which few have earned.

Wapello was a great speaker and could convince his followers very completely. For this reason he became a true friend of the Indians as well as the White People.

The only contact which Indians had with the United States Government was the Indian Agency which was located close by. Thus the name Agency City for Ottumwa’s close neighbor.

Chief Wapello’s favorite hunting grounds were on the Skunk River and it was while visiting here in 1842 that he died. His body was taken to the old Agency, and he was buried by the side of his old friend, General Street. The grave marker indicated that he was a friend of the Whites and that the stone was erected by his own people.

The little cemetery is near the present town of Agency. Letters spelling “CHIEF WAPELLO” are along the railroad tracks and can be seen by all passers.

The Indians left little to mark sites of their homes because they were forced to move so much. They built nothing permanent. Except for the monument erected over Chief Wapello’s Grave, no sign that the Indians ever lived here would exist.

SUGAR CREEK

The mouth of this creek was the site of the village of Keokuk, Wapello and Appanoose (a Sac). The Indians had persuaded General Street to erect a mill on Sugar Creek which was never used because of a flood that washed it away. There is reported to be an Indian grave here with the Brave’s Treasures buried with him.

GARRISON ROCK

So named because a garrison of soldiers were stationed below the rock during the time of settlement in this area. The top of the rock served as a “lookout” because of the view it provided.

HORSETHIEF CAVE

Back of Garrison Rock is Horsethief Cave. A band of thieves was reported to have hidden some stolen horses here until the owner quit looking for them. The cave has since been closed by natural means or purposely to keep the thieves from using it.

GARRISON CEMETERY

Located above Garrison Rock in the fields, the cemetery still proudly survives. It began with the graves of two soldiers who were killed in skirmishes in the area.

Shortly after the death of the soldiers, a girl fell from the cliff and died of her injuries. These were the first white people buried there.

CLIFFLAND

Named for rock cliffs that tower above it, Cliffland is located two miles southeast of Ottumwa.

The bluffs of sand and stone are very picturesque. In the spring the cliff is painted with violets and bluebells. Serviceberry trees grow in the rocky places and Red Bud blossoms abound.
RECOMMENDED TRAIL EQUIPMENT:

- Canteen of water—there is no water available on the trail.
- Sack lunch.

(It is suggested that each unit have a First Aid Kit, compass, and a Snake Bite Kit.)

CHIEF WAPELLO TRAIL HIKE REQUIREMENTS:

Each person hiking the Chief Wapello Trail must:

1. Be a currently registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.

2. The official Boy Scout or Explorer uniform is to be worn by all hikers. Official camp or Scout “T” shirts may be worn in warm weather.

3. An adult leader must accompany every 10 to 12 hikers.

4. Hikers must register at the start of the trail in Ottumwa Park before hiking the trail.

5. NO SHEATH KNIVES, AXES OR GUNS will be allowed on the trail. No camping or firebuilding on the trail except at the approved camping areas.

CONDUCT:

Most of our trail runs through privately owned property. It is essential that all hikers maintain a high standard of courtesy and friendly consideration for the property of others. Extreme caution must be taken to prevent damage to any private property which is being crossed. Avoid any complaint from a landowner on the behavior of one person could very well close the trail.

Walk on left side of road, facing the traffic. Highway courtesies are to be extended and hikers may not accept rides or take short cuts across fields. Leaders are responsible for the behavior of their hikers at all times.

HIKE PREPARATION:

The Chief Wapello Trail is an 11 mile hike through all kinds of hiking conditions—gravel roads, timber, underbrush, rocky areas, swampy grounds, etc. We recommend some short conditioning hikes prior to taking the trail.

TOUR PERMIT:

All units are required to obtain a Tour Permit. If the distance is 250 miles or less, you may use a local Tour Permit. If the distance is more than 250 miles you must secure a National Tour Permit. Allow three to four weeks for your National Tour Permit to clear the Regional Office. DO NOT COME WITHOUT YOUR TOUR PERMIT.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Camping facilities are available in Ottumwa Park. Water and latrines are available. Fires will be permitted in park burners. Some wood is available, however charcoal is suggested—bring your own. There is NO fee for camping. Camping will be in a special designated area.

Family camping facilities are available in Ottumwa Park.

The lagoon area in Ottumwa Park is available for canoeing or use of kayaks. You must bring your own. Also travel by canoe or kayak from Ottumwa to Cliffland on the Des Moines River is possible nearly all year.

The Wapello County Historical Museum is within walking distance of Ottumwa Park. Hiking groups will be welcomed.

There is excellent fishing in the Des Moines River and in Ottumwa Park Lagoons.