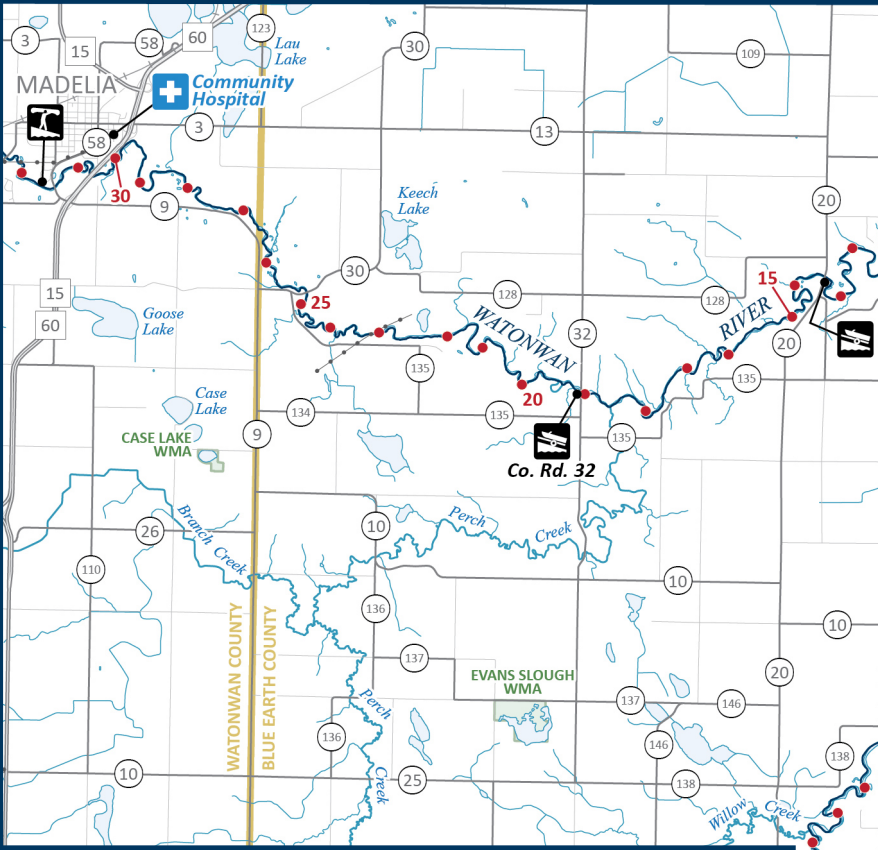


BLUE EARTH and WATONWAN RIVERS STATE WATER TRAILS

Carry-in Access	Rest Area	Dam	Railroad
Trailer Access	Fishing Pier	Drinking Water	Hazards
Toilet	Campground	State Public Lands	Rapids
Historic Site	Watercraft Campsite	River Miles	Regional Trails
Hospital/Clinic	River Level Gauge	Power Lines	Wildlife Management Area
		Aquatic Management Area	

Scale 1:150,000
Scale in Miles

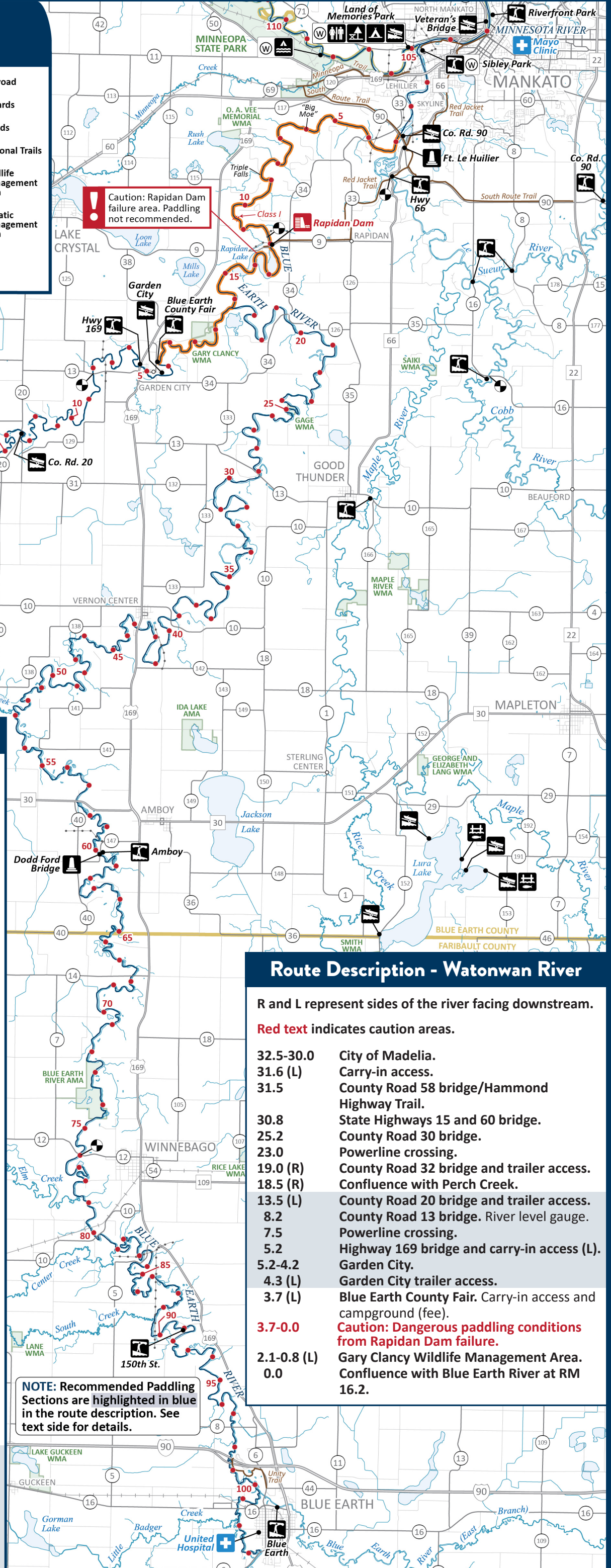


Route Description - Blue Earth River

R and L represent sides of the river facing downstream.

Red text indicates caution areas.

- 103.4 County Road 6 bridge.
- 102.1 West 7th Street bridge.
- 101.8 (L) Confluence with Little Badger Creek.
- 101.4 County Road 16 bridge.
- 101.2 Railroad bridge.
- 98.8 Interstate 90 East/Unity Trail bridges.
- 98.5 Interstate 90 West bridge.
- 97.4 County Road 8 bridge.
- 91.0 (L) 150th Street carry-in access.
- 89.9 Powerline crossing.
- 89.5 (L) Confluence with South Creek. Powerline crossing.
- 87.1 Powerline crossing.
- 83.5 Powerline crossing.
- 83.3 County Road 5 bridge.
- 83.0 Powerline crossing.
- 81.0 (L) Confluence with Center Creek.
- 80.1 County Road 10 bridge.
- 79.8 Railroad bridge.
- 78.8 (L) Confluence with Elm Creek.
- 76.0 County Road 12 bridge. River level gauge.
- 75.3-72.2 (L) Blue Earth River Aquatic Management Area.
- 67.8 County Road 14 bridge.
- 60.2 County Road 147/Dodd Ford historic bridge. Amboy carry-in (R).
- 59.6 Powerline crossing.
- 57.5 Highway 30 bridge.
- 52.8 (L) Confluence with Willow Creek.
- 42.9 U.S. Highway 169 bridge.
- 40.5 Powerline crossing.
- 39.3 County Road 10 bridge.
- 29.1 County Road 13 bridge.
- 25.2-24.3 (R) Gage Wildlife Management Area.
- 19.3 County Road 34 bridge.
- 16.2 (L) Confluence with Watonwan River.
- 12.1 County Road 9 bridge and city trail.
- 10.0-2.8 **Caution: Paddling not recommended. Debris from the dam failure may cause issues while paddling.**
- 11.9 (L) **Rapidan Dam has failed creating unsafe paddling conditions.** Stay clear of recirculating current below dam. River level gauge just downstream.
- 10.6 **Small, Class I rapids.**
- 8.7 (L) Triple Falls.
- 6.0 "Big Moe" glacial boulder in river.
- 3.9 County Road 33 bridge.
- 3.8 Powerline crossing.
- 2.8 (R) County Road 90 bridge and trailer access. South Route Trail.
- 2.4 Powerline crossing.
- 0.9-0.0 City of Mankato.
- 0.8 U.S. Highway 169 bridge.
- 0.5 Railroad bridge.
- 0.3 Powerline crossing.
- 0.2 (R) Sibley Park: Carry-in access and drinking water.
- 0.0 Confluence with Minnesota River at RM 104.8.



Caution: Rapidan Dam failure area. Paddling not recommended.

NOTE: Recommended Paddling Sections are highlighted in blue in the route description. See text side for details.

Route Description - Watonwan River

R and L represent sides of the river facing downstream.

Red text indicates caution areas.

- 32.5-30.0 City of Madelia.
- 31.6 (L) Carry-in access.
- 31.5 County Road 58 bridge/Hammond Highway Trail.
- 30.8 State Highways 15 and 60 bridge.
- 25.2 County Road 30 bridge.
- 23.0 Powerline crossing.
- 19.0 (R) County Road 32 bridge and trailer access.
- 18.5 (R) Confluence with Perch Creek.
- 13.5 (L) County Road 20 bridge and trailer access.
- 8.2 County Road 13 bridge. River level gauge.
- 7.5 Powerline crossing.
- 5.2 Highway 169 bridge and carry-in access (L).
- 5.2-4.2 Garden City.
- 4.3 (L) Garden City trailer access.
- 3.7 (L) Blue Earth County Fair. Carry-in access and campground (fee).
- 3.7-0.0 **Caution: Dangerous paddling conditions from Rapidan Dam failure.**
- 2.1-0.8 (L) Gary Clancy Wildlife Management Area.
- 0.0 Confluence with Blue Earth River at RM 16.2.

BLUE EARTH AND WATONWAN RIVERS STATE WATER TRAILS



m DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ABOUT THE WATER TRAILS

The Blue Earth River flows through a diverse and scenic landscape. You'll pass remnants of the Big Woods that covered east-central Minnesota, as well as natural grassland where bison used to roam. The river deepens in the lower twelve miles, curving below rocky bluffs and wooded hills. Wildflowers add color to the shores in spring. The river is usually calm with one area of Class I rapids; however, major rainfall can create fast moving water and waves capable of swamping a canoe or kayak. Check river levels before your visit. Other canoeable rivers, like Cobb River or Le Sueur River, flow into the Blue Earth, offering numerous trip options. Hazards include the Rapidan Dam area. The dam failed in 2024 creating dangerous paddling conditions. It is not recommended to paddle through the dam area as there is debris, unstable river channel and recirculating currents below the dam area.

The Watonwan River is usually calm, but can flow quickly at times. Many paddlers enjoy the 30-mile segment from Madelia to the river's confluence with the Blue Earth River at Garden City. You'll pass sloping, tree-lined banks with farmland just beyond. There are no major rapids. Be alert for the occasional snag (fallen tree) which may tip an unwary paddler.



Photo Credit: Scott Kudelka

Spring along the Watonwan River.

CONTACTS

DNR INFORMATION CENTER
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040
888-646-6367
info.dnr@state.mn.us

DNR SOUTHERN REGION HEADQUARTERS
21371 State Hwy. 15
New Ulm, MN 56073-5228
507-233-1200

TRIP PLANNING AND SAFETY



- Plan your trip with a map before you leave. Tell someone your plans, including put-in and take-out times.
- Travel with a companion or group.
- Most people paddle 2-3 river miles per hour.
- River levels can affect your speed and trip safety. Check conditions at mndnr.gov/river_levels.
- Don't underestimate the power of wind and waves, especially on large lakes.
- Be cautious of obstacles in the river and avoid overhanging and dead trees.
- Bring clean drinking water and a waterproof container with a first aid kit, waterproof matches and extra clothes.
- Wear a life jacket at all times while on the water.
- Purchase a license for your non-motorized watercraft if it's more than 10 feet in length. If you're not from Minnesota, check your state's watercraft license laws.

WATERCRAFT CAMPING



- Camp only in designated campsites, which are often available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Riverbed camping next to private property is not permitted.
- Stay off private property. Stop only at designated sites; much of the shoreland is private property.
- Be sanitary! Use designated toilet facilities or bury human waste away from the river.
- Practice Leave No Trace principles when camping.
- Follow the rules for firewood. State forests allow you to gather dead wood for a fire, but state parks do not.

MEDICAL



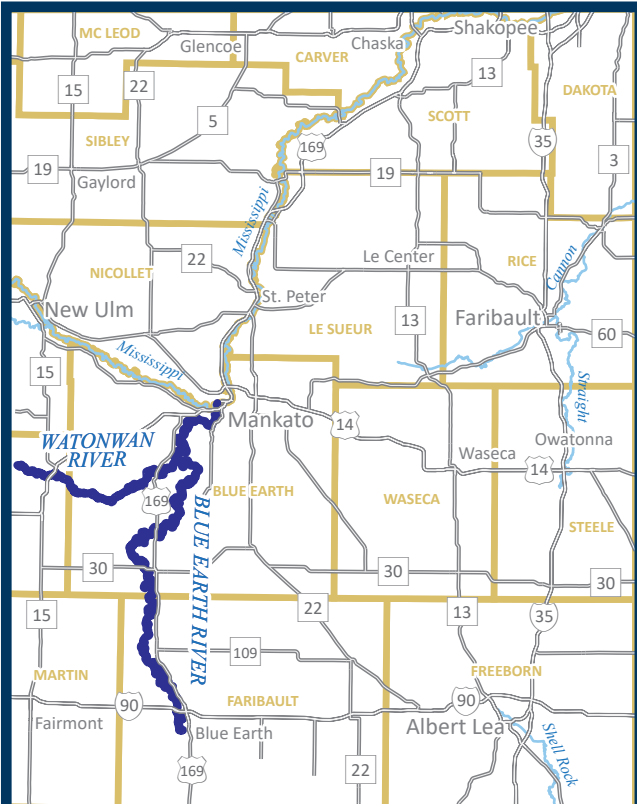
MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM
1025 Marsh Street
Mankato, MN 56001
507-625-4031

NEW ULM MEDICAL CENTER
1324 5th Street N
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-217-5000

UNITED HOSPITAL DISTRICT
515 S Moore Street
Blue Earth, MN 56013
507-526-7388

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

Photo Credit: Scott Kudelka



AREA OVERVIEW

RECOMMENDED DAY TRIPS

County Road 20 to Garden City Access

- Put-in location: County Road 90 Bridge Trailer Access
River mile **13.5**
- Take-out location: Sibley Park Carry-in Access
River mile **4.3**
- Length: **9.2** river miles

Enjoy beautiful scenery as you paddle into Garden City, home of the Blue Earth County Fair. This lazy, low-flow river is an easy paddle, but could potentially have scrapeable conditions at low water times.

RECOMMENDED PADDLING SECTIONS

NOTE: River conditions can change at any time. Be sure to check water levels before heading out.

Recommended paddling sections are highlighted in blue in the route description.

At typical water levels, these **Recommended Paddling Sections** offer:

- Enjoyable experience for all ages and abilities
- Fewer obstacles and woody obstructions
- Well-marked and maintained portages and public access facilities
- Variety of options for trip length and duration

mndnr.gov/recommended-paddling

PROTECT THE RIVER

Your experience on the river depends on a healthy environment. As you explore the beauty of this waterway, also do your best to protect it.

Protect Your Waters

Before launching...before leaving

- Clean off aquatic plants and animals.
- Drain all water away from the landing.
- Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.

mndnr.gov/invasives/aquatic

Buffer Protection

The Minnesota buffer law establishes new vegetation buffers along rivers, streams and ditches to help filter out chemicals and sediment before they reach waterways.

mndnr.gov/buffers

More Information

mndnr.gov/watertrails

- River level reporting
- River conditions reporting
- Interactive water trail map
- Recommended routes
- River rapids definitions
- Virtual tours

Search for outfitters at exploreminnesota.com

This document is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by contacting info.dnr@state.mn.us, 651-296-6157, or MN Relay 711.