The Mississippi River

Cottonwood River

When Joseph N. Nicollet first came upon the Cottonwood River near New Ulm in June of 1838, he was struck by its clarity. “The river is 120 feet wide and 4 to 6 feet deep at the camp. The water is so transparent that one can see many little objects at the bottom,” Nicollet wrote in his journal. “It seems to be 10 feet deeper during floods. Left bank steep; cedar, oaks, pines, white birch; right bank shallow; larch, poplar, spruce. Willow, willowgrass, and grass carpet the floodplain.”

The Cottonwood River, a ribbon of sparkling water flowing swiftly in some stretches, slowly in others, flows through beautiful prairies covered with a brilliant display of color. The spring and summer wildflowers transform the valley erupting in a brilliant display of color. The trees of the valley are a forest of willow, cottonwood, maple, and basswood. Elm, white oak, hard maple and bur oak cloak the higher hills of the valley. The scenery along the river is sometimes muted, sometimes stunning, particularly in the fall when the valley erupts in a brilliant display of color.

Wildlife abounds in the woodlands, grasslands, marshes, tributaries and fields of the Minnesota River valley. Swift, ducks, geese, shorebirds, egrets, herons, and other waterfowl are common along the river’s shores. Large, sucking insects abound along the river, as do crayfish, large red-tailed turtles, and the occasional American alligator. The Cottonwood River near New Ulm is rich in historical sites and cultural significance.

A STATE WATER TRAIL GUIDE TO THE MINNESOTA RIVER (Includes the Cottonwood and Watonwan Rivers)

The Minnesota River is one of the last large, free-flowing rivers in the state. It is a river that flows without the constriction of dams and locks, and it is home to a diverse array of wildlife. The river is a popular destination for canoeists, kayakers, and anglers.

The river is also home to a variety of Native American groups, including the Dakota, who have lived along the river for centuries. The river is a vital part of the region’s cultural heritage, and it is a place of beauty and inspiration.

The river is also a place of danger, with strong currents, deep rapids, and rocky shoals. It is important to be prepared for any unexpected events while on the river.

The river is also a place of learning, with a rich history and a variety of educational opportunities. The river is a place where people can come together to learn about the natural world.

The Minnesota River is a place of wonder, a place of discovery, and a place of peace. It is a place that is worth protecting and preserving for future generations.

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