In the 1800s, logging was the main occupation for the settlers who lived in the St. Croix State Forest. Federally, county, tribal, and private landowners manage the rest.

In the 1990s, logging was the main occupation for the settlers who lived in the St. Croix State Forest.

On July 1, 2011, a severe storm ripped through the St. Croix State Forest and the nearby state park. Winds estimated between 80 and 100 miles per hour uprooted and snapped 97,000 trees and vegetation to improve habitat for white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, and other species.

Wildlife such as elk, coyotes, red-tailed hawks, sandhill cranes, bald eagles, and porcupines, beavers, and muskrats. More of the forest. Grow in the western and northwestern parts of the forest. White oak, maple, basswood, ash, and birch.

In the future, habitats will be managed by controlling invasive species, harvesting timber, planting trees, and prescribed burning. Today, logging and prescribed burns dominate the eastern and southeastern parts of the forest. Interstream areas include red oak and northern hardwoods. Some mature pine grows along the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers and their sloughs. High-quality stands of red oak, white oak, maple, basswood, ash, and birch grow in the eastern and northeastern parts of the forest.

WILDLIFE—Common mammals include white-tailed deer, raccoons, red foxes, porcupines, bears, and muskrats. More abundant is the red fox and northern raccoon. Red-tailed hawks, goshawks, and paddles, and falcons are also common. Red-tailed hawks, goshawks, and eagles are also common. Red-tailed hawks, goshawks, and eagles are also common.
GENERAL STATE FOREST RULES

Whether you are hiking, horseback riding, geocaching, skiing, or gathering berries, take care to leave the forest in good condition.

- Forest lands are open at all times unless otherwise posted. Forest day-use areas are open between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., only registered campers may camp or remain in a campground.
- Campfires have limited use and are first-come, first-served. Dispensed camping is also allowed at least 1 mile outside of designated campgrounds on state forest land for no fee.
- Summer camping is limited to 14 days. Between the second Sunday in September and the first Saturday in May, camping is limited to 21 days.
- Pack out what you pack. Remove all personal property. Do not burn litter or garbage.
- Do not leave equipment unattended for more than 24 hours.
- Erecting permanent buildings of any kind is prohibited.
- Use firewood approved by the DNR or dead fuelwood collected on-site. Kiln-dried, unstained, unpainted dimensional lumber free from metal or other foreign objects is also allowed at least 1 mile outside of designated campgrounds on state forest land for no fee.
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BOULDER CAMPGROUND AND DAY-USE AREA

This campground also provides amenities and a day-use picnic area. Adjacent to more than 20 miles of hilly horse trails and the Mississippi River, this campground has 22 secluded, unplanned camp sites.

TAMARACK RICE CAMPground AND DAY-USE AREA

With 56 campsites designed for horseback riders, this campground also provides amenities and a day-use picnic area. Adjacent to more than 20 miles of hilly horse trails and the Mississippi River, this campground has 22 secluded, unplanned camp sites.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CAMPGITES

Boaters on the St. Croix River can access primitive shoreline campsite at mile markers 19.9 and 105.5. Vault toilets are nearby - bring toilet paper. No drinking water. The Lower Tamarack Camp is located at mile 19.9. Operated by the National Park Service. nps.gov/stcroix

TRAILS

HORSE TRAIL:

Twenty miles of horse trails along the Tamarack River and Tamarack Horse Camp offer experienced riders mostly single-track trails, some challenging steep hills, a water crossing over the Tamarack River, and lots of bridges. Minnesota Horse Trail Passes are required.

mdnr.gov/horseback_riding/horsepass

MATTREW LOUIEY STATE TRAIL:

Hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bikers can enjoy 80 miles of gravel and natural surface trail that links with the St. Croix State Park with the St. Croix, Chippewa, and Nemadji state forests. mndnr.gov/state_trails/mattw_louery

ST. CROIX RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL:

Beginning in Upper St. Croix Lake in Douglas County, Wisconsin, the St. Croix River flows 164 miles to its confluence with the Mississippi River near Prescott, Wisconsin. Banks are heavy with vegetation and island stands appear depending on the water level. The lower reaches along the St. Croix State Forest contain some rapids. The St. Croix River is also nationally designated as a “National Scenic Riverway.”

ST. CROIX STATE FOREST

CLASSIFICATION: LIMITED

All trail networks on state lands have a classification regarding motor vehicles. The St. Croix State Forest is classified as “Limited,” which means OHVs are allowed only on signed and mapped routes that are open for a specific OHV use (e.g., ATV’s, OHM’s, or off-road vehicles).

USING MOTOR VEHICLES WHEN HUNTING AND TRAPPING

The limited classification allows some exceptions for big game hunters and trappers during hunting and trapping seasons. For example, you can use Class 1 ATV’s to hunt big game or transport temporary hunting stands between October 1 and December 31, retrieve big game in September; trap during open season for protected furbearers, and trap for minks under certain conditions. See the Minnesota Hunting and Trapping Regulations Handbook mndnr.gov/regulations/hunting

HUNTING

The St. Croix State Forest provides plenty of game for hunting. In the appropriate season, licensed hunters can hunt for deer, grouse, and other game on state forest land and nearby wildlife management areas.

FISHING AND BOWS

During open hunting season licensed hunters may carry an unloaded and locked firearm or bow in their vehicle, but cannot, except in or within 200 feet of any forest recreation area (campgrounds, picnic areas, beaches, parking lots, interpretive centers, and trails) when hunting and trapping. Installing permanent deer stands and cutting shooting stands is prohibited.

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE TRAILS

Several miles of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails in the St. Croix State Forest wind through aspen, oaks, and maple. All trails are marked and range from easy to more difficult. Highway-licensed vehicles may operate on signed forest roads. Forest roads are open to off-highway vehicles (OHV’s) unless posted closed. Visit mndnr.gov/off-highway for up-to-date regulations.

GANDY DANCER TRAIL:

The Gandy Dancer Trail follows an abandoned railroad grade and connects to OHV trails in the Nemadji State Forest and Wisconsin. mndnr.gov/sohpy/gandy_dancer

RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY

The St. Croix State Forest contains private land along its boundaries, so know where you are. Hunting on private land within a state forest and crossing private land to access public land is subject to state trespass laws. Watch for posted “No Trespassing” and “No Hunting” signs and stay off private property.

You must have permission before entering private land, even to cross it to access public land.

Trespassing is a misdemeanor. If convicted, you could lose your license. All conservation and police officers enforce trespass laws.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) provide habitat for deer, bear, small game, forest upland birds, and waterfowl. WMAs are established to protect lands and waters that have high potential for wildlife, public hunting, trapping, and fishing. Hunting and trapping are allowed with the proper license and during the proper season.

NEARBY RECREATION IN ST. CROIX STATE PARK

Located just to the south of the St. Croix State Forest, the St. Croix State Park offers trails, canoeing, swimming, fishing, and cabin rentals. Additional park highlights include CCC-constructed buildings, a fire tower, and the Kettle River, which is a State Wild and Scenic River. Minnesota State Parks vehicle permits required.

mndnr.gov/state_parks/st_croix