ABOUT THE PARK

The Mississippi and Minnesota rivers have been shaping the landscape for thousands of years. An abundance of plants and animals continues to be sustained by all of this water. The majority of the park is dominated by cottonwood and silver maple trees and visitors can often spy white-tailed deer and wild turkeys while exploring the trails.

The confluence of the rivers is the center of the earth, and a sacred place, for the Mdewakanton Dakota people. It is also where 1600 Dakota people were imprisoned during the winter of 1862-63 before being forcibly removed from Minnesota in the spring. Exhibits in the Visitor Center and the Wokiksuye K’a Woyunihan (Remembering and Honoring) Dakota Memorial share the cultural significance and history of this sacred site with park users.

TRAIL HIGHLIGHTS

Minnehaha Trail
Gentle grade • Paved • Multi-use
A gentle, forested climb away from the river bottoms with gorgeous overlooks of the Mississippi River.

Pike Island Hiking Trail
Flat • Gravel
Hiking tails on Pike Island meander along the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers and their confluence. Look for beaver, heron, egret and river otter along the shoreline. No biking is allowed on this trail.

Snelling Lake Trail
Flat • Gravel • Multi-use
Year-round this trail offers excellent views of Snelling Lake.

Picnic Island Trail
Flat • Gravel • Multi-use
Experience river views and watch for wildlife on this short trail that passes two picnic shelters.

MORE TO EXPLORE AT THE PARK

• Look for naturalist programs based out of the visitor center.
• Borrow a GPS unit, birding kit or Discovery Pack from the visitor center.
• Check out fishing equipment from the park office and cast a line from one of the fishing piers.
• Rent a canoe or kayak from the park office and paddle Snelling Lake.
• Tune up your bicycle or rent a bike at the Nice Ride Station near the visitor center. (bike rentals available seasonally)
• Walk the trail from the visitor center to Historic Fort Snelling, a site managed by the Minnesota Historical Society.
• The Picnic Island Youth Camp is available by special permit only. Call 612-279-3555 for more information.
• Swim at the beach on Snelling Lake.
• Use Metro Transit to visit the park! The Fort Snelling Station (Minnehaha Ave.) has light rail and bus service.