

# Minnesota River Valley State Recreation Area Exploration Fact Sheet

## What is a State Recreation Area (SRA)?

State Recreation Areas are a unit in Minnesota's Outdoor Recreation System (ORS) as defined in Minnesota Statute 86A Subd.3.

An SRA is an area established to provide a broad selection of outdoor recreation opportunities in a natural setting which may be used by large numbers of people. An SRA must:

- contain natural or artificial resources which provide outstanding outdoor recreational opportunities that will attract visitors from beyond the local area;
- contain resources which permit intensive recreational use by large numbers of people; and
- be located in areas with serious deficiencies in public outdoor recreation facilities. SRAs should not replace municipal, county, or regional facilities.



Scenic, historic, scientific, scarce, or disappearing resources within state recreation areas shall be recommended for authorization as historic sites or designated scientific and natural areas to preserve and protect them.

## Why consider an SRA for the Minnesota River Valley in Redwood and Renville Counties?

In 2013, the [Minnesota River Valley Citizen's Advisory Committee Report](#) recommended that the DNR:

- develop a master plan for the Redwood / Renville county river valley area in collaboration with local stakeholders, and
- Suggest legislation for a new Outdoor Recreation System (ORS) unit type that allows multiple recreation uses.

In 2016 – 2017, Redwood and Renville counties worked with the DNR to initiate a master planning process for the valley. The DNR has adopted the master plan vision and goals and is starting to implement strategies identified in the plan.

Exploring options for an SRA designation is a key implementation strategy identified in the plan.



## Where in the valley could an SRA be located?

The valley is a narrow corridor where many interests like agriculture, conservation, recreation, business, and homesteads already exist. They must be carefully woven together in order to peacefully co-exist and optimize benefits for local residents, as well as for visitors.

An SRA unit should ideally be near existing multi-use areas such as city and county parks; or be used to connect the four major multi-use zones in the valley. These four zones center on Skalbekken County Park, Vicksburg County Park, Redwood Falls/Morton/Lower Sioux Area, and Anderson/Mac Lake County Parks/Fort Ridgley State Park area.

SRA units could be used to expand traditional uses in the valley such as hunting, fishing, and horseback riding. Sites that would be suitable for mountain biking, outdoor skill building or interpretive activities typically make excellent SRA units. Locations that include scenic views or important cultural and historical sites are usually considered good choices, also. Existing state lands would become secondary units within an SRA, maintaining their current uses and rules.

A search area description for the SRA is not determined at this point. It would be included in legislation.

The search area could include the river valley, bluffs, and ¼ mile beyond the bluff line of the Minnesota River and 2 miles up its tributaries. Ultimately, SRA unit location and size depends on three things:

- Willing landowners that want to leave a recreation and conservation legacy
- Securing sufficient local, state and grant funds
- How local and state political processes unfold



## How is an SRA designation obtained?

Local stakeholders and the DNR work together to support and plan for an SRA. The Minnesota State Legislature provides a legal designation via statute during a legislative session.

Interested stakeholders, local legislators or the DNR can initiate legislation for an SRA. Once legislation is developed it is submitted to the legislature and goes through the normal process that any law does.

After designation, a master plan must be developed or adopted for the new SRA, before development can begin.

## What type of public input is DNR requesting?

DNR is requesting the public's input on:

1. The types of non-motorized outdoor recreation preferred for a potential SRA in the river valley

SRA's around the state are often managed in a way that uniquely fits the situation at that site. Some offer a larger area for a particular type of use such as mountain biking. Others offer a

larger area where multiple types of uses are allowed overall, but uses are zoned within the SRA such as camping in one area, hunting/fishing in another, while a third zone offers low impact hiking and natural resource interpretation.

2. The interpretive or education themes of interest

At least four planning or public input processes have identified a number of interpretive themes for this area in Redwood and Renville counties. These include the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway planning process, the Minnesota River State Trail Master Plan, Lower Sioux History Site and the recent master plan process for the Minnesota River Valley in Redwood and Renville counties. A new SRA could use the same themes as those efforts mentioned above, just a few, or even include different themes.

3. Preferences for developing and managing multiple uses in the river valley corridor SRA

This portion of the project is designated by the DNR as "locally led" because of current conditions that surround demand and resources for outdoor recreation development. This means that, at least initially, local (county, city, non-governmental organizations) resources must develop and manage recreation facilities, such as trails, archery ranges, or interpretive centers.

## Where do I go to give my input?

A link to an online survey can be found on the [DNR website](#) , or a paper copy can be requested from MN DNR at [MNRiverValleyRCA.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:MNRiverValleyRCA.dnr@state.mn.us) , or call the MN DNR at 507-359-6000.

## How will this information be used?

Your responses to the survey questions will be used as input to help develop the management plan for a potential State Recreation Area (SRA) in the Minnesota River Valley of Redwood and Renville counties. The DNR thanks you for your help.

An open house is planned for fall 2018 in or near Redwood Falls, MN, where additional input can be provided on a draft master plan amendment document for the potential SRA.

To be notified about this meeting send an email to [MNRiverValleyRCA.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:MNRiverValleyRCA.dnr@state.mn.us) requesting to be put on the contact list.



## Where can I get more information?

Information about this area is available on the [counties' website](#), or at the [MN DNR project webpage](#). Copies of the Recreation and Conservation Master Plan – Minnesota River Valley are available at the Redwood and Renville County Environmental Offices in Redwood Falls and Olivia, MN, respectively. A copy is also available at the DNR Headquarters office in New Ulm, MN.

