

BIG FORK RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL  
MAP 1 - Dora Lake to Highway 6

Carry-in Access

Trailer Access

Hospital/Clinic

Toilet

Rest Area

Campground

Watercraft Campsite

Drinking Water

River Level Gauge

River Miles

Public Lands

State Units

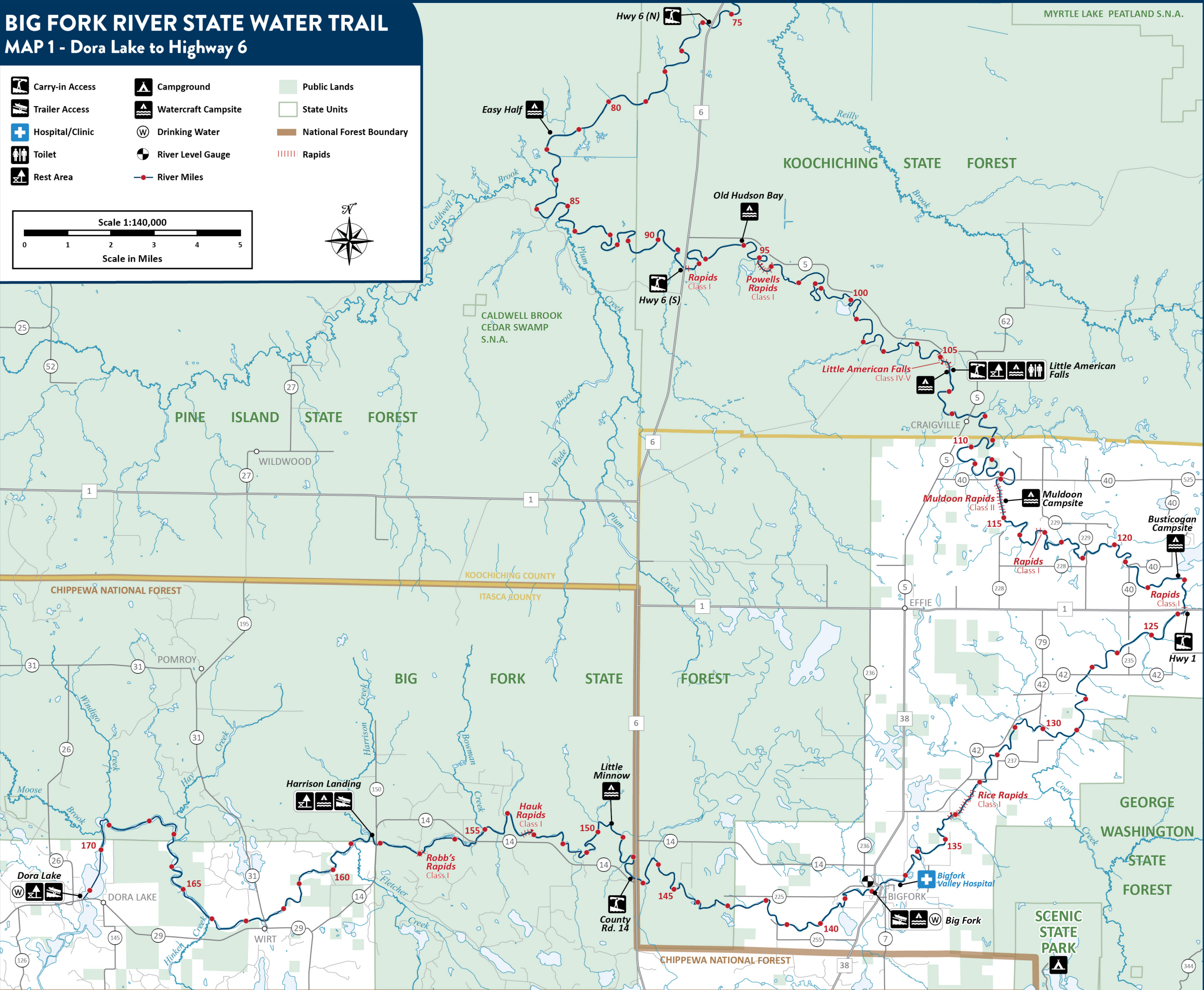
National Forest Boundary

Rapids

Scale 1:140,000

012345

Scale in Miles



ROUTE DESCRIPTION

R and L represent different sides of the river facing downstream.

- 75.8 (L)

81.7 (L)

83.1 (L)

85.4 (L)

91.5 (L)

91.6

94.0 (R)

95-96

104.8

107.5

113.5

114-115

114.4 (R)

116.8

119.1

121.1

123.0 (R)

123.7 (R)

123.8 (R)

127.2

129.3 (R)

132.9

133.1-134.2 (R)

137.6

137.8

138.0 (R)

147.1

147.3 (R)

149.5 (L)

153.2

155.0 (L)

155.5

157.1

158.3 (L)

158.9 (R)

164.1 (R)

166.8 (L)

169.1 (L)

169.5 (L)

171.3 (L)
- Highway 6 (N) carry-in access and bridge.

Easy Half watercraft campsite. A grassy, tree-lined clearing with picnic tables.

Confluence with Caldwell Brook.

Confluence with Plum Creek.

Highway 6 (S) carry-in access and bridge.

Class I rapids.

Old Hudson Bay Farm. Watercraft campsite and rest area.

Powells Rapids. Class I boulder-bed rapids.

Little American Falls. The river plunges over a six foot ledge into a deep pool flanked by 60 foot bluffs. This Class IV-V pitch bears scouting and probably a portage at any level. Portage left. A campsite with fire ring lies to the left of the falls. A county campground, picnic site and parking area are on the right bluff, up a steep trail.

County Road 5 bridge. The site of Craigville, an abandoned logging town.

County Road 40 bridge.

Muldoon Rapids, Class II. A bouldery, half-mile stretch with two-foot waves in high water. Half-mile portage, river right.

Muldoon watercraft campsite. Off portage trail.

Class I rapids.

County Road 229 bridge.

County Road 40 bridge.

Busticogan watercraft campsite. This large site has a fire ring and toilet.

Class I boulder-bed rapids. Begins at bend about 100 yards above Highway 1.

Highway 1 carry-in access.

County Road 42 bridge.

Confluence with Coon Creek.

County Road 237 bridge.

Rice Rapids. A long, bouldery Class I stretch that washes out in high water.

Footbridge. Confluence with the Rice River.

Highway 38 bridge. Town of Big Fork. River level gauge on bridge.

Big Fork trailer access and watercraft campsite. Drinking water available.

Highway 6 bridge.

County Road 14 carry-in access.

Little Minnow watercraft campsite.

Hauck Rapids, Class I.

Confluence with Bowman Creek.

County Road 14 bridge.

Robbs Rapids, Class I.

Harrison Landing. Trailer access, watercraft campsite, upstream of County Road 14 bridge. Confluence with Harrison Creek.

Confluence with Fletcher Creek.

Confluence with Hinken Creek.

Confluence with Hay Creek.

Confluence with Windigo Creek.

Confluence with Moose Brook.

Dora Lake. U.S. Forest Service trailer access and rest area on west shore of Dora Lake with tables and toilet.



# BIG FORK RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL

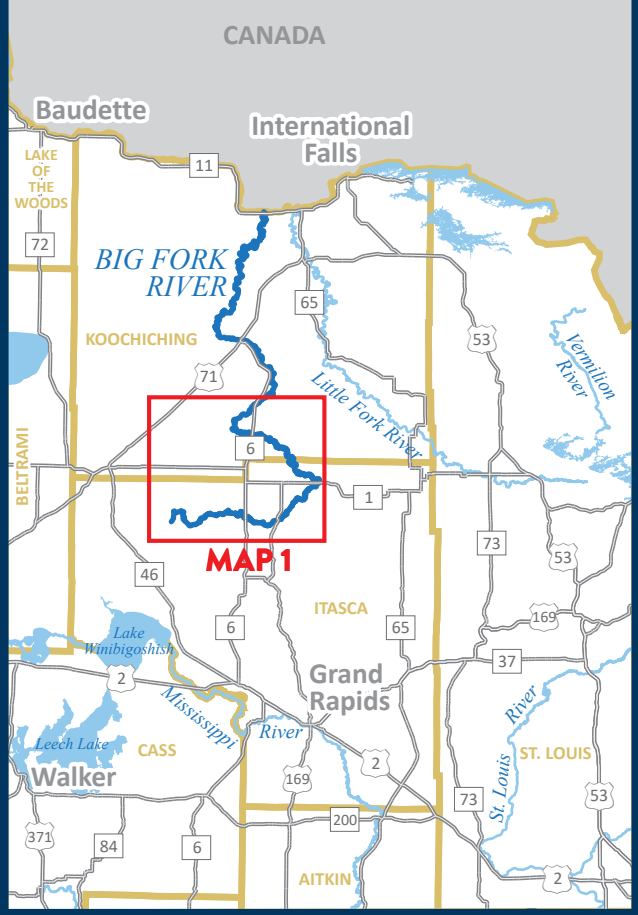


## MAP 1 - DORA LAKE TO HIGHWAY 6



**m MINNESOTA**  
STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

### AREA OVERVIEW



## ABOUT THE WATER TRAIL

The Big Fork River flows north to the Rainy River. Along its path, scattered small farms break up a forest of pine, spruce, fir, cedar, aspen and birch. The towns of Bigfork and Big Falls are the only areas where you will encounter more development. Anglers will find excellent fishing for walleye, northern pike and muskie.

Most of the watershed was once covered by glacial Lake Agassiz and is quite flat. The river's water level usually peaks in late April and falls during the summer when the rapids may be impassable. Heavy summer or autumn rains can raise the river to runnable levels. Some rapids will be too rocky to run if the gauge at the Highway 38 bridge in Bigfork is below 4 feet.

Most of the rapids on the Big Fork River are Class I-II. Two stretches are more difficult and require great caution: Little American Falls (Class III-IV) and Big Falls (Class IV-VI). These falls must be portaged by all but the most experienced paddlers. All rapids can be bypassed, though brush may make some portages difficult.



Know the location of the rapids along your route.

## 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](http://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.
- Follow the rules for firewood. State forests allow you to gather dead wood for a fire, but state parks do not.

## RECOMMENDED TRIP

### Highway 6 (S) to Highway 6 (N)

- Put-in location: Hwy. 6 (S) carry-in access River mile **91.5**
- Take-out location: Hwy. 6 (N) carry-in access River mile **75.8**
- Length: **15.7** river miles

This route can be done as a long day trip or a more leisurely overnight camping trip. The river winds past thickly wooded shoreline in the remote Koochiching State Forest. You'll find a watercraft campsite (first-come, first-served) about halfway through your trip.

## EXPLORE ON SHORE

### Minnesota State Forests

The river travels through Pine Island, Koochiching and Big Fork state forests. You'll find beautiful scenery and many opportunities for recreation. [mndnr.gov/forests](http://mndnr.gov/forests)

### Chippewa National Forest

Explore a wide variety of recreational opportunities including fishing, camping and numerous trails. [fs.usda.gov/main/chippewa/home](http://fs.usda.gov/main/chippewa/home)

### Scenic State Park

This park is almost ten miles from the river and offers a peaceful, serene setting for hiking, camping, fishing and lake paddling. [mndnr.gov/scenic](http://mndnr.gov/scenic)

## 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](http://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](http://mndnr.gov/buffers)

## CONTACTS

### DNR NORTHEAST HEADQUARTERS

1201 East Hwy 2  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
218-328-8780

### DNR INFORMATION CENTER

500 Lafayette Rd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040  
888-646-6367  
[info.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:info.dnr@state.mn.us)

### CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST

200 Ash Avenue NW  
Cass Lake, MN 56633  
218-335-8600  
[fs.usda.gov/chippewa](http://fs.usda.gov/chippewa)

## MEDICAL

### BIGFORK VALLEY HOSPITAL

258 Pine Tree Dr.  
Bigfork, MN 56628  
218-743-3177



**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 911**

## More Information

[mndnr.gov/watertrails](http://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](http://exploreminnesota.com)

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