

## ROUTE DESCRIPTION

NOTE: (R) and (L) represent right and left banks of the river when facing downstream.

### RIVER MILE

- 68.0 Talcot Lake. Talcot Lake County Park is at the south end of Talcot Lake, trailer access and camping in park. Fee for camping.
- 68.0 (L) Talcot Lake Dam and carry-in access. Talcot Lake Wildlife Management Area.
- 67.8 County Road 7 bridge.
- 63.2 County Road 6 bridge.
- 62.2 Highway 62 bridge.
- 61.7 360th Avenue bridge.
- 60-59.6 (R) Winkler Wildlife Management Area.
- 59.1 County Road 5 bridge.
- 57.5 Highway 62 bridge.
- 56.8-55.8 Pat's Pasture Wildlife Management Area.
- 55.7 390th Avenue bridge.
- 55.3 Pat's Grove County Park. Carry-in access, rest area and watercraft campground. Not directly on the Des Moines River, located upstream on the Heron Lake outlet.
- 55.0 Powerline crossing.
- 52.7 County Road 15 bridge.
- 48.8 County Road 14 bridge.
- 46.3 (L) Confluence of Scheldorf Creek.
- 43.7 County Road 14 bridge.
- 40.8 County Road 15 bridge.
- 40.4 (L) Dynamite County Park. Rest area, located a little distance from the river.
- 38.6 (L) Highway 13 carry-in access.
- 37.2 Highway 62 bridge. Small rock riffles just below the bridge.
- 37.0 (L) Former site of Windom Dam and Island Park. Carry-in access, campground and rest area. Fee for camping, self-registration with no reservations. Drinking water. Rock riffles with class I-II rapids passable at higher water levels. Portage left, 150 yards.
- 36.6 Railroad bridge.
- 36.1 (L) Mayflower Park. Carry-in access and drinking water.
- 35.6 Powerline crossing.
- 35.3 Highway 71 bridge.
- 31.4 (L) Mabel Nelson watercraft campsite.
- 30.5-29.5 (L) Des Moines River Prairie Scientific and Natural Area.
- 29.1 (L) Christianna bridge (County Road 30). Trailer access and picnic area.
- 28.7 (L) Christianna Bridge campsite.
- 25.5-24.6 Kilen Woods State Park on right (north segment).
- 24.9-24.6 (L) Holthe Prairie Scientific and Natural Area.
- 23.3 (R) Kilen Woods State Park. Drinking water, rest area, toilets and camping in park. Fee for camping and reservations are needed beforehand. Woods and virgin prairie along the river provide a contrast to the surrounding agricultural area.
- 23.2 Small Rapids.
- 22.8 (R) County Road 19 bridge and trailer access. State park vehicle permit required.
- 21.7 Powerline crossing.
- 21.4 (L) Belmont County Park. Watercraft campsite and rest area.
- 20.1 Small rapids.
- 19.8 County Road 16 bridge.
- 17.1 Powerline crossing.
- 16.1 Small, class I rapids.
- 14.8 Interstate 90 bridge. Powerline crossing.
- 13.0 Highway 71 bridge.
- 12.8 (L) Ashley City Park. Carry-in access, rest area, toilet and drinking water.
- 12.4 County Road 23 bridge and Small, class I rapids.
- 12.3 Former site of Jackson Dam, class I rapids. River level gauge.
- 10.8 Powerline crossing.
- 8.3 Powerline crossing.
- 7.1 (R) Confluence of Story Brook.
- 6.9 County Road 4 bridge.
- 6.1 Wire across the river, may be impassible in high water.
- 3.1 (R) Petersburg trailer access. County Road 23 bridge.
- 0.0 Minnesota-Iowa border.

# DES MOINES RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL



**mn MINNESOTA**  
STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

## ABOUT THE WATER TRAIL

The Des Moines River rises from Lake Shetek in southwestern Minnesota and flows 525 miles to join the Mississippi River near Keokuk, Iowa. The river ranges from 50 to 200 feet wide as it passes a mix of agricultural land and wooded bluffs. From Talcott Lake Dam to Windom, you'll experience flat farmland with few trees. From Windom to Kilen Woods State Park, you'll enter a valley bounded by low hills and more vegetation. From the park to Jackson, you'll pass increasingly taller hills and bluffs. Thick woodlands screen cultivated land and farm buildings from view.

This is a great river for beginner paddlers when river levels are normal; however, heavy rains can cause the river to flood and flow quickly. Stream flow usually peaks in early to mid-April. The river level is usually enough for canoeing.

Hazards include dams; be aware of portage locations. Watch for snags (fallen trees) in the river that may tip an unwary paddler. The river also has several Class I rapids.



Spring rains raise river levels.

## CONTACTS

**DNR AREA OFFICE**  
175 County Road 26  
Windom, MN 56101-1868  
507-832-6010

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

## 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.

## MEDICAL



**WINDOM EMERGENCY SERVICES**  
2150 Hospital Dr.  
Windom, MN 56101  
507-831-2400

**SANFORD HEALTH - JACKSON**  
1430 North Hwy.  
Jackson, MN 56143  
507-847-2420

**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 911**

## AREA OVERVIEW



## RECOMMENDED DAY TRIP

### Mayflower Park to Christianna Bridge

- Put-in location: Mayflower Park (carry-in)  
River mile **36.1**
- Take-out location: Christianna Bridge (trailer)  
River mile **29.1**
- Length: **7** river miles

Enter the river just below the city of Windom. You'll pass a mix of open farm fields and wooded shoreline. A watercraft campsite offers a chance to stretch your legs during your trip.

## EXPLORE ON SHORE

### Kilen Woods State Park

Hike trails along the tranquil Des Moines River. You'll find pleasant surprises as you explore small creeks, prairie grasslands and oak savannas.

[mndnr.gov/kilen](http://mndnr.gov/kilen)

### Talcot Lake Wildlife Management Area

This large WMA has over 5,200 acres to explore. Watch for deer, small game, pheasants and waterfowl.

[mndnr.gov/wma](http://mndnr.gov/wma)

## 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)

## 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 [exploremnnesota.com](http://exploremnnesota.com)

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