

A STATE WATER TRAIL GUIDE TO THE KETTLE AND SNAKE RIVERS

Route Description for the Snake River

River Mile	
84.0	River level gauge, MN Highway #65 bridge.
83.8 (L)	Bear Creek Landing, carry-in access.
81.0	State Highway 18 bridge, river level gauge.
79.1 (R)	Silver Star Road trailer access. Caution: Submerged pilings.
78.3 (L)	Kern Riddlington Campsite.
76.6 (R)	Aitkin County Park, trailer access, rest area and campground (fee required).
75.2 (R)	Bergmann Brook enters.
74.1-73.7	Class II rapids.
73.8 (L)	Cowen Brook enters.
73.3-72.6	Upper Snake River Falls, portage left 300 yards Class II-III.
72.4-71.5	Lower Snake River Falls, portage left, 900 yards Class III-IV.
71.5-71.2	Class I-II rapids.
71.5	Lower Falls Campsite, walk-in or canoe-in only.
70.8 (R)	Ford Twp. Road/Highway 23 bridge, river level gauge.
69.1 (L)	Chesley Brook enters.
66.6 (L)	Old Wooden Dam, Old Bean Logging Co. Dam campsite.
64.2	Rock Dam, Class I-II. Use caution.
56.8 (R)	County Road 3 carry-in access. River level gauge on bridge, center piling, downstream side.
48.8	County Road 19 bridge.
44.9	State Highway 65 bridge.
44.3 (R)	Knife River enters.
41.9	County Road 6 bridge. River level gauge on bridge.
41.9 (L)	Mora Municipal trailer access, carry-in.
40.5	Railroad bridge.
40.0	State Highway 65 bridge.
38.3 (R)	Ann River enters.
34.9	County Road 11 bridge.
34.8 (R)	County Road 11 trailer access. Groundhouse River confluence.
33.9 (L)	Chipmunk Hollow watercraft campsite.
29.9	Rice Creek confluence on right, Mud Creek confluence on left.
28.4	State Highway 70 bridge.
27.1	State Highway 107 bridge. Town of Grasston.
24.7 (R)	Lost 40 watercraft campsite.
22.1 (L)	#1 Canary Road carry-in access.
17.4	Pokegama Lake carry-in access, north side of County Road 7 bridge.
17.0 (L)	Mission Creek enters.
16.0 (L)	Northwest Company Fur Post Campsite.
15.8 (R)	Northwest Company Fur Post Historical site, off of County Road 7.
14.2	Interstate 35 bridge.
13.5 (L)	Pine City trailer access in Pine City.
11.9 (L)	Cross Lake trailer access, Pine City.
11.8	Rock dam, portage left 200 yards.
11.7	Carry-in access County Road #9, river gauge on bridge left (north) pier.
11.7-10.9	Class I rapids, low water, not canoeable much of the year.
11.7-0.8	Scattered Class I rapids.
7.8 (L)	Bear Creek confluence.
5.1 (L)	Bass Creek confluence.
1.0 (R)	River's End Campground.
0.0	Confluence with St. Croix River, Snake Bit Access on right—0.1 mile downstream of Snake River outlet on the St. Croix River.



The Kettle River

DIFFICULTY:

Most of the river is Class I during low water with some stretches reaching II or III in high water. The Banning Rapids area range in difficulty from Class II-IV at all water levels.

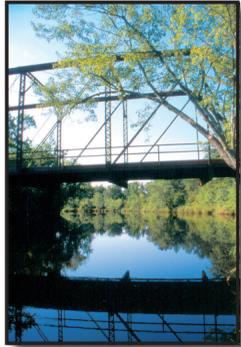
WIDTH: 30-250 feet.

SCENERY: Most of the river is bounded by a heavy forest of black spruce, fir, birch, aspen, maple, ash, elm and scattered red, white and jack pine. Bluffs occasionally rise more than 100 feet above the river. Rocky cliffs are common along the Banning and Lower Kettle River rapids. The river passes a few towns, houses or farmland, although several bridges cross the upper reaches. The Kettle in Pine County is a state wild and scenic river.

WILDLIFE: Beavers, otters and muskrats are occasionally sighted. White-tailed deer are common. Other mammals include black bears, bobcats, coyotes, mink, raccoons and gray and red fox. Two upland game birds, ruffed grouse and some Canada geese nest near the river.

FISH: Smallmouth bass, walleyes and northern pike are caught throughout the river. The Kettle also holds channel catfish, sturgeon and redbreast. **GEOLOGY:** The gently rolling to steeply undulating land of the Kettle River watershed is formed largely by glacial deposits. The oldest known rocks in the watershed are middle Precambrian folded sedimentary layers underlying the upper Kettle. A wide band of sandstone underlies the river from Willow River to the State Highway 48 bridge, where the Douglas fault crosses the Kettle. Basalt underlies the lower river.

HISTORY: The Kettle was the focus of considerable industry near the turn of the century. The forests, once thick with pine, were logged. Land near the river was mined for sandstone and copper. The river itself was dammed to generate electricity and to float sawlogs to nearby mills. Many people near Sandstone took refuge in the Kettle River when the Hinckley fire swept through Pine County September 1, 1894.



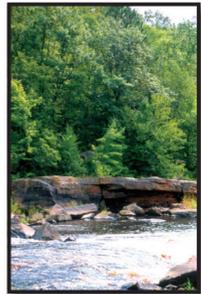
the falls. From Mora to Pine City, the river travels through wooded banks that give way to a wide farming valley below Grasston.

Below Cross Lake, forested banks as well as sandstone bluffs make this stretch very scenic. **WILDLIFE:** White-tailed deer, black bears, gray and red fox, beavers and muskrats as well as an occasional otter. Bobcats, coyotes, minks, and raccoons are also found in this region. Ruffed grouse, numerous waterfowl and songbirds may be sighted as well.

FISH: Walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass, and catfish. Some of the lakes along the route support panfish populations as well. Lake (Rock) sturgeon are also present—one of few rivers in Minnesota with lake sturgeon.

GEOLOGY: Gently rolling hills as well as sharp granite outcrops are all evidences of glacial activity that predominates over the area. Sandstone bluffs are exposed below the Cross Lake stretch. **HISTORY:** The river gets its name from the Ojibway word Kanabec, or snake, naming it after their enemies, the Dakota, who lived upriver, and who they later displaced.

As white men settled in the area, the fur trade was important along the Snake. Historical information can be found at the Northwest Company Fur Post site—Pine City. Later, logging became an important industry, with evidence such as the Old Bean logging dam and campsite.



Water Levels

These two rivers are susceptible to extreme water level fluctuations. High rain fall or rapid snowmelt will bring water levels up quickly. Periods of low precipitation will bring water levels down quickly.

High water levels on either river can make rapids more difficult and hazardous. Conditions on the rivers can change quickly, please call the DNR for water level information, or visit our website at: mndnr.gov.

The stretch of the Kettle river that is most runnable for canoeists during low water levels is between County Road 52, near Willow River, to Highway 23 near Sandstone.

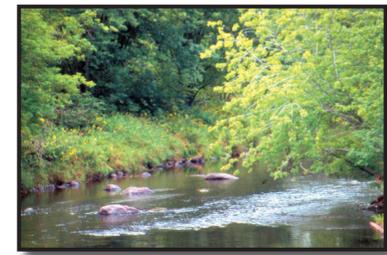
The stretch of the Snake river that is most runnable for canoeists during low water periods is between the Twin Bridges Access near Mora to Pine City

Planning a Safe River Trip

A successful river trip is safe. To enjoy a safe journey, you should be prepared by getting acquainted with your route. Choose a distance that is comfortable for you.

Water levels can speed or slow you: get information about water levels from the regional DNR Parks and Trails office, or check the DNR website, or the DNR Information Center.

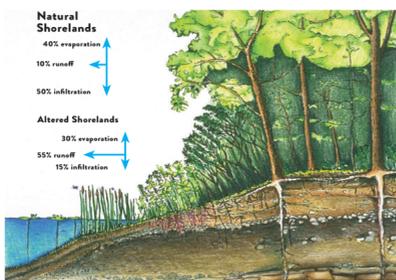
Protect the water and shorelands and leave nothing behind you except footprints. Remember that much of the shorelands are privately owned. Here's a checklist you should consider in planning your trip:



Sustainable Ecosystems

Outdoor recreation is dependent on a healthy and attractive natural environment. Sustainable outdoor recreation enables people to enjoy the outdoors without negative impacts on the environment.

Natural shoreline buffers improve water quality by filtering out pollutants and sediments. Healthy and diverse native shoreline plant communities are attractive and provide important shoreline habitat for birds and wildlife.



The Snake River

SCENERY: The upper Snake's banks are heavily forested with birch, aspen, oak, maple, ash, elm and some black spruce, tamarack and white pine. This stretch is dotted with granite outcrops, near

Route Description for the Kettle River

River Mile	
62.0-56.0	Many short boulder-bed rapids. Class I-II. See text for more information.
61.1	State Highway 73 bridge.
58.8	Co Rd 12 bridge and river level gauge on abutment.
55.8	State Highway 27 bridge.
55.6-55.3	Class I rapids.
54.7-54.3	Class I rapids.
53.6-53.3	Class I rapids.
52.7-52.6	Class I rapids.
51.6	Railroad trestle.
51.4-51.3	Class I rapids.
50.6	County Highway 46 bridge.
50.0 (L)	White Pine Campsite.
49.6 (L)	Headwater Campsite.
46.6 (L)	Moose Horn River enters.
46.2 (R)	Musclewood carry-in access at Co Rd 52 bridge.
42.8	County Highway 41 bridge.
41.9 (L)	Willow River enters.
40.3	Bridge, gravel road.
39.4 (R)	Beaver Pond Campsites (2 sites). Caution: steep bank.
37.3	County Highway 61 bridge. Willard Munger State Trail crossing.
36.2	County Highway 33 bridge.
33.7-33.5	Short Class I boulder-bed rapids. Outcrop on right with "kettles," potholes cut by swirling water.
33.4	Possible portage in low water.
33.5-33.4	Rustler Bend Campsites (3 sites).
33.0	Short Class I boulder-bed rapids.
32.9	Interstate 35 bridges.
32.5	Short Class I boulder-bed rapids.
30.4 (L)	Bridgeview campsite and access. Fire rings, toilet. The road to this site joins State Hwy. 23, east of the bridge over the Kettle.
29.8 (L)	#1 trailer access, State Highway 23 bridge, River level gauge. Rapids downstream are unrunnable when gauge reads less than one foot.
28.4-28.2	Portage left, 1.5 miles.
28.5 (L)	Watercraft campsite.
28.4 (R)	Banning State Park #2 trailer access.
28.4-28.2	Blueberry Slide, the first of the Banning Rapids. Class II-IV. Two steep pitches in this long rapids create large souse holes and standing waves.
28.2 (L)	Blueberry Slide primitive campsite. Accessible by portage trail.
27.2-27.8	Mother's Delight. Class II-III. River rushes through steep boulder-bed rapids into the Dalles of the Kettle River, a short, narrow canyon flanked by sandstone cliffs.
27.8	Dragon's Tooth, named for a large rock on the right side of the channel near the tail of the rapids. Class II-IV. The river, less than 50 feet wide, has severely undercut the canyon walls. The "tooth" forms a powerful souse hole and waves in high water.
27.6-27.3	Little Banning Rapids, a series of boulder-bed rapids. Class I-III.
27.3	Banning ruins. The town of Banning, grew around major sandstone quarries two miles north of Sandstone. More than 20 million tons of rock were shipped out of Banning. By 1905, however, the quarries were abandoned.
26.9-26.8	Hell's Gate. Long boulder-bed rapids ending in a steep, narrow pitch between high sandstone escarpments at the Kettle leaves the dalles. Class II-III.
26.4	Wolf Creek Falls. Wolf Creek tumbles over a 10-foot ledge before it joins the Kettle. Find the mouth of the creek on the right and follow the stream about 100 yards into the woods.
26.6	A cave is in the sandstone bluffs on the right. Remains of some sandstone quarries can be seen from the cave downstream to Robinson Park in Sandstone.
25.7	Railroad trestle.
25.5 (R)	Quarry Rapids, Class II, portage right 100 yards. This drop may not be runnable at low water since the entire river tumbles onto sharp boulders; at high water, large back rollers develop.
25.4 (R)	Robinson City Park, campground, boat ramp, toilets, well, picnic tables and a shelter.
25.1	State Highway 123 bridge.
24.0-23.4	Portage right 0.7 miles.
23.9-23.9	Big Spring Falls, Class IV, the river splits into two channels around the island. Right channel drops over cascading waterfall; left channel curves through boulder-ledge rapids with difficult turns, the falls are followed immediately by dangerous severely undercut ledges which will trap trees, boats and swimmers. IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED NOT TO TRY THESE FALLS AND THAT WAVE SURFING NOT BE ATTEMPTED HERE.
23.5-23.4	Sandstone Rapids, Class II. This is the location of the former Sandstone Dam last used for electricity in 1963. The Dam was removed in 1995, and as a result, Big Spring Falls is visible again.
23.4 (R)	Carry-in access near electrical complex/tower.
23.0	Three short boulder-bed rapids. Class I-II.
22.0	Class I rapids.
20.2-19.9	Friesland Rapids. Three boulder-bed pitches. Class I-II.
15.1-15.0	#5 trailer access on right, State Highway 48 bridge, river level gauge.
11.0	Class I rapids.
8.0 (L)	Maple Island trailer access and campsite.
7.8-0.0	Lower Kettle River Rapids, a series of long boulder-bed pitches. Class I-II. Large standing waves form in high water.
7.0	Willard Munger State Trail crossing.
7.0 (L)	Big Eddy, Campsite, toilet and drinking water.
3.6 (L)	#7 trailer access, Kennedy Brook.
3.1 (R)	Half Through Campsite.
2.5 (R)	River's End Campsite.
1.6 (L)	Two Rivers Campsite.
0.0	Boulder-studded channels split around several islands. Slightly more than a mile downstream, where the two channels of the St. Croix join, the river tumbles over steep, low ledge that forms a three-foot backroller in high water.

All Class I Rapids in this section are Class II if gauge is above 4.5 at the Hwy 12 bridge.

Trip Planning

Travel with a companion or group. Plan your trip with a map before you depart and advise someone of your plans including planned departure and arrival times.

Most people paddle two to three river miles per hour.

Bring a first aid kit that includes waterproof matches.

Beware of river obstructions, such as overhanging and dead trees in the river.

You must pack out all trash.

Leave only footprints; take only photographs!

Public rest areas are available along the route to rest, picnic and explore.

Camp only in designated campsites, which are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Bring drinking water. It is only available at a limited number of rest areas. Drinking river water is not recommended, but if you do it must be treated.

Respect 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.

Wear a U. S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device that state law requires be on board the craft.

Bring an extra paddle.

Not all portions of this water trail are suitable for motor use.

Register your watercraft. All watercraft more than 9 feet in length, including nonmotorized canoes and kayaks, must be registered in Minnesota or your state of residence.

Boating Information

Rivers and rapids are rated according to the International Scale of River Difficulty. Ratings are estimates based on observations at low or moderate water levels or on secondhand reports.

CLASS I. Easy rapids with small waves and few obstructions.

CLASS II. Rapids with waves up to three feet high. Some maneuvering is required.

CLASS III. Difficult rapids with high, irregular waves capable of swamping an open canoe. Narrow chutes may require extensive maneuvering. Usually considered the limit for an experienced paddler in an open canoe.

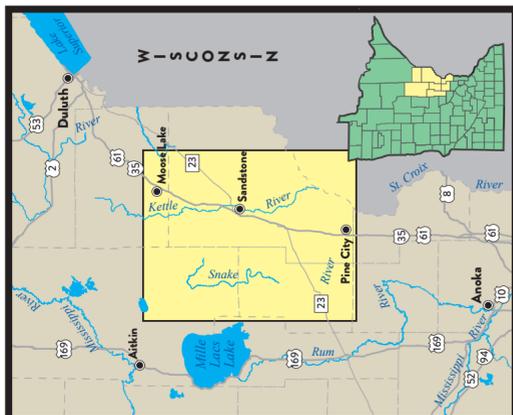
CLASS IV. Long, turbulent rapids with high, irregular waves, constricted passages and blind drops. Decked canoes and kayaks only; open canoes should be portaged.

CLASS V. Long, violent rapids with complex routes and steep drops or waterfalls. Hazard to life in the event of a mishap. Runnable only by experts in decked boats.

CLASS VI. Cannot be attempted without great risk to life.

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The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is an Equal Opportunity Employer

This information is available in alternative format upon request.

Minnesota State Parks and Trails Regional Unit

1601 Minnesota Drive
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-828-2693

Online water trail information and maps can be found at mndnr.gov/watertrails

DNR Information Center

The DNR's Information Center is available to provide free publications of facilities and services as well as answers questions pertaining to DNR recreational opportunities in Minnesota.

500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040
651-296-6157 Metro Area
1-888-646-6367 MN Toll-Free



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