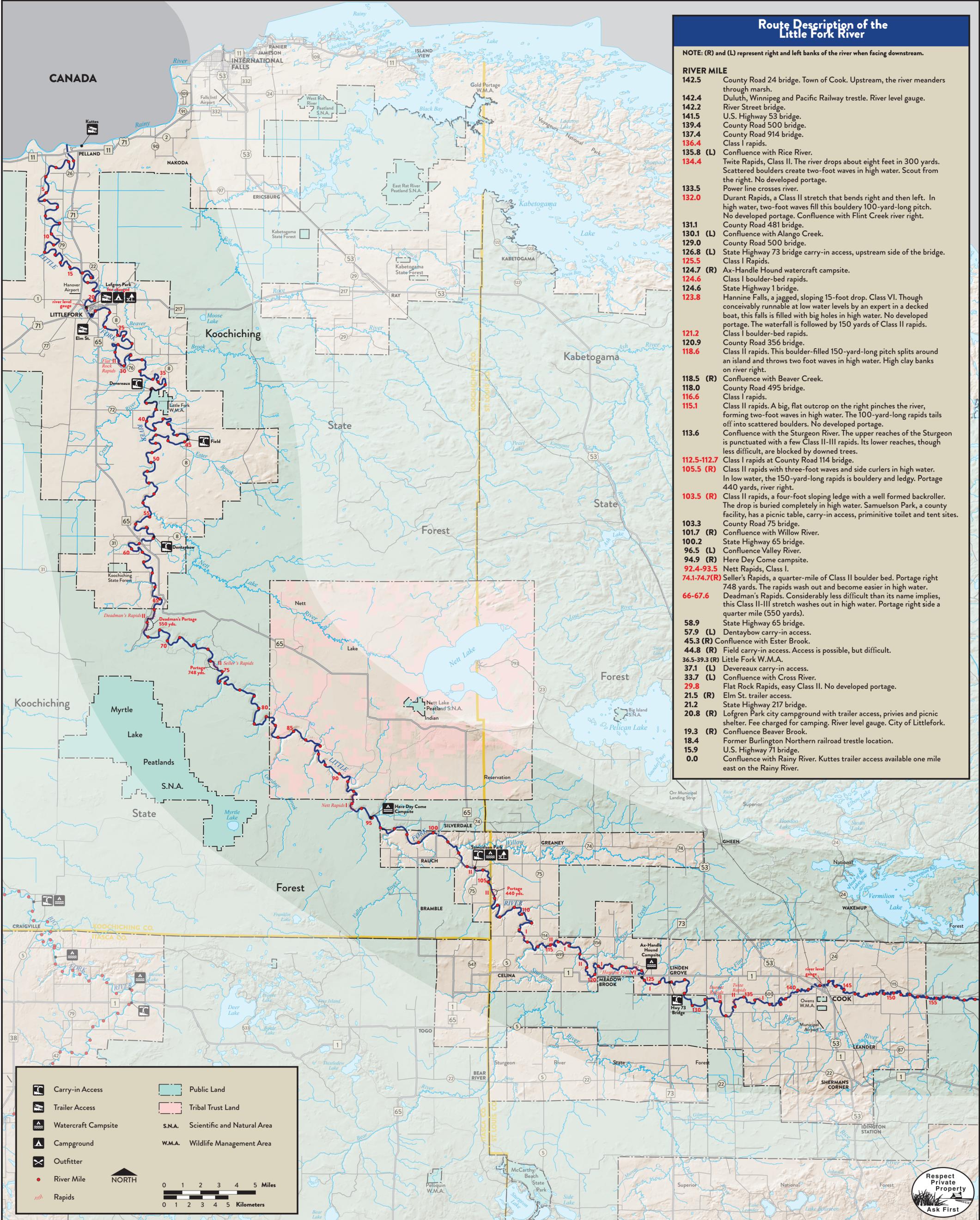


# A STATE WATER TRAIL GUIDE TO THE LITTLE FORK RIVER



## Route Description of the Little Fork River

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

- RIVER MILE**
- 142.5** County Road 24 bridge. Town of Cook. Upstream, the river meanders through marsh.
  - 142.4** Duluth, Winnipeg and Pacific Railway trestle. River level gauge.
  - 142.2** River Street bridge.
  - 141.5** U.S. Highway 53 bridge.
  - 139.4** County Road 500 bridge.
  - 137.4** County Road 914 bridge.
  - 136.4** Class I rapids.
  - 135.8 (L)** Confluence with Rice River.
  - 134.4** Twite Rapids, Class II. The river drops about eight feet in 300 yards. Scattered boulders create two-foot waves in high water. Scout from the right. No developed portage.
  - 133.5** Power line crosses river.
  - 132.0** Durant Rapids, a Class II stretch that bends right and then left. In high water, two-foot waves fill this bouldery 100-yard-long pitch. No developed portage. Confluence with Flint Creek river right.
  - 131.1** County Road 481 bridge.
  - 130.1 (L)** Confluence with Alango Creek.
  - 129.0** County Road 500 bridge.
  - 126.8 (L)** State Highway 73 bridge carry-in access, upstream side of the bridge.
  - 125.5** Class I Rapids.
  - 124.7 (R)** Ax-Handle Hound watercraft campsite.
  - 124.6** Class I boulder-bed rapids.
  - 124.6** State Highway 1 bridge.
  - 123.8** Hannine Falls, a jagged, sloping 15-foot drop. Class VI. Though conceivably runnable at low water levels by an expert in a decked boat, this falls is filled with big holes in high water. No developed portage. The waterfall is followed by 150 yards of Class II rapids.
  - 121.2** Class I boulder-bed rapids.
  - 120.9** County Road 356 bridge.
  - 118.6** Class II rapids. This boulder-filled 150-yard-long pitch splits around an island and throws two foot waves in high water. High clay banks on river right.
  - 118.5 (R)** Confluence with Beaver Creek.
  - 118.0** County Road 495 bridge.
  - 116.6** Class I rapids.
  - 115.1** Class II rapids. A big, flat outcrop on the right pinches the river, forming two-foot waves in high water. The 100-yard-long rapids tails off into scattered boulders. No developed portage.
  - 113.6** Confluence with the Sturgeon River. The upper reaches of the Sturgeon is punctuated with a few Class II-III rapids. Its lower reaches, though less difficult, are blocked by downed trees.
  - 112.5-112.7** Class I rapids at County Road 114 bridge.
  - 105.5 (R)** Class II rapids with three-foot waves and side curlers in high water. In low water, the 150-yard-long rapids is bouldery and ledgy. Portage 440 yards, river right.
  - 103.5 (R)** Class II rapids, a four-foot sloping ledge with a well formed backroll. The drop is buried completely in high water. Samuelson Park, a county facility, has a picnic table, carry-in access, primitive toilet and tent sites.
  - 103.3** County Road 75 bridge.
  - 101.7 (R)** Confluence with Willow River.
  - 100.2** State Highway 65 bridge.
  - 96.5 (L)** Confluence Valley River.
  - 94.9 (R)** Here Dey Come campsite.
  - 92.4-93.5** Nett Rapids, Class I.
  - 74.1-74.7(R)** Seller's Rapids, a quarter-mile of Class II boulder bed. Portage right 748 yards. The rapids wash out and become easier in high water.
  - 66-67.6** Deadman's Rapids. Considerably less difficult than its name implies, this Class II-III stretch washes out in high water. Portage right side a quarter mile (550 yards).
  - 58.9** State Highway 65 bridge.
  - 57.9 (L)** Dentaybow carry-in access.
  - 45.3 (R)** Confluence with Ester Brook.
  - 44.8 (R)** Field carry-in access. Access is possible, but difficult.
  - 36.5-39.3 (R)** Little Fork W.M.A.
  - 37.1 (L)** Devereaux carry-in access.
  - 33.7 (L)** Confluence with Cross River.
  - 29.8** Flat Rock Rapids, easy Class II. No developed portage.
  - 21.5 (R)** Elm St. trailer access.
  - 21.2** State Highway 217 bridge.
  - 20.8 (R)** Lofgren Park city campground with trailer access, privies and picnic shelter. Fee charged for camping. River level gauge. City of Littlefork.
  - 19.3 (R)** Confluence Beaver Brook.
  - 18.4** Former Burlington Northern railroad trestle location.
  - 15.9** U.S. Highway 71 bridge.
  - 0.0** Confluence with Rainy River. Kuttles trailer access available one mile east on the Rainy River.

	Carry-in Access		Public Land
	Trailer Access		Tribal Trust Land
	Watercraft Campsite		S.N.A. Scientific and Natural Area
	Campground		W.M.A. Wildlife Management Area
	Outfitter		
	River Mile		
	Rapids		

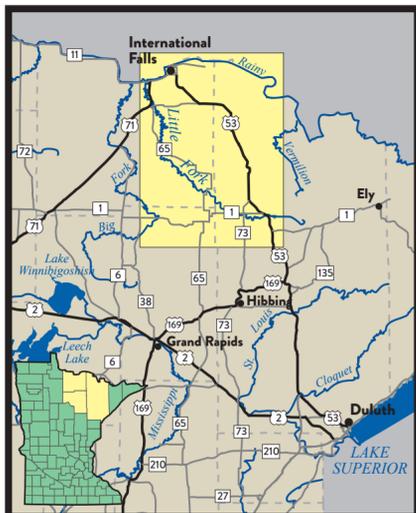
NORTH

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles  
0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometers



Little Fork River

MINNESOTA  
STATE PARKS  
AND TRAILS  
ESTABLISHED 1891



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This information is available in alternative format upon request.

Minnesota State Parks and Trails Area Office

650 Highway 169  
Tower, MN 55790  
218-753-2580 ext.250

Online water trail information and maps can be found at [mndnr.gov/watertrails](http://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  
[mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov)

Cover Photo: Samuelson Park  
All Photos: MN DNR

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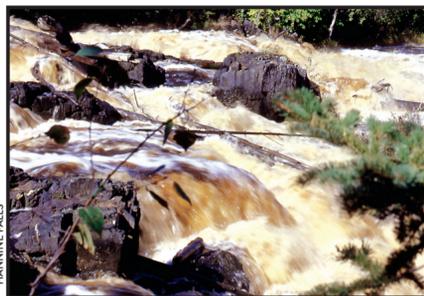


A STATE WATER TRAIL GUIDE TO THE LITTLE FORK RIVER



The river holds a variety of secrets just waiting for you to explore. Bring your binoculars, a field guide or just your curiosity and enjoy the river's magic.

The Little Fork River



HANNINE FALLS

A succession of Woodland Culture Indians occupied the region during the 2,500 years before its settlement by whites. The Laurel gave way to the Blackduck, who may have been the direct predecessors of the Dakota. The Dakota, or Sioux, inhabited the region until the Ojibway laid claim to what would become northern Minnesota.

Magnificent stands of white and red pine near the Little Fork's headwaters were logged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A log drive down the Nett Lake and Little Fork rivers to the Rainy in 1937 was the last major drive in the region.

Wildlife

Timber wolves, bobcat, lynx, beaver, otter, bald eagle, and osprey are occasionally sighted. Big game includes moose, black bear, and white-tailed deer. Ruffed grouse and several species of ducks are common.

The Little Fork River is bounded by low banks, nearly level land, and a dense forest of pine, spruce, fir, aspen, and birch. Farms and farm houses flank the upper river, which is crossed by several bridges. But the stretch from the State Highway 65 bridge at river mile 97.7, to where the road again crosses the stream at river mile 57, is wild and nearly inaccessible. Farther downstream, development again is more evident, particularly near the town of Littlefork.

Precambrian igneous and metamorphic rocks underlie the watershed. Outcrops are infrequent. The lower river glides over flat land that once was the bed of glacial Lake Agassiz

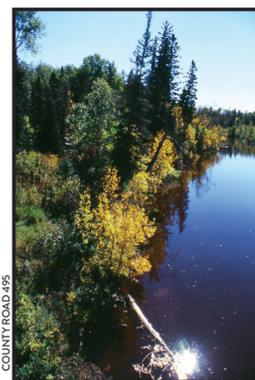
Red clay and other suspended solids cloud the water, especially during heavy rains. Even in low water, the river carries a dark tint. Although good for swimming, the water must be disinfected and filtered before it can be drunk.

Stream flow generally peaks in late April and falls during the summer, when rapids may be impassible. Heavy summer or autumn rains can raise the river to runnable levels. The U.S. Geological Survey maintains a gauge on the river at mile 21.6 on the river right. A reading of 1.7 feet or above is the level for optimal flow.



NEAR LITTLEFORK

The Little Fork drops 225 feet from Cook to its mouth, an average of 1.6 feet per mile. The upper stretch from Cook to the first State Highway 65 bridge falls 2.7 feet per mile.



COUNTY ROAD 495

- Choose a distance that is comfortable for you, most people paddle two to three river miles per hour.
- Wear a U. S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device that state law requires be on board the boat for each person.
- Bring a first aid kit that includes waterproof matches.

anticipated and avoided. Start your trip with the proper safety equipment. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices (PFD) should be worn at all times.

Hypothermia, a rapid loss of body heat, has killed many people who have swamped or tipped. Swimming soon becomes impossible in freezing water. Wear a PFD and stay close to shore if there is a possibility that your craft will swamp. Don't overload your canoe. Snag-ridden waters often are trickier to negotiate than whitewater. Underwater obstacles can easily tip a canoe. Watch carefully.

Rating Whitewater

Rivers and rapids are rated according to 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.

- Bring an extra paddle in your canoe.
- Be cautious of river obstructions, such as overhanging and dead trees in the river.
- You must pack out all trash.
- Leave only footprints; take only photographs!

Water levels can speed or slow you down. You can get information about water levels from the area DNR Trails and Waterways office, or check the DNR website, or the DNR Information Center. Remember that much of the shorelands are privately owned. Respect and protect the water and shorelands.

Boating Information

- 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.

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

Canoeing on Large Rivers

The wide variety of waters can provide an equally wide variety of hazards to canoeists. Although the Little Fork is often very placid, the current can be quick and powerful when the river is near or at flood stage. But most dangers can be



COUNTY ROAD 356

Rest Areas and Camping Sites

- 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.



DEVEREAUX ACCESS

- 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.

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.

Communities working together can improve water resources by promoting environmentally sensitive land use practices along rivers and throughout watersheds.

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

