Route Description of the Long Prairie River

**RIVER MILE**

93.7 Lake Carlos State Park and lake outlet. Carry-in access.
93.8 Dam.
93.9 State Highway 29 bridge.
93.9 (R) Lake Carlos Road bridge.
89.3 Sea Line Railroad bridge.
83.4 County Highway 83 bridge.
84.0 County Highway 83 bridge.
77.3 County Highway 83 bridge.
72.7 County Highway 83 bridge.
66.9 County Highway 83 bridge.
64.3 County Highway 83 bridge.
56.2 County Highway 83 bridge.
53.5 (R) Reynolds Township carry-in access.
47.8 (R) Long Prairie WMA carry-in access. Carry-in access, city of Long Prairie.
47.3 (L) Carry-in access, city of Long Prairie.
47.3 Riverside Drive bridge.
47.2 State Highway 71 bridge.
37.5 County Highway 90 bridge.
34.2 (R) Carry-in access, city of Browerville.
33.0 County Highway 14 bridge.
29.1 County Highway 29 bridge.
23.0 State Highway 29 bridge.
11.9 WMA Lawrence State Park and lake outlet.
7.7 State Highway 29 carry-in access.
0.0 Lake Osakis Dam.

**NOTE:** (R) and (L) represent right and left banks of the river when facing downstream.
The Long Prairie River

The Long Prairie River gently flows through a diverse landscape of shaded woods, farm fields and floodplain meadows and forests. The river winds its way eastward from its starting point at Lake Carlos in Eastern Douglas County for 95 miles until it flows into the Crow Wing River two miles southeast of Motley.

Over the 95 mile length of the Long Prairie River it drops from an initial elevation of 1360 feet above sea level at Lake Carlos to approximately 1215 feet at the confluence with the Crow Wing River.

While the entire river is designated canoe and boating route, low water levels may result in portions of the river being impassable. The river is generally considered accessible by novice canoeists; however, snags can provide challenges and may tip canoeists.

There are two dams on the river. The first exists at the outlet of Lake Carlos. Another dam was constructed downstream as a diversion to Lake Osakis and was built to divert water from the river to Lake Osakis during low water years. Only remnants of the second dam exist, however caution is urged to boaters traveling through the area.

Another safety concern is at Highway 29 near Perham. The river passes under the Highway through two culverts. Extreme caution is needed when passing through the culverts to ensure not tipping your canoe.

Currently recreational facilities along the Long Prairie River are somewhat limited. Because of a wide marshy floodplain and lack of suitable public riparian land, access is limited to using bridge crossings and parking along road shoulders. The City of Long Prairie does own parkland along the river that provides public access to the river.

Camping is limited to Lake Carlos State Park, at the headwaters of the river. The park has two campgrounds; a lakeside facility, and a second facility away from the lake up in the hills. A total of 125 sites are available at the park.

Historically, the Long Prairie River served as hunting and fishing grounds for the Dakota and Ojibwe Native Americans. The river also served as a means of transportation to the Crow Wing River and then the Mississippi River.

European settlers first started establishing themselves in the area in the 1840s. At this time the river and connecting streams were much deeper, and at one point a steamboat was able to regularly travel part of the river.

Over the mid 1890s the sandy soils found along the river and connecting streams were much deeper, and at one point a steamboat was able to travel part of the river.

Originally the majority of the river flowed through forested areas. The woods consisted of a variety of hard woods and pines. One of the first industries was logging. Commercial logging began about 1866 and continued through the mid 1890s. The sandy soils found along the river were susceptible to the logging and the resulting erosion filled the streams with sediment.

By 1877 the water level had fallen so that only small rafts could navigate the river. Today, while wooded areas are returning, the majority of land around the river is cultivated, hay, pasture, or grassland.

Fishing

The Long Prairie River provides a sport fishery for northern pike and walleye. Both small and large mouth bass are also found in the river.

Recent fish surveys have found high numbers of white sucker and shorthead redhorse. The upper portions of the Long Prairie River are stocked with smallmouth bass in an attempt to establish a spawning population in Lake Carlos.

Wildlife

A variety of wildlife species call the river home. Different species of waterfowl, great blue herons and many kinds of songbirds along with the occasional muskrat, beaver, otter and mink can be found along the river.

The few forested and grassland areas along the river are inhabited by many game species such as grouse, pheasant, wild turkey and whitetail deer. Some game species and waterfowl species can be found at the Long Prairie Wildlife Management Area located North of the city of Long Prairie.

It is not uncommon to view birds of prey, including the bald eagle, owls and various hawks.

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