

MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL



MAP 4 - JACOBSON TO AITKIN



m MINNESOTA
STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

ABOUT THE WATER TRAIL

This section of the Mississippi River is influenced by glacial lakes Upham and Aitkin, which once covered most of the area. You'll find a flat landscape with meandering streams and many oxbows (u-shaped sections of abandoned river channel). The still waters of the oxbows are excellent for fish and other wildlife. You will also pass floodplain forests that offer food, shelter and habitat for muskrat, beaver, otters, turtles, herons, hawks, osprey, eagles and more. Much of the shoreline is privately managed for forest or agriculture with few houses due to the river's tendency to flood.

Hazards include snags, downed trees and a diversion channel dam. At the Rice River confluence, a diversion channel carries water around the town of Aitkin during high flow. There is no portage route around this diversion channel dam.



Watch for wildlife along the river's banks.

CONTACTS

DNR INFORMATION CENTER
500 Lafayette Rd.
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040
(888) 646-6367
info.dnr@state.mn.us

DNR REGION 2 HEADQUARTERS
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
(218) 328-8980

SANDY LAKE RECREATION AREA- US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
McGregor, MN 55760
(218) 426-3482

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.
- 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. State and national forests do allow dispersed camping. Be sure to check regulations before your trip.
- 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 DAY TRIP

Sandy Lake Recreation Area to Wold's Ferry Crossing

- Put-in location: River mile **1,105.5**
- Take-out location: River mile **1,096**
- Length: **9.5** river miles

A fee is required to launch from the Sandy Lake Recreation Area. You'll paddle approximately a mile from the launch to reach the Mississippi River. This is an easy section to paddle, with riffles during low water. Fish for catfish, walleye and smallmouth. Stop for a picnic at Scott's Rapid Campsite if it is unoccupied.

EXPLORE ON SHORE

Sandy Lake Recreation Area

River mile **1,105.5**

This recreation area is a part of the US Army Corps of Engineers- Mississippi Headwaters Project. The area offers camping (fee required), boat launches, swimming, picnicking, fishing and hiking. Be sure to visit displays about the river's past in the museum at the north side of the dam. You'll have to paddle approximately one mile up the Sandy River to reach the recreation area from the Mississippi River.

recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/233620

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

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

MEDICAL

RIVERWOOD HEALTHCARE CENTER

200 Bunker Hill Dr.
Aitkin, MN 56431
218-927-2121



IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

More Information

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

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

