

MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL



MAP 7 - LITTLE FALLS TO ST. CLOUD



m MINNESOTA
STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

ABOUT THE WATER TRAIL

This section of the Mississippi River connects Minnesota's forests to its prairies. Shorelands are covered in mixed hardwood forest and nearby grassland prairie supports wildflowers. Watch for deer, muskrat, otter, fox, red-tailed hawks, eagles, kingfishers and turtles along your trip. Water quality here is very good and boasts a premier fishery for walleye, muskie, northern pike and smallmouth bass. Expect more motorized boat traffic north of the Sartell Dam to the Highway 2 Bridge.

The Mississippi River drops six and a half feet for every river mile between Little Falls and Royalton. Two dams operated by Minnesota Power obscure the falls today. You'll see less development along this section of the river due to local and state protections. Downstream of the Highway 23 Bridge, the river is designated as a State Wild and Scenic River.

Hazards include rapids (near Sauk Rapids) and several dams. All dams must be portaged.



There are many opportunities for camping along this section.

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.
- 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

Royalton Sportsman's Club to Stearns County Park

- Put-in location: River mile **953.6**
- Take-out location: River mile **942.2**
- Length: **11.4** river miles

Launch from the Royalton Sportsman's Club (fee required). You'll pass numerous islands (some on private land) and shorelines with a mix of forest and farmland. Stop at the Seven Islands Campsite to camp for the night or for a quick picnic (if unoccupied). A private campground is located halfway through this trip. You'll paddle past undeveloped shoreline along the Michaelson Farm Wildlife Management Area. Anglers will want to pack a fishing pole for this trip. Watch for rocky riffles during low water levels.

EXPLORE ON SHORE

Charles A. Lindbergh State Park River mile 964

This state park is upstream of the Mississippi's confluence with Pike Creek. You'll find boat access, hiking trails and camping (reservation required). A historic site is downstream of the confluence. The park is named for the Minnesota Congressman who was also the father of aviator Charles Lindbergh.

mndnr.gov/lindbergh

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

CONTACTS

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

DNR AREA OFFICE
1035 South Benton Drive
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379
(320) 223-7878

CHARLES A. LINDBERGH STATE PARK
1615 Lindbergh Drive South
Little Falls, MN 56345
(320) 616-2525
mndnr.gov/lindbergh

MEDICAL

SAINT GABRIEL'S HOSPITAL
815 2nd St. SE
Little Falls, MN 56345
(320) 632-5441

ST. CLOUD HOSPITAL
1406 Sixth Avenue North
St. Cloud, MN 56303
(320) 251-2700

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.

