

MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL



MAP 8 - ST. CLOUD TO ELK RIVER



m MINNESOTA
STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

ABOUT THE WATER TRAIL

Between St. Cloud and Anoka, the Mississippi River flows through a broad valley with tall bluffs and diverse plant communities. You'll discover over 100 islands varying in size from sandbars to mile-long islands. Though this portion of the river borders one of the fastest growing areas in the state, much of the natural character of the river corridor remains. This section of the river was designated and protected as a Minnesota Wild and Scenic River in 1973.

Small boats can maneuver this entire stretch, although shallow areas may be difficult during low river levels. Paddlers will find mild rapids and a moderate current perfect for a family trip. Day trips include: St. Cloud to Clearwater, Clearwater to Monticello, and Monticello to Elk River. Plan a weekend trip by combining stretches. You'll encounter many rest stops, camping areas and access points. Anglers may enjoy fishing for smallmouth bass, walleye and northern pike. Nearby outfitters offer shuttling.

Hazards include Class I-III rapids (near Sauk Rapids) and dams, be sure to know which side to portage on.



Watch for shallow areas during low river levels.

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

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.



MEDICAL

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



IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

MAP AREA OVERVIEW



RECOMMENDED DAY TRIP

Beaver Island Trail Access to Clearwater

- Put-in location: River mile **925.8**
- Take-out location: River mile **913.7**
- Length: **12.1** river miles

Paddle narrow channels through the Beaver Islands at the start of your trip. The islands are a mix of public and private land. The river then widens through a mostly undeveloped landscape with bluffs. You'll find several public boat launches and campsites perfect for a picnic lunch stop or to stretch your legs along the way. Expect some riffles when the river levels are low and fast moving water when they are high. Local outfitters offer shuttling services in this section.

EXPLORE ON SHORE

Primitive Campsites (DNR)

River miles **922.8, 916.6, 906, 890.3**

In this section, you'll find several primitive campsites on properties managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. These sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis and do not require a fee. Most of the campsites offer a picnic table, fire ring and rustic toilet. Camp during a longer trip or simply stop for a picnic lunch (if unoccupied). Putnam's Pasture and Boy Scout Point campsites provide access to many acres of public land.

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

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.