

MISSISSIPPI RIVER STATE WATER TRAIL



MAP 9 - ELK RIVER TO MINNEAPOLIS



m MINNESOTA
STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

ABOUT THE WATER TRAIL

This stretch begins with rolling farmland that transitions to buildings and bridges as you near downtown Minneapolis. Many of the city's buildings are set high on bluffs with a natural strip of land along the river. Long ago, a series of seas helped form layers of limestone, sandstone and shale that the river flows through today. See these layers in the gorge from St. Anthony Falls to Fort Snelling.

Hazards include snags, sweeps, boulders, small rapids and dams. Know which side to portage or lock through. Stay close to shore as you prepare to get out or enter a lock. Do not cross the river directly above dams. Watch for two locks at St. Anthony Falls and one at the Ford Dam above Fort Snelling. The current in this segment can be deceptively swift. Use caution when approaching shore. Motorboats and barges create large wakes that can swamp unsuspecting paddlers. The river is silty and, in places, contaminated. The water is undrinkable unless treated. Eating fish caught in this area of the river is not advised. Check with the Minnesota Department of Health Advisory for current recommendations.



Islands and wooded shorelines await near Coon Rapids.

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.
- Stay off private property. Stop only at designated sites.
- Use designated toilet facilities or bury human waste away from the river.
- Follow the rules for firewood. Many areas do not allow collecting dead wood.

BARGE TRAFFIC SAFETY

- Avoid moving barges. They have blind areas directly in front and sides of barge.
- Stay clear of the stern of barges. They may suddenly turn on a burst of power and overturn small boats.
- Turn your bow into the wake of barges and boats.
- The sides of the navigation channel are marked with red (left) and green (right) buoys. Where possible, stay outside the channel.

RECOMMENDED DAY TRIP

Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park to Riverfront Regional Park

- Put-in location: River mile **866.4**
- Take-out location: River mile **860.3**
- Length: **6.1** river miles

Below the Coon Rapids Dam, the Mississippi River corridor allows you to experience nature inside the city. Pass scenic islands and look for wildlife. Great-blue herons, bald eagles and white-tail deer are commonly seen. The river is wide and the current is swift in this stretch, take extra care when paddling. This route takes the average paddler about 2-3 hours.

EXPLORE ON SHORE

Mississippi River Islands Scientific and Natural Area

River mile **893-887.8**

Birds abound along the shores of these protected islands. Watch for wood ducks, hooded mergansers, geese, bald eagles, otter, mink, and beaver. You may even spot a deer swimming between the islands. There are no trails or facilities on the islands, but they make a lovely spot to pull up to and wildlife watch. Keep an eye out for shallow areas near the islands.

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 REGION 3 HEADQUARTERS

St. Paul, MN 55106
(651) 259-5748

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

111 E. Kellogg Blvd., Suite 105
Saint Paul, MN 55101
(651) 293-0200

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

St. Paul, MN
(651) 290-5807

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

Various locations
(763) 559-9000

MEDICAL

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.

