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.

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.
- 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.
- 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, greese, 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

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.

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

MEDICAL
IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

MEDICAL
IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

Medical information available from mndnr.gov/health

This document is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by contacting info.dnr@state.mn.us (651) 293-0200 or 711 via MN Relay.

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

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, greese, 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

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

563-296-6157, or MN Relay 711.