



**Mississippi National River
and Recreation Area**

Trail Guide

Minneapolis/Saint Paul Area





The Mississippi River carves its way through the Twin Cities providing an escape from the everyday routine. You can follow many trails alongside of, or connecting to this great river, passing sandy shores and wooded bluffs, or fully loaded barges and paddleboats traveling through the locks.

In 1988 Congress designated a 72-mile stretch of the river—from Ramsey and Dayton in the north to just south of Hastings—as a unit of the National Park System. But unlike other National Parks, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) has no obvious boundaries or gates. Instead, private and public lands make up the area. The National Park Service works to build partnerships with local park agencies, the private sector, organizations, and citizens to protect the river and its resources, and provide recreational, interpretive, and educational opportunities.

One important vision is to achieve a continuous trail and open space system along the river while continuing to protect its resources. The goal is to be able to follow the entire 72-mile stretch on foot or bicycle. While this vision has yet to be fully achieved, a significant number of connected trails are already in place. This guide focuses on these and hopes to bring you close to the water's edge or to spectacular views of this mighty river.

How to Use This Guide

This guide focuses on six trail segments from Minneapolis to South St. Paul. You can find a map and overviews of each segment on pages 3–6. Pick a segment and use the segment maps on pages 7–30 to plan your route. Start from a convenient parking lot and make your trip as long or as short as you like. Don't forget about the trail notes. They'll point

out hard-to-find trails and guide you through difficult gaps along the way.

Symbols indicate facilities and recreational opportunities available in each segment. A legend for these symbols is on the flap attached to the back cover.

If you have any questions or are unsure of where you are going, call the phone number listed or check out the web site. You can also find an online version of this guide—as well as additional information on ongoing construction and links to other recreational web sites—on MNRRA's web site (www.nps.gov/miss). Also, many trails are in secluded areas, and it is recommended you travel with a companion.

Great River Road

The Great River Road is a scenic route that closely follows the Mississippi River from the headwaters at Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico. In this guide look for the Great River Road logo or call the Mississippi River Parkway Commission at (763) 212-2560 or check out www.mississippi-river.com.

Great River Birding Trail

The National Audubon Society offers a map that lists prime birding sites along the Mississippi River, indicated in this guide by a bird symbol. For a copy of the map contact the National Audubon Society at 1-651-565-4989 (long distance from Twin Cities).

Accessibility

For information on the trails and facilities listed in this guide, please call the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area at (651) 290-4160 or visit www.wildernessinquiry.org/mnparcs.

Segment Overviews



1 Downtown Minneapolis

Plymouth/8th Avenue Bridge to the Franklin Avenue Bridge



Discover the birthplace of Minneapolis, where downtown converges with the Mississippi River at St. Anthony Falls. The Stone Arch Bridge is a perfect place to watch the water fall. This National Civil Engineering Landmark, built as a railroad bridge in 1883, now allows

pedestrians, bikers, inline skaters, and the River City Trolley to cross the river from downtown Minneapolis to St. Anthony Main. You'll experience nature, history, the bustle of the University, and a thriving entertainment district.

2 Mississippi Gorge Region

Franklin Avenue Bridge to the Ford Parkway Bridge

The river cuts a deep gorge in the landscape here, the only one of its kind on the Mississippi. Most of the trail follows the river from atop the bluffs, while other trails take you through Mississippi Gorge and Minnehaha Regional Park, site of the 53-foot Minnehaha Falls, made famous in the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem, "The Song of Hiawatha."



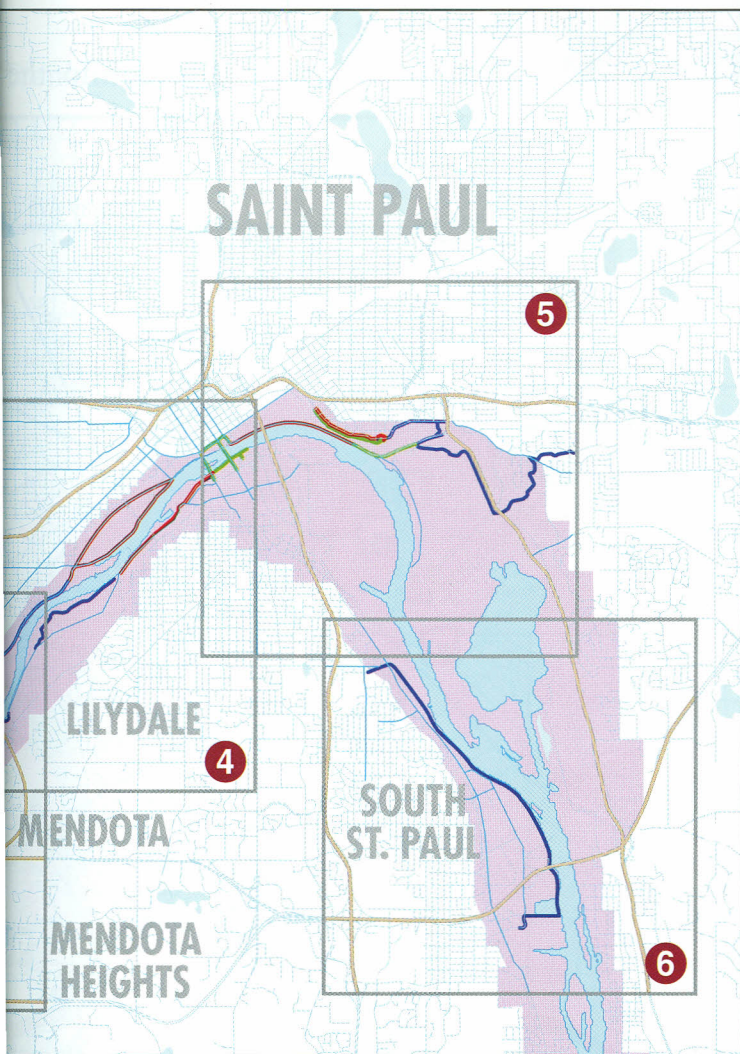
3 The Confluence of the Rivers

Ford Parkway Bridge to the Big Rivers Regional Trail



Here the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers converge with a series of backwaters, canals, and lakes. The confluence of these two great rivers is of special importance to the Dakota and home to a number of secluded parks, historic sites, and trails. Lose yourself in the history and nature

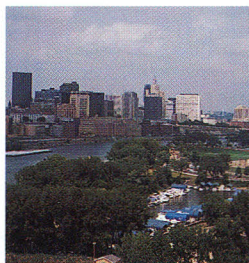
tucked away between the Twin Cities.



4 Downtown Saint Paul and the West Side

Lilydale/Harriet Island Regional Park to the Robert Street Bridge

Within sight of downtown Saint Paul sits a peaceful trail along the Mississippi's west bank. Take in Saint Paul's lovely skyline and the new attractions along the river, or stray from the city and enjoy a secluded journey along the river flats.



5 The Working River

Lower Landing Park to Battle Creek Regional Park



Watch towboats at work pushing 1,500-ton barges along the Mississippi River in a short trail easily accessible from downtown Saint Paul. In the 1800s Lower Landing served as one of the busiest steamboat landings

in the country. Venture away from the river for a quiet trail along Battle Creek or stop at ancient Indian burial mounds, with a breathtaking view of the city. The Hopewell Indians created the ancient burial grounds 2,000 years ago; and in more recent times the Dakota added to the mounds. The trail is not continuous along the river in this section, but you can explore the three distinct yet connected trails and parks.

6 South St. Paul

South St. Paul Riverfront Trail

This trail showcases nature, industry, and history coexisting much like it has for many years in South St. Paul. A heaving train slows to a stop as you watch the waters of the Mississippi meander around picturesque islands. A great blue heron stands at the water's edge, across from the former stockyards, now a revitalized industrial park.



I: Downtown Minneapolis



What it's Like: Trails wind along both sides of the river through a number of Minneapolis attractions, from quiet parks to the roaring St. Anthony Falls, to the heart of downtown Minneapolis. A continuous loop crossing at the Plymouth/8th Avenue Bridge and the Franklin Avenue Bridge is about 8 miles. The St. Anthony Falls Heritage Trail is a 1.8-mile trail that crosses the river at the Stone Arch Bridge and interprets the history of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

Getting There: Take I-35W to the Washington Avenue exit and head west on Washington. Turn right on Portland Avenue. When you come to West River Parkway you can either turn left and a metered parking lot is located to the right, or continue on Portland Avenue under the Stone Arch Bridge to the parking lot for the Upper Lock and Dam Visitor Center.

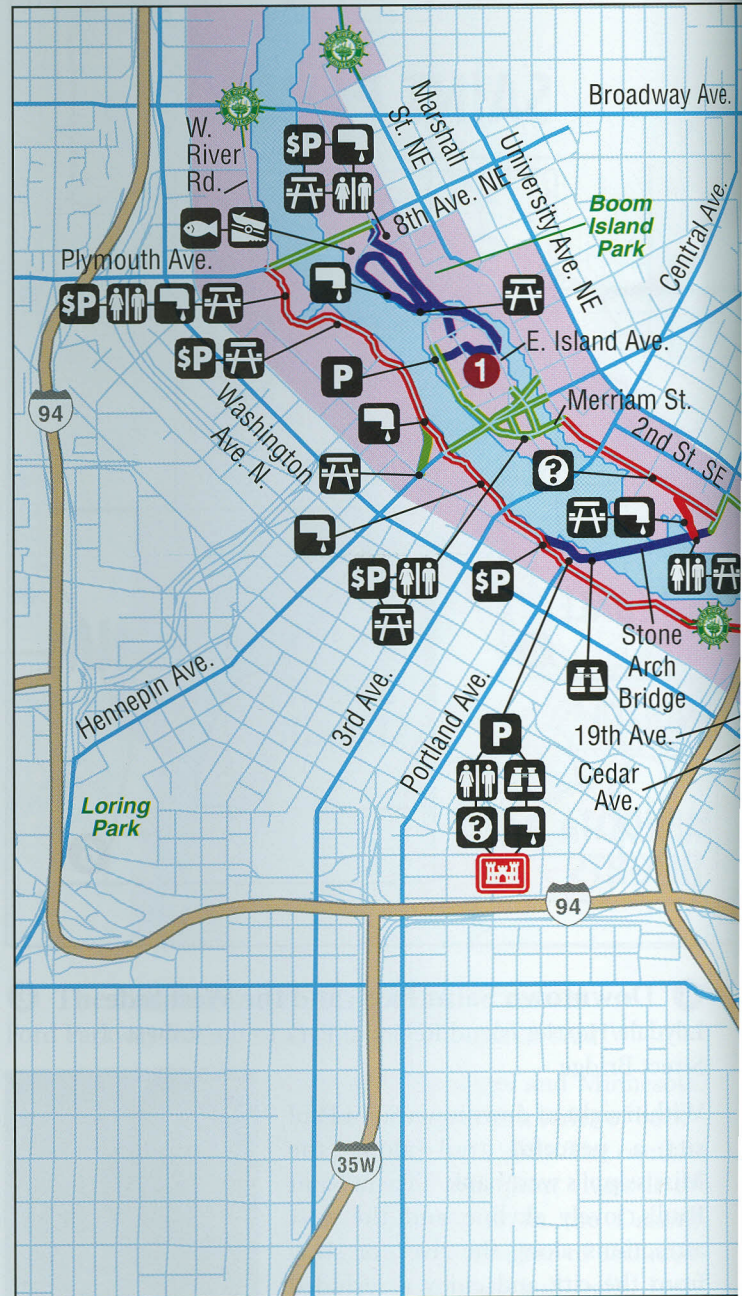
St. Anthony Falls

They're the only remaining falls on the entire Mississippi River, and the city of Minneapolis owes its existence to this once natural wonder. Before Europeans christened the falls "St. Anthony," they were known by several names. The Dakota called them Minirara, which means "curling water," and Owahmenah, which means "falling water." The Chippewa called the falls Kakabikah, meaning "the severed rock." In 1680 the Dakota brought the first European, Father Louis Hennepin, a Catholic Friar, to the falls. Hennepin named the falls after his patron saint, Anthony of Padua. Since then booming industry and natural erosion have taken their toll on the falls. Saw and flour mills built up around them and for a stretch of 50 years Minneapolis became the flour milling capital of the world. In 1869 a tunnel collapse spawned a decade of desperate fixes. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers worked to stabilize the falls, and by 1885 a concrete apron, as well as a number of dikes and dams, protected the falls. In 1963 the Corps completed the Minneapolis Upper Harbor Project, which made the Mississippi navigable past St. Anthony Falls.



Downtown Minneapolis

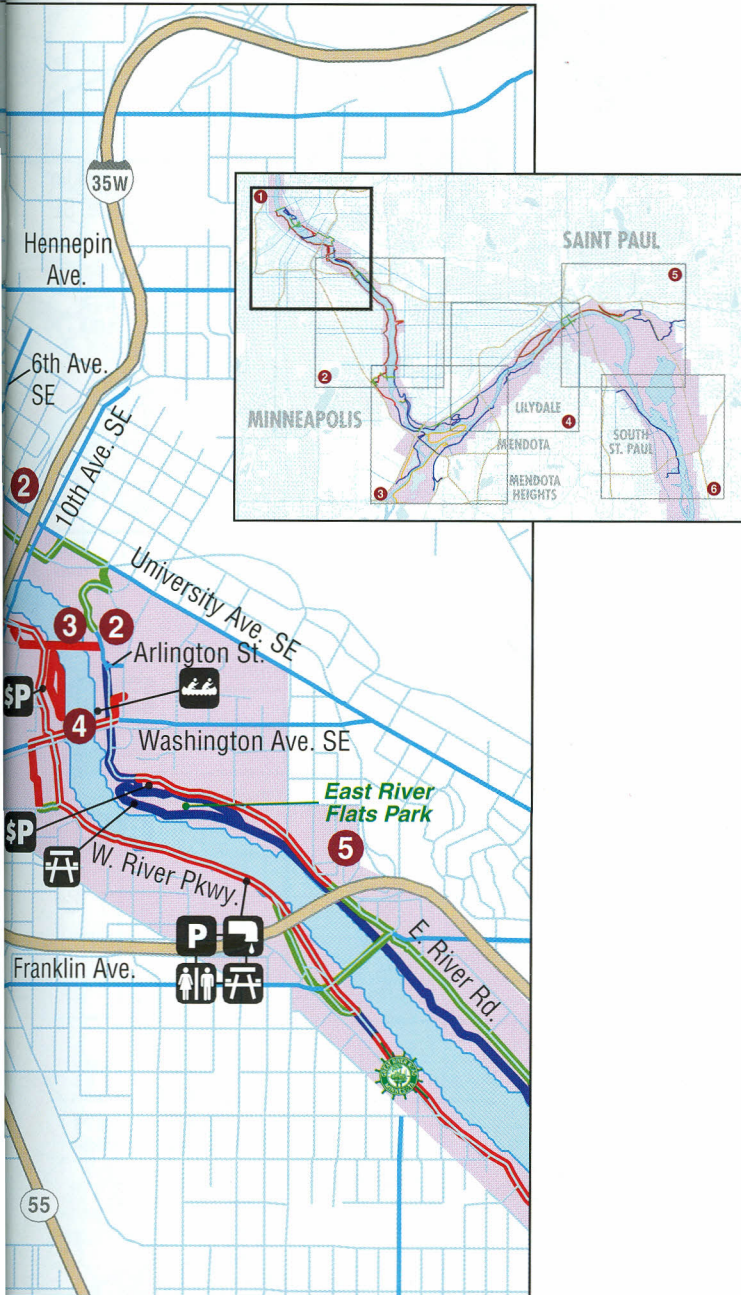
Plymouth/8th Avenue Bridge to the



Things To See & Do: St. Anthony Falls is a National Historic District and full of fun and exciting things to do and see, from walking, boating, and trolley tours to restaurants and entertainment. For a complete list of attractions, including festivals and events, contact the Mississippi Mile, (612) 673-5123 or



Franklin Avenue Bridge



www.mississippimile.org. For walking tours, call the Minnesota Historical Society at (612) 627-5433.

For More Information:

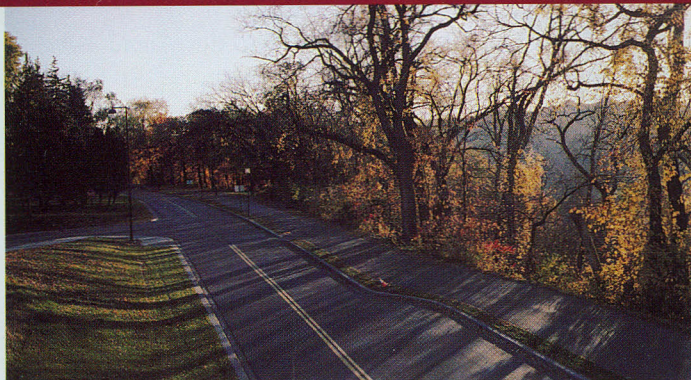
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board—(612) 661-4800
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Upper Lock & Dam)—(612) 333-5336

Trail Notes:

- 1 There is a gap in the trail on Nicollet Island between the Merriam Street Bridge and the short dirt path that connects to Boom Island (which isn't really an island). Just follow East Island Avenue until the trail picks up again.
- 2 Another gap exists on the east bank between the Stone Arch Bridge and the University of Minnesota campus. From the Stone Arch Bridge, follow 6th Avenue north to 2nd Street SE, which takes you under I-35W to University Avenue. Continue east on University and cross the wooden pedestrian/bike bridge. Turn right on East River Road and follow it until the trail picks up again at Arlington Street.
- 3 Dinkytown Bikeway Connection. On the east bank this converted railroad bridge is located on East River Road next to the University's Minerals & Materials Building. On the west bank the connecting trail is between the 10th/19th Avenue bridge (concrete) and the I-35W bridge (green metal) off West River Parkway.
- 4 The Washington Avenue Bridge has a pedestrian/bike path on the upper level, above the actual roadway. On the east bank a ramp along East River Road will provide access to the bridge. On the west bank take 4th Street, just southeast of the bridge, up the hill to the U of M campus. Pass the Ted Mann Concert Hall and take a right turn toward Ferguson Hall, following the bike route signs into a courtyard where marked bike lanes lead straight to the Washington Avenue crossing.
- 5 East River Flats Park is located below the U of M campus next to the Mississippi River. A 1.6-mile trail closely follows the river, passing waterfalls and crossing a cantilevered bridge above the water. At the east end of the trail an extremely steep hill switches back to the trail along the bluffs.



2: Mississippi Gorge Region



What it's Like: This is a popular path along the bluffs overlooking the river. A series of unpaved walking trails slip into the forest and bring you closer to the water, while the main paved trail predominantly follows West River Parkway and Mississippi River Boulevard. A continuous loop crossing at the Franklin Avenue Bridge and the Ford Parkway Bridge is about 8 miles.

Getting There: Take I-94 to the Cretin Avenue exit. Head south to Marshall Avenue and follow it west (right). Take Mississippi River Boulevard south or cross the bridge and turn left onto West River Parkway for parking.

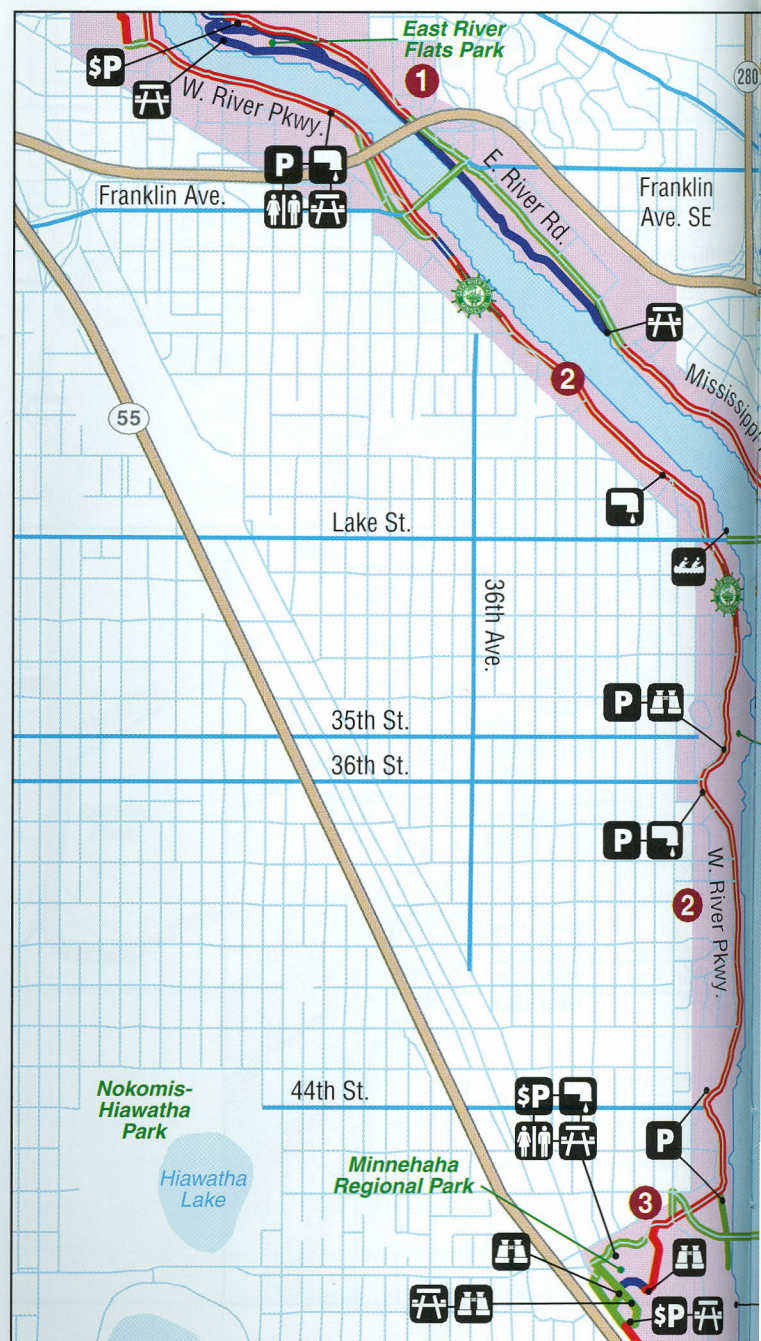
The River Gorge Savanna

Mesic oak savanna, plant communities composed of scattered oak trees and a ground layer of prairie grasses and wildflowers, once flourished across the Upper Midwest. Today it is one of the rarest native plant communities in Minnesota. Only ten acres of mesic oak savanna remain in the metro area, five of which are between West River Parkway and the Mississippi River at East 36th Street. The Longfellow Community Council, the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, and the National Park Service are cooperating to restore this remnant savanna, along with the five acres of mesic oak forest surrounding it. Many factors threaten the savanna, including the suppression of fire in the area, trees and shrubs filling in the ground layer and choking out the native prairie plants, invasive species like buckthorn that reduce native plant diversity, and informal trails that cause severe erosion. The project has included controlled burns, the removal of non-native vegetation and restoration of native vegetation, and efforts to repair the erosion damage. The area is accessible to the public primarily through the Winchell Trail, which is covered with wood-chips to reduce the potential for erosion.



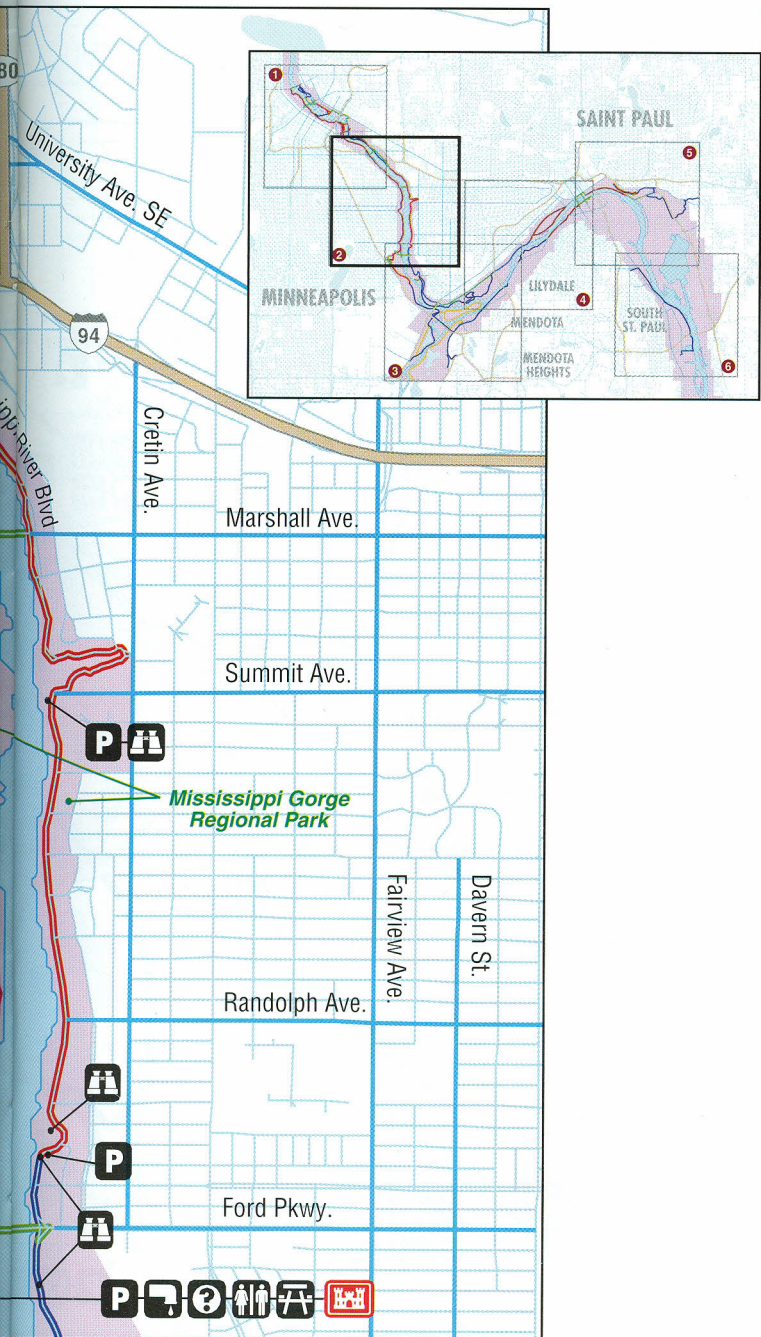
Mississippi Gorge Region

Franklin Avenue Bridge to the Ford



Things To See & Do: Be sure to see the legendary Minnehaha Falls, Lock and Dam #1, and the oak savanna restoration in the Mississippi Gorge Regional Park. This area is home to many events and activities, including runs and walks, cultural celebrations, and music festivals.

Parkway Bridge



For More Information:

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board—(612) 661-4800

Saint Paul Parks & Recreation—(651) 266-6400

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Lock and Dam #1)—(612) 724-2971

Trail Notes:

- 1 East River Flats Park: See Trail Note 5 on page 10.
- 2 The Winchell Trail is a multi-segment hiking-only trail on the west bank between Franklin Avenue and 44th Street. Unpaved paths break away from the main trail along the bluffs and cut into the woods, allowing you to really experience the lower gorge. One section drops down to the sandy shore of the Mississippi River and another takes you through an oak savanna restoration area. Some sections are rugged and others are closed for vegetation restoration, so follow the signs and stay on the path. These unpaved trails can often be muddy after it rains and have a number of stairways—some dating back to the 1930s. Between 38th Street and 44th Street the Winchell trail doubles as the paved, pedestrian-only segment of the separated bike/pedestrian trail along the bluffs. Here pedestrians can slip away from West River Parkway and descend into the gorge.
- 3 If you're on the Ford Bridge it's easy to miss the west bank trail, and if you're on the west bank trail it's easy to miss the Ford Bridge. The west bank trail continues under the bridge and connects with Minnehaha Regional Park. The bridge comes to a five-way intersection with no trail in sight. If you're on the bridge turn left on 46th Avenue South. If you're on the trail look for 46th Avenue South near the eastern entrance to Minnehaha Park and follow it north. Turn right at the first stoplight onto the Ford Bridge.

Minnehaha Falls



3: The Confluence of the Rivers



What it's Like: The trails in this region duck into areas of seemingly untouched nature. The Mendota Trail (Trail Note 5) brings you right to the sandy edge of the river, while others like the Big Rivers Regional Trail (Trail Note 6) look down from the bluffs above. There are over 20 miles of interconnected trails in the area.

Getting There: For the trails on the east bank take 35E to the Shepard Road exit (from southbound 35E, exit at 7th and take Davern Street to Shepard Road). The Crosby Farm Regional Park North gate will be on your left just past Davern Street (the South gate is not open to motorized vehicles). The gate for Hidden Falls is farther west past where Shepard Road becomes Mississippi River Boulevard. The north entrance is just past Magoffin Avenue.

For the west bank (Big Rivers Regional Trail, Mendota Trail, and Fort Snelling) see Trail Note 2 or take Highway 55 to Highway 110 to Sibley Memorial Highway and head north or south to the appropriate parking lot.

Hidden Falls

A wide, grassy path leads north from the Hidden Falls Regional Park picnic shelter. Follow the tiny creek into the ravine and finally to the falls. Also, a winding, rock-carved staircase—dating from the 1930s—descends to the falls from an overlook on Mississippi River Boulevard, between Magoffin Avenue and Ford Parkway. As you stand in the ravine gazing up at the falls, you can't help but notice they are just a trickle. The falls are most spectacular in the spring or after it rains, and the ice that forms in the winter can be impressive. But the water isn't the only attraction. The ravine is peaceful and quiet, shaded with trees and accented by the sound of falling water and the marvelous stone work. There's a sense of hidden history in the air: Maps from the early 1800s label this area Rum Town and Lebanon Grove, and near the falls workers uncovered a giant beaver from the last ice age.

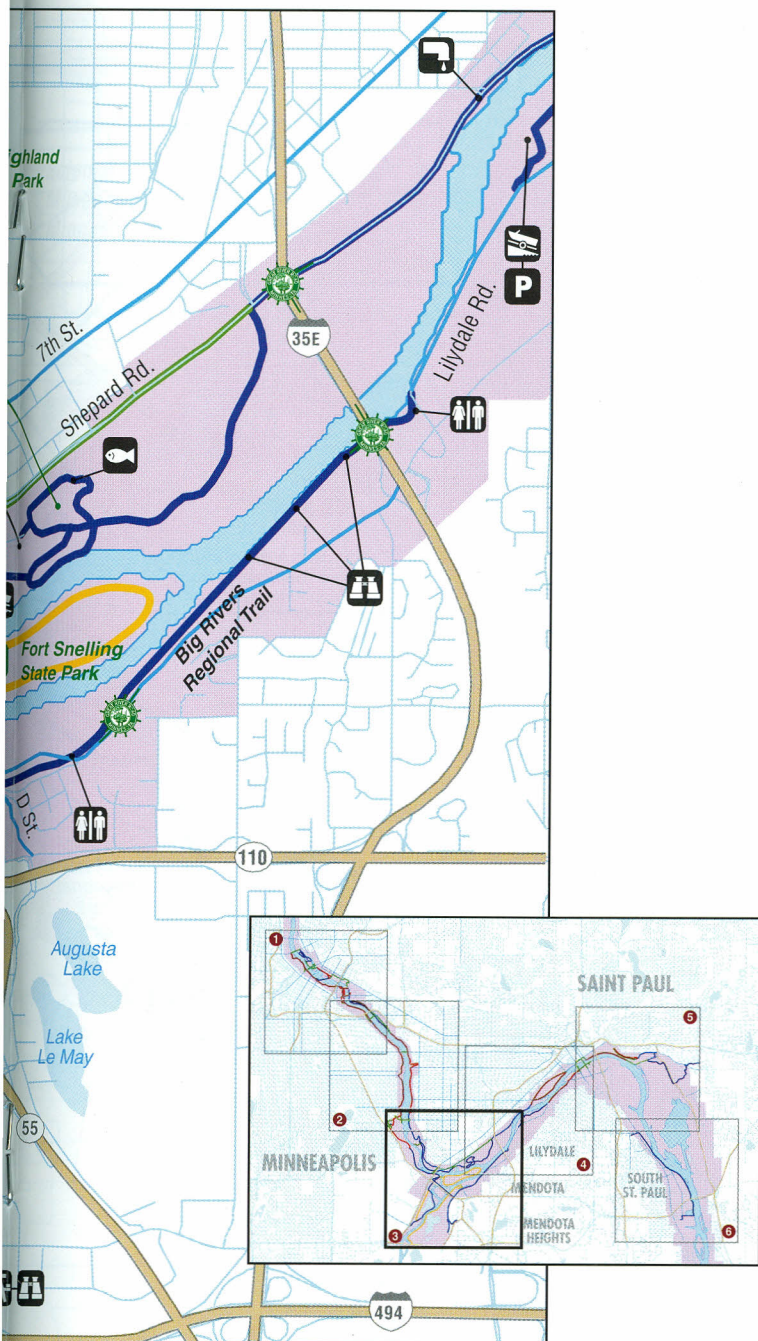


The Confluence of the Rivers

Ford Parkway Bridge to the Big Rivers Re



Things To See & Do: Tour nineteenth-century buildings and quiet backwaters. Contact the appropriate park or historical site for a complete list of programs and events.

**For More Information:**

Saint Paul Parks & Recreation—(651) 266-6400
 Dakota County Parks Information Line —(651) 438-4671
 Fort Snelling State Park—(612) 725-2724
 Sibley House Historic Site—(651) 452-1596
 Historic Fort Snelling—(612) 726-1171

Trail Notes:

- 1 The Highway 5 Bridge connects Fort Snelling State Park with Hidden Falls/Crosby Farm Regional Park. On both sides a short staircase with bike gutters drops down to the walkway. On the Fort Snelling side the staircase is located at the back of a small parking lot between the Historic Fort and the History Center—look for the bike route signs.
- 2 The Fort Snelling Historic Site and Fort Snelling State Park are two separate attractions. The Historic Fort is located off Highway 55 and the State Park entrance is located off Post Road and Highway 5. A steep path that descends from the Historic Fort's bluffs to the State Park Visitor Center connects the two. There is an entrance fee for the state park and a separate fee to tour the Historic Fort.
- 3 A 3.2-mile hiking-only trail circles Pike Island, site of treaties with the Dakota that allowed the establishment of Fort Snelling.
- 4 A half-mile walkway on the Mendota/Highway 55 Bridge connects Fort Snelling State Park with the Big Rivers Regional Trail. On the Fort Snelling side of the bridge a partially paved path leads south from the Historic Fort to the bridge. On the Mendota side of the bridge you must cross Sibley Memorial Highway. A sidewalk veers away from the bridge walkway toward Mendota. You can cross the highway here, or continue a half-mile along Sibley Memorial Highway into Mendota and cross at D Street. Use caution when crossing the highway.
- 5 The Mendota trail, within Fort Snelling State Park, is a gravel trail accessible only from the Sibley House Historic Site. There is parking south of the site off Sibley Memorial Highway. Follow D Street past the Sibley House and go under the railroad trestle. The 5.8-mile trail follows the Minnesota River, making it a secluded trail with beautiful views of the river and wildlife. At times the trail can be muddy, if not completely washed out. At the southern end the Cedar Avenue Bike Ramp connects this trail to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
- 6 The trail comes to a "T" near the southern end of the Big Rivers Regional Trail. The path that continues southeast connects to Pilot Knob Road and bikeways throughout Dakota County. The path that continues north travels through Mendota and toward the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. The path that turns south crosses Sibley Memorial Highway and connects to the southern trailhead/parking lot.

4: Downtown Saint Paul & the West Side



What it's Like: Harriet Island offers a picture of downtown Saint Paul and a revitalized riverfront in action. Take time to enjoy the walkway that stretches from Harriet Island past Robert Street. West of Harriet Island leave the city behind for the calm and quiet backwaters and floodplain forest of the Lilydale area of the Regional Park. This segment boasts 8 miles of trails that follow both sides of the river.

Getting There: Take I-94 to Highway 52 South. Exit at Plato Boulevard and turn right. Follow Plato Boulevard until it ends at Dr. Justus Ohage Boulevard. Turn left to head toward the Lilydale area of the Regional Park or turn right into the Harriet Island parking lot.

Islands in Name and Memory Only

You may have noticed that Harriet Island in Saint Paul and Boom Island in Minneapolis aren't islands at all. But at one point in history both locations were just that. Harriet Island was originally an island and a peaceful meeting place for the Dakota, Winnebago, and Chippewa. Dr. Justus Ohage, Saint Paul's Commissioner of Health, purchased the island in 1899 to establish public baths and donated the island to the city in 1900. The island was also home to one of the earliest day nurseries and a zoo, among other attractions. In the 1940s and 1950s the back channel was filled in and Harriet Island became part of the mainland.

Boom Island started as a natural peninsula connected to the mainland by a swampy area. Spring floods often turned the peninsula into an island until it permanently became one in 1858 when the Main Horseshoe Dam at St. Anthony Falls raised the river level and flooded the swampland. By 1900 industrial waste had filled the channel, making it a peninsula again. In the late 1970s the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board acquired the island and filled in the remaining channel to make the land more usable.



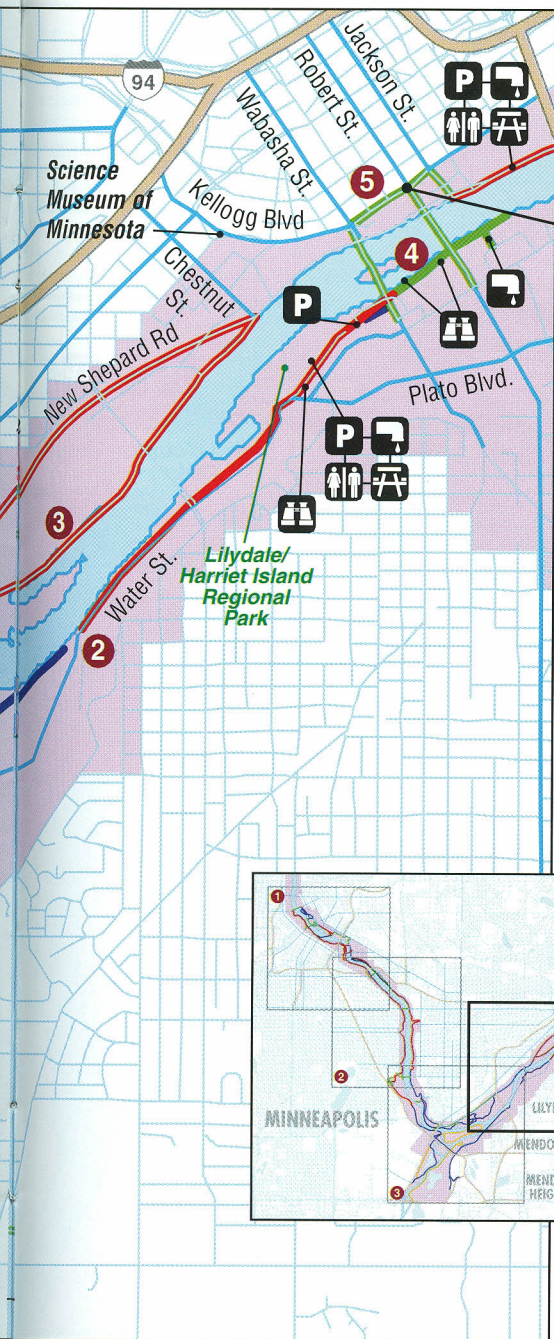
Downtown Saint Paul and the Lilydale/Harriet Island Regional Park to



Things To See & Do: Harriet Island is the hub of activity and home of the Padelford Packet Boat Company. The Science Museum, the National Park Service office, and other downtown Saint Paul attractions are a short walk across the river. The planned Mississippi River National Center, adjacent to the Science

West Side

the Robert Street Bridge



Trail Notes:

- 1 The trail ends at the western edge of Lilydale/Harriet Island Regional Park. If you continue $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile along Lilydale Road, you can join the Big Rivers Regional Trail (see pages 16-17).
- 2 There is a gap in the trail at the eastern entrance to Lilydale/Harriet Island Regional Park. Follow Lilydale Road $\frac{1}{5}$ of a mile until the path picks up again. The road is narrow here and little or no shoulder exists, so be careful. Another short break in the trail occurs where a railroad bridge shrinks Lilydale Road to one lane. The trail continues immediately on both sides of the bridge, so watch for traffic from both directions and follow the road under the bridge.
- 3 The trail on the east bank follows both the old and new Shepard Roads. Hidden Falls/Crosby Farm Regional Park is the best place to access this trail (see pages 16-17). Call Saint Paul Parks & Recreation for details.
- 4 A riverfront walkway stretches along the west bank from Harriet Island to east of the Robert Street Bridge. While ramps and stairs connect to the Wabasha Street Bridge, no direct connection exists to the Robert Street Bridge.
- 5 Kellogg Park, which overlooks the river, lies along the bluffs of the east bank from Wabasha Street to Robert Street. Sidewalks along the Wabasha Street Bridge connect to Harriet Island, and city sidewalks connect to the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Headquarters and the Science Museum of Minnesota. Sidewalks also connect via Kellogg Boulevard and Jackson Road to Lower Landing Park (see page 26).

Museum's main lobby, will offer opportunities to further explore MNRRA, the entire Mississippi River, and all National Parks.

For More Information:

Saint Paul Parks & Recreation—(651) 266-6400

Science Museum of Minnesota—(651) 221-9444



5: The Working River



What it's Like: Separated bike and pedestrian paths provide a front row view of Saint Paul's flourishing shipping industry at Lower Landing Park. Look down on the park, the river, and all of downtown from Indian Mounds Park on the bluffs. Away from the river the trail winds through a forest before following a peaceful stream through Battle Creek Regional Park. Seven miles of trails meander through and connect these parks.

Getting There: Take I-94 to Highway 61/10 South. To get to Indian Mounds Park, take a right on Burns Avenue and veer left onto Mounds Boulevard. For Lower Landing Park, continue south on Highway 61/10 and turn right on Warner Road. For Battle Creek Regional Park, continue south on Highway 61/10 and turn left on Lower Afton Road and left again into the park.

View the "Working Mississippi"

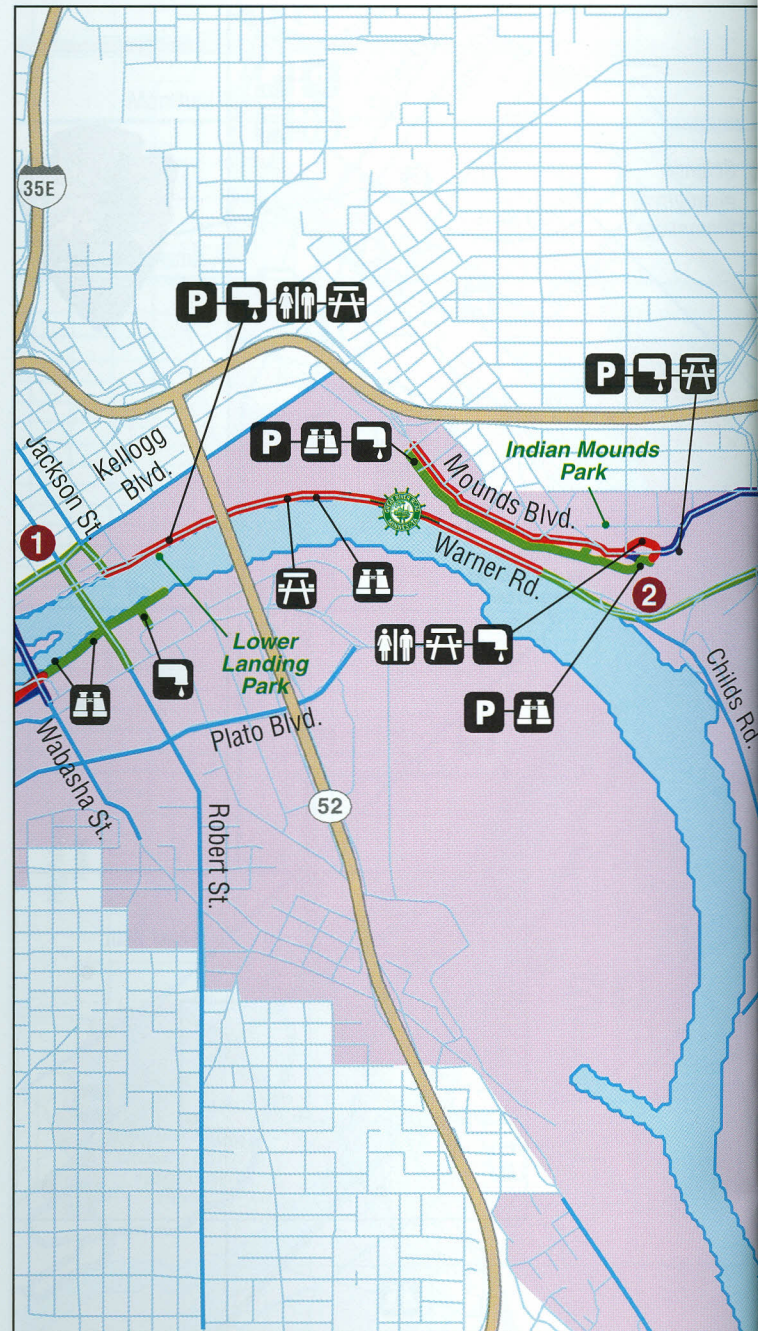
The passing of time on the Mississippi has replaced steamboats with towboats, and shallows and sandbars with pools. The upper Mississippi River has undergone substantial changes to allow the movement of bulk commodities. Beginning in 1866 Congress authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin navigation improvements that would make river transportation safe and reliable, and consequently would change the ecology of the river forever. Today barges utilize this lock and dam system to transport commodities up and down the river.

A standard barge is 200 feet long, 35 feet wide, and can carry 1,500 tons. That's the equivalent of 60 semi-trailer trucks. Barges are cabled together into a "tow," which can be longer than three football fields. A single towboat pushes a standard tow of 15 barges. Grain, sand, gravel, fertilizer, asphalt, salt, and cement are just some of the products carried in the barges, with grain being the largest downstream commodity. Eight million tons of Minnesota's corn, soybeans, and wheat are shipped annually to New Orleans for export to destinations around the world.



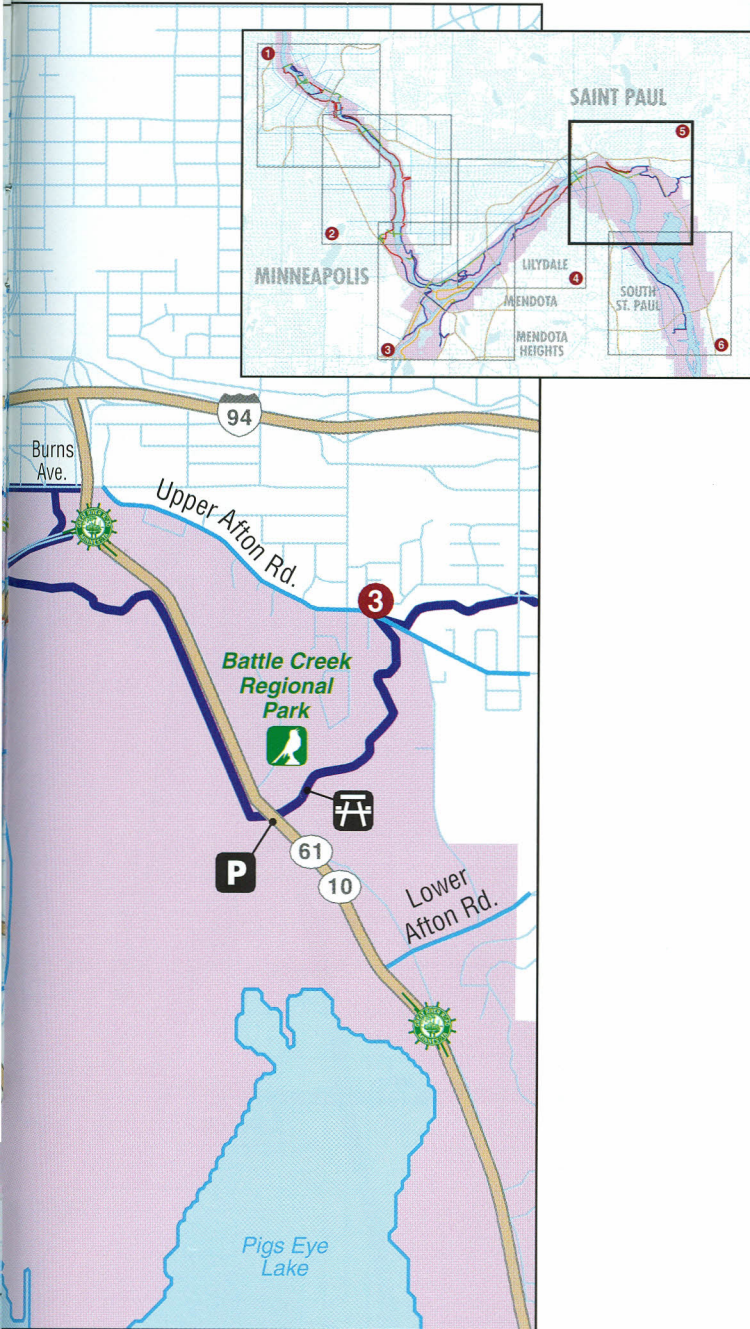
The Working River

Downtown Saint Paul to Battle Creek



Things To See & Do: The regional parks and downtown Saint Paul offer historic, natural, and cultural attractions. The Saint Paul Bike Classic is held the second weekend in September. Call the Classic Hotline at (612) 882-3180 or check out www.spnec.org.

Regional Park



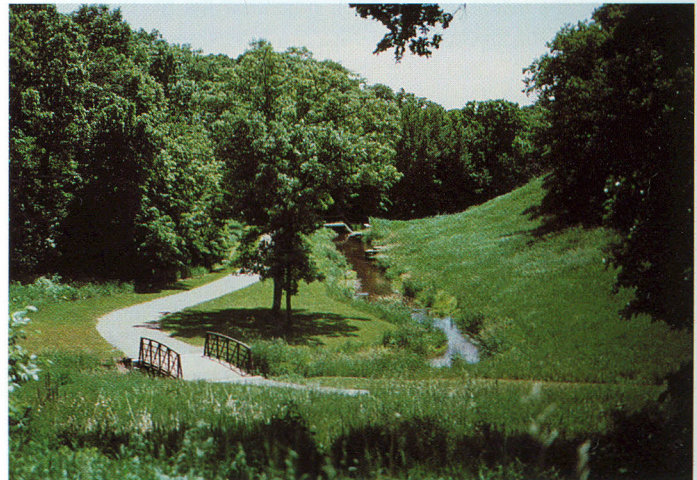
For More Information:

Saint Paul Parks & Recreation—(651) 266-6400

Ramsey County Parks—(651) 748-2500

Trail Notes:

- 1 Sidewalks connect Lower Landing Park with downtown Saint Paul. Take Sibley Street or Jackson Street to Kellogg Boulevard. The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area Headquarters, Kellogg Park, and the Science Museum of Minnesota are all west on Kellogg Boulevard. Cross the Wabasha Street Bridge to get to Harriet Island (see page 22).
- 2 The 1.25-mile Lower Landing Trail concludes at the eastern end, although sidewalks continue and connect with Battle Creek Regional Park and Indian Mounds Park. The sidewalk follows Warner Road across two busy exit and entrance ramps before joining the path that links the parks. Use caution when crossing.
- 3 A 2-mile trail situated alongside tranquil Battle Creek winds through this regional park. The trail crisscrosses a number of falls and spillways that keep the creek moving and preserve wetland areas. The trail follows Upper Afton Road for a few hundred feet before continuing on the opposite side into another portion of the park.



6: South St. Paul



What it's Like: The 6.5-mile South St. Paul Riverfront Trail is built atop a levee between the river and downtown South St. Paul. You can see Pig's Eye Island Heron Rookery, two smaller islands, the site of the former Armour meatpacking plants, and stockyards that were once the largest in the Midwest. A smaller stockyard still operates today, and a new industrial park is home to many diverse companies including Waterous, the largest and oldest manufacturer of fire hydrants in the country.

Getting There: Take I-494 to Concord Street. Parking lots are located north on Concord off Grand Avenue and farther north on Concord between Bryant and Butler Avenues. Or take I-494 to Hardman Avenue. Parking lots are located north on Hardman off Verderosa Avenue or south on Hardman at the South St. Paul Municipal Service building (See Trail Note 3).

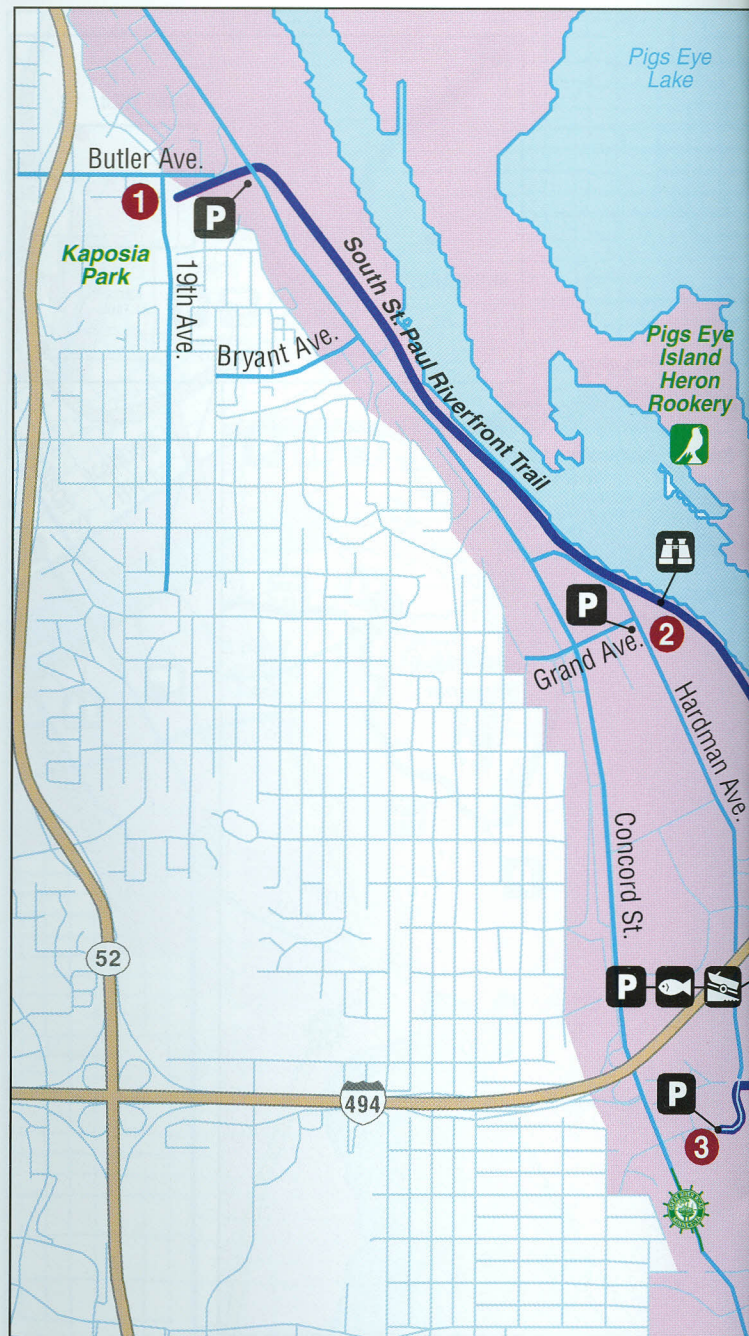
South St. Paul Meatpacking History

At one time South St. Paul was home to the largest stockyards in the world. Alpheus B. Stickney, a prominent railroad businessman, had the vision, and in 1886 organized the St. Paul Union Stockyards. The stockyards eventually attracted four major meatpacking plants, including Swift and Company in 1897 and Armour and Company in 1919. Meatpacking and related businesses became the heart of South St. Paul's economy. World War II brought peak years to the industry when the plants had government contracts to supply military needs worldwide. In the late 1960s and 1970s the market decentralized and the sprawling plants became obsolete. Swift's number one meatpacking plant in the nation closed its doors in 1969 while Armour remained open until 1979. These closings had a devastating effect on South St. Paul's economy, but the community has persevered. In 1990 the Armour plant was demolished and replaced with an industrial park, and the riverfront has become the city's new focus for redevelopment.

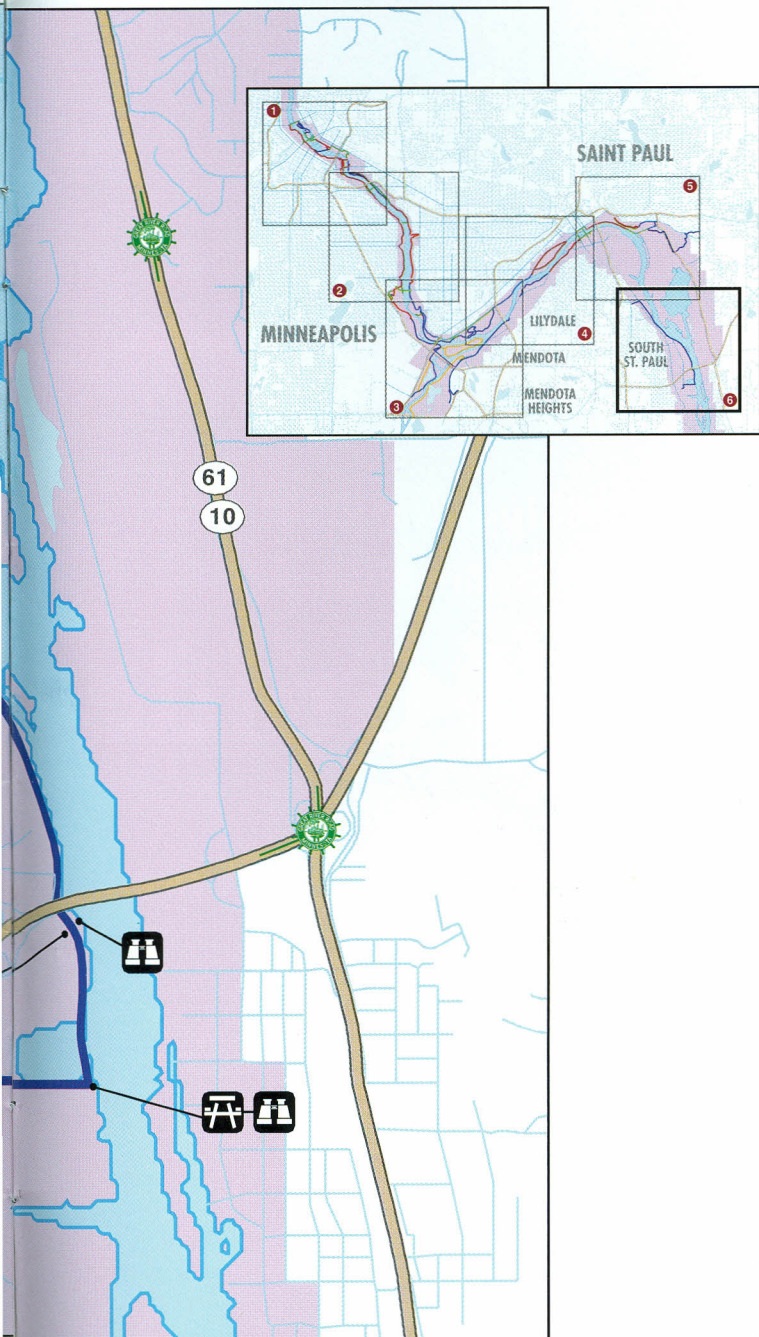


South St. Paul

South St. Paul Riverfront Trail



Things To See & Do: Don't miss the old Stockyards Exchange Building at Concord Street and Grand Avenue and the sites of the former Swift and Armour plants. South St. Paul hosts a number of programs and events, including Kaposia days in June, Old Concord Days in August, and a Kid's Fishing Contest in July.



For More Information:

South St. Paul Parks & Recreation—(651) 554-3260

Trail Notes:

- 1 The northern section of the trail turns away from the river and runs through Simon's Ravine and currently dead ends at the 19th Avenue land dam. Future plans include connecting the trail to Kaposia Park.
- 2 An accessible ramp rises over the train tracks to connect the trail with the parking lot off Grand Avenue and also provides a vast view of the river.
- 3 The southern-most parking lot is next to the South St. Paul Municipal Service building.

Pig's Eye Island Heron Rookery






The Pig's Eye Island Heron Rookery is home to a number of colonial waterbirds and is a Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area, giving it the highest degree of protection available on state lands. Species that nest on the island include the great blue heron, great egret, black-crowned night-heron, double-crested cormorants, and yellow-crowned night heron. The rookery is one of only four places in the state where yellow-crowned night herons are known to nest. Bald eagles also nest on or near the island. The rookery was designated a state Scientific and Natural Area in 1987 and is the largest rookery in the metro area. Although the rookery is open to the public for nature observation and education, it is not a park or recreational area open for intensive recreational activities. The island is accessible only by boat and from April 1-July 15 a permit to visit the island is required in order to protect the birds as they nest. For a permit call the DNR at (651) 296-2835. For more information contact the DNR at (651) 296-6157 or check out www.dnr.state.mn.us (click on Scientific and Natural Areas).

Below: Double-crested cormorants



Key to Symbols

Trail Types

-  Separate bike/pedestrian lanes
-  Combined bike/pedestrian lanes
-  Sidewalk only
-  Dirt trail
-  Major or referenced city street

Boundaries

-  MNRRA boundary

Amenities

-  Parking (free)
-  Parking (fee)
-  Picnic area
-  Fishing pier
-  Water
-  Restroom
-  Visitor center
-  Scenic overlook
-  Boat access
-  Canoe access

Points of Interest

-  Birding trail
-  Great River Road
-  MNRRA headquarters
-  Lock & dam

Area Activities

-  Hiking
-  Biking
-  Inline skating
-  Auto touring
-  Cross country skiing
-  Swimming



Mississippi River Trail

This trail is one of 16 trails in the country designated as a National Millennium Trail. Many of the trails in this guide are part of the Mississippi River Trail and will ultimately extend through 10 states from the Mississippi headwaters at Lake Itasca to New Orleans. For more information, call toll free 1-877-MIL-TRLS or visit www.millenniumtrails.org.



Grand Rounds

The Minneapolis and Saint Paul Grand Rounds are designated scenic byways. For more information on the Minneapolis Grand Rounds, call the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board at (612) 661-4800. For the Saint Paul Grand Rounds, route of the annual Saint Paul Bike Classic, call Saint Paul Parks & Recreation at (651) 266-6400.

Water Trails

The following waterways are designated canoe and boating routes: Mississippi, Minnesota, St. Croix, North Fork Crow, and Rum Rivers, and Minnehaha Creek. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources provides free river maps that show access points, rest areas, camp sites, and river mileage. Contact the DNR at (651) 296-6157, TDD 296-5484, or visit www.dnr.state.mn.us (click on State Canoe Routes).

Mighty Mississippi Passport

A number of the locations listed in this guide have activities in the Mighty Mississippi Passport. Join Freddie the Flathead Catfish for family-friendly fun on or near the Mississippi River. The program is great for all ages, especially children 5 to 12 years old. Get your passport stamped every time you participate, and with as few as three activities completed you can win a prize. Call the hotline at (612) 676-9444 or check out www.mississippipassport.org.



National Park Service

In 1988 the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) was established by Congress to protect, preserve, and enhance the significant values of the Mississippi River corridor through the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Here's a look at what we do:

Stewardship

We provide technical and financial assistance to help communities within the river corridor realize their goals for the river. Projects include trail and park development, habitat restoration, cultural resource protection and interpretation. We facilitate a partnership of over 50 public and private organizations, cooperating to establish a continuous trails and open space system along the river.

Education

With the help of partners, we provide opportunities to learn about and care for the river. "Big River Journey" brings fourth, fifth, and sixth graders to the river on a paddleboat field trip.



The "Singing Ranger" celebrates the river in concerts along the Mississippi. Information about these and other programs is available by calling or checking out the web site.

Volunteers in Parks (VIP)

You can volunteer alongside National Park Service staff to protect, enhance and interpret the diverse resources of the river. Contact the MNRRA Volunteer Coordinator for more details.



Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

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www.nps.gov/miss

"Experience Your America"

This guide was printed on recycled paper and developed by the National Park Service with the support of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, The Trust for Public Land, Dakota County, and The Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota.