

Walking tour map



Science Museum
of Minnesota

Map courtesy of
Saint Paul RVCA

We hope you enjoyed this walking tour.
To learn more about other fun activities along
the Mississippi River, please visit
www.livetheriver.org.



Mississippi River Visitor Center
(Lobby, Science Museum of Minnesota)
120 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota
55102

(651) 293-0200
www.nps.gov/miss

“At what point in the river’s course, does the
Mississippi become what the Mississippi
means?” - T.S. Elliot

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area



Saint Paul Riverfront Self-Guided Walking Tour



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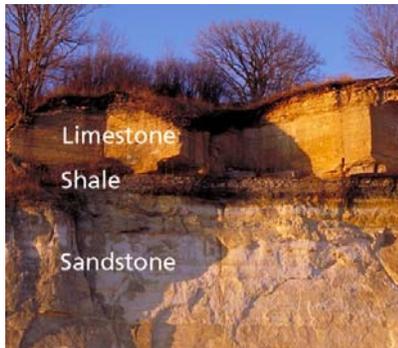
Welcome to downtown Saint Paul!

This tour explores some of the places that make the Mississippi riverfront a special American landscape. The tour takes about 90 minutes and covers 1.5 miles.

Exit the Science Museum's main entrance, turn right and follow the sidewalk four blocks to Wabasha St. Stop in front of the silver metallic sculpture, and walk to the river overlook.

Stop 1: Geologic History

12,000 years ago, an enormous waterfall was right here. As glacial meltwaters surged over the limestone lip of the falls, they undercut the lip's soft sandstone foundation.



Unsupported, the lip's harder crust of limestone and shale would snap off and crash into the waters below, sometimes in chunks as big as cars. The cycle of erosion would begin anew as the waterfall slowly retreated upstream to its present location at St. Anthony Falls, in Minneapolis.

Those limestone chunks later prevented steamboats from going farther upstream. Saint Paul became a city because it was the last stop on the river highway during the 1800's.

Return to the sidewalk and cross Wabasha St. to enter Kellogg Park. Follow the green railing to the second fountain.



Parting Thoughts

The Mississippi remains an important part of our lives. Saint Paul draws its water from the Mississippi and the river provides an endless supply of recreational opportunities.

Did you know that some of the nation's best walleye fishing is right here on the river?



About 40% of our nation's migratory birds use the river corridor annually, making the Mississippi an excellent location for birders.



The river's importance in our nation's history and Saint Paul's everyday life is unchallenged. Its historical, cultural, economic, recreational, natural, scenic, and scientific resources continually connect us all.

What makes the Mississippi special to you?

What will you do to protect it?



Stop 3: Commerce on The River

You are standing at historic Lambert's Landing. In just 10 years (1850-1860), Saint Paul's population grew 2,700%. Many of those settlers, traders, and tourists got off their steamboats right here. This landing was in operation for 150 years and even today, you can board a riverboat right here for a trip down the Mississippi River.



Today, barges instead of steamboats bring us the materials we need to farm our lands, build our homes and offices, and fuel the power plants that generate our electricity. They also ship our corn and grain to the rest of the world and carry away some of the trash we create each day.



Did you know that on the river, one gallon of gas will ship one ton of goods farther than the distance between Saint Paul and Chicago? One barge holds the equivalent of 15 train cars or 58 semi-trucks.

Continue on the sidewalk, going upstream. Stop underneath the Wabasha St. bridge. It's the bridge that crosses the small island in the river.



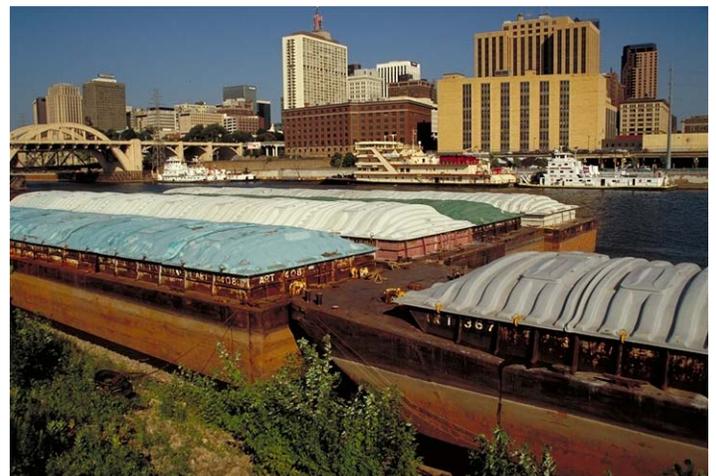
Stop 4: Changes to the River

For many years the river pulsed with the seasons. It flooded in the spring and dried in the summer. The average depth of the river wasn't much higher than your knees.



Photo (1912) courtesy of Minnesota Historical

However, to support barge shipping on the Mississippi, the Army Corps of Engineers built a series of dams that created the deep, lake-like pools seen here today.



Continue on the sidewalk next to the river going towards the Science Museum another 4-5 minutes. Stop at the semi-circle of large yellow stones.



Stop 5: Flooding

Flooding is a normal part of a river's life. For many years, Saint Paul's poorer residents lived near the river and adapted to its cycles.



In 1952, the Mississippi flooded out the community of Little Italy. For many years afterward, the city forbade anyone to live so close to the river. Now, new condominiums have been built on fill nearby.



The flood mounds behind you represent six of the biggest floods in Saint Paul's history. Their dates are etched into the cement ring that encircles them. Each of these floods would have prevented you from taking this tour.



Stop 2: Humans Arrive

1,500-2,000 years ago, members of the Hopewell culture buried their dead on the bluffs of Saint Paul, a custom embraced by their Dakota descendants.

Six of these burial sites still exist in Mounds Park, visible in the distance, downstream beneath the beacon tower.



Permanent European settlement in Saint Paul began with the notorious one-eyed whiskey seller Pierre, "Pig's Eye" Parrant. At its inception, this city was known as "Pig's Eye" until missionaries renamed it "Saint Paul." Can you find his likeness along the railing?



European settlement, dwindling food sources, disease, and warfare pushed the Dakota farther downstream until in 1854, they signed a treaty forcing them to leave the area entirely.

Continue down Kellogg Blvd. two blocks to Sibley St. Turn right and continue walking until you cross Shepard Rd. Stop at the boat landing (it has a blue railing).