Hiking

While most people explore the St. Croix Riverway by water, it can be explored by foot. The National Park Service maintains seven hiking trails along the St. Croix and Namekagon rivers. The trails can be enjoyed during all seasons. Other trails exist in nearby state parks and forests. Maps for state trails can be obtained directly from the state agency. For more information contact the St. Croix River Visitor Center at 715-483-2274, or www.nps.gov/sacn.

Trail Difficulty

Riverway trails are classified as either easy or moderate.

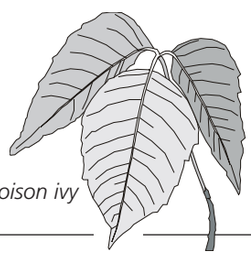
Easy: uneven ground but very little grade.
Moderate: some steep grades plus some level grades.

There may be temporary trail obstructions such as downed trees. Wet and leaf-covered trails can be slippery.

Poison Ivy

Poison ivy grows along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. This plant has three saw-toothed leaves that join together on a woody stem. It has clusters of pea-sized white berries. In fall, the leaves turn red and yellow. It prefers habitat where sun is somewhat filtered, such as forest edges.

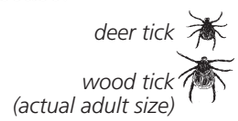
Many people are allergic to this plant. All parts of the plant contain the oil that causes reactions.



poison ivy

Ticks

Both wood and deer ticks are common along the Riverway. Deer ticks can transmit Lyme disease. Tuck long pants into your socks and learn the symptoms of Lyme disease.

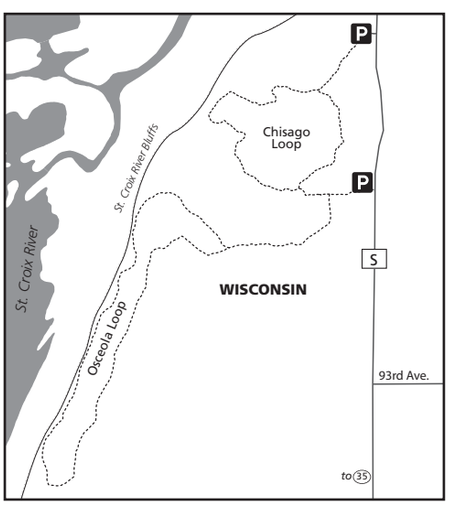


Biting insects such as mosquitoes, deerflies, and horseflies can be annoying, and can carry diseases. Bring repellent.

Trail Regulations

Hunting is permitted on Riverway trails. Hikers should wear blaze orange during hunting seasons.

Bicycles, ATVs, and motorized vehicles are NOT allowed on park trails. Pets must be on a leash. Berry picking for personal use is allowed. More information can be found in the Superintendent's Compendium, available at Riverway visitor centers and on the Riverway website: www.nps.gov/sacn.



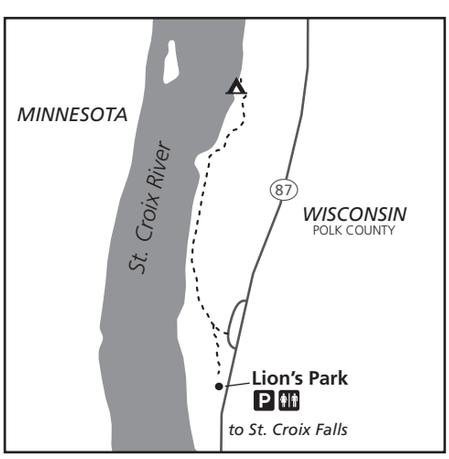
Ridge View Trail

Length: 3 miles, 2 loops
Difficulty: easy to moderate
Nearest town: Osceola, Wisconsin

The Chisago loop traverses basalt rock outcroppings; the Osceola loop is more level as you hike through pine and deciduous woods. Vistas of St. Croix backwaters are visible from the bluff side of the trail.

People have impacted this landscape. An observant eye can find evidence of American Indians and former settlers.

This is a great place to see scarlet tanagers, eagles, turkeys, grouse, and other forest-loving wildlife. Forest plants include marsh marigolds and large maple trees.

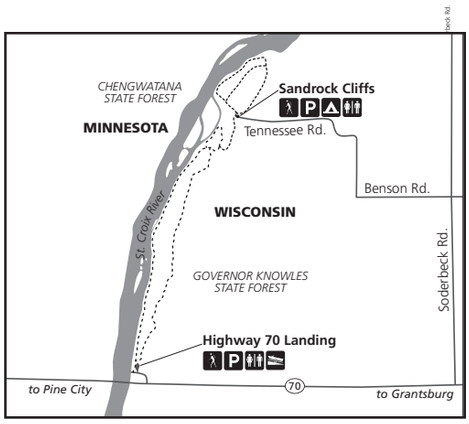


Indian Head Flowage Trail

Length: 3/4 mile one-way
Difficulty: easy
Nearest town: St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin

This level trail crosses bridged streams as it winds its way through woods and wetlands to the river. Spring wildflowers create spectacular splashes of color with trilliums, marsh marigolds, blue flag iris, wild geraniums, and more. Summer flowers are subdued by greenery and late-summer raspberries make a nice treat. Migratory songbirds as well as other woodland residents can be glimpsed and heard if one walks quietly.

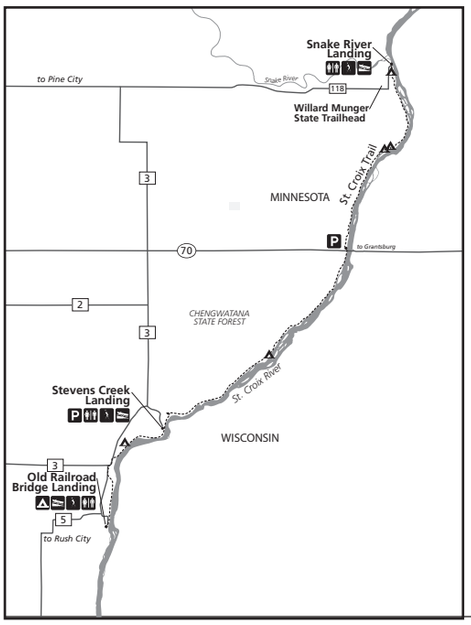
This trail is adjacent to Lion's Club Park, a large picnic area, and a boat launch.



Sandrock Cliffs Trail

Length: 5 miles, 4 loops
Difficulty: easy to moderate depending on loop
Nearest town: Grantsburg, Wisconsin

The lower loop of this trail follows the river closely, then turns onto a ridge providing a variety of terrain and scenery. The highlight of the trail system is the sandstone cliffs located in a side channel of the river. The story of this area begins 600 million years ago when warm seas evaporated, laying down what became sandstone. Then, at the end of the last ice age, glacial meltwater carved this ridge into cliffs.



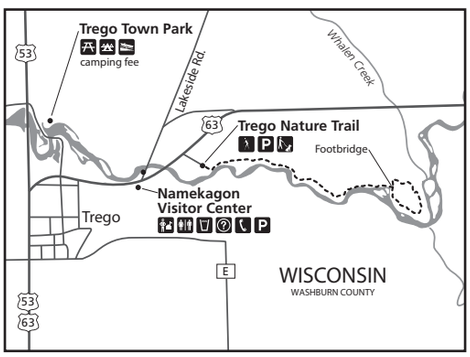
St Croix Trail

Length: 12 miles one-way
Difficulty: easy
Nearest town: Pine City, Minnesota

There are several primitive shoreline campsites available to hikers along this mostly level trail. Small streams frequently cross the trail and spring wildflowers are abundant in the moist streamsides.

Bank beaver activity is common along the trail. Look for their lodges drooping down the side of the bank. The river is too large for the beavers to dam so they build lodges by digging into the riverbank. Several bald eagle nests are located near the St. Croix. Immature bald eagles are as large as the adults when they take their first flight.

At the northern end of the trail (Snake River Landing), you can hike a half mile along the road to the Willard Munger State Trail. Be prepared for short up and down stretches and stream crossings between Highway 70 and Old Railroad Bridge Landing where bridges have been removed.

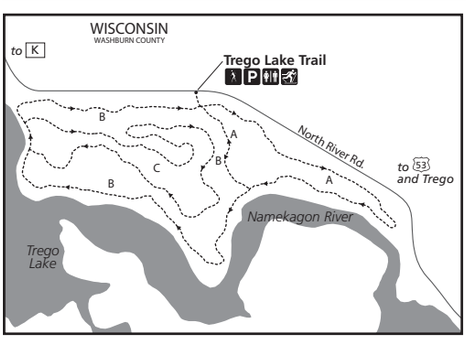


Trego Nature Trail

Length: 2.8 miles round-trip
Difficulty: easy
Nearest town: Trego, Wisconsin

Walk through a beautiful forest and glimpse breathtaking views of the Namekagon River on this trail. The diversity of life is one of the best features here. Wildlife seen can include deer, fox, otters, and bobcats.

In winter, this trail is an excellent location for snowshoeing with an abundance of animal tracks and otter slides.

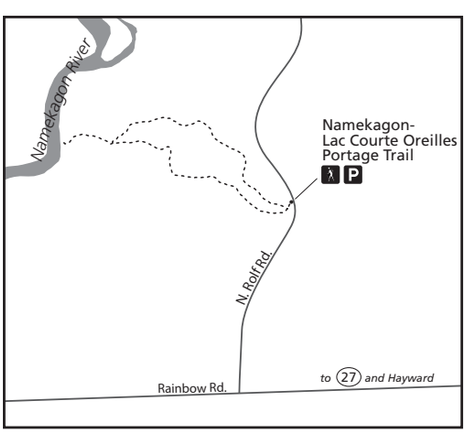


Trego Lake Trail

Length: 3.6 miles, 3 loops
Difficulty: easy to moderate
Nearest town: Trego, Wisconsin

This trail offers hikers many scenic overlooks of Trego Lake. The area has a large population of white-tailed deer and ruffed grouse. Watch the ground for signs left by these animals.

This trail is not groomed for crosscountry skiing. Hiking and snowshoeing are permitted.



Namekagon-Lac Courte Oreilles Portage Trail

Length: 0.8 mile loop
Difficulty: easy
Nearest town: Hayward, Wisconsin

The trail passes through a second growth forest, which has various fungi, plants, wildflowers, and animals. A boardwalk allows hikers to walk through a wetland without damaging the delicate habitat.

The northwest section of the historic Namekagon-Courte Oreilles Portage Trail was located near the present trail. The original trail was used by American Indians, fur traders, and explorers to connect the St. Croix and Chippewa river systems. In 1784, Michel Cadotte operated a winter fur trading post near the trail.