



## Paddling Guide to the St. Croix River (Gordon Dam to Highway 70)

Water levels on the St. Croix River depend on the amount of precipitation that falls in the watershed. Low water conditions often cause paddlers to walk in sometimes extremely slippery conditions, especially on the upper stretches. Water level information and detailed section maps can be obtained at Riverway visitor centers or online at [www.nps.gov/sacn](http://www.nps.gov/sacn). River miles (S92.6) correspond to the river miles indicated on section maps. Not all landings or facilities are listed here so it is best to use this guide with the maps. Some non-National Park Service landings require fees.

| River Stretch                           | Description   |
|---|---|
| Gordon Dam to Scott Bridge              | About one mile downstream of <b>Gordon Dam (S155.0)</b> there are Class I rapids around a large island and then there are wide shallows and riffles. Approximately 300 yards of boulders, plus Class I and II rapids, come up suddenly right before the <b>Scott Bridge (S153.4)</b> . It is best to avoid the right when paddling these rapids.  |
| Scott Bridge to Dry Landing             | The river deepens after Scott Bridge with occasional riffles. You can sometimes run the chutes of <b>Coppermine Dam (148.8)</b> but make sure you scout it first (the chute second from the right is usually best) or use the portage on the right. The river then becomes shallow with many riffles and small rapids continuing to just below <b>Schoen Park Landing (S142.8)</b> . This stretch can be very challenging in low water conditions, causing paddlers to continually dodge large rocks and boulders. Then the river slows and paddling is easier to <b>Dry Landing (S141.8)</b> .   |
| Dry Landing to CCC Bridge Landing       | Calm water ends once you reach <b>Big Fish Trap Rapids (S140.0)</b> . These winding Class I and II rapids are considered the most challenging on the entire Riverway and no portage exists. During low water conditions it is often helpful to stay to the left. Starting just before the bridge and <b>CCC Bridge Landing (S138.9)</b> there is a smaller set of Class I rapids called Little Fish Trap Rapids. Make a sharp left turn under the bridge to reach the landing.  |
| CCC Bridge Landing to Riverside Landing | Rapids continue below the landing, then the river becomes deeper and slower for the next 2 miles. There are more rapids and riffles about a mile before the confluence with the Namekagon River. The river bottom is rocky and water levels are shallow especially around <b>Big Island (S134.0)</b> Riffles continue to just above <b>Riverside Landing (S131.7)</b> .   |
| Riverside Landing to Thayers Landing    | Keep right of the islands ( <b>S129.5</b> ) a few miles downriver from Riverside. The river slows then and paddling is easy for the next 10 miles. Large groups of people on inner tubes may be encountered upstream of the Highway 48/77 bridge. Stay to the left at the rock ledge ( <b>S118.0</b> ). Continue staying left as <b>Thayers Landing (S118.3)</b> is located immediately downstream of the bridge.   |
| Thayers Landing to Nelsons Landing      | Paddling is easy with few obstacles and good water levels between Thayers Landing and <b>Nelsons Landing (S101.4)</b> . The <b>main landing for St. Croix State Park (S108.5)</b> is located behind an island on the right side of the river—don't miss it.   |
| Nelsons Landing to Highway 70 Landing   | Rapids begin downstream of <b>Nelsons Landing (S101.4)</b> . The left channel is usually easiest around the first small island. Several large islands exist farther downstream that are hard to distinguish as islands. Stay left if you want to stay in the deeper main channel. The entrance of the <b>Kettle River Slough (S100.7)</b> can be identified by a channel that angles 90 degrees to the right of the first big island. Near the <b>confluence at the St. Croix (S96.7)</b> there is a series of fast and steep rapids. You will miss <b>Fox Landing (S99.3)</b> when taking this route. There are also several short stretches of easy rapids in the main channel. Wide shallows and easy rapids characterize the river once it joins up with the Kettle. Paddling is easy from this point other than occasional riffles from here to <b>Highway 70 (S89.7)</b> . The <b>Sandrock Cliffs channel (S91.3)</b> is two miles past <b>Soderbeck Landing (S93.6)</b> on the left and can dry up in low water. |

