



St. Croix River, Seven Islands, mile 95.6
© BOB FIRTH

Corridors of Convergence

Habitat transitions enrich life’s diversity

Solitude in natural settings, rare so close to a major metropolitan area, exists for many who visit St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. The St. Croix and Namekagon rivers create a corridor where all manner of things—past, present, and timeless—converge. Scenery shifts as geological zones shift, as prairie and forests meet and mix, and as rivers and streams water the life-rich riparian zones lining their banks. Riverway waters are healthy, still home to all their historically recorded mussel species. Because its many values are so important to our quality of life, this Riverway was among the first protected by Congress under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1968.

Recreation gradually shifts as the character of the rivers changes. Human-powered canoeing is popular on the Namekagon and northernmost St. Croix, but motorized boating, houseboating, and sailboating are popular on down the Riverway. Traditional lands of the Ojibwe (Chippewa) meet the lands of the Dakota (Sioux) here, and now Indian ways—hunting, fishing, river travel, or just enjoying the natural world—have become popular forms of outdoor recreation throughout these corridors of convergence.



Scenic gorge
© MARIBETH LUNDEN



Quiet stretch
NPS / JEAN VAN TATENHOVE



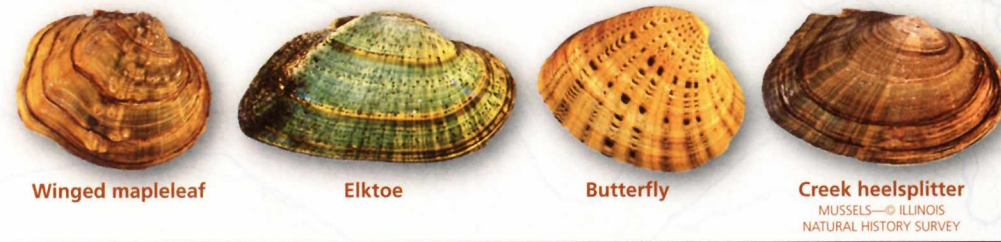
Open water
NPS / DALE COX

Worthy Waters

All 40 native mussel species are still present

These Riverway waters are remarkably healthy compared to others in this region. This adds immeasurably to the Riverway’s attraction for people who love the outdoors and makes it imperative that we protect the Riverway. The nation’s most threatened class of organisms is freshwater mussels. The federal government lists 23 percent of the nation’s 304 native mussel species as threatened or endangered. Problems facing these bivalve mollusks are dredging, dams, fish kills, sediment runoff from development, and invasive, non-native species like the zebra mussel. The Riverway is still home to all 40 of its

recorded native mussels. This attests to healthy waters—and to the lack of major development along the rivers—despite how many mussels are in trouble. Five of the Riverway’s mussels are endangered and several others are listed as species of concern by states. Mussels can’t escape problems—many move only a few feet in a lifetime. They lie on waterway bottoms, filtering water for food organisms. Growing pressure for development, especially south of the St. Croix Falls hydroelectric dam, is a grave threat to the future of the Riverway’s unusually intact assemblage of mussels.



Winged mapleleaf

Elktoe

Butterfly

Creek heelsplitter
MUSSELS—© ILLINOIS
NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

People and the Rivers

It is possible to witness centuries of history along the Riverway. You can see sites that reflect the cultures of prehistoric people, American Indians, and European Americans. Structures in the rivers illustrate the logging and navigation past. Other sites demonstrate more recent conservation and recreation history.

The St. Croix and Namekagon remain focal points for people who live in and visit the area. The rivers attract paddlers, boaters, and anglers. Historic river towns bustle with activity. The scenery and wildlife draw hikers, artists, and nature enthusiasts.

12,000 Years Ago
People have lived here for at least 12,000 years, since the end of the last ice age. They found abundant food and materials and used these rivers as trade routes.



Berry season trip
WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Ojibwe and Dakota
The rivers remain important to American Indians, especially Dakota (Sioux) and Ojibwe (Chippewa). People of both tribes live nearby.



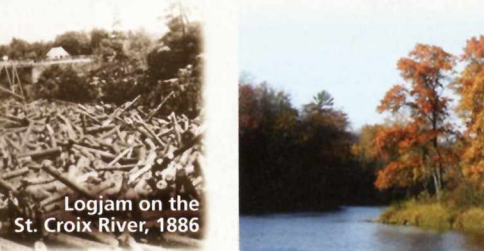
Gathering wild rice
GREAT LAKES INDIAN FISH AND
WILDLIFE COMMISSION

The Fur Trade
Beginning in the late 1600s, Europeans came to the area seeking furs of beaver and other animals. They traveled the rivers to trade with Indians.



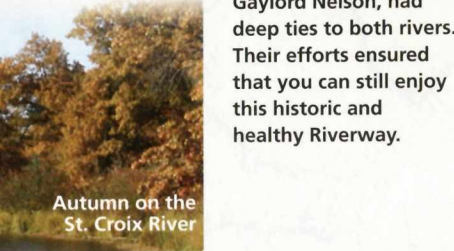
French-Indian
fur trader
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Extensive Pine Forests
Logging became the economic driver after the 1837 treaty opened the area to European American settlement. The new arrivals began cutting the pine forest. They and other settlers spurred development in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Their work supplied lumber to the Midwest. Look for the

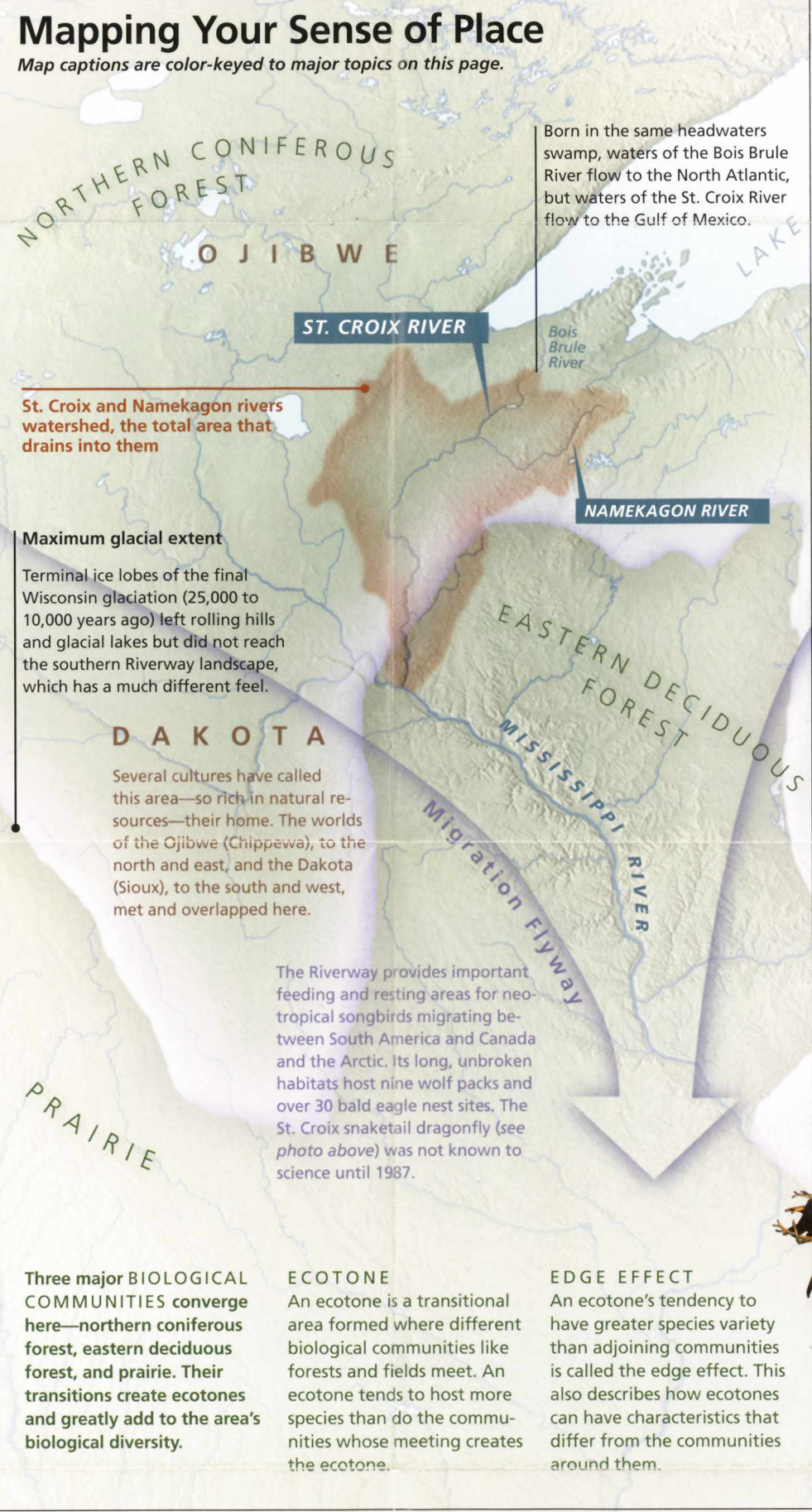


Logjam on the
St. Croix River, 1886
WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A New Appreciation
Logging brought tourists to the St. Croix area. They came to see massive logjams caused by the vast quantities of logs floating down the rivers. As people experienced the scenic beauty and recreational



Autumn on the
St. Croix River
NPS



River Recreation

Shoreline primitive camping par excellence

Creating the Riverway in 1968 signaled a shift in thinking about the rivers. For over 300 years they had been harvested, exploited, and manipulated. Now we treasure the Riverway more for scenic beauty, recreation, and wildlife habitat. The rivers are so diverse that they offer a great variety of recreation: paddling, inner tubing, fishing, boating, wildlife watching, and primitive shoreline camping. (See map on the other side of this brochure.) Your challenge may be to define what type of recreation you seek. Once you decide on an activity, park staff, the website, and river section maps can point you to spots that suit your needs.

Trout fishing is popular on the upper Namekagon while smallmouth bass capture attention on the St. Croix. The rivers’ environs here are generally more wild than those below St. Croix Falls, but you can find solitude throughout the Riverway.

Below St. Croix Falls, the Riverway’s setting mixes forested areas with suburban landscapes. There it offers motorboating, houseboating, sailboating, and water skiing. State parks along the rivers in both Minnesota and Wisconsin offer developed campgrounds, picnic areas, beaches, and hiking trails.



Easy rapids
NPS / JEAN VAN TATENHOVE



Nice catch
NPS / JEFF BUTLER



Autumn view
NPS / DONALD ERET

A Wealth of Habitats

Unfragmented forests are crucial for wildlife

The Riverway’s protected north-south corridor forms a refuge of nearly unbroken shoreline wildlife habitats. Glacial actions created diverse landscapes scattered with rolling hills, numerous lakes, and rich river bottoms. (See map at left for the extent of glacial influence.) Darters, stoneflies, and pistolgrip mussels seek shelter in outcrops of exposed bedrock where the river flows fast. Where glaciers deposited 100-foot-thick sediments, the river is slow and deep—perfect for paddlefish and common map turtles. Southern St. Croix lands

escaped the glacial bulldozer. Add to this landscape streamside areas, with seasonal floods and ground waters, and the result is diverse plant and animal habitats. Open water, marshlands, wooded bottom lands, and bluffs of the Riverway offer excellent birding. Some kingfishers dive for fish here all year. Neotropical songbirds like redstarts, blackpoll warblers, and wrens (below, marked with a *), migrate through, often at night, and many nest here in summer.



Exploring the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

This map shows the entire Riverway, but is not intended for river navigation. Instead, use individual section maps of the river that give details of road access, services, and all facilities. Obtain these maps at visitor centers and other information sites or from the park website, www.nps.gov/sacn.

Boaters and Paddlers All watercraft must be equipped with a USCG-approved lifesaving device for each person aboard. Children under age 13 must wear a properly fitted life jacket if vessels—including canoes, kayaks, and inner tubes—are moving. The National Park Service recommends non-swimmers always wear a life jacket. Everyone should wear one in high water conditions or when running rapids. Check water levels before trips, especially on upper stretches, by visiting the Riverway website. Don't overload your craft. If you capsizes, stay upstream of your vessel. Boaters, watch your wake near canoes and your prop near swimmers.

Swimmers and Inner-tube Floaters Do not swim alone, at night, or in unfamiliar places. To jump or dive from bridges is illegal. Swimming between US 8 and the public boat launch at Wisconsin Interstate Park is prohibited. Entering the river from shore in Minnesota Interstate Park to swim is prohibited. Watch children closely near water. There are no lifeguards or supervised beaches on the Riverway. Wear a lifesaving device when on an inner tube, float with others, and navigate rapids feet first.

Your Safety Wear sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat to prevent sunburn. To protect bare feet, all glass containers are prohibited at Riverway landings. Shoes that can get wet are a good precaution. Bring your own drinking water to protect against *Giardia*. Use caution near high cliffs. Hunting is allowed in season. For firearms and other regulations, check the park website.

Fishing A fishing license is required on the Riverway; state regulations apply. On the Namekagon and northernmost 25 miles of the St. Croix, a Wisconsin license is required. Where the St. Croix River is the boundary between Minnesota and Wisconsin, a license from either state is valid. State conservation officers and park rangers enforce regulations.

Fires and Firewood Build fires only in steel fire rings or grills. Dead and down wood may be collected except from islands. Use local wood. Moving firewood can transport pests that kill trees. The possession of firewood that originates over 25 miles from the Riverway is prohibited. Fires must be out and ashes cold before you leave the area.

Lodging and Supplies Nearby communities offer lodging and supplies. Outfitters supply river recreation equipment, paddleboat trips, vehicle shuttle service, and guide services. A list of authorized outfitters is on the park website.

Facilities The St. Croix River Visitor Center in St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, and the Namekagon River Visitor Center in Trego, Wisconsin, are open seasonally. Park headquarters is open year-round, but make arrangements with staff for entry when the St. Croix River Visitor Center is closed. Many picnic areas line the Riverway. The largest are Earl Park Landing on the St. Croix. Drinking water is available at limited locations. See below for camping facilities.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check our website. Service animals are welcome.

Fees There are no use fees for federally owned land or facilities. State parks charge entrance and camp fees. You can buy daily or annual state parks permits.

Private Property Private property exists along the Riverway. Please observe the rights of property owners by not trespassing or using facilities without the landowner's permission.

Cultural and Natural Features Disturbing features like rock formations, Indian burial mounds, or remnants of historic structures is illegal. Picking wildflowers or picking up artifacts is prohibited. Do not disturb freshwater mussels or their empty shells. Gathering fruits, nuts, or plants for commercial purposes is illegal.

Special Water Use Regulations Special "Slow speed" and "Slow—No Wake" zones exist for boaters on the St. Croix River between St. Croix Falls hydroelectric dam and the Mississippi River. Personal watercraft (PWC) like Jet Skis® are prohibited north of Stillwater, Minnesota. A checkpoint at mile 29.5, High Bridge, prohibits upstream travel to prevent the spread of zebra mussels. In some zones water skiing

is prohibited after noon on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend. Complete regulations are found at marinas and state parks, on the park website, and posted at Riverway access points.

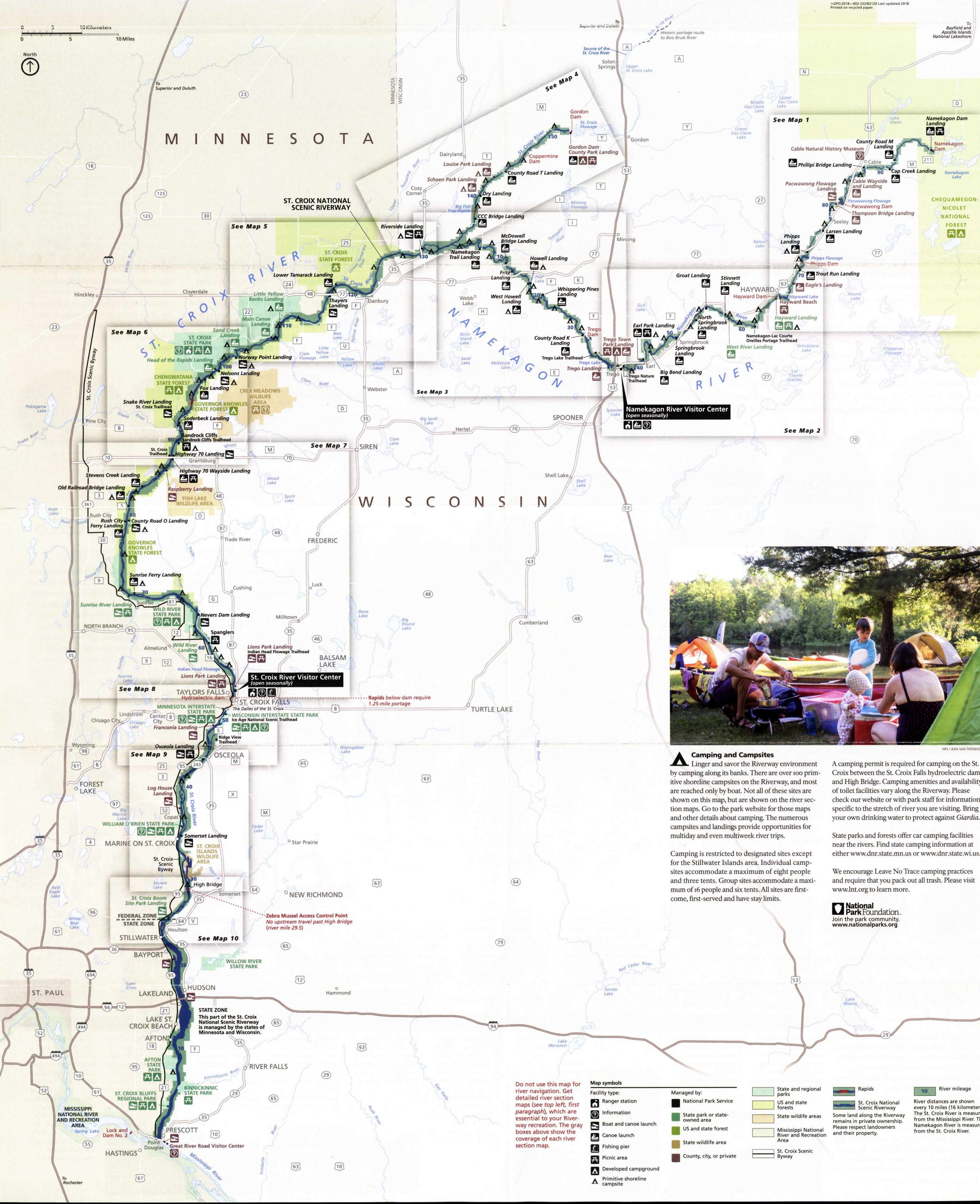
Lyme Disease Deer ticks are prevalent and can carry Lyme disease. Check yourself daily for ticks. Take precautions and know symptoms of infection.

More Information St. Croix National Scenic Riverway 401 North Hamilton St. St. Croix Falls, WI 54024 715-483-2274; www.nps.gov/sacn

Follow us on social media.

The National Park Service manages 230 miles of the Riverway. Learn more about national parks at www.nps.gov.

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Camping and Campsites Linger and savor the Riverway environment by camping along its banks. There are over 100 primitive shoreline campsites on the Riverway, and most are reached only by boat. Not all of these sites are shown on this map, but are shown on the river section maps. Go to the park website for those maps and other details about camping. The numerous campsites and landings provide opportunities for multiday and even multiweek river trips.

Camping is restricted to designated sites except for the Stillwater Islands area. Individual campsites accommodate a maximum of eight people and three tents. Group sites accommodate a maximum of 16 people and six tents. All sites are first-come, first-served and have stay limits.

A camping permit is required for camping on the St. Croix between the St. Croix Falls hydroelectric dam and High Bridge. Camping amenities and availability of toilet facilities vary along the Riverway. Please check our website or with park staff for information specific to the stretch of river you are visiting. Bring your own drinking water to protect against *Giardia*.

State parks and forests offer car camping facilities near the rivers. Find state camping information at either www.dnr.state.mn.us or www.dnr.state.wi.us.

We encourage Leave No Trace camping practices and require that you pack out all trash. Please visit www.lnt.org to learn more.

National Park Foundation Join the park community. www.nationalparks.org