Great River Road Wisconsin Travel & Visitors Guide

Flying along the Great River Road
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Wisconsin’s National Scenic Byway on the Mississippi River
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Welcome to Wisconsin’s Great River Road!

This stunning drive stretches 250 beautiful miles along the Mississippi River and winds through 33 charming, historic towns with opportunities to get out and explore at every turn.

For the outdoor adventurer, the eight counties along Wisconsin’s only National Scenic Byway offer some of the state’s best biking, hiking, fishing and boating against the backdrop of the Driftless Area’s lush and ancient bluffs. The Great River Road also welcomes travelers with only-in-Wisconsin events, historic sites, culinary experiences and local boutiques that promise a fun and memorable getaway.

Use this guide as a first step in planning your trip. Along your journey, stop by six Interpretive Centers with even more information about Wisconsin’s corridor of the Great River Road.

We invite you to discover the communities on and around Wisconsin’s Great River Road, and on behalf of Wisconsin’s Tourism industry, we look forward to welcoming you.

Sincerely,

Sara Meaney
Wisconsin Tourism Secretary-Designee
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The Wisconsin Great River Road is Wisconsin’s only designated National Scenic Byway and, according to the Huffington Post, the Prettiest Drive in the Nation.

The 250-mile Wisconsin Great River Road is part of the ten-state Great River Road National Scenic Byway, which follows the Mississippi River for 3,000 miles from northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Established in 1938 by Franklin Roosevelt, the Great River Road is America’s oldest and most distinguished byway.

The communities along the Wisconsin Great River Road are among the oldest in the Midwest, with several having been established in the 1600s. Before European settlement, Native American tribes called the river corridor home. Today, visitors will see remnants of the Oneota, Hopewell, and other ancient tribes’ cultures in the burial and effigy mounds found up and down the Wisconsin Great River Road.

The miles of wetlands and untouched river-bottom forests that come together as the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge run along more than two-thirds of the Wisconsin Great River Road. These areas are protected as a result of an Act of Congress in 1924. The beautiful pools and winding channels that you see on the Mississippi River today are the result of the Lock and Dam system built in the 1930s.
### JANUARY – MARCH
- Bald Eagle Appreciation Day, Prairie du Chien
- Bald Eagle Day, Ferryville
- Kickapoo Valley Reserve Winterfest, La Farge
- Snowmobile Trails Day, Chaseburg
- Eagles on Ice, Alma
- Ice Fishing Tournament, Stoddard
- Westby Ski Jump at Snowflake
- Eagles on Ice, Alma
- Ice Fishing Tournament, Stoddard
- Westby Ski Jump at Snowflake

### APRIL
- Between The Bluffs Beer, Wine & Cheese Festival, La Crosse
- Bluegrass, Bourbon, & Brews Festival, River Falls
- Spring Flood Run, Fountain City to Prescott
- Stoddard Bergen Fire Dept. Annual Walleye Tournament, Stoddard

### MAY
- 100 Mile Garage Sale, Prescott to Fountain City
- 70 Mile Rummage Along The River, Crawford & Vernon Counties
- Reggae Fest, Trempealeau
- Spring Bird Migration Hike & Events, Ferryville
- Mid West Music Fest, La Crosse
- Syttende Mai Festival, Westby
- Winding Roads Art Tour, Start in Viroqua
- Tromp and Chomp Trail Run, Kickapoo Valley Reserve
- World Migratory Bird Day, Alma
- Driftless Outdoors Show, Onalaska

### JUNE DAIRY MONTH
- Dairy Breakfast held in each county
- Prairie Villa Rendezvous, Prairie du Chien
- Spring Fresh Art Tour, Pepin & Pierce Counties
- Tour de Pepin, Lake Pepin
- Artspire, La Crosse
- Winneshiek Landing Day, De Soto
- Fire in the Shire Renaissance Festival, Alma
- Ellsworth Cheese Curd Festival, Ellsworth
- Cesky Den, Hillsboro
- Beer Walk, Viroqua
- Canoe Race & Music Fest, Readstown
- Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival, La Crosse

### JULY
- Riverfest, La Crosse
- Catfish Days, Trempealeau
- War of 1812 Reenactment Events, Prairie du Chien
- Stockholm Art Fair, Stockholm
- Prairie Dog Blues Fest, Prairie du Chien
- River Bluff Daze, Ferryville
- River Falls Days, River Falls
- Driftless Music Festival, Viroqua
- Vintage Motorcycle Rally, Viroqua
- Bagley 4th of July Parade, Bagley
- Bull Bash, Bagley
- Swiss Heritage Days, Alma
- 4th of July Parade, Buffalo City
- Troutfest, Coon Valley
- Ontario 4th of July
- Hot Rod Sunday, LaFarge
- Country Boom, La Crosse
- La Crosse Storytelling Festival
- Trempealeau County Fair, Galesville

### AUGUST
- Fountain City Days, Fountain City
- Buffalo County Fair, Mondovi
- Ashley For The Arts, Arcadia
- Irishfest, La Crosse
- Dog Days of Stockholm, Stockholm
- Kornfest, Holmen
- Coon Creek Canoe Races, Coon Valley
- Wild West Days, Viroqua
- Larryfest Music Fest, LaFarge
- Outdoor Flea Market, Readstown
- Charity Tractor Pull, Hillsboro
- Retreat World’s Fair, De Soto
- Great River Folk Fest, La Crosse
- Potosi Brew Fest, Potosi
- Kickapoo BRAVE Ride (bicycling), Gays Mills
- Cassville Classic Car Cruise, Cassville
- Potosi Catfish Festival, Potosi
- Crawford County Fair

### SEPTEMBER DRIVE THE GREAT RIVER ROAD MONTH
- Alma Music & Arts Festival, Alma
- Sidewalk Insanity, Alma
- Farm Fest, Fountain City
- Great River Road Fall Fest, Stonefield at Cassville
- Villa Louis Carriage Classic, Prairie du Chien
- Prescott Daze & Classic Car Show, Prescott
- Laura Ingalls Wilder Days, Pepin
- Driftless Area Art Festival, Soldiers Grove
- Apple Festival, Gays Mills
- Bicycle Fest, La Crosse
- Fall Fest, Ferryville
- Art On The Kinni, River Falls
- Bacon Bash, River Falls
- Oktoberfest, La Crosse
- Vernon County Fair, Viroqua
- Viola Horse and Colt Show, Viola
- Labor Day Weekend Fireman’s Picnic, Stoddard

### OCTOBER
- Fall Fresh Art Tour, Pepin & Pierce Counties
- Oktoberfest, Mondovi
- Flyway Film Festival, Stockholm, Pepin & Alma
- Oktoberfest, Prairie du Chien
- Kickapoo Reserve Dam Challenge, La Farge
- Octoberfest – Hillsboro Brewing Co., Hillsboro
- Safe & Spooky Halloween, Stonefield at Cassville
- Breweriana Flea Market, Potosi
- Pear Near Bike Race, Vernon Trails
- Apple Affair, Galesville

### NOVEMBER
- Christmas in Alma, Alma
- River Dazzle, River Falls
- Wine Walk, Viroqua
- Twinklefest Parade, Viroqua

### DECEMBER
- Community-Wide Holiday Events
- Christmas in Alma, Alma
- Rotary Lights, La Crosse
- Carp Fest, Prairie du Chien

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**Dairy Breakfasts**

**JUNE IS DAIRY MONTH**

Celebrate Wisconsin’s dairy culture!

Grab a hearty breakfast and tour a working farm. Locations & times found at dairydaysofsummer.com
Wildlife on the Great River Road

By Anastasia Penchi

The opportunity to experience nature as a participant is often cited as the top reason why hunters like to hunt. Hunters also like knowing more about their food, and they are proud to be part of the herd management process. Sharing stories with other hunters is often part of the tradition, as is teaching kids to hunt safely, and playing cards while having adult beverages with friends at “the cabin.”

There are 6 million acres of public lands in Wisconsin, which means there are also plenty of places to hunt along Wisconsin’s Great River Road, a 250-mile stretch of Highway 35 running adjacent to the Mississippi River from Kieler, Wis., in the south, to Prescott in northern Wisconsin. Whether your game of choice is whitetail deer, turkey, duck or even bear, here are four places to hunt when private land isn’t an option:

Something to quack about
The south end of the Great River Road near Prairie du Chien is a puddle duck hunter’s paradise thanks to the Wisconsin River, which is augmented by shallow marshes and nearby agricultural fields. Since puddle ducks like to eat the foods farmers grow (in addition to river plants and fish) this area is a big draw. Waterfowl hunting is a huge deal in the Lower Wisconsin Riverway, which includes about 95,000 acres of land on both sides of the river that can serve both single hunters in canoes and larger hunting parties in motorboats. Success here means you’ll be eating bacon-wrapped duck breast in no time.

Venison for miles
Wisconsin has a Managed Forest Law that allows the public to hunt any of its open Managed Forest lands, and in exchange the private landowner gets a property tax reduction. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Web site has maps that show thousands of acres of these lands, along with the owner’s name and information on how to contact them. While not required, contacting the owner might help you identify the best access point to the property or find a hidden game trail. There are several maps identifying spots in the Town of Freeman, just south of Ferryville, but many other locations are noted up and down the Great River Road for those who don’t own hunting land. Can you hear the backstraps sizzling on the grill? I can.

A wildlife area to gobble up
Wisconsin’s Wildlife Areas are often used for bird watching, but they are also available to those who prefer to hunt and eat their birds. Van Loon Wildlife Area, which is an almost 4,000 acre property just north of La Crosse, is made up of flood plain forest, sand prairies and oak savanna habitat. Woodland birds like wild turkeys and pheasants are drawn to hardwood forests, grassy areas and water, which is why they have been spotted here. We’re not talking turkey – visit a Wildlife Area and thanksgiving dinner need not be limited to November – only to open hunting seasons.

The mighty hunting ground
One of the reasons hunting is so popular in Western Wisconsin is because of the Mississippi River. Much of its corridor and many of its islands offer opportunities to hunt deer, squirrel, wild turkeys and other critters. However, the big draw to the river proper is ducks – canvasses to be specific. Start at the northern end of the road by Trempealeau. This area of the river (heading south to Lynxville) tends to harbor the most canvasses. Some reports cite up to 400,000 birds per fall, which makes it one of the biggest concentrations in North America. The attraction is in part thanks to the abundance of wild celery and other tasty diving duck treats that grow in the river. They eat; you eat. Isn’t that a win-win?

Meet the Writer
Anastasia Penchi is a self-employed writer who lives just off Wisconsin’s Great River Road. You can read more about Wisconsin’s Great River Road, and the festivals and people of Western Wisconsin, at the Web site: www.loislaneforhire.com.
PIERCE COUNTY
Maiden Rock, Bay City, Diamond Bluff, Hager City, Prescott

HISTORIC RIVER TOWNS & VILLAGES

MAIDEN ROCK offers a panoramic view across Lake Pepin at the confluence of the Rush and Mississippi Rivers. Tales of an Indian maiden jumping from the bluff rather than marry are still told today.

BAY CITY sits at the head of Lake Pepin and takes its name from its large bay. Hard-woods on the bluffs and fishing on Lake Pepin provided the community with a source of income that could easily be shipped on the Mississippi River from its bay. Visit the River Bluffs History Center and the Conlin Log Home built in 1856.

HAGER CITY, mostly an island on the Mississippi, with a large community on the water. Its origins began as a railroad town, founded by Burlington and Northern Railroad. Best known for Bow & Arrow formation, created by ancient natives it is a set of boulders aimed at Lake Pepin and has been a landmark for 1000s of years.

DIAMOND BLUFF, named for prominent limestone bluffs rising above the land easily visible by steamers on the Mississippi. Site of the Sea Wing steamboat disaster in 1890. Oneota Indians set up camps in this location on the river for 1000s of years. Over 500 earthen mounds, including the Panther Effigy Mound, have been identified.

PRESCOTT is the northern gateway to Wisconsin’s Great River Road National Scenic Byway. The community dates back to 1839 by a fur trader and later a center for river enterprise and steamboats. Home to the Wisconsin Great River Road Visitor & Learning Center at Freedom Park. From these bluffs the confluence of the St Croix and Mississippi Rivers is an impressive site. Prescott Daze celebration is a favorite every September. Public golf course available.

ELLSWORTH, the county seat of Pierce County, is known the world over as the Cheese Cud Capital of Wisconsin. Visitors flock to Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery at 11:00am for the fresh curds of the day. The annual Cheese Cud Festival draws thousands of cud enthusiasts to the village each year in June. Visitors will also appreciate the architecture of the Pierce County Courthouse. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, it’s open to the public on weekdays from 8:00am-4:30pm

RIVER FALLS, the most populous city in Pierce County, is a bustling community of 15,000 and the home of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. River Falls exemplifies the best Wisconsin has to offer with its perfect combination of outdoor activities, arts, cultural events and hometown charm. Built in 1925 by the Women’s Improvement League, this pedestrian suspension bridge is a rare resource that attracts visitors year-round.

TAKE A SIDE TRIP TO: Ellsworth, River Falls, Spring Valley
PEPIN COUNTY
Pepin, Stockholm

HISTORIC RIVER TOWNS & VILLAGES

PEPIN, near the birthplace of Laura Ingalls Wilder, has become all things Laura. Visit the museum, a replica of the Little Cabin In The Woods and a festival the second week of September, Laura Ingalls Wilder Days. Set on the shores of Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River visitors will enjoy beautiful sunsets, sailing, dining and a walkway out into Lake Pepin.

STOCKHOLM, a village of less than 100, is today a vibrant artist community filled with unique shops and experiences. Their annual one-day Stockholm Art Fair in July draws over 10,000 visitors to the shores of Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River. With Swedish roots, Stockholm was a community center that has evolved into a favorite stop for travelers. Their Blue Bike Project offers visitors a free bike while exploring the village. The community is also known for their hospitality along the Great River Road via the winery, restaurants, and many places to stay.

LAKE PEPIN is a naturally occurring lake, and the widest naturally occurring part of the Mississippi River. The formation of the lake was caused by the backup of water behind the sedimentary deposits of the Chippewa River’s delta. It has a surface area of about 40 square miles and an average depth of 21 feet, which makes it the largest lake on the entire Mississippi River.

The wide area of the Lake Pepin stretches from Bay City, Wisconsin, in the north, down past Pepin, in the south, with Pepin being just upstream from where the Chippewa River enters the Mississippi. The villages of Maiden Rock and Stockholm are also on Lake Pepin.

The lake was first named in a map of New France made by Guillaume Delisle at the request of Louis XIV of France in 1703. The lake was named for Jean Pepin who settled on its shores in the late 1600s after exploring the Great Lakes. In 1890 Lake Pepin was the site of one of the worst maritime disasters on the Mississippi, known as the Sea Wing disaster when the Sea Wing ferry capsized in a bad storm, killing 98 people.

In 1922, a Minnesota resident invented the sport of water skiing on Lake Pepin. Today the size of Lake Pepin provides an ideal venue for sailing and many other water sports.

TAKE A SIDE TRIP TO: Durand, Lund

VISITOR INFORMATION

PEPIN VILLAGE HALL
740 7th Ave West
Durand WI 54736
Phone: 715-672-5709
Website: www.visitpepincounty.com
www.pepinwisconsin.com
www.stockholmwisconsin.com

HISTORICAL SITES

Maiden Rock State Historical Marker, Stockholm
Fort St Antoine Site State Historical Marker
Lake Pepin State Historical Marker
Laura Ingalls Wilder Wayside, Cabin & State Historical Marker, Lund
Pepin County Courthouse & Jail (last wooden courthouse), National & State Historical Marker, Durand

PARKS, REFUGES & NATURAL AREAS

Chippewa River State Trail (bike & pedestrian), Durand
Marina at Lake Pepin, Pepin
Five-Mile Bluff Prairie State Natural Area
Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area
Nine Mile Island State Natural Area
Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area

RIVERS

Mississippi River
Chippewa River
Eau Galle River

POINTS OF INTEREST

Pepin Depot Museum, Pepin
Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum, Pepin
Lake Pepin
Sailing on Lake Pepin
Corral Bar Circus Lithograph, Durand
Eau Galle Cheese Factory, Durand

Lake Pepin, Pierce & Pepin Counties, Wisconsin

Photo courtesy: Dylan Overhouse
Exceptional Eateries
By Anastasia Penchi

Upcale but not stuffy
Lovechild in La Crosse is a 100-seat restaurant described as “big city fine dining in a small town.” Artsy décor and velvet seating helps create a romantic ambiance at this downtown gem. Food is locally sourced and driven by the seasons. Glasses of wine are $5 during happy hour.

Rustic charm near the Mississippi River
The Barn in Prairie du Chien is a restaurant that is located inside an actual old barn. It is very big and seems to go on forever, and its nooks and crannies are filled with antiques. Locally caught Mississippi catfish is on the menu, but the place is probably best known for its Friday night all-you-can-eat cod special. Diners also rave about the beer battered cheese curds, broasted chicken and its classic prime rib. A separate pizza menu also features a wild mushroom pizza with fresh crimini, shiitake, oyster and portobello mushrooms.

The female chefs of the North
The Chef Shack in Bay City is the creation of Lisa Carlson and Carrie Summer. They started their Chef Shack journey with a food truck and a mission to take organic street food to the masses of Minneapolis at an affordable price. The Bay City restaurant is only open on weekends, but the rustic French cooking is worth the trip. The key, patrons say, is to make reservations and go early in the evening.

Elegant dining with a view
Harbor View Café in Pepin offers beautiful sunsets overlooking the marina on Lake Pepin in addition to homemade soups and breads, and show-stopping desserts. Just make sure to go early to get a table. Look for the sky blue building with classic Adirondack chairs out front. This business is seasonal and closes for the winter – so don’t wait.
Motorcycling on the Great River Road

By Scott Sweere

Sometimes “you just have to take what life throws at you.” Let’s look at that statement from a motorcyclist’s perspective.

When it’s the 1st of June and you’ve been on your motorcycle once, that’s life…Weather happens, work happens, family responsibility happens, that’s life. The big question is how you respond when life has your kickstand down and dust-covered. A road trip, that’s how. Just planning a road trip gets my motor running. I know that a plan is just the beginning and that plans bring action. Soon I’ll be riding that plan out.

I am fortunate enough to live just off the Wisconsin Great River Road. A National Scenic Byway of 250 miles and 33 river towns. Of course the ride doesn’t need to stop there. One day I hope to ride the Great River Road all the way to its end in Louisiana.

For several years a group of us have traveled the Great River Road for our annual trek. We don’t usually have a destination in mind nor do we try to keep a schedule. We have been taking this trek every year because of the “guarantees”: the guarantee of beautiful scenery, a long list of “stops” and of course the guarantee of smooth, winding road that just seems to soothe the soul while on a motorcycle. Soon forgotten are the irritations of life as the senses come alive while motorcycling. The Great River Road and its tributaries offer more than the opportunity to unplug and unwind. It offers the chance to create lasting memories, meet new friends and recharge the batteries, not only on the bike but your inner being. This year we made it well into Illinois, stopping in Savannah for a concert and an overnight. I mentioned tributaries. These are some of the most beautiful side roads I have ever experienced and while it’s the directive of most cager’s to go from point A to point B, on a motorcycle it’s all about the journey. We had stops at Bucknuckles, a favorite for all types of cruisers, cager’s included. Vino over the Valley, Buena Vista park in Alma, about 20 of the over 360 bars in La Crosse, which we walked of course and another story. Potosi Brewery was well worth the trip and so many more places that I’d like to visit again.

My riding season isn’t over but its clear to me that some of my favorite experiences and memories have been created on the Great River Road. The leaves change colors in the fall and more beautiful than you would expect along the road. As temperatures drop, opportunities to ride dwindle but on those crisp, sunny fall days, you’ll know where to find me. Well… somewhere in that 250 mile stretch anyhow.
BUFFALO COUNTY
Fountain City, Buffalo City, Cochrane, Alma, Nelson

HISTORIC RIVER TOWNS & VILLAGES

FOUNTAIN CITY, the oldest settlement in Buffalo County, is home to the US Army Corps of Engineers, offering them the largest natural harbor on the Mississippi. Eagle Bluff is the tallest bluff on the Mississippi River and Elmer’s Auto & Toy Museum offers views from this vantage point. Merrick State Park is just north of Fountain City. The northern gateway to the Great River State Trail is just south of Fountain City at Marshland. See another historically significant location and grab a bite to eat at The Monarch Public House, the oldest server in the state, serving original beer recipes from 1850. Visit Kinstone Megalithic Garden, the largest stone circle in the U.S., and enjoy its tranquility.

BUFFALO CITY is located on a slough of the Mississippi River with beautiful views across the river, Spring Lake and Whitman Bottoms. Great for fishing, boating, kayaking and birding. The local grocery imports Kringle from Racine!

COCHRANE is located at the base of high bluffs on the sand prairie. Home to the Prairie Moon Sculpture Garden which features the works of Herman Rusch and others. Rusch created nearly 40 large works using concrete, stone & rock. This folk art site was preserved by the Kohler Foundation as a public art site. Public golf course available.

ALMA is a designated National Historic District preserving over 220 acres in this small historic rivertown. Home to Buena Vista, largest natural balcony overlooking the Mississippi River from over 500 feet, the Great Alma Fishing Float, Riecks Lake Park and Lock & Dam #4. Wings Over Alma Nature & Art Center offers a 30-foot viewing deck on the Mississippi River below Lock & Dam #4. As an art community there are many local artists & shops. A Wisconsin Bird City Community, this is a prime birding spot and bald eagle viewing is popular. Castlerock Museum offers a look at arms and armory from the Middle Ages. Hiking trails include Buena Vista Trail, and Mossy Hollows Trails. Alma Music & Art Festival held Sunday of Labor Day weekend.

NELSON sits at the base of two twin bluffs. Wildlife abounds within the Tiffany and Nelson-Trevino Bottoms State Natural Areas. The dike road (State Hwy 25) leading to Minnesota offers great fishing and paddling in the backwaters of the Mississippi River. Although no longer an operational cheese factory, Nelson Creamery is a popular stop for ice cream and cheese curds throughout the year.

TAKE A SIDE TRIP TO: Mondovi, Waumandee

VISITOR INFORMATION

WINGS OVER ALMA VISITOR CENTER
110 North Main Street
Alma, Wisconsin 54610
Phone: 608-685-3303
Email: info@almawisconsin.com
Website: www.almawisconsin.com

HISTORICAL SITES
City of Alma National & State Historic District, Alma
Beef Slough State Historical Marker, Alma
Fountain City State Historical Marker, Fountain City

PARKS, REFUGES & NATURAL AREAS
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge
Buffalo River State Trail (bike & pedestrian), Mondovi
Merrick State Park, Fountain City
Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area
Tiffany State Natural Area, Nelson
Nelson-Trevino Bottoms State Natural Area, Nelson
Whitman Bottoms Floodplain Forest
State Natural Area, Buffalo City
Trempealeau Meadow State Natural Area
Riecks Lake Park & Campground, Alma
Dike Road, Lock & Dam #5, Buffalo City
Great River State Trail, Buffalo Siding
Thrive! Park, Nelson

RIVERS
Mississippi River
Buffalo River
Chippewa River
Trempealeau River

POINTS OF INTEREST
Lock & Dam #4 with Railroad Bridge, Alma
Lock & Dam #5A, Fountain City
Great Alma Fishing Float, Alma
Nelson Cheese Factory, Nelson
Wings Over Alma Nature & Art Center, Alma
Buena Vista Overlook, Alma
Castlerock Arms & Armory Museum, Alma
Elmer’s Auto & Toy Museum, Fountain City
State Normal School & Museum, Alma
Prairie Moon Sculpture Garden & Museum, Cochrane
Mississippi River Bridge to Wabasha, MN
Mississippi River Bridge to Winona, MN
Kinstone Megalithic Garden, Fountain City
Fun 'N The Sun
The Elite Fleet
on the Upper Mississippi River

These deluxe houseboats come with 1 or 2 baths, private staterooms, full kitchen with microwave, waterslides and deluxe furnishings. Amenities like air conditioning, DVD, gas grill, stereo & much more.

Alma, Wisconsin
888-343-5670 • funsun.com

Arms, Armor and Art
a world class museum
on the great river road

Open Fridays and Saturdays, 1 to 4 pm (Sundays – June through August)
Group days by appointment
www.castlerockmuseum.com

Elmer's Auto & Toy Museum
www.elmersautoandtoymuseum.com
608-687-7221

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Fountain City, WI 54629

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visit kinstonecircle.com

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Castlerock Museum
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ON THE GREAT RIVER ROAD

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Open Fridays and Saturdays, 1 to 4 pm
(Sundays – June through August)
Group days by appointment
www.castlerockmuseum.com

402 South 2nd Street, Alma, WI 54610
HISTORIC RIVER TOWNS & VILLAGES

CENTERVILLE is located at an intersection of the Wisconsin Great River Road where Highways 53, 93 and 35 meet. Head toward the Mississippi River and you will find Trempealeau, head toward the rolling hills and valleys you will find Arcadia and south you will find orchards and pick-you-own stands. It’s really the “center.”

TREMPEALEAU Main Street runs right to the Mississippi River and Lock & Dam #6. Access point to the Great River State Trail and Perrot State Park (Trempealeau Mountain). Perfect views of the Mississippi River. Great for fishing, boating, kayaking and birding. Public golf course available. Catfish Days held the weekend following the 4th of July. A Wisconsin Bird City Community.

PERROT STATE PARK
North of Trempealeau, on the Wisconsin Great River Road, is Perrot State Park. The 1,400 acre Perrot State Park encompasses a complex of wetlands and towering bluffs. The park’s most scenic feature is Trempealeau Mountain, for which the community was named. This majestic bluff is located entirely on an island surrounded by the Mississippi River. Exceptional hiking and biking trails throughout the park allow you to capture a number of fantastic views of this strikingly beautiful section of the river valley. An easy-to-paddle canoe trail is excellent for paddlers of all ability levels. Perrot State Park also has several ancient burial mounds that can be seen along the trails.

TREMPEALEAU NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Also north of Trempealeau is the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, one of the best birdwatching destinations on the entire Mississippi River. It is a significant element of the Mississippi Flyway at the confluence of the Trempealeau and Mississippi Rivers. Named by RAMSAR as a Wetland of International Importance in 2010 along with the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge. Observation deck overlooks wetlands offering great opportunities to view waterfowl. The refuge is also a sand prairie, where big bluestem, indiangrass, and switchgrass can reach heights of 8–9 feet. Great River State Trail travels through this park from Trempealeau to Marshland.

POINTS OF INTEREST
Great River State Trail (bike & pedestrian)
Ecker’s Apple Farm, Trempealeau
Lock & Dam #6, Trempealeau
Tremplo Fishing Float, Trempealeau
Soldier’s Memorial Park, Arcadia
Little Bluff Mounds Interpretive Trail
Schwertel Family Farms Roadside Stand
Elmaro Winery

TAKE A SIDE TRIP TO
Arcadia, Blair, Galesville, Independence, Osseo & Whitehall

VISITOR INFORMATION
TREMPEALEAU COUNTY TOURISM
36245 Main Street, Whitehall, WI 54773
Phone: 715-538-2311 ext. 251
Email: rob.grover@co.trempealeau.wi.us
Website: www.tremplocounty.com/tourism

HISTORICAL SITES
Mississippi River Parkway:
First Project State Historical Marker
Trempealeau Main Street,
National & State Historic District
Trempealeau Platform Mounds
National Historic District
Perrot State Park
Trempealeau Lakes Mound
National Historic District
Decorah Peak State Historical Marker
Perrot's Post State Historical Marker
Brady's Bluff State Historical Marker
Galesville Bridge State Historical Marker
The Mississippi River Parkway:
First Project Marker

PARKS, REFUGES & NATURAL AREAS
Trempealeau National Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Great River State Trail
(bike & pedestrian)
Perrot State Park, Trempealeau
Trempealeau Mountain State Natural Area
Great River Trail State Natural Area
Brady's Bluff Prairie State Natural Area
Tamarack Creek Bog State Natural Area
Borst Valley Meadow State Natural Area
Chimney Rock Oak Savanna State Natural Area
Hawkinson Creek Wet Prairie State Natural Area
Vosse Coulee State Natural Area
Pietrak County Park, Arcadia

RIVERS
Mississippi River
Black River
Buffalo River
North Fork Buffalo River
Trempealeau River
Your Napa Valley, Close to Home.
Trempealeau, Wisconsin
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The Golden Frog Restaurant and Saloon serves a full menu with over 100 beers, local draft beer and wine! Enjoy the patio, live entertainment and nightly specials.
Visit TheGoldenFrog.com or call 608-687-3335. Great River Road, Hwy 35, 112 North Shore Drive, in Historic Fountain City.

Photos courtesy: Dylan Overhouse
On the Great River Road in the historic village of Trempealeau, WI

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historic village of Trempealeau, WI

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HOW DO YOU [tremp-pe-lə]? On the Great River Road
LA CROSSE COUNTY
La Crosse, Onalaska, Midway, Holmen

HISTORIC RIVER TOWNS & VILLAGES

LA CROSSE is the largest city you’ll pass through on your Wisconsin Great River Road journey, with a population of over 50,000, in the worldly unique Driftless Area. Many historic buildings and the large downtown district date back to the 1800s, when La Crosse was one of Wisconsin’s most important centers for trade and commerce. The city is a Wisconsin Bird City Community.

The area’s most prominent land feature is Grandad Bluff, located on the east side of the valley that cradles the community of La Crosse. A drive to the top provides stunning views into Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. A city of many festivals, La Crosse has a great arts and culture community. For a full list of events, visit explorelacrosse.com.

ONALASKA is located on Pool 7 of the Mississippi River, which encompasses 7,688 acre Lake Onalaska. Known as the Sunfish Capital of the World, it is a great destination for fishing, sailing, biking, hiking, hunting & bird watching. Onalaska is the southern access point for the Great River State Trail. Visit the US Fish & Wildlife Visitor Center where nature hiking paths and numerous birding opportunities are offered.

MIDWAY is an access point to the Great River State Trail. Halfway Creek trail from Holmen connects at this point. The Great River State Trail runs along Brice Prairie. The Midway Railroad Prairie State Natural Area encompasses the eastern entrance to the prairie. Two landings offer access to Lake Onalaska and the Mississippi River and a canoe landing accessing the Black River.

HOLMEN is located at the base of the bluffs on a sand prairie. Van Loon Wildlife Area and McGilvray Bridges are located about 3.5 miles NW of Holmen. Check out the group of five rare bowstring arch truss bridges & one low truss bridge on the Old McGilvray Bottoms Road. Halfway Creek Trail in Holmen connects to the Great River State Trail in Midway. Kornfest is celebrated in Holmen in August each year.

POINTS OF INTEREST
Great River State Trail (bike & pedestrian)
Lake Onalaska Spillway
McGilvray Bridges (pedestrian), Holmen
Children’s Museum, La Crosse
US Fish & Wildlife Visitor Center, Onalaska
Mississippi River Bridge to Hwy 61, MN
Mississippi River Bridge to La Crescent, MN
Shrine of Our Lady Of Guadalupe

TAKE A SIDE TRIP TO: Norskedalen, West Salem

VISITOR INFORMATION

EXPLORE LA CROSSE
410 Veterans Memorial Drive
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601
Phone: 800-658-9424 or 608-782-2366
Email: info@explorelacrosse.com
Website: www.explorelacrosse.com

HISTORICAL SITES
McGilvray Bridges State Historical Marker, Holmen
Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center, Coon Valley
City of La Crosse National State Historic Districts
Gideon C. Hixon House, La Crosse
City Brewery, La Crosse
Mindoro Cut, Mindoro to West Salem

PARKS, REFuges & NATURAL AREAS
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Grandad Bluff City Park & Overview, La Crosse
Great River State Trail (bike & pedestrian)
Marsh View Trail, Onalaska
La Crosse State Trail (bike & pedestrian), Onalaska to Sparta
Van Loon Wildlife Area
Midway Railroad Prairie State Natural Area
Great River Trail Prairies State Natural Area
Greens Coulee Park Trail, Onalaska
Holland Sand Prairie State Natural Area

RIVERS
Mississippi River
Black River
La Crosse River
Annual juried art fair featuring many returning and new talented artists!

JULY 25 & 26
UW-L CAMPUS
$5 Admission
FREE for children under 12 & students (w/ID)
Scholarship Fundraiser

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JOIN THE BIG BLUE DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL.

It takes a lot of arms (and legs) to accomplish something truly big. That’s why we’re inviting you to be part of the 8th Annual Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival. Join us as 50 teams race to support area breast cancer survivors and healthy lifestyles programs at Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse.

Experience the thrill firsthand. Build or join a team. Enjoy the excitement of paddling in this exhilarating outdoor activity. Build your own team of 20 paddlers or seek teams to join on our website. Register by May 31.

Saturday, June 20, Copeland Park, La Crosse, WI
bigbluedragonboat.com

Not interested in paddling? Come for the fun!
- Games and inflatables
- Magician and balloon artist
- Face painting and kids crafts
- Spectacular racing
- Memorabilia and giveaways
- Food trucks

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The Only Storytelling Festival
in the Tri-State Area
July 24 & 25, 2020
Pump House Regional Arts Center
La Crosse, WI
Friday: Tales of the Creepy & Scary
Saturday: Adult & kids areas, evening Adult Cabaret
lacrosse storytelling festival
www.lacrossestoryfest.com

Fun For All Ages

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lacrosse storytelling festival
www.lacrossestoryfest.com

Fun For All Ages
Escape to the “Northwoods” of Onalaska!

W7305 County Road Z
Onalaska, WI
608-779-2800
redpinesbarandgrill.com

Great Food — Always A Good Time!

Enjoy hand-prepared cheese curds, walleye, catfish & lake perch, in-house smoked pork ribs & brisket specials, half pound burgers as well as our delicious homemade soups, salads and pizzas.

LIVE MUSIC Saturday Nights
Band Schedule and Weekly Specials available on the "Events" tab of our website.

Mark your calendars for the 2020 concert dates!

Thursdays • 5:30-8pm
June 4, 11, 18 & 25 • July 16, 23 & 30
August 6, 13, 20 & 27 • September 3 & 10
Finale Concert: Saturday, September 12 • 2-9pm

Made possible by Valley View Rotary & all their sponsors!
Concessions provided by: Piggy’s Restaurant • Pearl Street Brewery
Interact’s Pepsi & Popcorn Stand • The Pearl Ice Cream Parlor

FREE CONCERTS
• Riverside Park
La Crosse, WI

DNA VINTNERS
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Centrally located in beautiful La Crosse, WI
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1223 Caledonia St. • La Crosse, WI
dnavintners.com

Escape rooms are a new type of interactive adventure game in which people are locked in a heavily themed room with other participants and have to use elements of the room to follow clues, solve puzzles, crack codes, and escape the room within a set time limit. Great fun for people of all ages! Many themes to choose from!

(608) 518-3891
LaCrosseEscapeRoom.com

Escape to the “Northwoods” of Onalaska!

W7305 County Road Z
Onalaska, WI
608-779-2800
redpinesbarandgrill.com

Great Food — Always A Good Time!

Enjoy hand-prepared cheese curds, walleye, catfish & lake perch, in-house smoked pork ribs & brisket specials, half pound burgers as well as our delicious homemade soups, salads and pizzas.

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(608) 518-3891
LaCrosseEscapeRoom.com

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(608) 518-3891
LaCrosseEscapeRoom.com

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Boating and Paddling

Boat launches are available in nearly every riverside community along the Wisconsin Great River Road. The entire river along Wisconsin’s western border is a veritable boating playground. Broad pools, winding channels and extensive backwaters offer hundreds of thousands of acres of open water to explore. Whether you're paddling, sailing or power boating, the Mississippi River is an incredible boating experience.

Here are some of the top boating opportunities along the Wisconsin Great River Road:

**Lake Pepin**
More than 25,000 acres of open water awaits you on Lake Pepin. This natural lake was formed by a natural sandbar created where the Chippewa River spills into the Mississippi. The result is one of the best places on earth for sailing and boating. Waterskiing was invented on this big body of water. Numerous marinas and boat launches can be found along its shores.

**Lake Onalaska**
At 7,700 acres, Lake Onalaska offers boaters lots of room to explore. The lake is famous not only as a boating and paddling destination—it's also known as the “Sunfish Capital of the World.” Backwater areas and quiet sloughs are perfect for canoeing and kayaking, especially the Lake Onalaska Canoe Trail, a marked trail down the Black River to Lake Onalaska.

**Lake Winneshiek** (Pool #9)
This wild and undeveloped stretch near Lynxville and Ferryville offers thousands of acres of open water just waiting to be explored with a canoe or kayak. At the northern and southern ends of the pool, the river splits into numerous channels. Boat launches are located along the eastern shore, allowing easy access to this pristine section of the Mississippi River.
Wisconsin was the first state to set aside land for a state park.

Granted, most of that land wasn’t owned by the state at the time, so the lumber barons who were profiting from those northern forests eventually got them back.

But by 1900, the state figured out how to create a park system, and since then it has grown to 139,000 acres featuring 93 state parks, forests, trails and recreation areas.

There’s always something new happening in Wisconsin’s state parks, whether it’s new trails to walk on, new programming being offered by volunteer groups or just a steady stream of new visitors.

Some of the best state land is located along Wisconsin’s Great River Road, a 250-mile stretch of Highway 35 running adjacent to the Mississippi River from Kieler, Wis., in the south, to Prescott in northern Wisconsin.

The rivers, bluffs and valleys of Western Wisconsin provide some of most gorgeous scenery in the world, so why not take a minute to appreciate the majestic views the state chose to preserve and scout for the wildlife within.

Reach for the stars

Eagles aren’t the only thing you can see in the sky at Wyalusing State Park, a 2,628-acre state park located at the south end of Wisconsin’s Great River Road near Prairie du Chien. This site where the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers meet is not only a great place to spend the day outdoors with its many caves, hiking trails and kayaking spots, but it also offers plenty of nighttime appeal. The Starsplitters are a group of amateur astronomers who spread the wonders of astronomy from the Lawrence L. Huser Astronomy Center inside the park. Why not incorporate a visit to use their telescopes while you are camping? Visit Native American burial mounds by day and star constellations by night.

Something old is something new

The state park named after Wisconsin’s first governor, Nelson Dewey, is located in Cassville and overlooks the Mississippi River. Dewey’s 2,000-acre estate, which he called “Stonefield,” was designated a historic site in 1954 and eventually became a place to honor Wisconsin’s agricultural heritage. Now featuring more than 30 buildings that show the historic perspective of farm life in rural Wisconsin, it also houses the state’s Agricultural Museum, which has the state’s largest collection of farm tools, models and machinery. In September 2019, there will be special events as part of the Great River Road Fall Festival that include an antique tractor pull, wagon rides, sorghum making and broom making. Learn how Wisconsin farm families made a clean sweep in this nation’s agricultural history.

No experimentation necessary

The Coulee Experimental State Forest, which is located just east of La Crosse, is not your typical state park, but it’s sometimes good to try something new. While this expanse of about 3,000 acres of state-owned public land does not allow traditional activities like biking or camping, it does allow hiking and horseback riding. In the wintertime, cross-country skiing is also a popular recreational use of this property, and volunteers traditionally groom 12 miles of trail for that purpose. While there are no official bathrooms, employees or buildings at this site, there are also no parking fees or other entry requirements to use it.

Take it to the top

Sheer beauty can be witnessed at a variety of altitudes for visitors of Perrot State Park in Trempealeau. Known for its bike trails that take riders to Onalaska and La Crosse, this more traditional state park also attracts many hikers who want to see the spectacular views from Brady’s Bluff. Up more than 500-foot-high, seasoned hikers recommend checking in at the park and following the path at the south end so you go up the switchbacks and come down the steep stairs. Programming at this park is always changing thanks to its active “Friends of Perrot State Park” group. Whether they are organizing group bike rides, teaching visitors about the animals that live in the park or crafting new trails, there is always something new to enjoy at Perrot.

Merrick Park

Located along the Mississippi River and surrounded by the hills of Wisconsin’s Coulee Region, the 322-acre Merrick State Park is popular with anglers and boaters. The marshy backwaters are home to a variety of fish, birds, animals and plants. Rising and falling river levels, though controlled some by dams, are part of the natural environment.

continued on page 29...
While you are traveling along the Great River Road taking in the scenic vistas and beautiful landscapes, keep your eyes open for another Mississippi River traveler, the monarch butterfly!

The Mississippi River is a butterfly highway, providing food and protection for butterflies on their fall & spring migrations from southern US and Mexico to the Midwest and Canada. The availability of natural habitat along the Mississippi River cannot be overstated in a region whose farms and cities have converted much of the native prairie to other uses.

An Amazing Journey

One of the most amazing and mysterious facts about monarch migration is that they must complete the trip from the far southern to northern ends of their route over the course of 2-3 generations. This means that the adults that leave Mexico will depend upon the survival of their great-great grandchildren to return to the beautiful bluffs of Wisconsin. The trip requires sufficient nectar sources (native plants) and sufficient milkweed plants (for egg & larvae survival) along the entire route. When monarchs return south in the fall, the adults enter a resting stage (called diapause) that will persist through the winter as they save energy and congregate on fir trees in the mountains of central Mexico.

Incredible milkweed

Due to its importance as both a habitat for eggs and a food source for larvae, increasing the prevalence of milkweed on the landscape is a key strategy being employed by monarch conservation organizations and citizens. Gardeners who often pulled out milkweed plants from their gardens as “weeds” are now letting patches remain in the hopes of housing monarchs in their backyards. There are at least 27 North American milkweeds that are important to monarchs. Of those, there are a handful that are both beautiful and highly sought by monarchs.

When you are traveling the Great River Road and soaking in the beautiful views, remind yourself to take note of the rainbow of colors that delight your eyes. Chances are, milkweeds and other native nectar plants are the reason for that glowing aura you are admiring. While you munch your lunch in Ferryville or Alma, watch for the monarch caterpillars who are feasting on milkweeds in order to nourish themselves and obtain the toxic compounds that give monarchs their bad taste to predators. Maybe you can justify a slice of Stockholm pie on the grounds that it will repel bad guys? It’s worth a shot.

Monarch Viewing Along the Way

During their migrations, monarchs tend to travel on the same warm and sunny days that motivate you to take a drive down the River Road. Monarchs may be spotted at most pull-outs and parks, but there are some recommended sites that you may want to check out due to their healthy pollinator patches.

For the off-the-beaten path view: Rush Creek State Natural Area & Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area

continued on page 29...
Vernon County
Victory, Genoa, Stoddard

Historic River Towns & Villages

Victory has always been an important point for the buying and shipment of grain with its convenient location on the Mississippi River. It had three warehouses, one of which is built of stone. In years gone by 100,000 bushels of wheat passed through each year. It was built by the farmers and called the “Farmers Stock Warehouse.” Victory was established in 1854 and was named to commemorate the Battle of Bad Axe just south of town.

Genoa lies on the banks of the Mississippi River at the base of tall bluffs. This beautiful, quiet village offers tranquil vistas and unique points of interest to visitors who like to get off the beaten path and into river village escapes. Founded in 1854 by Italian immigrants, named after Genoa, Italy. From the village of Genoa you can watch towboats and barges “lock through” Lock and Dam #8. Fish from the Clements Fishing Barge. Genoa National Fish Hatchery offers tours throughout the year.

Stoddard is a charming village of 800 that became a river town in 1937 when the pool created by the construction of Lock and Dam #8 flooded 18,000 acres of bottomland and brought the river to its doorstep. Stoddard offers two parks- one directly on the Great River Road, and the Riverpark, with a beach and two boat launches, along the Mississippi River.

Genoa National Fish Hatchery

Genoa National Fish Hatchery rears 23 species of fish including trout, northern pike, and walleye. Guided and self-guided tours are offered. The area has 17 open-air ponds and 6 raceways. Because of its location at the confluence of the Bad Axe and Mississippi Rivers, the La Crosse Chapter of the Audubon Society ranks the hatchery as a top location for bird watching. On a walk among the rearing ponds, backwaters and sloughs you might see Great Egrets, Solitary Sandpipers, Green Herons, resident Bald Eagles, and Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

The Genoa Great River Road Interpretive Center was completed and dedicated in June of 2018. This brand new facility hosts summaries of the area’s history, wildlife, and Native American heritage through many vivid displays. Directly on the Wisconsin Great River Road, the new Interpretive Center sits in the heart of Vernon County. Come and enjoy the beautiful views of the Mississippi River as you absorb the stories that surround it!

Take a Side Trip to: Hillsboro, Viroqua, Westby

Visitor Information

Vernon County Tourism
Phone: 608-606-6552
Website: www.invernoncounty.com
And www.driftlesswisconsin.com

Historical Sites

Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center
Coon Valley Goose Island National Archaeological Site
Stoddard Dams on the Mississippi State Historical Marker, Genoa
Battle of Bad Axe State Historical Marker, De Soto
Three Chimneys, Viroqua
Cheyenne Valley Settlers Heritage Park, Hillsboro
Round Barns, Viroqua, Westby, Hillsboro
Great River Road Interpretive Center, Genoa
Thoreson House Museum, Westby
Vernon County Museum, Viroqua

Parks, Refuges & Natural Areas

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Blackhawk County Park, De Soto
Mt. Pisgah Hemlock-Hardwoods State Natural Area
Battle Bluff Prairie State Natural Area
Coon Creek Cliffs State Natural Area
Kickapoo Valley Reserve
Bergen Bluffs State Natural Area
Romance Prairie State Natural Area
Tunnelville Cliffs State Natural Area
Hillsboro State Trail, Hillsboro
Coon Prairie Trail, Viroqua & Westby
Wildcat Mountain State Park, Ontario
Old Settlers Overlook, between Stoddard & Genoa
Sidie Hollow County Park
Duck Egg County Park

Rivers

Mississippi River
Bad Axe River + North & South Forks
Kickapoo River + West Fork
Little Baraboo River

Points of Interest

Lock and Dam #8, Genoa
Clements Fishing Barge, Genoa
Old Settlers Overlook, between Stoddard & Genoa
Great River Road Interpretive Center and Fish Hatchery, Genoa

28 | wigrr.com
The Friends Group sells firewood in season. And sponsors naturalists programs. Canoes, including paddles and life jackets, may be rented Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Drive-up accessibility: Goose Island Park (La Crosse) & PARK RECOMMENDATION NEAR PEPIN/PRESCOTT?

Stretching your legs: Great River State Trail (Midway exit near Onalaska, trailhead at OT & ZN) or Spring Lake Landing Dike Trail near Buffalo City

From a boat: Paddle the Lake Onalaska Canoe Trail from Lytle’s Landing to the Fred Funk Landing near Onalaska, WI or Chippewa River Water Trail near Nelson, WI

Support Monarchs, Support Local Business

If you want to plant your own pollinator patch, consider stopping in at a few businesses that have monarch products. When planting a pollinator patch, the size isn’t nearly as important as the species composition. It is important to think about a mix of milkweeds and nectar producing flowers that will bloom throughout the entire growing season. Another important consideration is choosing plants that have not been treated with pesticides and to minimize or stop the use of pesticides on your property. Think of an area of your yard that you don’t enjoy mowing that is in full sun and convert some or all of it to native prairie plants. You’ll be rewarded with pollinators, beautiful flowers and more time for lemonade.
CRAWFORD COUNTY

Prairie du Chien, Lynxville, Ferryville, De Soto

HISTORIC RIVER TOWNS & VILLAGES

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN is located just above the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers, and is the oldest European settlement on the Upper Mississippi River. When permanent settlement began at Prairie du Chien in the early 1770’s, the prairie was part of the British colony of Canada. As such, Prairie du Chien was under the governance of the British Colonial Governor in Montreal, with a lieutenant governor in residence at Mackinac.

Many epic frontier stories were played out in Prairie du Chien and their history dates back to the 17th century. Fort Crawford Museum stands on the site of the old fort. Villa Louis, the historic Dousman home, attracts thousands of visitors each year and is open May through October. St. Feriole Island, home to the Villa Louis, has a number of historic sites. The Villa Louis grounds are the site of the Battle of Prairie du Chien, the only battle fought in Wisconsin during the War of 1812. Re-enactments are held every year in July.

LYNXVILLE is just north of Lock and Dam #9 one of the wildest, most beautiful stretches of the Mississippi River. See millions of waterfowl, especially canvasback ducks, swans, white pelicans, even beaver in the Fall along this stretch of Hwy 35/River.

FERRYVILLE, is located at the base of buffs rising almost 600 feet above the Mississippi River. Widest point on the River, known for fishing, hunting and water sports – “A Place For All Seasons”. Home of former Governor Patrick J. Lucey. The Observation Deck (River View Park) in the center of the Village offers excellent panoramic views. A Bird City, Wisconsin.

DE SOTO is a small village on the Mississippi, originally part of the Northwest Territory and home to the Winnebago Indians. From 1820 – 1854 it was known as Winneshiek Landing and later changed to De Soto after Hernando De Soto who discovered the Mississippi River. A Bird City, Wisconsin.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Mississippi River (Lake Winneshiek) Observation Deck, Ferryville
Lock and Dam #9, Lynxville
Villa Louis, Prairie du Chien
Fort Crawford Museum, Prairie du Chien
Hubbard’s Fishing Float, Lynxville
Mississippi River Sculpture Park, Prairie du Chien
Mississippi River Bridge to Marquette, IA
Mississippi River Bridge to Lansing, IA

RIVERS

Mississippi River • Kickapoo River • Wisconsin River

TAKE A SIDE TRIP TO:

Gays Mills, Soldiers Grove, Wauzeka, Seneca & Mt. Sterling

VISITOR INFORMATION

DRIFTLESS WISCONSIN, CRAWFORD CO. TOURISM COUNCIL
Phone: 608-326-6658
Website: www.driftlesswisconsin.com

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM COUNCIL
211 South Main Street
Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin 53821
Phone: 800-732-1673
Email: info@prairieduchien.org
Website: www.prairieduchien.org

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN TRAVEL WI WELCOME CENTER
211 South Main Street
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821
Phone: 608-326-2241

FERRYVILLE TOURISM COUNCIL
P.O. Box 236, Ferryville, WI 54628
Phone: 608-734-9077
Website: www.visitferryville.com

HISTORICAL SITES

Prairie du Chien
Villa Louis, National & State Historical Site & Marker; Fort Crawford Museum, National & State Historical Site & Marker; War of 1812 State Historical Marker, Villa Louis; St. Feriole Island; Dousman House Hotel, National Historical Landmark; 1800s Jail; Fort Crawford Military Cemetery; Old French Cemetery (1817)

Riverview Park and Historical Marker, Ferryville
Foley Mound Group National Archaeological Site, Lynxville (restricted)
Governor Lucey Highway
Historical Marker, Ferryville
Tainter Cave Petroglyphs, Clayton (restricted)
Wall-Smethurst Mound Group, Lynxville (restricted)

PARKS, REFUGES & NATURAL AREAS

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Blackhawk Park, De Soto
La Riviere Park, Prairie du Chien
St. Feriole Island, Prairie du Chien
Lawler Park, Walk of History, Prairie du Chien
Hogback Prairies State Natural Area
Kickapoo Wild Woods State Natural Area
Limery Ridge Savanna State Natural Area
Rush Creek State Natural Area
Sugar Creek Bluffs State Natural Area
Sugar Creek Park, Ferryville
Wauzeka Bottoms State Natural Area
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www.tremplofishing.com

**BEST DAM FISHING FLOAT**
Dresbach, Minnesota near La Crosse, WI
Located below Lock & Dam #7
www.bestdamfishingfloat.com

**CLEMENTS FISHING BARGE**
Genoa, Wisconsin in Vernon County
Located below Lock & Dam #8
www.clementsfishing.com

**HUBBARD’S FISHING FLOAT**
Lynxville, Wisconsin in Crawford County
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www.hubbardsfishingfloat.com

**TROUT STREAMS**
With over 460 trout streams classified by the Wisconsin DNR, this region boasts many opportunities for trout fishing. These streams can be found in any of the eight Wisconsin counties that border the Mississippi River.

Trout stream classifications and maps are available at: www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/trout/streammaps

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Wine Tasting Adventures

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• locally produced wines & several estate wines
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Northern Wine Tasting Adventure

North of La Crosse, Wisconsin, the WIGRR Northern Wine Tasting Adventure stretches from River Falls, Wisconsin down to Trempealeau, Wisconsin. The route includes the following vineyards:

1. Belle Vinez
   W10829 875th Ave., River Falls

2. Maiden Rock Winery & Cidery
   W12266 King Lane, Stockholm

3. Villa Bellezza
   1420 3rd Street, Pepin

4. Danzinger Vineyards & Winery
   S2015 Grapeview Lane, Alma

5. Seven Hawks Vineyards
   17 North Street, Fountain City

6. Elmaro Vineyard
   N14756 Delaney Road, Trempealeau

7. Tenba Ridge
   N27587 Joe Coulee Rd, Blair

8. Lost Island Wine
   570 Theater Rd, Onalaska

9. DnA Vintners
   1229 Caledonia St., La Crosse

10. WineSitter Brewhouse
    12711 South Avenue, La Crosse

11. Branches Winery
    Old Line Road, Westby

12. Vernon Vineyards
    S3426 Peterson Lane, Viroqua

13. Sugar Creek Winery
    13418 Chellevold Road, Ferryville

14. Spurgeon Vineyards & Winery
    16008 Pine Tree Road, Highland

15. Whispering Winds Winery
    13541 Blue School Road, Fennimore

16. Whispering Bluffs Winery
    196 S Main Street, Potosi

17. Sinnipee Valley Vineyard & Winery
    4547 Timber Lane, Cuba City/Kieler

18. Weggy Winery
    30940 Oakridge Dr., Muscoda

View the maps on pages 24-25 for winery locations.

Southern Wine Tasting Adventure

South of La Crosse, Wisconsin, the WIGRR Southern Wine Tasting Adventure stretches from Westby, Wisconsin to Kieler, Wisconsin. The route includes the following:

11. Branches Winery
    Old Line Road, Westby

12. Vernon Vineyards
    S3426 Peterson Lane, Viroqua

13. Sugar Creek Winery
    13418 Chellevold Road, Ferryville

14. Spurgeon Vineyards & Winery
    16008 Pine Tree Road, Highland

15. Whispering Winds Winery
    13541 Blue School Road, Fennimore

16. Whispering Bluffs Winery
    196 S Main Street, Potosi

17. Sinnipee Valley Vineyard & Winery
    4547 Timber Lane, Cuba City/Kieler

18. Weggy Winery
    30940 Oakridge Dr., Muscoda

View the maps on pages 24-25 for winery locations.
Road Tripping along the Great River Road

Bob Schmidt is a radio veteran with over three decades on the air. Since he left the radio business, he finds joy in interviewing, educating and inspiring others with his podcasts. Dean Klickenberg, the Mississippi Valley Traveler, is on a mission to explore the rich history, diverse cultures and varied ecosystems of the Mississippi River Valley. He’s driven along the Great River Road, hiked to the tops of bluffs, paddled on the Mississippi River in kayaks and canoes.

Bob: [He’s] the author of a couple really cool books – actually, a handful of really cool books – dealing with the upper Mississippi River and the Wisconsin Great River Road, as well as the entire Great River Road. Dean Klinkenberg [is] my guest this month on the Wisconsin Great River Road Podcast. Dean, I appreciate you spending some time with us to talk about the beauty that is the Wisconsin Great River Road.

Dean: Thanks for having me on. I love talking about the river.

Bob: Dean, you currently live on the Mississippi, in St. Louis, but you spent some time up in La Crosse, Wisconsin. What was the start of the love for Dean Klinkenberg and the mighty Mississippi River?

Dean: I blame it on La Crosse, mostly. I went to college there; I moved there in 1982 to start college. Being that close to the Mississippi, I took pretty good advantage of the opportunities to get outside and experience the river when I lived there. I had a couple favorite activities that I did often. I loved hiking around in the bluffs and going to places around Grandad Bluff that I wasn’t supposed to go to – of course, don’t do that [because] you’re not supposed to do that – and riding my bike down to the river to the favorite spots for me to sit and brood. I just loved going down to the river and watching it swirl and watching the animals and the birds. The first time I canoed on the Mississippi was also from La Crosse. For some reason, my friend and I started off by paddling upriver. We weren’t the brightest at that age, but we made some progress and got up to some old beach, then we stopped and swam and had a little lunch before we paddled back. It just left a big impression on me from those years in La Crosse.

Bob: It is a beautiful area. I moved here in 1992 thinking I’d be here a year or two, and here it is 27 years later and I’m still enjoying La Crosse, for sure. One of the books you wrote is called, “Small Town Pleasures,” and I’m assuming there’s probably some small-town pleasures here in Wisconsin.

Dean: There are a lot. It’s one of the things that I think sets the Wisconsin Great River Road apart from other areas. It’s mostly small communities. You have places like Fountain City and Alma. [They are] these small, little river towns that
have done a great job of maintaining their river identities and staying really connected to the river. Because you have so many small communities, you have a lot of small-town businesses. You have a lot of businesses that are owned locally. I like patronizing those small, local businesses as much as I can because the money I spend tends to stay in those communities. And you're not sacrificing the least bit of quality. These are all great places, so it's fantastic. People are generally nice and making sure you have a good experience. It's just great all around.

**Bob:** You've had the opportunity to travel the entire Great River Road multiple times, I'm assuming.

**Dean:** Multiple times. I was just thinking about that today. There may be 50 to 100 miles of pavement I haven't driven yet. I'm kind of losing track of how many miles I've driven just along the Great River Road since I started doing it, but I know it's over 125,000 miles.

**Bob:** You're driving that much and spending that much time on the Mississippi. Do you have a favorite spot in Wisconsin on the Great River Road?

**Dean:** Where I am at the moment. Just wherever I am at that moment. It's hard to pick a favorite spot. I will say that that stretch of the Great River Road from Prescott down to Sandy Hook is among my favorite drives anywhere. Picking a couple of favorite spots along there, it's really hard because there are so many that I enjoy.

**Bob:** The other book that you wrote, “Road Tripping Along The Great River Road,” talk a little bit about that and some of the cool road trips that there are here on the Wisconsin Great River Road.

**Dean:** One of the reasons I started writing these books is I was discouraged to see people who had heard so much about the Mississippi and went out of their way to drive to the banks of the river, took a look at it, and then drove on somewhere else. I wanted to give people more of a context for what they're seeing and help them understand why they needed to spend more time along the Mississippi. All my books spend a fair amount of time describing local history for each of the communities along the river, and then giving people different ideas of things that they can see and do while they're there. I know people like to take day trips when they drive along the Great River Road and then they zip back up to the Twin Cities or Madison or wherever. You need some time to really get to know it well. The Mississippi begs you to slow down. To really get to know it well, you need to take your time and explore it slowly, spend some time in the communities, spend a couple nights here [and] a couple nights there. You can do weekend trips over portions of the Wisconsin Great River Road, particularly around Lake Pepin. The Wisconsin communities along Lake Pepin would be great for a weekend. I know people tend to rush through those. I'd like people to set aside two or three days to do that. Traveling and being along the Mississippi is what was making me happy.

**Bob:** It's awesome when you can find something you love to do and make some money at it at the same time. You've written a bunch of books, which is really cool. You've written nonfiction as well as some fiction books. Tell me about how we can find out more information about you, Dean.

**Dean:** There are two websites that I maintain. Mississippitraveler.com is the site where I have travel information about places along the Mississippi. I also write fiction. I write mysteries that are set in places along the Mississippi. Two of them are in print: Rock Island Lines and Double Dealing in Dubuque. The third book, which should be out next year, is tentatively called “Letting Go in La Crosse.” That will be topical, sort of the Wisconsin Great River Road. Those you can find out more about at deanklinkenberg.com.

To find out more about the Wisconsin Great River Road please check out the website www.WiGRR.com.

Find out more about Dean at deanklinkenberg.com.
Megan: We’re very fortunate in this area to have the natural resources we do with the Mississippi River here. We’ve got excellent fishing. We have fishing year-round. There’s always something. The hunting is great in this area. We’ve got really good deer hunting in this area. We’ve got really good duck and goose hunting. It’s a really cool area, not to mention that the scenery is pretty decent to look at as well.

Bob: Megan Jensen, a Wisconsin Conservation Warden with the Wisconsin DNR is my guest on the Wisconsin Great River Road Podcast. So, tell me about being safe when it comes to deer hunting season.

Megan: When we look at the deer hunting season, obviously we have the archery season and the gun season. [With] archery season, there’s usually not as many folks out in the woods, and the season is over a longer period of time. But [with] the gun deer season, usually we’re getting a more concentrated number of folks out in the woods, and they’re hunting with firearms. One of the biggest concerns is their safety. We do have the blaze orange or the blaze pink requirement for those hunters. Anyone who is hunting during a gun deer season has to wear at least 50 percent of the blaze orange or the blaze pink. And in all of our hunter education courses, we always talk about the acronym TABK. Those are the four primary rules of firearm safety. The first one is T, [which is] treat every firearm as if it’s loaded. The A is, always point your muzzle in a safe direction. B [is], be sure of your target and what’s beyond. The K is, keep your finger off the trigger until you’re ready to shoot.

Bob: That’s always some good advice right there. How is hunting along the Wisconsin Great River Road different from hunting in state or on the other side of the state?

Megan: As a warden, I’ve worked along the Mississippi River for my entire career. Over here along the Mississippi River, we’ve got really good hunting, and we’ve got a variety of hunting. Not only do we have really good deer hunting over in this area, a couple of our counties – Buffalo County and Trempealeau County – are really destination deer hunting counties for a lot of folks not just from within Wisconsin, but really from multiple states. I frequently do get calls from folks from other states asking about hunting opportunities on the public land in Trempealeau County just because this area is known for their nice-sized bucks and the plentiful deer herd. We are also along the Mississippi River Flyway for ducks and geese, so we have great waterfowl hunting here as well, which just really makes this a hunter’s paradise because there is a little bit of something for everyone. We also have good small game hunting and turkey hunting and other hunting activities. I think we’re very fortunate along the river here to have all the hunting activities that we do, and opportunities that we have.

Bob: Living along the Wisconsin Great River Road, of course we’ve got the opportunity to fish year-round with the Mississippi River being there. What kind of advice would you give to a fisherman?

Megan: The first piece of advice I give to anyone who is going out fishing or hunting is to make sure you take a peek at the regulations for that year. Things do change from year to year here, and it’s important for folks to know what the regulations are because at the end of the day, it’s up to the fisherman and the hunter to read what the regulations are for the body of water they’re going out on, and the state that they’re in. Here along the Mississippi, one of the biggest things I like to remind folks of is that there’s a state line along the Mississippi River that we share with Minnesota and Iowa there. If folks are fishing on the non-Wisconsin side of the river, they need to follow the regulations for the state for which they’re fishing in. For continued on page 41...
GRANT COUNTY
Kieler, Dickeyville, Tennyson, Potosi, Cassville, Glen Haven, Bagley, Wyalusing

HISTORIC RIVER TOWNS & VILLAGES

KIELER is the southern gateway to the Wisconsin Great River Road National Scenic Byway. Not far from Kieler is the Sinsinawa Mound, home to over 700 Dominican nuns, with bookshop and 1847 stone building built by Father Mazzuchelli.

DICKEYVILLE offers a folk art delight, the Dickeyville Grotto, located on the grounds of Holy Ghost Parish. It stands as one of the most important works of outsider art in existence. Three dimensional mosaics from the use of various materials reflect light in many directions. Themes are both spiritual as well as patriotic.

TENNYSON began as a mining community. This lead mining region of SW Wisconsin had over 10,000 mines in its heyday, dug by hand. Much of the lead used by the Union Army during the Civil War came from this area.

POTOSI has the longest main street without an intersection in the world (3 miles). The restored Potosi Brewery is home to the National Brewery Museum and a Great River Road Interpretive Center. For a unique view of the Mississippi River, visit the Observation Deck at the end of Point Road where over 274 species of birds have been spotted.

CASSVILLE is well-known for its many historic buildings and the Cassville Ferry from Wisconsin to Millville, Iowa. Nelson Dewey State Park is a great place to see bald eagles from the bluffs. Stonefield, a state historic site, is home to the State Agricultural Museum, one of the best places in the Midwest to learn about the history of agriculture in the U.S.

GLEN HAVEN is a quiet village surrounded by natural beauty with excellent access to the Mississippi River.

BAGLEY, with its location on the Mississippi River, is a popular riverside destination for summer when the village’s population quadruples. Easy access to Wyalusing State Park makes Bagley a sought after camping location.

WYALUSING is home to 2600-acre Wyalusing State Park, perched high above the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers. As you stand and look out from the bluffs, you’re looking over a maze of islands, channels and sloughs that look much as they did when explorers Marquette and Joliet first arrived in 1673. The park includes a number of burial mounds, historical markers, campsites and an interpretive center.

TAKE A SIDE TRIP TO:
Platteville, Lancaster, Fennimore, Muscoda & Hazel Green

VISITOR INFORMATION

CASSVILLE TOURISM
Post Office Box 576
Cassville, Wisconsin
Phone: 608-725-5855
Email: casstour@chorus.net
Website: www.cassville.org

HISTORICAL SITES
Stonefield State Historic Site,
Nelson Dewey Plantation, Cassville
Stonefield State Agricultural Museum, Cassville
Wyalusing State Park Mounds
National Archaeological Site, Wyalusing
Eagle Valley Mound National Historic District, Glen Haven

PARKS, REFUGES & NATURAL AREAS
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Wyalusing State Park, Wyalusing
Nelson Dewey State Park, Cassville
Wyalusing Hardwood State Forest
Dewey Heights Prairie State Natural Area
Blue River Sand Barrens State Natural Area
Wyalusing Walnut State Forest
Cassville Bluffs State Natural Area

RIVERS
Mississippi River
Little Platte River
Big Green River
Menomonee River
Blue River
Platte River
Grant River
Wisconsin River
Little Green River

POINTS OF INTEREST
Dickeyville Grotto, Dickeyville
Sinsinawa Mound, Sinsinawa
Cassville Car Ferry, Mississippi River
Stonefield, Cassville
Potosi Brewery & National Brewery Museum, Potosi
Mississippi River Bridge to Dubuque, IA
Nine out of ten fish prefer our bait.

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Get a dozen half off.

Must present coupon at time of purchase. Limit one coupon per person. Offer good through Labor Day 2020.
example, if someone is fishing in the La Crosse area on the Wisconsin side, they would follow Wisconsin regulations. If they’re fishing on the Minnesota side of the river, they would have to follow the regulations put out by Minnesota.

Bob: Megan, how do we find out more information about the Wisconsin DNR?

Megan: The Wisconsin DNR has an awesome website. Just about anything you want to know can be found on that website. Encourage folks to go online and just type in “wisconsindnr” [dnr.wi.gov] and take a look at our website. Another resource we have is a “Hunt Wild Wisconsin App.” It’s a free app that people can download on their smartphones. It’s a really good resource. It has an interactive map on there that has overlays of where the public land is so they know if it’s public land or private land where they’re at. They can also look up regulations for the different species. They can look up shooting hours, so that’s a really good resource.

To find out more about the Wisconsin Great River Road please check out the website www.WiGRR.com.

Wisconsin DNR Website https://dnr.wi.gov/

Bob Schmidt is a radio veteran for 3 decades. Since he’s left the radio business, he finds joy in interviewing, educating and inspiring others with his pod casts.

Megan Jensen is a Wisconsin Conservation Warden. The mission of the WI DNR is to protect, enhance, and promote the safe and wise use of our natural resources.
Visit! Potosi Tennyson

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Photos courtesy of Stephen Gassman Photography
Eagle Viewing
By Anastasia Penchi

It’s been the national symbol for the United States since 1782 when our newly formed country needed a national seal.

Despite declines, bald eagles have had a remarkable comeback in states like Wisconsin, where they soar majestically over the Mississippi River.

See eagles at ground level
Overlooking Lake Onalaska is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Visitor Center, located within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (the migration flyway above the Mississippi River accessible in four states). More than 300 pairs of bald eagles nest the refuge and can be seen year-round: Mates renew their bond November until March with aerial displays; they teach young ones to hunt from March to October; and open water fish from November to March. The Onalaska Visitor Center is unique because it has two miles of paved and packed gravel trails and a River Walk exhibit that allows you to “walk on water” within the refuge. Take a look at what lies beneath the river surface – you might see something eagles like to eat. A viewing platform at the end of the paved trail from the Refuge visitor center provides opportunities to see eagles, waterfowl, and other wildlife.

Watch eagles in comfort
Wings Over Alma Nature & Art Center celebrates nature and art, while also promoting ethics in the environment. It is perched within the same refuge mentioned above, but you can see things from a higher location as the City of Alma spreads onto a bluff. The center boasts both a 30-foot viewing outdoor deck and interior viewing area, which is especially good for those with limited mobility. It’s also nice for those who prefer to do their eagle watching in temperature-controlled environments.

Spot eagles from your car
The Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce and Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center advises visitors who want to see eagles to stay in their vehicles. Apparently, eagles are used to these motorized bird blinds nowadays. Take a spotting scope and get comfy. Research eagle nest locations and feeding areas before you go by studying the tips on the chamber’s website. You can also learn more about them during Bald Eagle Appreciation Days, which is held every February. In La Crosse an eagle viewing area is located just off Rose Street near Interstate 90. View eagles in this location from your car or use the spotting scopes provided at the site.

Eagles have homes, too
An abundance of top quality wetland habitat is what makes the observatory at River View Park in Ferryville an eagle-spotting hub. Cold morning air warms and lifts, and eagles take advantage, soaring amid the nearby bluffs. The Annual Bald Eagle Watching Day takes place in March. There are numerous activities during the event including a live eagle program and local youth are asked to submit eagle-related art projects.
Mississippi Flyway

National Wildlife Refuges - Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge

An abundance of top-quality wetland habitats and two National Refuges make this the perfect destination for those wanting to observe spring and fall waterfowl migrations. Over 40% of North America’s ducks, geese, swans and other waterfowl use the Mississippi River flyway during their migration.

Over 300 species of birds have been spotted along the Wisconsin Great River Road. The area is famous for bald eagles, which can be seen throughout the year, but are particularly plentiful during the winter months. Tundra swans, sandhill cranes and white pelicans flock at various points in the Refuges visible from Wisconsin’s Great River Road in the spring and fall.

Visitor Centers

Onalaska, Wisconsin is home to a Visitor Center with exhibits and walking paths through the prairie. A paved path from this visitor center takes you to a viewing platform overlooking Lake Onalaska. A visitor contact station at the Trempealeau Refuge is open to the public during business hours to pick up informational material or ask questions about the area. Special programs are offered throughout the year at both locations.

Wildlife Viewing

There are observation decks, pull-offs, and canoe and bike trails to help you observe the natural wonders of the Refuge. Although boating provides the most intimate look at this river system, many visitors enjoy viewing the Refuge’s wild and scenic beauty from bluff top overlooks in state and local parks bordering the Refuge. The Refuge and its wildlife mark time by the ancient rhythms of spring, summer, fall and winter. An eagle viewing area is available near Interstate 90 on Rose Street in La Crosse; winter is prime time viewing for this location.

Fishing

The Refuge is an anglers’ paradise, and is known for walleye, largemouth bass, crappie, catfish and bluegill. There are year-round fishing opportunities including many ice fishing locations. Fishing is allowed in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Canoe Trails

Marked canoe trails wind through the marshes and backwater areas of the Refuge. Canoe areas provide quiet, peaceful areas to paddle a canoe or kayak. Explore your National Wildlife Refuge by water.

Environmental Education

The Refuge’s environmental education program focuses on increasing understanding of the Refuge. The programs strive to inspire a life-long connection to nature, encourage active stewardship and foster future conservationists. Contact Refuge staff for more information on environmental education opportunities.

Wildlife Photography

Wildlife on the refuge are waiting to be captured by photographers. Patience and time allow photographers to capture the wildlife of the skies and forests. Good luck on your photographic journey.

Exploring the Mississippi River

The entire Great River Road borders the river Refuges. You can find your adventure on the Refuges by exploring the Great River Road.

For more information: www.fws.gov/refuge/Upper_Mississippi_River or call 608-779-2392

Photo courtesy: Dylan Overhouse
Bicycling does a lot more than just provide exercise. Studies show it helps you sleep better, look better, increases your brain power and makes you live longer. In many areas, it even gets you to your destination faster.

There are plenty of ways to enjoy two wheels along Wisconsin’s Great River Road, the 250 miles of Highway 35, which runs adjacent to the Mississippi River from Kieler, Wis., in the south, to Prescott in northern Wisconsin.

No matter your biking style, one of these locations is likely to fit the bill:

**Bike on trails**
The Great River State Trail has a finely crushed limestone surface and follows an abandoned railroad line, which means it is easy for the whole family to bike together safely. This 24-mile trail travels from La Crosse to Onalaska to Trempealeau and beyond. Note the wildflowers as you bike through the prairies and the wildlife living in the backwaters of the Mississippi River Valley. This trail is particularly notable because it is inside the Mississippi River migratory bird flyway; passes through two national wildlife refuges; and is part of the state trail system that connects all the way to Reedsburg, Wis.

**Mountain biking beauty**
Those mountain bikers wanting a more rugged adventure should hit the rolling hills of Wyalusing State Park in Bagley, Wis. It has trails totaling 7 miles that are classified as easy to intermediate so they are perfect for beginners and families. Some describe the Mississippi Ridge Trail as challenging, but it’s hard to resist a 1.8 mile ride along the bluff that ends with such a picturesque view of the Mississippi River. Besides, after the ride, there are other fabulous sites to explore on foot including a small limestone cavern called Treasure Cave and some waterfalls. It’s a favorite state park for many campers, so why not make it a weekend?

**Road bikers rejoice**
The Great River Road isn’t just for cars. Road biking is especially popular with those who like exploring quaint little towns and witnessing the splendor of the bluffs at a slower pace. Some spots of the road are more desirable than others due to road width and traffic, but all it takes is a little planning. A 38-mile stretch from Nelson to Hager City on the north end hits several cute river towns with neat mom-and-pop businesses. A southern stretch from Lynxville to Genoa features a trip through Ferrryville, a community built on a ledge between the Mississippi River and the bluffs that may be the longest one-street village in the world.

**Serious mountain bikers wanted**
Want a spot where mountain biking trails are rated easy, intermediate and difficult? Hixon Forest in La Crosse has 800 acres of bluff land and wildlife, and some of its bike trails get pretty steep. Hixon Forest hosted the 8th event in the Wisconsin Off-Road Series racing in 2018, and promoters promised “thrilling challenges through rock gardens, root tangles and punchy climbs with fast descents.” Especially appealing is the fact you can ride the trails from Hixon Forest through the La Crosse River Marsh to get to hotels in downtown La Crosse. Make it a weekend of nonstop biking. Park your car at the hotel on Friday and leave it until it’s time to go home Sunday.
As you travel the Wisconsin Great River road you might just see one of the six paddle wheel boats that still meander up and down the Mississippi River. Bringing to mind the adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, these steam-powered vessels carry adventurers of a different sort today. People from all over the world come to cruise the Mississippi and enjoy the raw beauty of our region.

2020 Shore Stop Schedule
Boats dock at the Mississippi Levee in Riverside Park, La Crosse. Schedule subject to change according to the unpredictable river conditions. Please call ahead to make sure the boat is on schedule: 800-658-9424

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>americanqueensteamboatcompany.com</td>
<td>888.749.5280</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>12:30-4:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 8</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>8:30am-12:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, September 18</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>12:30-4:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 22</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>8:30am-12:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMERICAN QUEEN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>americanqueensteamboatcompany.com</td>
<td>888.749.5280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, August 1</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>12:30-4:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 5</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>8:30am-12:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, August 15</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>12:30-4:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 19</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>8:30am-12:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sorry, no tours of the boats are available.

Information courtesy of Prairie du Chien Chamber of Commerce (prairieduchien.org) and Explore La Crosse (explorelacrosse.com).
CAR FERRY
Cassville Car Ferry from Cassville, WI to Millville, IA in Grant County

MISSISSIPPI RIVER LOCKS & DAMS
Lock & Dam #9, near Lynxville, WI in Crawford County
Lock & Dam #8, Genoa, WI in Vernon County
Lock & Dam #7, near La Crosse, WI in La Crosse County
Lock & Dam #6, Trempealeau, WI in Trempealeau County
Lock & Dam #5A, near Fountain City, WI in Buffalo County
Lock & Dam #4, Alma, WI in Buffalo County

MISSISSIPPI RIVER BRIDGES
Mississippi River Bridge from Grant County, WI to Dubuque, IA
Mississippi River Bridge from Prairie du Chien, WI to Marquette, IA
Mississippi River Bridge from Crawford Co, WI to Lansing, IA
Mississippi River Bridge from La Crosse, WI to La Crescent, MN
Mississippi River Bridge from La Crosse, WI (Interstate 90) to Minnesota
Mississippi River Bridge from Buffalo County, WI to Winona, MN
Mississippi River Bridge from Nelson, WI to Wabasha, MN
Mississippi River Bridge from Hager City, WI to Red Wing, MN
Mississippi River Bridge from Prescott, WI to Hastings, MN

VISITOR CENTERS
Platteville Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center
Platteville, WI in Grant County
Prairie du Chien Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center
Prairie du Chien, WI in Crawford County
Explore La Crosse
La Crosse, WI in La Crosse County
La Crosse Area Travel Wisconsin Welcome Center
La Crosse, WI in La Crosse County
Wings Over Alma Visitor Center
Alma, WI in Buffalo County
Great River Road Visitor & Learning Center
Prescott, WI in Pierce County

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES
Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge
Buffalo, Trempealeau, La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford & Grant Counties
Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge
Buffalo & Trempealeau Counties

GREAT RIVER ROAD INTERPRETIVE CENTERS
Potosi Brewing Company
Potosi, WI in Grant County
Stonefield, State Agricultural & Historical Site
Cassville, WI in Grant County
Fort Crawford Museum
Prairie du Chien, WI in Crawford County
Villa Louis, State Historical Site
Prairie du Chien, WI in Crawford County
Great River Road Visitor & Learning Center
Prescott, WI in Pierce County
Genoa National Fish Hatchery
Genoa, WI in Vernon County

STATE PARKS
Wyalusing State Park
Wyalusing, WI in Grant County
Nelson Dewey State Park
Cassville, WI in Grant County
Wildcat Mountain State Park
Ontario, WI in Vernon County
Perrot State Park
Trempealeau, WI in Trempealeau County
Merrick State Park
Fountain City, WI in Buffalo County
Kinnickinnic State Park
River Falls, WI in Pierce County

WISCONSIN STATE TRAILS (bike & pedestrian)
Hillsboro State Trail, Vernon County
La Crosse River State Trail, La Crosse County
Great River State Trail, Buffalo, Trempealeau & La Crosse Counties
Buffalo River State Trail, Buffalo County
Chippewa River State Trail, Pepin County
Everyone knows La Crosse has one of the nation's premier Oktoberfest festivals. Well, on top of that we also have Holmen's Kornfest, West Salem's June Dairy Days, La Crescent's Applefest, and Celebrate Onalaska... the festivals go on and on. What can we say? **WE'RE FESTIVE.**