



STAGECOACH TRAIL DISTRICT

Mile Post (MP) 0.0-23.0

The Stagecoach Trail portion of the St. Croix Scenic Byway features outstanding scenic and recreational areas within an easy drive of the Twin Cities. This portion of the Byway route extends northward from a point of intersection with the Great River Road, then follows the early trail from Point Douglas through Afton to Stillwater, a distance of 23.0 miles. Private nature reserves, local, county and state parks all provide abundant opportunities to enjoy the natural resources and outdoor recreational activities that make the Byway a nationally-renowned destination. Whether you are looking for boating, fishing, skiing, camping, nature hikes, breathtaking vistas, tranquil farm settings, educational programs, history, heritage experiences, even bison watching, it is all available on the Stagecoach Trail section of the St. Croix Scenic Byway. Please refer to Map Legend on p. 1.

Ferry between Prescott and Point Douglas circa 1900, Minnesota Historical Society.



View of Lake St. Croix from Point Douglas Park, photographer Bill Neuman



Point Douglas Drawbridge, photographer Bill Neuman

MP0.1 Point Douglas, Minnesota

(N44° 44.903', W092° 48.496')

The meeting point of the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers, Point Douglas is located at the beginning of the historic 1852 Point Douglas to Superior Military (or Government) Road, encountered along many portions of the Byway. At one time Point Douglas was a bustling frontier community, but all that remains now of the original settlement is the schoolhouse. The first post office outside of a military installation was established here in July of 1840. At the nearby Point Douglas Park there is a 510-foot swimming beach on the St. Croix River, a fishing pier, restrooms, changing rooms, picnic tables, and barbecue grills for the public to use. This park provides a magnificent upstream view of the St. Croix River, also known here as Lake St. Croix. From this point you can still view abandoned piers of the old lift bridge, built in 1922, which was replaced in 1990 with the only drawbridge in the Twin Cities metro area. The Point Douglas drawbridge has an unusual design as it is driven by gears rather than the traditional counterweight.

MP1.8 Carpenter Nature Center

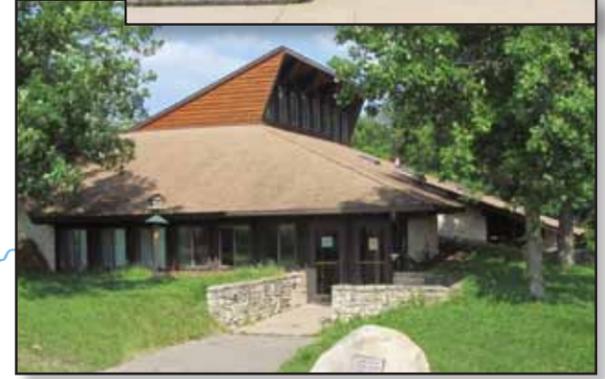
(N44° 45.912', W092° 49.041')

With property on both the Minnesota and Wisconsin sides of the St. Croix National Scenic River, the Carpenter Nature Center is a wildlife habitat preserve and educational center. On the Minnesota side, ten miles of hiking trails wind along the river through 425 acres of pines, oak savanna, restored prairies, wooded ravines, and an apple orchard. Wildlife abounds in the restored prairie and wooded bluffs in the 300-acre Wisconsin side of the nature preserve. Sections of trails are accessible for visitors with mobility limitations. There is a visitor center, beaches, exhibits and live animal displays.

MP4.5 St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park

(N44° 48.152', W092° 48.374')

This 579-acre regional park is located on the wild and scenic lower St. Croix River. The park offers a variety of landscapes including rolling upland fields, wooded ravines and three quarters of a mile of river frontage. Facilities include a boat launch, fishing pier, camping, picnic shelters, trails, ball courts, children's play structures, cross-country ski trails (*ski permits required*), and a conference cottage. *Vehicle permits required.*



Top photo: Afton State Park Office, photographer Bill Neuman
Bottom photo: Afton State Park Visitor Center, photographer Bill Neuman

MP7.7 Afton State Park

(N44° 53.730', W092° 46.997')

This is the southernmost of six state parks along the Byway. This 1,695-acre park has scenic bluff lands, two miles of river frontage with a swimming beach, canoeing/kayaking, trails, fishing, camping areas, cabins, picnic shelters (*two are ADA accessible*), a visitor center/warming house, park programs, volleyball, and horseshoe courts, all nestled amidst outstanding landscapes of woods and open prairies. *Vehicle permits required.*



Afton Historical Museum, photographer Bill Neuman



St. Croix River looking north toward Afton, photographer Bill Neuman

MP11.4 Afton

(N44° 53.730', W092° 46.997')

Afton is a charming historic village settled in the 1840's by New Englanders and later by German and Swedish farmers. It is a quaint community with many historic homes and buildings. Each year the town hosts a unique 4th of July parade only one block long. The Cushing Hotel (Afton House) on St. Croix Trail South is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A modest frame structure, it was built in 1867 to lodge the railroad workers, lumbermen, and travelers who were populating the region.

Heritage Derived

from Native Language and Traditions

Catfish Bar

Visible across the river from Afton is a sandbar called the Catfish Bar or Pike Bar. According to a Dakota legend, when two warriors stopped here for the night one became so incredibly thirsty after eating a fish from the river that he lay down at the edge of the water and drank and drank throughout the night. In the morning his friend found him changed into a giant fish that stretched far out into the water. The sands of the river eventually covered the fish so that it now looks like a sandbar. This is why one of the Dakota names for the St. Croix River is *Hogan Wanke Kin* (Where the Fish Lies).

Rattlesnake Effigy Mound

On the shore of the St. Croix River where the city of Afton is now located there was once a group of earthen mounds constructed by Native Americans. This group included an effigy mound in the shape of a giant rattlesnake. The head of the snake was 56 feet across and its length stretched along the riverfront for more than 500 feet.



Afton Press, photographer Bill Neuman