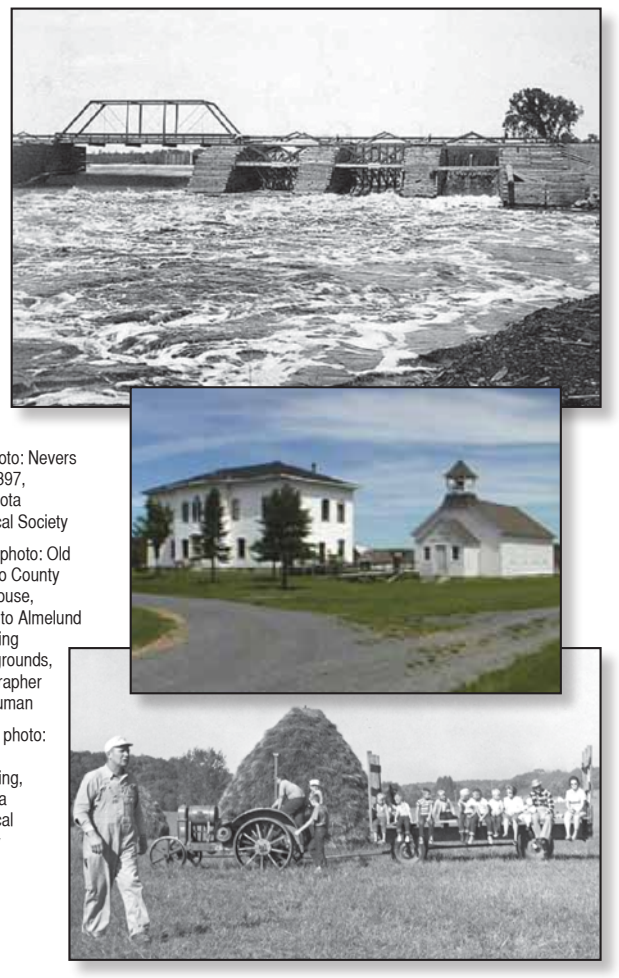
NEVERS PLACE DISTRICT

Mile Post (MP) 55.1-89.1

A sense of wildness that once defined the entire St. Croix River valley is experienced along the Nevers Place portion of the St. Croix Scenic Byway. Traveling along the terraces of the river, this 34.0-mile segment of the Byway features bluffs, vistas, stream crossings, and Wild River State Park. The historic villages of Almelund and Sunrise, the surrounding farms, and the occasional country cemetery add to the timeless feeling of this route segment. Historical markers, many of which were placed by the North Chisago County Historical Society, highlight the region's heritage. For those who want to travel even farther off the beaten path, the Nevers Place District features four unpaved Historic Backways. The District name is derived from the 1890 Nevers Dam, built to control the amount of logs and amount of water flowing down the St. Croix River to the mills below. When built it was the largest wooden dam in the world and its Bear Trap Gate was the largest dam gate in the world. *Please refer to Map Legend on p. 1*



Top photo: Nevers Dam 1897, Minnesota Historical Society

Middle photo: Old Chisago County Courthouse, moved to Almelund Threshing Show grounds, photographer Bill Neuman

Bottom photo: Stack Threshing, Osceola Historical Society

Reed Avenue Historic Backway

(unpaved)

(The south end of this Backway route diverts from the Byway at MP 62.9 at the intersection of Reed Avenue (Chisago Co Rd 81) and Chisago Co Rd 16, then proceed north on Reed (Co Rd 81) to rejoin the Byway farther north at MP 66.5 at the intersection of Reed Avenue and Chisago Co Hwy 12 at the entrance to Wild River State Park)

This scenic, but minimally-maintained and unpaved road winds along the wooded edge of Wild River State Park and is an alternate way to approach the Park. Spring wildflowers are abundant.

MP 64.2 Almelund *(Side Trip)*

(N45° 29.928', W092° 46.936')

(To reach this Side Trip destination, divert from the Byway at MP 64.2, head southerly on Chisago Co 12 one-half mile to Almelund. To reach the Almelund Threshing Show grounds proceed 2.6 miles southeast of Almelund on MN Hwy 95)

Meaning "elm grove" in Swedish, Almelund is an unincorporated village in Amador Township. The community is home to the Amador Heritage Center, which is housed in a former two-room brick schoolhouse built in 1910. The museum is located to the east of Park Trail on Maple Lane. A Swedish log farmstead is reconstructed nearby.

The Almelund Threshing Show is a multi-day tribute to the agricultural history and pioneer heritage of the region held the second weekend of August each year. The 100-acre site for the Threshing Show is located 2.6 miles to the east of Almelund on MN Hwy 95. Historic structures on the grounds, including the 1876 Chisago County Courthouse, are open during the annual event.

(For more Scandinavian heritage connections see the Swedish Ring Historic Backway map on page 24)

MP 66.5 Wild River State Park

(N45° 31.447', W 092° 45.277')

Wild River State Park stretches for 18 miles along the St. Croix River. Nearly 5,000 of the over 6,000 acres contained in the park were donated by Northern States Power Company as part of an even larger transfer of land to the National Park Service, which convinced Congress to designate the St. Croix as one of the original eight rivers protected under the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Start your Park visit at the McElroy Visitor Center, the deck of which offers one of the best views of the river valley. Several historic sites and features are set amongst the prairies, woods and valleys of the park including the location of the former Never's Dam, which was constructed in 1890 to regulate the amount of logs and water flowing down the St. Croix River to the mills below. The park also preserves remnants of the 1852 Point Douglas to Superior Military Road—one segment, the Deer Creek Section, is walkable and in the National Register of Historic Places. Among the activities available in the park are horseback riding, geocaching, wildlife viewing, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, biking, camping, and canoeing. *Vehicle permits required.*

Wild River State Park Entrance, photographer Bill Neuman

Military Road — River Road Historic Backway (unpaved)

(The south end of this Backway route diverts from the Byway at MP 67.7 at the intersection of River Road and Chisago Co Rd 81 (at the point that northbound Co Rd 81 turns sharply west). Take River Road north and then mostly west to rejoin the Byway at MP 72.7 at its intersection with Chisago Co 9 in Sunrise).

This Backway route travels along and through Wild River State Park. The west half of this roadway follows an original segment of the 1852 Point Douglas to Superior Military Road. This is a dirt road, 6.1 miles long, which leads back to the Scenic Byway in the City of Sunrise. This Historic Backway parallels the Byway route on Chisago Co 81 just to the south.

[Read more about the 1852 Point Douglas to Superior Military Road (Government Road) on the Military Road map on page 20]

Top photo: Trillium

Bottom photo: Trout Lilies, both photos by Bill Neuman