

# INTERSTATE STATE PARK

## FACILITIES AND FEATURES

- 37 semi-modern campsites (22 with electricity)
- Trailer sanitation station, flush toilets, and showers
- Primitive group camp (capacity 100)
- Nature Store
- Picnic area with 2 shelters (1 open, 1 enclosed) and 175 tables
- Canoe rental
- Drive-in water access
- 4 miles of hiking trail
- Visitor center

## VISITOR FAVORITES

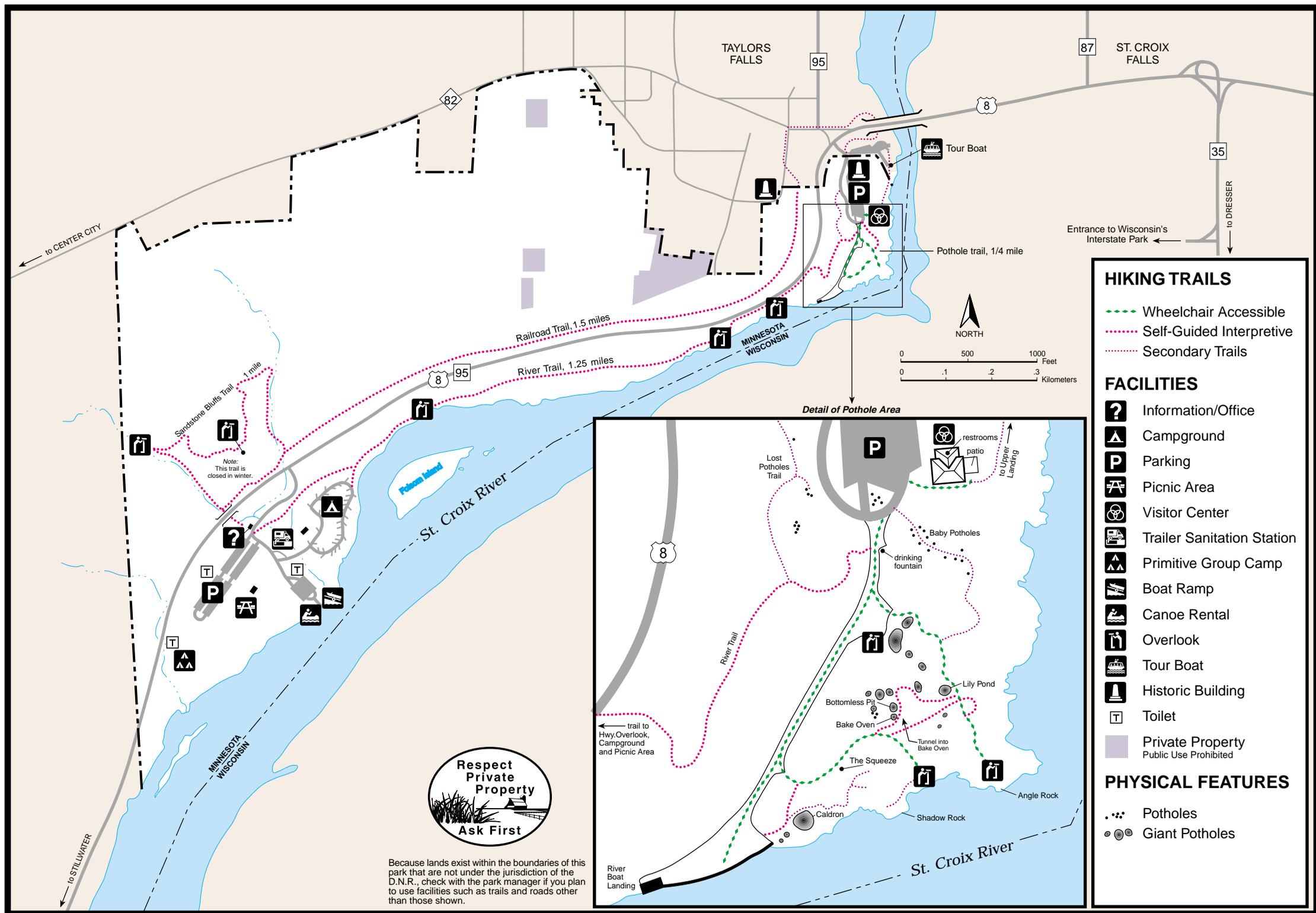
- Canoeing and canoe rental
- Rock climbing
- Excursion boats
- Hiking
- Dalles of the St. Croix
- Glacial potholes

### LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ?

The DNR has mapped the state showing federal, state and county lands with their recreational facilities.

Public Recreation Information Maps (PRIM) are available for purchase from the DNR gift shop, DNR regional offices, Minnesota state parks and major sporting and map stores.

Check it out - you'll be glad you did.





# INTERSTATE STATE PARK

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Interstate State Park  
P.O. Box 254  
Taylors Falls, MN 55084  
(651) 465-5711

Department of Natural Resources  
Information Center  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040

(651) 296-6157 (Metro Area)  
1-888-646-6367 (MN Toll Free)

TDD (Telecommunications  
Device for Deaf)  
(651) 296-5484 (Metro Area)  
1-800-657-3929 (MN Toll Free)

DNR Web Site: [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)

**INTERSTATE STATE PARK** is 45 miles northeast of Minneapolis/St. Paul on the southern edge of the city of Taylors Falls along the St. Croix River. The park entrance is located on U.S. Highway 8. Highway map index: L-15.

Interstate State Park is 293 acres in size. The park was established in 1895 in a joint venture with Wisconsin Interstate Park directly across the St. Croix River, creating the first interstate park in the nation.

In 1968, the U.S. Congress designated the St. Croix as a Wild and Scenic River.

**GEOLOGY:** The geology of Interstate State Park contains some of the most outstanding and unique geological features to be found anywhere in Minnesota.

About 1.1 billion years ago the North American continent began to tear into two parts along a line from present-day Lake Superior south, to what is now Iowa. Huge flows of lava erupted from the widening cracks, hardening into a strong, dark-grey rock called basalt. The scenic, towering cliffs at Interstate State Park are made of this basalt rock.

600 to 500 million years ago, this region of Minnesota was gradually covered by an encroaching sea. The sand and silt deposited by the seas was compressed and hardened over time to form sandstones and shales. These sedimentary rocks are found in the park and nearby areas.

In some areas, the ocean waves pounded high outcrops of basalt, loosening rocks which fell into the sea and were covered by sand. The rock and sand hardened to form a sedimentary rock known as a conglomerate.

As the global climate cooled, several glaciers pushed across Minnesota. The first glacier formed about one million years ago, the last melted about 10,000 years ago. As the last glacier thawed, its torrent of meltwater rushed south, carving a wide valley which is now known as the St. Croix Valley. Only the very resistant basalts were able to partially withstand the floodwaters, leaving behind the magnificent Dalles of the St. Croix River.

Interstate State Park's most outstanding resource may be the immense holes that formed in the bedrock when the Glacial St. Croix River rushed through the area. Giant whirlpools formed in the turbulent river, blasting a vortex of sand and silt-laden water against the bedrock. The holes these whirlpools carved are called glacial potholes.

Interstate State Park contains more glacial potholes in a smaller area than any other location in the world. The most impressive pothole is the Bottomless Pit. With a depth of over 60 feet, it is the world's deepest explored glacial pothole.

**HISTORY:** Humans lived in the St. Croix Valley at least 6,000 years ago. Here, attracted by the many plants and animals, many cultures of American Indians made their home. Evidence of their life here has been found in the park.

The first European explorer to visit the area was probably Daniel Greysolon Sieur Duluth in 1680. The St. Croix River was to become an important route of trade and travel over the next few centuries.

Several fur trading posts were located on the banks of the St. Croix River in the 18th & 19th centuries. The St. Croix Valley provided excellent habitat for valuable fur-bearing mammals. The Columbia Fur Trading

Company operated Fort Barbo, which was established at the falls of the St. Croix in 1825.

1837 treaties with the Ojibway opened up much of the St. Croix Valley to a new industry—logging. The valley's vast forests of white pine were highly prized for their lumber. The St. Croix River was used to transport logs from the valley's forests to the sawmills downstream. The Dalles of the St. Croix may best be remembered for the immense log jams that formed between the high basalt cliffs. The largest jam occurred in 1886, when over seven miles of logs clogged the river upstream from what is now Interstate State Park.

Long before Interstate State Park was established in 1895, the Dalles of the St. Croix was a natural attraction for thousands of visitors. Steamboat service to Taylors Falls began in 1838, and the railroad came to town in 1880. Iron mooring rings set in the rock along the river and the remains of a railroad trestle remind visitors of the steamboats and trains that once brought visitors to the area.

**WILDLIFE:** Visitors will find a surprising diversity of habitat in this small park. A hike through the park will reveal maple-basswood forest, oak savanna, white pine forest, prairie, floodplain forest, and basalt bald habitats.

These habitats support a great variety of wildlife. Many types of rare and endangered species are found at Interstate State Park, including native cactus!

The park is an excellent birding spot during spring and fall migrations. Several trails in the park are excellent listening points for early morning birdsongs and evening owl-calling.

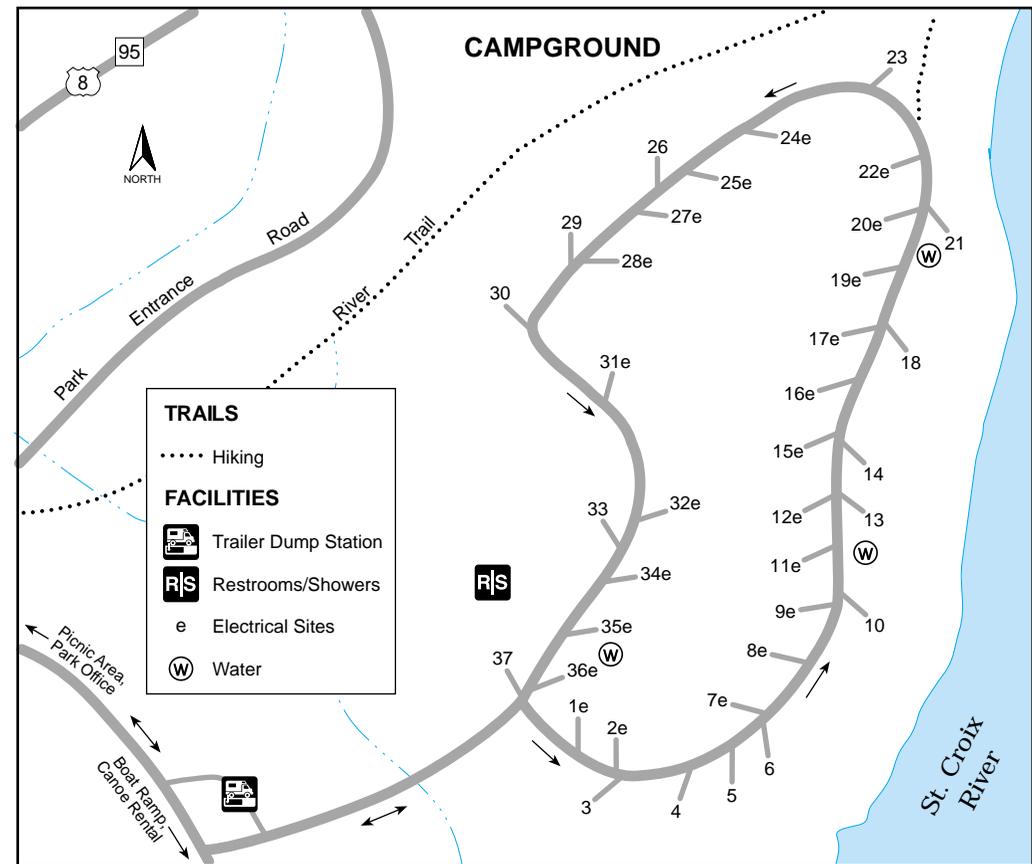
Spring wildflowers carpet the St. Croix Valley from mid-April through May. The Sandstone Bluffs Trail is one of the best spring wildflower walks in the region.

Such varied wildlife and superlative scenery make Interstate State Park an excellent area for everyone that enjoys beauty in nature.

**INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM:** Visitors can learn about the park's natural and cultural history through the park's interpretive programs.

Interpretive publications are available at the park office or visitor center. These brochures bring to life the park's geology, birding, canoe routes, and more. Park naturalists conduct guided tours, hikes, campfire programs, and requested programs. Check at the park office for program schedules.

Interstate State Park's visitor center showcases the area's geological, historic, and natural features. The park's most popular trail begins at the visitor center. The Pothole Trail is a self-guided 1/4 mile hike through the glacial potholes, winding its way through the St. Croix Dalles and into one of the giant holes.



## SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY THE PARK . . .

- The park belongs to all Minnesotans. Please treat it with respect and help us to protect it by following the rules.
- The park is open year-round. On a daily basis, the park gate is closed from 10:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M. the following morning except to registered campers.
- Camp only in designated locations.
- The use of firearms, explosives, air guns, slingshots, traps, seines, nets, bows and arrows, and all other weapons is prohibited in state parks.
- Pets must be restrained on a leash no longer than six feet. Pets are not allowed in park buildings.
- Park in designated areas only.
- Motor bikes and other licensed vehicles are allowed only on park roads, not on trails.
- Enjoy park wildlife and plants but please respect them. Do not pick or dig up plants, disturb or feed animals, or scavenge dead wood.
- Build fires only in designated locations—fire rings or fireplaces. Wood is available for purchase from

park staff. Portable stoves or grills are permitted.

- Daily or annual permits are required for all vehicles entering a state park. They may be purchased at the park headquarters or the Information Center in St. Paul (see "FOR MORE INFORMATION" at left).

**This information is available in alternative format upon request.**

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Department of Natural Resources

DNR Maps