TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

2026

TrailLink Unlimited Guides

St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail

Minnesota, Wisconsin

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With beautiful views of the river, quick access to the city of Stillwater and numerous recreational opportunities, the St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail is popular with both locals and visitors. As the name suggests, the trail creates a loop around the St. Croix River by crossing the river twice. The trail connects the city of Stillwater in Minnesota with Houlton in St. Croix County, Wisconsin. As part of an interstate trail system that winds through Wisconsin and Minnesota, the trail is jointly-owned by the two states. Part of the trail's route in Minnesota runs along the same former Minnesota Zephyr rail corridor as the Brown's Creek State Trail and the two trails meet up in Stillwater by the Brown's Creek State Trailhead Kiosk (401 Laurel St E).

This paved multiuse path meanders along both sides of the St. Croix River, crossing it twice via the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge and the St. Croix River Crossing bridge. Closed to traffic, the Historic Stillwater Lift Bridge is only for pedestrians/cyclists and the St. Croix River Crossing bridge has a protected pedestrian/bike path with barriers separating it from traffic. The Lift Bridge is steep and may be difficult for someone using a mobility device or pushing a stroller.

In Minnesota, the trail hugs the water's edge as it runs along Stillwater's riverfront. Part of the city's riverfront is quite developed with numerous shopping areas, restaurants, and hotels found along the trail as it runs between the city and the river. The rest of the trail on the Minnesota side is sheltered by trees from residential areas. In Wisconsin, the trail wanders further from the riverfront and is mostly surrounded by fields with a very short section in Houlton.

There are a number of spots to check out along the trail, including ten interpretive panels, the Lake St. Croix Overlook, the St. Croix Valley Art Bench, and the Houlton Hawk Landing. Benches, picnic shelters, restrooms, water fountains, trash receptacles, and a bike repair station can all be found at various points throughout the route. The locations of restrooms and water fountains are indicated on the map.

The St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail connects to other trails in the area, including the Gateway Trail (via a short connector trail) and the Brown's Creek State Trail. There are a number of parks and playground along the trail, including Lowell Park (201 Water St N, Stillwater), Lowell Park Gazebo (500 Myrtle St E, Stillwater), Lowell Park South (425 Nelson St E, Stillwater), Teddy Bear Park (207 Nelson St E, Stillwater), Pioneer Park (515 2nd St N, Stillwater), Kolliner Park (Town of St. Joseph, on the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway), Trailhead Park (Hawk St, Houlton), and St. Joseph Town Park (1337 County Road V, Hudson).

Vehicles entering St. Croix County owned properties must

St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail

Minnesota, Wisconsin

States: Minnesota, Wisconsin

Counties: St. Croix,Washington

Length: 4.7miles

Trail end points: Hilltop Trailhead (1395 Hilltop Drive, Houlton) to Blue Star Trailhead (77 Houlton School Circle, Houlton)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt,Concrete

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike,Walking,Wheelchair Accessible

Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available at the following locations (please see the map for detailed directions):

Lowell Park South (425 Nelson St E, Stillwater, MN)

Lowell Park (201 Water St N, Stillwater, MN)

Lowell Park Mulberry Point (466 Mulberry St E, Stillwater, MN)

St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trailhead (1315 Main St S, Stillwater, MN)

St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail Hilltop Trailhead (1395 Hilltop Drive, Houlton, WI)

Loop Trail Blue Star Trailhead (77 Houlton School Circle, Houlton, WI)

Houlton Park and Ride (Hawk St, Houlton, WI)

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Trailhead Restroom Parking Water Fountain Tunnel

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