



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Central Lakes State Trail

Minnesota



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The completion of the final segment of the Central Lakes State Trail in 2005 was the culmination of a positive partnership between volunteers and local and state officials that began in 1992 with the purchase, by the State of Minnesota, of an inactive Burlington Northern Railroad corridor.

The trail begins in Fergus Falls in Otter Tail County and ends in Osakis in Douglas County 55 miles to the south. The official northern trailhead has been an undeveloped parking lot just beyond where the trail crosses under MN 210. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has purchased property immediately south of MN 210 and, in the next few years, will be developing it as the official trailhead. For practical purposes of parking and limited water supply, trail users can park in Delagoon Park and

take a short paved trail spur beyond the picnic area/campground to access the trail at that point (water is available only from sinks in the restrooms at the ballpark). There is also parking at a small gravel lot farther south just before the trail crosses County Road 29 at Chautauqua Lake.

The landscape between the two cities is incredibly diverse, ranging from rolling hills and dense forest to farmland, prairie remnants, and Minnesota's famous lakes. Because the trail runs past lakes used by many species of waterfowl during migration, bird-watching aficionados will want to bring their binoculars.

While much of the trail offers the kind of rural serenity that lends itself to bird-watching and wildlife sightings, it also passes many railroad and state historic sites. The paved pathway also runs directly through the city of Alexandria, just northeast of a small town where the Kensington Runestone, an alleged Viking artifact, was discovered. The urban route passes several miles of both commercial and residential areas before reentering a pastoral landscape. There are significant road crossings along this route, so caution is advised.

The small towns of Ashby, Garfield, Nelson, Brandon, and Evansville all offer convenience stores or cafés where you can grab a bite to eat. The trail is a spacious 14 feet wide for its entire length. In Osakis, the Central Lakes State Trail connects directly to the Lake Wobegon Trail. That trail continues south for another 62 miles to the city of St. Joseph.



Central Lakes State Trail

Minnesota

States: Minnesota

Counties: Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail

Length: 55 miles

Trail end points: 1st Ave. E. and Main St. at
Lake Wobegon Trail (Osakis) to SR 210 just east
of E. Douglas Ave. (Fergus Falls)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Inline

Skating, Wheelchair

Accessible, Snowmobiling, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

To reach the trail in Osakis, take I-94 to Exit 114. Head 1.9 miles northeast on MN 27, and turn left onto First Ave. E. In 0.7 mile turn left onto W. Main St. Park at the Osakis Information Center on the corner of Central Ave. and W. Main St.

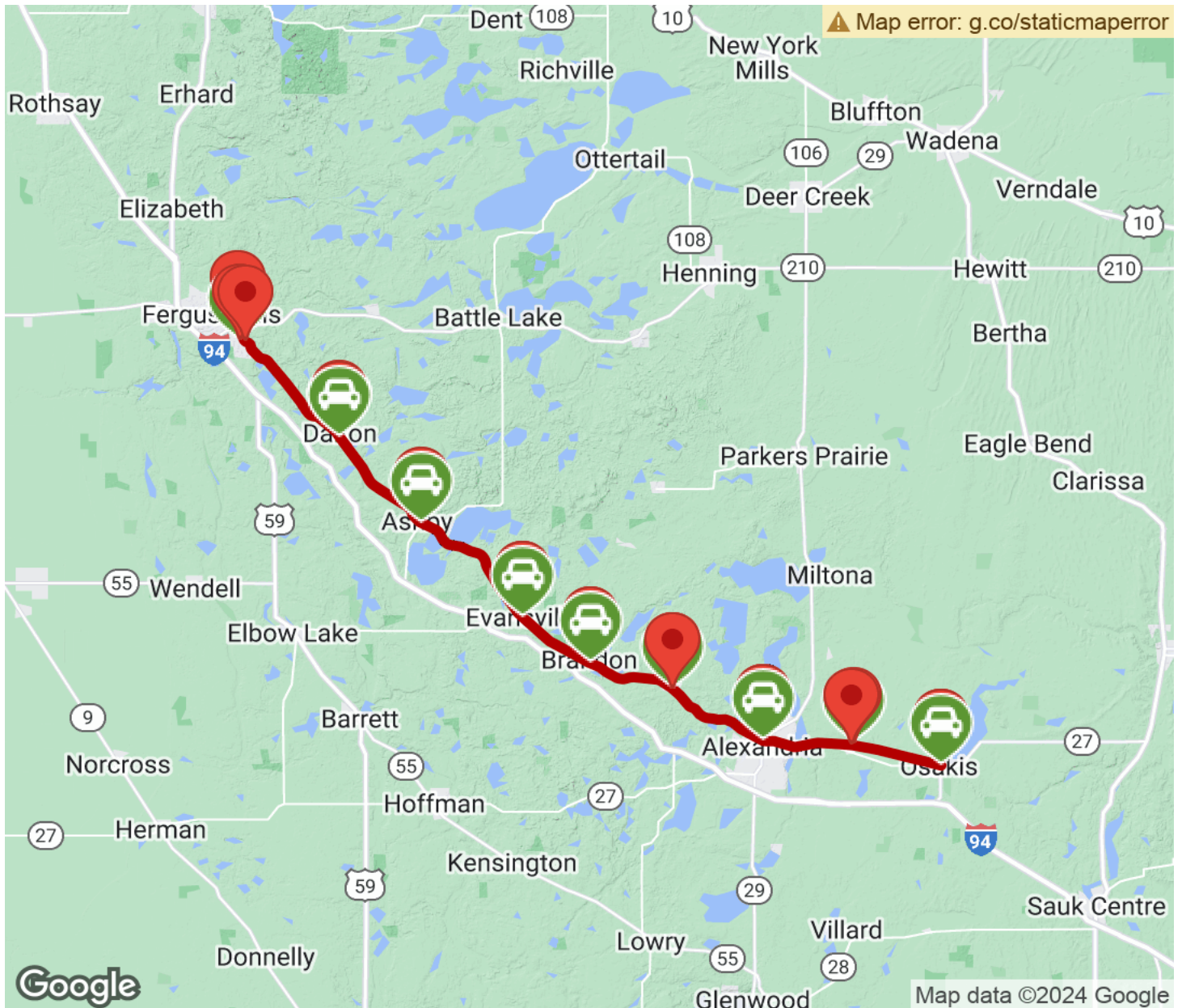
To reach the trail in Fergus Falls at Delagoon Park, from I-94, take Exit 57. Head 1.7 miles north on MN 210 E. Turn right onto Pebble Lake Road, and go 0.9 mile. Turn left onto Delagoon Park Drive. Parking is on the left in 0.5 mile.

In the smaller cities of Dalton, Ashby, Evansville, Brandon, Garfield, Alexandria, and Nelson, park at the dedicated parking lots where available or on city streets.



Central Lakes State Trail

Minnesota



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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