



2025

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides   



**Great River
State Trail**
Wisconsin



Great River State Trail

Wisconsin

Closure notice: As of 05/16/2025, the bridge over Tank Creek (approximately 3 miles east of Trempealeau) on the Great River



Closure notice: As of 05/16/2025, the bridge over Tank Creek (approximately 3 miles east of Trempealeau) on the Great River State Trail is closed until further notice due to damage from a fire on the bridge. Please refer to the [Wisconsin DNR website](https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/trailpass.html) for any recent updates.

The Great River State Trail is named for the Mississippi River, but Ol' Man River stays mostly out of sight if you follow this 27.6-mile trail through river marshes, wildlife preserves, hardwood forests, and old river towns on its eastern shoreline.

Snowmobiling and cross-country skiing are permitted based on local county announcements. Hunting is allowed, in season, about 3 miles north and 10 miles south of the village of Trempealeau.

NOTE: A State Trail Pass (\$25 annually/\$5 daily) is required for bicyclists ages 16 and older. For information, go to dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/trailpass.html. Snowmobilers must display either a Wisconsin registration or a snowmobile State Trail Pass, and hunters must have a license.

About the Route

The trail leaves off from its northern endpoint along Great River Road, where trail users will immediately enter the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge and the surrounding vast marshland. The 6,500-acre refuge is on the Mississippi Flyway, so if visitors time their trip right, they'll be in the company of a vast assortment of waterfowl, wading birds, and migratory songbirds. Watch for offshoot trails that explore the refuge. You'll pick up the railroad grade as you leave the preserve on Refuge Road. About 2.3 miles after leaving the refuge, you'll pass the entrance to a campground for Perrot State Park, which features more wildlife viewing in its rugged terrain of hills, ridges, and bluffs.

Less than 3 miles past the campground, the trail enters the small town of Trempealeau, which provides a nice break with its cafés and parks. Earthen mounds in the vicinity are evidence of civilizations that date back 1,000 years. For the next 10 miles, the route passes through peaceful wooded areas that provide shade on a warm summer day, and then a series of bridges that span several small tributaries within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Six miles past Trempealeau is Lytles Landing, a boat launch park that provides parking and trail access, as well as a 1,200-foot-long railroad trestle spanning the river.

Continuing south, the trail passes small neighborhoods and pockets of woods. Trail users will ride alongside Lake Onalaska, an impoundment of the Black and Mississippi Rivers, for a couple of miles before arriving in the heart of Onalaska about 8 miles past Lytles Landing. There are restaurants and pubs here. A 0.7-mile trail gap requires that



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States: Wisconsin

Counties: Buffalo, La Crosse, Trempealeau

Length: 27.6 miles

Trail end points: WI-35 (Fountain City) to 3801 Co Rd B (La Crosse)

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Fishing, Mountain Biking, Snowmobiling, Walking

Parking & Trail Access

The Great River State Trail runs between WI-35 (Fountain City) and 3801 Co Rd B (La Crosse), with parking available at both ends.

Parking is available at:

- N 14949 W Prairie Rd. (Trempealeau)
- 23787 Trail View Ln. (Trempealeau)
- 101 Irvin St (Onalaska)

Please see [TrailLink map](#) for all parking options and detailed directions.



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