

### Key Highlights

- While tracing America's river, the MRT Bikeway provides opportunity for significant adventure and outstanding cultural enrichment.
- There is a unique intimacy and connection to what is happening while traveling upon a bicycle.
- Minnesota is the place to bike! In 2011 Minnesota was ranked number 4 as "most bicycle friendly state in the United States." In 2010 Minneapolis was recognized as America's best city to bicycle and Minnesota was named the country's Best State Trails.
- There is something for everyone! Over 100 miles of off-road trails have been incorporated into the route to match the needs of a wide range of would-be adventurers.
- Save some for later! the MRT can be the blueprint for numerous trips ridden over many years.

### Connections

- The MRT travels through ten states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana
- The MRT travels through nearly 70 cities and 21 counties in Minnesota.
- The MRT connects with 3 states and 10 regional trails in Minnesota.
- The MRT connects to 8 state parks, 1 national park and numerous regional parks in Minnesota.
- The MRT travels through two bicycle friendly large urban areas - the St. Cloud metro area and the Twin Cities metro area.

# Minnesota,

the source of the Mississippi River, is an ideal 833 mile beginning to your expedition on the 3000 mile Mississippi River Trail. Or, by itself, Minnesota can be a bicycling destination of international quality. Through small towns, and thriving metropolises, among pristine forests and historic landscapes, from the river's beginning as a meandering stream small enough to walk across, along it's transformation into a monumental waterway, you will find the MRT in Minnesota an awe-inspiring journey.

The industry, transportation and settlements that have lined the river throughout history still exist today. Enter traditional downtowns near the water that invite you in for glimpses of the past along with modern support and amenities. Find evidence of the logging trade, the era of mining, and learn about past and present day Native American cultures. Historical markers, interpretive museums, and remnants of industrial infrastructure offer views into the river's past and current influence.

The Mississippi River is a central part of Minnesota life today. The MRT links a wide array of trails, parks, and recreational opportunities such as canoeing, hiking and fishing. Accommodation possibilities range from rustic campgrounds to first class resorts. Throughout the state, experience challenging hills, and gentle trails, stately pine forests, and magnificent wetlands, birdwatching, wildlife and striking fall color in a variety of Minnesota communities.

*"The Great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun"*  
Mark Twain



**Mississippi River Trail Bikeway-** The MRT is a bikeway, largely on the shoulders of low volume, paved roads, offering the safest and best bicycling experience along the length of the Mississippi River through ten states, from the headwaters at Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico.

**MRT ROUTE COMPOSITION:**  
**77 % On-road Route**  
**23 % Off-road Trail**

**ROUTE CHARACTERISTICS:**  
**Surface: Paved**  
**Distance: 817 miles**

## HEADWATERS TO THE IOWA BORDER

For more information: [www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html)

**MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRAIL BIKEWAY**

# Scenery

abounds as the Mississippi River Trail connects the cities of Little Falls and Elk River. The river corridor provides a relaxing ride past farms, fields, and woodlands on pleasant rural roads while Midwestern hospitality awaits you in the small communities. In Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Monticello, you can enjoy access to the Mississippi River in numerous riverside parks, while local, off-road trail segments allow you to travel alongside the river through enchanting wooded corridors. Acting as a hub for Scenic Mississippi, St. Cloud celebrates its riverfront with Clemens and Munsinger Gardens, while nearby Lake Maria State Park offers you a nice out of the way hiking and camping experience.

Near Little Falls is the Lake Wobegon Trail that celebrates Garrison Keilor's imaginary town.

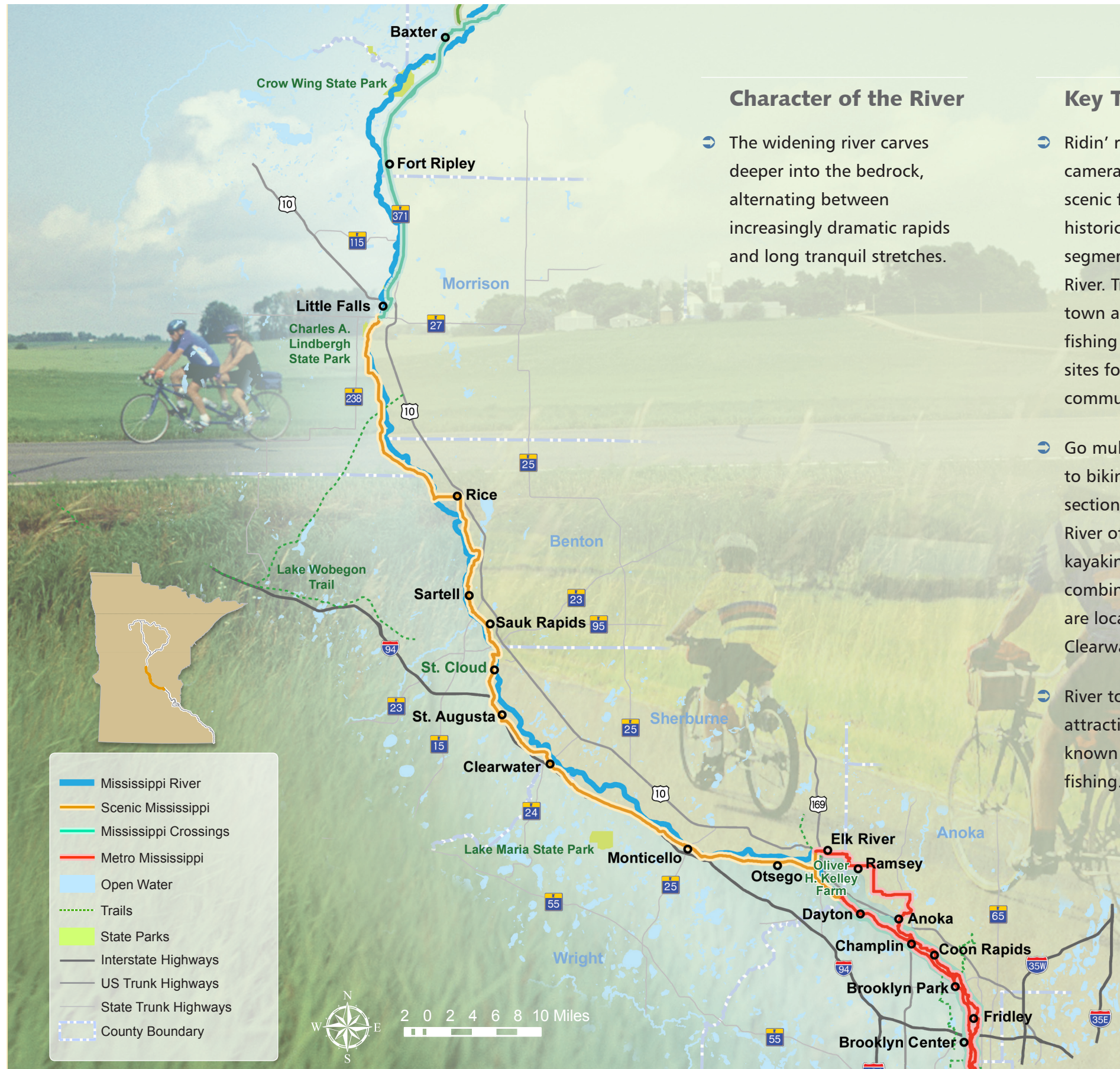
Monticello has an inviting downtown just off the river, and other historic sites are concentrated in the communities of St. Cloud, Clearwater, and Elk River. Break your ride to journey back in time at the nearby Oliver H. Kelley Farm in Elk River. At this working museum, you can pick heirloom vegetables, churn butter, make homemade soap and participate in other farm activities, while costumed guides offer insight into rural Minnesota life in the 1860s.

## Character of the River

- The widening river carves deeper into the bedrock, alternating between increasingly dramatic rapids and long tranquil stretches.

## Key Themes

- Ridin' rural - grab your camera and photograph scenic farm-scapes and historic barns along this segment of the Mississippi River. Travel from town to town and enjoy the markets, fishing piers and picnic sites found in several of the communities.
- Go multimodal - in addition to biking, this pastoral section of the Mississippi River offers canoeing, kayaking and other travel combinations. Outfitters are located in St. Cloud, Clearwater, and Monticello.
- River tourism is a great attraction, and the water is known for excellent sport fishing.



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### SCENIC MISSISSIPPI ROUTE COMPOSITION:

**97% On-road Route**  
**3% Off-road Trail**

### ROUTE CHARACTERISTICS:

**Surface: Paved**  
**Distance: 85 miles**

## LITTLE FALLS TO ELK RIVER

**For more information:** [www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/mrt.html)

**SCENIC MISSISSIPPI**  
MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRAIL  
BIKEWAY

# 10-State Mississippi River Trail Map



Source: MRT, Inc.

