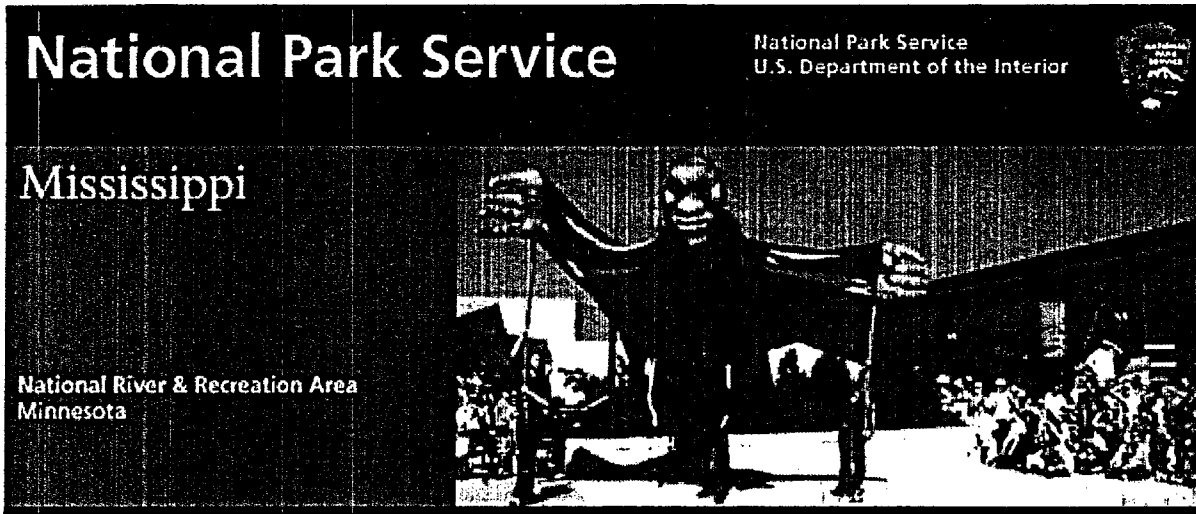


NPS 2005



Mississippi River Visitor Center
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Used by Native Americans for trade, food, and water long before Europeans visited the "New World," the Mississippi River and its watershed is a major contributor to the ecology, culture, politics and economy of the North American continent. To acknowledge this fact, Congress established the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area in 1988. The park's boundaries enclose about 54,000 acres and 72 miles of river. They describe a narrow corridor of land on either side of the Mississippi from Dayton and Ramsey, MN on the north boundary past Hastings, MN on the south border. Only 35 acres are owned by the Park Service.

These 72 miles are a significant and representative stretch of the Mississippi. They contain the only gorge and waterfall on the main course of the entire 2,350 miles of river. Named St. Anthony Falls in 1680, the falls were later used to generate power for logging, flour milling, and electricity for a growing population. Less than ten miles away, the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers was an early outpost for the American military and an important crossroads for fur traders. Further downstream, St. Paul marked the upper end of steamboat navigation and was the jumping off place for tens of thousands of settlers. And the Vermillion River bottoms are excellent examples of floodplain forest ecology. From visitor centers to trails, from industrial centers to Mississippi River backwaters, this park has a bit of something for everyone.

Designations

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National Recreation Area - November 18, 1988
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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge



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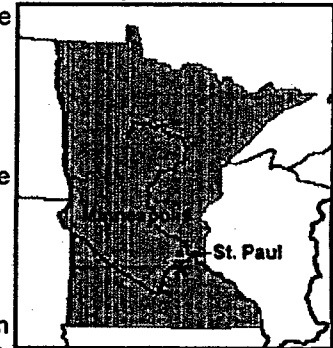
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Introduction

Not more than 10 miles from downtown Minneapolis lies an outdoor experience as primitive and natural as any state or national park. The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is one of only four urban wildlife refuges in the nation, a place where wild coyotes, bald eagles, badgers, and beavers live next door to three million people.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1976 to provide habitat for a large number of migratory waterfowl, fish, and other wildlife species threatened by commercial and industrial development. Today, the Refuge comprises 14,000 authorized acres, stretching for 34 miles from Fort Snelling State Park to Jordan, Minnesota. The Refuge has eight units, four of which have trails and interpretive signs. The Visitor Center is located in Bloomington, one mile east of the Mall of America.



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge also manages a fourteen county Wetland Management District (WMD), stretching from Blue Earth County to Chisago County. Within the WMD over 2,600 acres of land have been designated as Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) – lands set aside for the production of waterfowl and other wetland and prairie dependent species. WPAs, like the Refuge, are open to the public. In addition, over 2,000 acres of wetlands and grasslands are protected through permanent easements.

The National Wildlife Refuge System contains 542 national wildlife refuges, at least one in every state, encompassing over 93 million acres of land. Most national wildlife refuges are strategically located along the major bird migration corridors, ensuring ducks, geese, and songbirds have rest-stops on their long annual migrations. Hundreds are home to endangered species, while others host big game like caribou, buffalo, deer, and elk.

Management of the Refuge involves restoring wetlands, grasslands, and oak savannas, enhancing aquatic plant diversity through water level management, grassland management, exotic species control, and water quality monitoring.

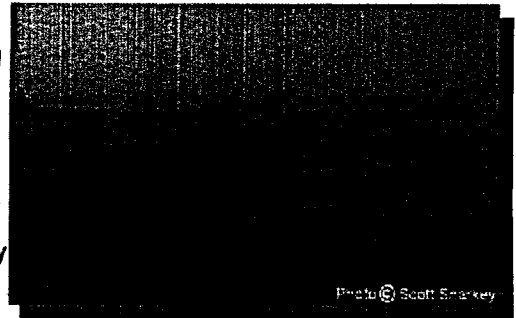


Photo © Scott Smerkey

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is well known for bird watching. Annual migrations funnel hundreds of thousands of waterfowl, songbirds, and raptors through the valley. Other wildlife-dependent recreation uses on the Refuge and WPAs include: wildlife observation, wildlife photography, hunting, fishing, environmental education, and interpretation.

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Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
3815 American Blvd. East
Bloomington, MN 55425
Phone/TTY: 952.854.5900
Fax: 612.725.3279



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge



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Private Lands Restoration

Before the land was settled, native prairie spread uninterrupted for miles across southwestern and western Minnesota as a sea of waving grass up to eight feet tall. Wetlands were alive with energy as turtles swam and frogs hopped along the swaying cattails. These habitats were not only beautiful, but vital to the balance of Minnesota's natural ecosystem. Prairie and wetland habitats reduce erosion, flooding, and promote diversity. Wetlands also play an important part in restoring ground water and improving water quality.

Today, 1% of Minnesota's native prairie remains and thus drained. The need to protect and restore our state's natural 1988-1999, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge has 1939.3 acres of prairie habitats. The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge works in 13 counties with private landowners who own land to its natural state: Blue Earth, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, LaSueur, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sibley, Steele and Waseca. On their land, these landowners become part of the Program.

How can I restore a prairie or wetland with the Service?

1. Contact a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Representative

Discuss with USFWS what your restoration goals are and a representative will present options available to you.

2. Site Visit by a Representative

A site visit will allow the representative to make an inventory of your property. This, in combination with a survey, will determine the restoration and the benefit to the local watershed and community.

3. Review Restoration and Conservation Options - Select

The representative will discuss the restoration potential of your property and offer suggestions on how the Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program can help. At this time, the representative will discuss available options with the representative to select the option that will best meet your needs. The representative may also refer you to other programs.

4. Initiation of Restoration Process

A timeline for restoration will be established and initiated.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

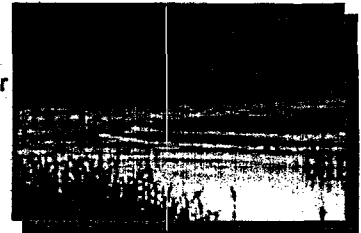
Becoming a part of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is a great way to help restore our natural resources. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provide a \$1000/acre to restore the grasslands/wetlands so there is a better property that is being restored is usually marked by a Partner.

The following is a list of the benefits, requirements, and sign up periods for the program.

Partners for Wildlife Restoration:

Habitat:	Wetland	Grassland
Benefits:	Improve water and soil quality, restore wildlife habitat, and flood control	Improve water and soil quality, restore wildlife habitat, and flood control
Length of agreement:	10 years for most projects, longer for some	15 years for most projects, longer for some
Payment:	None	None
Eligibility:	Areas where a small ditch can be plugged or tile can be broken to restore wetlands	A minimum site of 20 acres of uplands with existing or restorable wetlands present
Provisions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No dugouts, only restorations - 100% cost share to landowner in most situations - No restriction to haying or grazing - All restoration efforts can be removed at end of contract period at landowner expense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or local conservation organization will work with landowner to prepare and seed site - 100% cost share to landowner in most situations - Landowner controls access and is responsible for weed control - No haying or grazing - All restoration efforts can be removed at end of contract period at landowner expense
Sign-up Period	Continuous sign-up	Continuous sign-up

Several counties, businesses and associations help out and contribute donations to the Partners in Wildlife Program. We would like to recognize these people for their generous contributions. Without them, the program would not be possible.



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Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
 3815 American Blvd. East
 Bloomington, MN 55425
 Phone/TTY: 952.854.5900
 Fax: 612.725.3279



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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Habitat Management

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Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge contains a variety of habitats that are actively managed to benefit the many wildlife species who utilize them. Habitats in the Refuge include hillside forest, floodplain forest, oak savanna, wet meadows, emergent marshes, fens, grasslands, lakes, streams, and creeks. Refuge staff manage and restore these habitats through biological control, prescribed burning, water control structures, hydroaxing, invasive plant removal, integrated pest management, seeding, planting, encouraging natural regeneration, and working cooperatively with neighboring cities, land management agencies, and organizations.

Use the links to the left to learn more about habitat management practices on the Refuge.

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