



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Trails

Minnesota Valley State Trail - Information Sheet June 17, 2015

State Authorization Legislation

The Minnesota Valley State Trail was originally legislatively authorized in 1969. It was revised in the 2015 Minnesota Session Laws.

See Minnesota Statute 85.015 STATE TRAILS, Subd. 6.

“Subd. 6. Minnesota Valley State Trail, Hennepin, Dakota, Scott, Carver, Sibley and Le Sueur Counties.

(a) The trail shall originate at Fort Snelling State Park and thence extend generally southwesterly along the Minnesota River Valley through Hennepin, Dakota, Scott, Carver, Sibley, and Le Sueur Counties to the city of Le Sueur, and there terminate. The trail shall include the following state waysides: (a) Rice Lake Wayside, in Scott County; (b) Carver Rapids Wayside, in Scott County; (c) Lawrence wayside, in Scott county; (d) Belle Plaine Wayside, in Carver, Scott, and Sibley Counties; (e) Blakeley Wayside, in Scott County; and (f) Rush River Wayside, in Sibley County.

(b) The trail shall be developed primarily for riding and hiking. Motorized vehicles are prohibited from that portion of the trail on the north side of the Minnesota River, lying between Fort Snelling State Park and Rice Lake Wayside. That portion of the trail on the north side of the Minnesota River, lying between the Bloomington Ferry Bridge pedestrian crossing and the Cedar Avenue Bridge, must be a paved trail developed primarily for hiking and bicycling.

(c) In establishing, developing, maintaining, and operating the trail the commissioner shall cooperate with local units of government and private individuals and groups whenever feasible.”

Federal Authorization Legislation

The Act to provide for a national wildlife refuge in the Minnesota River Valley, and other purposes was created in 1976.

See Public Law 94-466 – October 8, 1976, 94th Congress.

“An Act to provide for a national wildlife refuge in the Minnesota River Valley, and for other purposes, and includes:

“...(c) OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—The plan required by subsection (a) of this section shall—
(1) provide for the Minnesota Valley Trail Corridor, authorized by Minnesota Statute, 1969, section 85.198, as an integral part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the adjacent wildlife recreation area; and
(2) contain such other provisions relating to public use, law enforcement, wildlife conservation, environmental education and interpretation, and other matters as the Secretary and the State deem necessary to preserve, protect, and enhance the refuge recreation area and to carry out the purposes of this Act.”

Existing Status:

- The Minnesota Valley State Trail is developed and paved from the Bloomington Ferry Pedestrian Bridge to Chaska. From Chaska to Belle Plaine there is a natural surface.
- Preliminary engineering drawings have been completed for the State Trail from the vicinity of the USFWS Headquarters in Bloomington to the Bloomington Ferry Pedestrian Bridge. The estimated development cost for this section is approximately \$2.5 million.
- DNR has developed preliminary agreements for review by the City of Bloomington, and the USFWS, for the state trail alignment through their respective properties.
- DNR staff has met with City of Bloomington staff for review and input of the preliminary agreement.
- DNR staff has met with USFWS Refuge Managers for review and input of the preliminary agreement.

Current Development Priority:

- From the vicinity of the USFWS Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge's Visitor Center to the Bloomington Ferry Pedestrian Bridge (an area sometimes referred as the "missing link").
- This segment of the Trail will consist of two trail alignments within the Trail corridor; one will be a paved surface that will meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, allowing people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the unique characteristics of the Minnesota River Valley, one alignment will be a natural surface alignment.
- The alignments will be separated as much as possible, coming together as needed, such as to navigate around wetlands and lakes, and at the planned trail bridge over Nine Mile Creek

Examples of Connections with other existing, and proposed trail systems (when trail systems are completed):

- The Minnesota River State Trail (legislatively authorized from the entrance to Big Stone Lake State Park, extending along the Minnesota River Valley to connect to the Minnesota Valley Trail at the city of LeSueur).
- County trail systems (Carver, Dakota (including Dakota County's proposed Minnesota River Greenway), Hennepin, LeSueur, Scott, and Sibley).
- City trail systems (Minneapolis, Bloomington (the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge is currently being renovated and will provide a trail connection into the State Trail), Burnsville, Eagan, Shakopee).

Existing State Funding Available

See HF 2490 3rd Engrossment-88th Legislature (2013-2014)

- \$2,165,000 is currently available "to develop the Minnesota Valley State Trail from the Bloomington Ferry Bridge to the Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center in Bloomington."