













St. Croix Falls Segment (Atlas Map 1f)

SNAPSHOT

 **8.9 miles:** Ice Age Trail Western Terminus in Interstate State Park to River Rd.

Note: References to “Interstate State Park” or “Interstate SP” refer to Wisconsin’s park, while Minnesota’s park is noted as “Minnesota Interstate State Park.”

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|  <p>At the Ice Age Trail Interpretive Center and other locations in Interstate State Park, the Polk County Tourist Information Center and Lions Park.</p> |  <p>At Interstate SP (incl. Interpretive Center), Polk County Tourist Info Center, Lions Park and St. Croix National Scenic Riverway campsite.</p> |
|  <p>From the St. Croix River, Big Rock Creek and other small streams/creeks. Do not take water from Mindy Creek as the headwaters are at the site of an old landfill.</p> |  <p>Five ColdCache sites on segment.</p> |
|  <p>Walk-in campsite  in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.</p> |  <p>Dogs must be leashed (8-ft max) and under control at all times.</p> |
|  <p>Interstate SP campgrounds and campgrounds  in nearby Taylors Falls, Minn. (see Area Services).</p> |  <p>Portions overlap bike trails, ski trails, roads and sidewalks.</p> |
|  <p>At Interstate SP and Lions Park.</p> |  <p>Portions of this segment may be suitable for those using wheelchairs or similar devices.</p> |

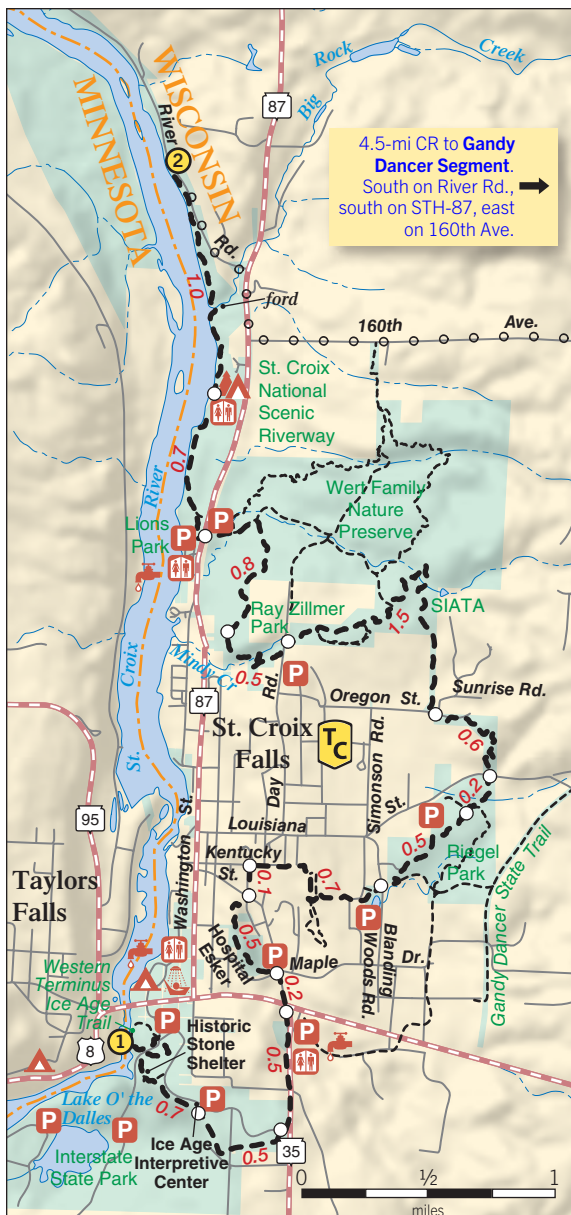
TRAIL ACCESS AND PARKING

- 1 Ice Age Trail Western Terminus in Interstate State Park Trail Access (45.39967, -92.64956):** From St. Croix Falls at the intersection of USH-8 and STH-35, take STH-35 south for 0.6 mi. Turn right, enter Interstate State Park and follow park roads 1.5 mi to the Pothole Trail parking area. A brief walk clockwise on the Pothole Trail leads to the western terminus marker.
Parking: Adjacent to Trail Access.
- 2 River Rd. Trail Access (45.45002, -92.64882):** From St. Croix Falls at the intersection of USH-8 and STH-87, take STH-87 north for 3.0 mi. At River Rd. turn left and go northwest 0.5 mi. **Parking:** Roadside.
Additional Parking: (i) Interpretive Center and other parking areas in Interstate State Park. (ii) Polk County Visitor Information Center at STH-35 and USH-8. (iii) East Georgia St. parking area near its intersection with Vincent St. (iv) Blanding Woods Rd. parking area. (v) Riegel Park on Louisiana St. A spur trail leads to the Ice Age Trail. (vi) Oregon St. roadside parking. (vii) Ray Zillmer Park on Day Rd. (viii) Wert Family Nature Preserve on the east side of STH-87. (ix) Lions Park on STH-87.

THE HIKE

This segment features many geological wonders. The St. Croix River valley you pass through was formed when the area’s glacial lobe retreated. First, meltwater created glacial Lake Duluth. Then, its water drained in giant floods, cutting this valley through billion-year-old volcanic basalt bedrock.

The Interstate State Park’s Pothole Trail offers access to the Ice Age Trail’s western terminus. This loop trail, built soon after the park’s creation in 1900, is one of Wisconsin’s oldest recreational footpaths. From the Pothole Trail parking area, reach the terminus either by taking the northern (non-Ice Age Trail) portion of the loop or the southern (Ice



Age Trail) portion. The glacial potholes and Dalles of St. Croix River, highlighted on the Pothole Trail, were formed when torrential glacial meltwater scoured the riverside bedrock cliffs with rock and silt. The potholes vary in size and depth; the largest is 16 feet deep and 3 feet wide.

The official terminus marker is affixed to a large piece of basalt similar to the one at the Trail's eastern terminus in Potawatomi State Park, Door County. It rests on a basalt cliff overlooking the 100-foot-deep gorge of the Dalles of the St. Croix River. Upriver from just below the terminus marker is the famous rock face of the "Ol' Man of the Dalles." Downriver is a basalt rock protrusion that was unyielding enough to redirect the roaring outflow of the prehistoric lake and river, creating a rare 90-degree turn in the river. This protrusion was the site of the world's largest log jam in 1886. An estimated 50,000,000 board feet of pine piled up for nearly five miles while 400 men worked day and night to clear it. Finally, after six frustrating weeks, a dynamite bomb and a perfectly timed rain that raised the river's water level got the logs moving again.

From the segment's start at the western terminus, head back to the Pothole Trail parking area on the southern portion of the Pothole Trail's loop. Then cross the park road and head southwest on the park's Horizon Rock Trail. The segment ascends steeply, passing the ruins of a stone shelter near a rock-

ledge overlook. Enjoy river views as you walk toward the Ice Age Interpretive Center. Stop in for a detailed map highlighting the park's trails and facilities.

From the Interpretive Center, the segment briefly shares a portion of the Skyline Nature Trail loop before leaving it by turning left and heading east toward the park entrance road. Cross it to join a paved bike path leading north and paralleling STH-35. You'll pass the Polk County Information Center, located on the opposite side of the highway. Follow the paved path as it crosses under USH-8 and turns left on East Georgia Street.

Ascend the Hospital Esker and enjoy excellent views of the city of St. Croix Falls and the glacial lake plain left behind by the drained Glacial Lake Duluth. Descend the esker to the hospital parking area on State Street. Turn north on Roosevelt Street and then east on Kentucky Street, following it until it ends. Continue up a steep bluff. At the top, you'll enter school property. Turn right, cut across a grassy area behind the elementary school, and enter the woods on a gravel path. Re-emerge behind the middle school, passing alongside it before entering another wooded area and quickly intersecting a paved path. Turn right, pass a picturesque pond, cross Blanding Woods Road, and follow the paved path briefly before turning left.

Enter city-managed Florence Baker Riegel Memorial Park. As you head northeast through the park, you'll traverse rock outcroppings and basalt knobs. The segment also crosses a blue-blazed spur trail leading to the Louisiana Street parking area and a white-blazed trail exploring other regions of Riegel Park.

After crossing Louisiana Street, climb a ridge, meander through the woods, and gradually descend to the intersection of Oregon Street and Sunrise Road. Briefly follow Oregon Street west, then turn right and cross open fields between two fence lines. Wind north and then southwest through State Ice Age Trail (SIATA) land, traversing more exposed rock outcroppings, basalt knobs, and surface bedrock. You'll pass a blue-blazed trail leading to Wert Family Nature Preserve's Tall Tale Trail. Continue ahead, and at a large rock outcropping, curve around to its right, meeting a spur trail heading southwest (left) to a large rock outcropping known as Zillmer Point. Two benches at the highest point offer rest for enjoying the long views of the St. Croix Falls River valley.

Back on Trail, re-enter woods and cross into Ray Zillmer Park, named for the lawyer and avid outdoorsman considered originator of the Ice Age Trail and founder of what is today's Ice Age Trail Alliance. Traveling through the park, you'll pass the first junction with a white-blazed loop trail and then a second junction with it before reaching the Zillmer Park parking area on Day Road.

The segment briefly follows Day Road to the left, then turns right, and crosses a 26-foot-long footbridge. Look carefully at the bridge's limestone landing closest to Day Road; when the limestone is wet, two 6-inch nautilus fossils appear. Continue west through woods, then downhill along boulder-strewn Mindy Creek.

After leaving the creek, head north and continue through the Wert Family Nature Preserve toward the STH-87 Trail access. Cross STH-87 (dangerous road crossing) and hike through Lions Park, then turn north and follow the scenic shoreline of the St. Croix River. Several social trails ("unofficial" trails created by meandering hikers) exist in the area; pay close attention to signage and stay close to the riverbank.

Heading north, you will soon find a shoreline walk-in campsite – part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway – available on a first come, first served basis. North of the campsite, the segment reaches bridgeless Big Rock Creek. Usually, you can cross it on stepping stones, but you may have to ford it in high water.

You'll encounter several more bridgeless creek crossings on your way to the segment's terminus at River Road.

AREA SERVICES

Interstate State Park: Camping. On Trail (715-483-3747, dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/interstate; reservations: 888-947-2757, wisconsin.goingtocamp.com). At Minnesota Interstate State Park (Taylors Falls, MN, 651-539-4500, dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/interstate; reservations: 866-857-2757 or see website).

Tc St. Croix Falls: Restaurant, grocery store, convenience store, general shopping, lodging, camping, library, medical service. On Trail. Most services in downtown on Washington St., USH-8 and STH-35. For area info, contact St. Croix Valley Tourism (thestcroixvalley.com) or the Polk County Tourist Information Center (715-483-1410, discoverpolkcountywis.com).

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway Visitor Center: Walk-in campsite. On Trail (St. Croix Falls, 715-483-3284, or 715-483-2279, NPS.gov/sacn).



JANET WOOD

St. Croix Falls Segment: A pothole created by glacial meltwater's powerful scouring action.