Mississippi River and Recreation Park

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Mississippi River and Recreation Area is a 72 mile river park, established in 1988. Mississippi River is an iconic river and it is recognized as one of the world’s largest rivers and most complex floodplain river ecosystems on the planet. Historically, the river serves as important trade route in North American Continent. The river is used by Native Americans for trade, food, water long before Europeans visited the New World. The river is a major contributor to the ecology, culture, politics and economy of the United States.

There are wide range of activities available for the park visitors. Some of these activities are:

* Bicycling: Minneapolis is well known for its bike-friendly trail systems. Visitors that has no bike can rent one from the Nice Ride rentals. Places to ride to include: Mississippi river trail, Coon Rapids dam, Crosby farm regional park, fort Snelling Park, hidden falls regional park, Minnehaha falls Regional Park, and other parks around the river area.
* Boating and Canoeing: The 72 mile stretch of the Mississippi river provides a unique experience for visitors that have interest in boating and canoeing. The park provides a trail map for visitors. There are some restricted part of the river that are visitors can’t sail to.
* Camping: The Park provide numerous visitor services like restaurants and lodging accommodation. There are recommendations for visitors visiting outside the city. Although the park has no formal campgrounds within the national park, but there are primitive camping on some islands owned by the park service.
* College Science: This is a projects in the park that allows visitors to observe record, and share the data they find with scientists and land managers. To be part of this project, visitors have to apply. The participants can eek out and find species of plants and animals within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and record their sightings on their smart phones using the iNaturalist app.
* Fishing and Hunting: There are fishing opportunities for both boat and shoreline fishing. The Mississippi River is well known as a smallmouth bass fishery with both good numbers and size of fish. The park holds fishing workshops during the summer and winter fishing seasons and provide programming for both youth and adult groups.
* Geocaching: This is an outdoor game where visitors use GPS receivers to find cleverly hidden caches. A cache is a small container with a logbook and possible trinket. The park has many geocaches to hunt down.
* Hiking and Walking: The walks are on hard trail surface and shorter than the hiking trails. The walk trails have amenities like restrooms and drinking water and easy parking. The hikes are more strenuous because of it long distance. During hiking, visitors can enjoy the exceptional historic and natural views.
* Historic Sites: Visitors can visit some historic sites in the park area. Upon visit, visitors will learn the fascinating people, events, and natural history that changed the world. Some of these sites are: historic Fort Snelling, Pike Island, mill city museum, and meeker lock and dam.
* Junior Ranger Program: This a program organized by the park to connect people to the river through numerous activities. The program participants are within the age range of 8-12, but anyone that want to explore the river is welcome. Participants can choose activities to work on to learn about wildlife, ecosystems, and the nation’s history in different Parks.
* Museums: Visitors have the opportunity to find out the park history through viewing artifacts, talking with knowledgeable staff, taking a tour, and viewing exhibits. Some of the museums within the park are: Mill City Museum, Mill City Museum, Sibley House Historic Site, and Science Museum of Minnesota
* National Parks Passport Program: This program allows visitors to explore the 400 units of the National Park Service. The National Parks Passport Program can be purchased at a store in the Park or online on the park website.
* Visitor Centers: There visitors centers in the Park that allows visitors to interpret the history of the park and surroundings. Some of the visitor centers are: Mississippi River Visitor Center, St. Anthony Falls Visitor Center, East Coon Rapids Dam Visitor Center, Fort Snelling State Park Visitor Center, and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center.
* Watching Wildlife: The Park supports variety of environments for a diverse population of birds and wildlife. There are many places to watch for birds and wildlife like: Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Coldwater Spring, Marshall Terrace Park, Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area, and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge