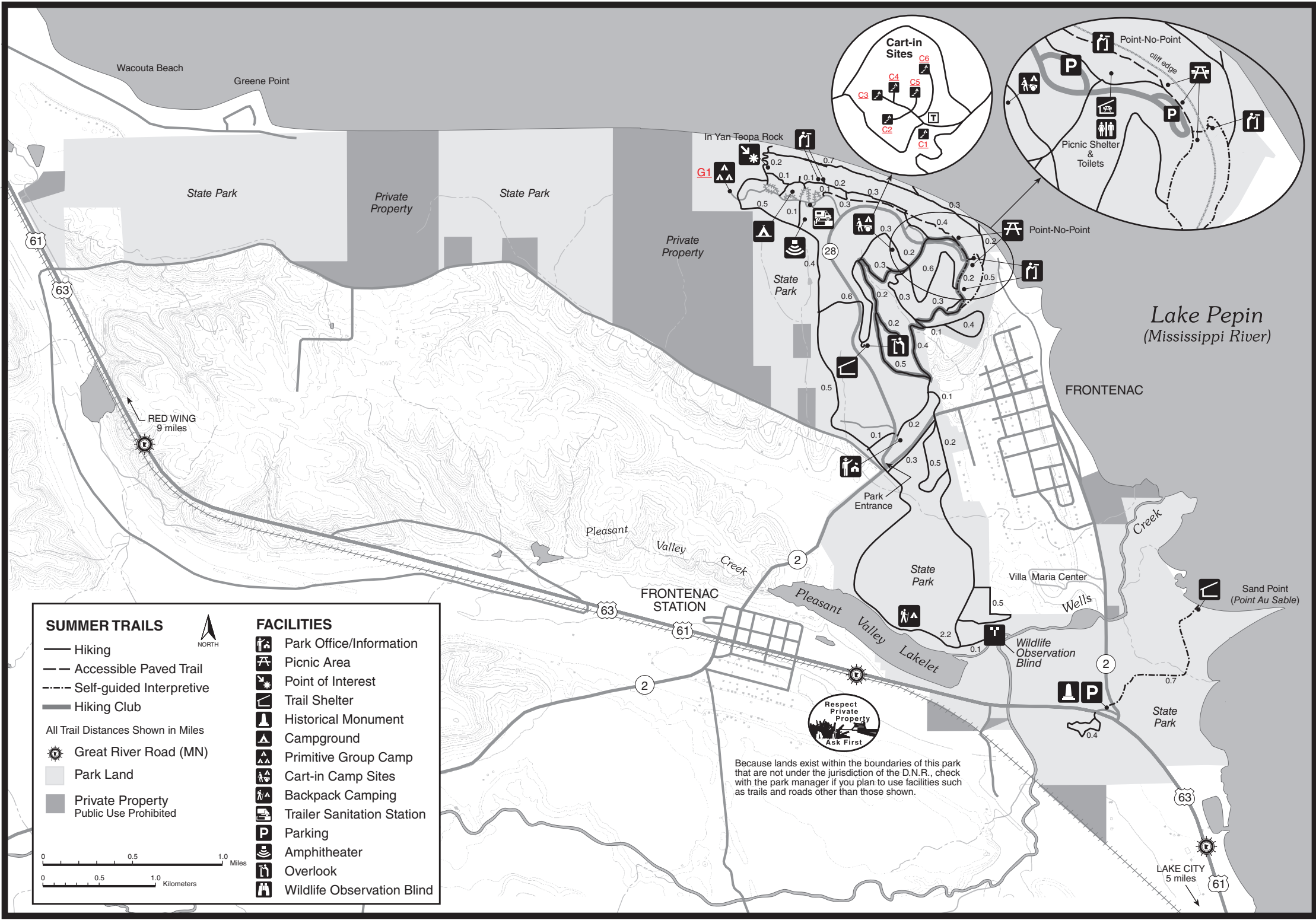


# FRONTENAC STATE PARK

## SUMMER FACILITIES AND FEATURES

- 58 site semi-modern campground/19 with electricity
- 6 rustic, all-season cart-in campsites
- 2 backpack campsites
- Dump station, showers, and flush toilets (seasonal)
- Primitive group camp with running water. Capacity 35 (seasonal)
- 40 site picnic ground with enclosed shelter/trail center with wood stove and electricity. Seasonal modern restrooms.
- 14.2 miles of hiking trail
- 1 mile paved ADA multi-use trail.





# FRONTENAC STATE PARK SUMMER TRAILS

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Frontenac State Park  
29223 County 28 Blvd.  
Frontenac, MN 55026  
1-651-345-3401

Department of Natural Resources  
Information Center  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040

**(651) 296-6157 (Metro Area)**  
1-888-646-6367 (Toll Free)

TDD (Telecommunications Device for Deaf)

**(651) 296-5484 (Metro Area)**  
1-800-657-3929 (Toll Free)

**FRONTENAC STATE PARK** is a 2,317-acre park located on U.S. Highway 16, ten miles southeast of Red Wing on the shore of Lake Pepin. Highway map index: M-18.

Many millions of years ago, most of Minnesota was covered by shallow seas. At the bottom of these seas, sediment accumulated and slowly hardened into rock. This rock now makes up the bluffs along the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota.

During the last million years, this ancient rock was shaped by the erosive power of water. Most of the landscape in the Frontenac area was carved by the Glacial River Warren. This powerful river flowed from the south end of Glacial Lake Aggasiz, a lake larger than all the Great Lakes combined. It covered much of northwestern Minnesota extending into North Dakota and Canada.

Glacial River Warren cut the large valley through which the Minnesota River now flows. In what is now eastern Minnesota it picked up increased force from the waters of the Upper Mississippi and the St. Croix Rivers and flowed southeast sculpting the Mississippi River Valley. When the river was at its peak, most of Frontenac was under water. The park’s bluff was an island.

On the bluff below the park’s picnic area is a stone quarry, inactive for more than 50 years. Time has softened the harshness of its vertical face with flowers growing in its crevices. For 100 years, the high-quality limestone from this and other quarries in the area was popular for building. In 1883 architects John LaFarge and George L. Heins chose limestone from this quarry to construct part of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City.

**HISTORY:** In 1976 the Minnesota Historical Society researched Frontenac’s rich history through the excavation of archaeological sites.

The Havana Ridge Site dates from 400 B.C. to 300 A.D. and represents the northern edge of the Hopewellian culture. Some sites in the park were habitation sites and others served as burial grounds.

The Dakota and Fox Indians hunted and fished on the shores of Lake Pepin. In the park is a stretch of high ground covered by woods and meadows that was sacred to the Indians in the region. The focal point of the area was In-Yan-Teopa, a giant rock perched on the edge of the bluff overlooking Lake Pepin.

In 1680, Father Louis Hennepin led the first European exploration to this section of the Mississippi River.

In June 1727, an expedition left Montreal to set up a post in the land of the Dakota. From this post, explorers planned to go west in search of the best route to the Pacific Ocean.

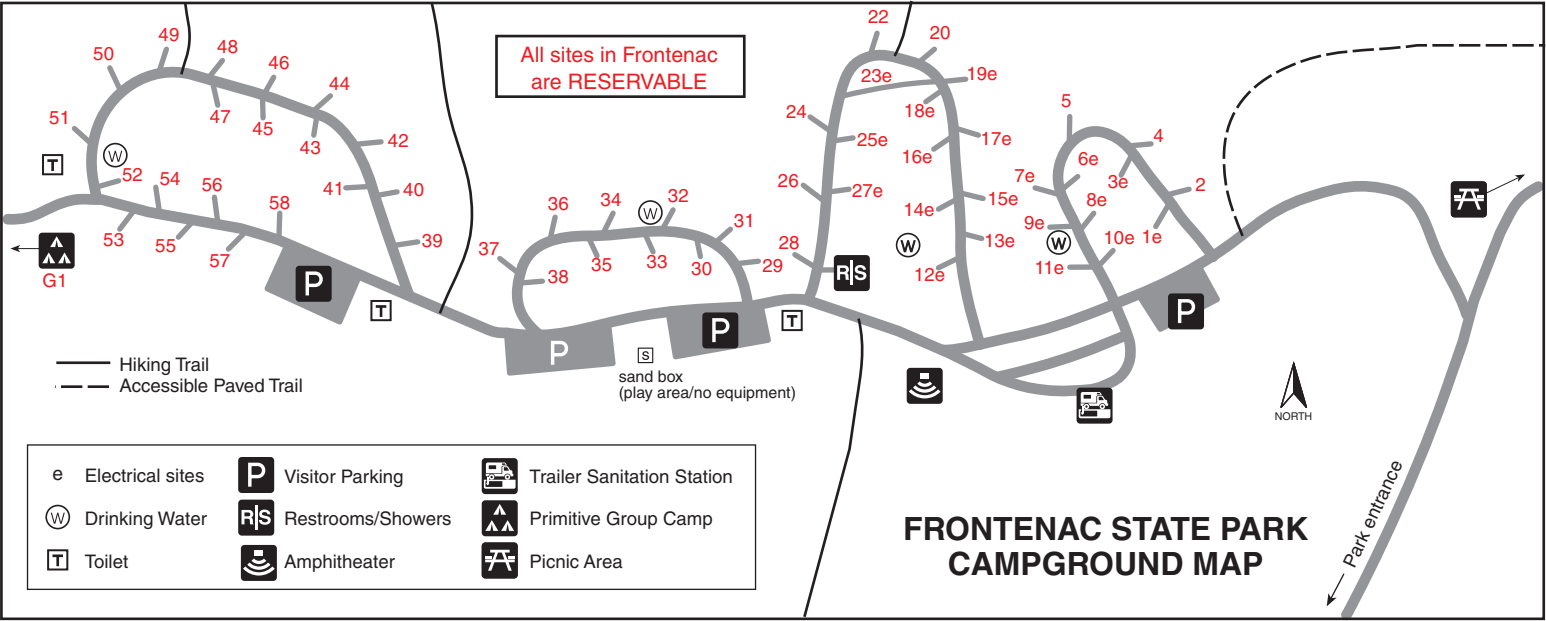
Rene Boucher and his men landed in the vicinity of the park on September 17, 1727. Within four days they had built a log stockade and named it Fort Beauharnois in honor of the Marquis de Beauharnois, governor general of New France (Canada).

In the fort, two Jesuit missionaries, Michel Guignas and Nicholas de Gonnor established what may have been Minnesota’s first church, the Mission St. Michaels the Archangel.

In 1763, when the Treaty of Paris ended the Seven Year War, Great Britain became heir to France’s claim to much of North America. This led to the abandonment of Fort Beauharnois. Field work has failed to uncover the exact location of the fort and chapel. All evidence of their location has vanished.

The first permanent pioneer resident in the area was a fur trader, James “Bully” Wells. By 1840, he had built a trading post and a home where the town of Frontenac now stands.

As the fur trade declined, logging increased. By the mid-1800’s, most of the woodlands around the park had been cleared. Logging operations on the Upper Mississippi, St. Croix, and the Chippewa Rivers sent huge log rafts down the Mississippi to sawmills. In 1854, Israel Garrard came to Frontenac to hunt. He was so impressed with the region that he decided not to return home.



Three years later, Evert Westervelt, a Dutch immigrant who had bought out the interests of Bully Wells, platted a 320-acre town with Israel Garrard. Originally, it was named Westervelt, but in 1859, when Israel Garrard bought out Evert Westervelt, he changed the name to Frontenac in honor of Comte de Pallusa et de Frontenac who served as governor of New France from 1671 to 1698. Governor Frontenac was responsible for many early exploration expeditions.

Israel Garrard recruited laborers and within a short time Frontenac was under construction. The Civil War interrupted the town’s development. After the war, Israel Garrard returned as a general and brought with him skilled craftsmen from the south. They worked in the sawmill and the quarry and built the town’s many buildings, including St. Hubert’s Lodge (Israel Garrard’s home named in honor of the patron saint of hunters), the Lake Side Hotel ( a three-story, white-framed structure with double porch), and Christ Episcopal Church (which still has services every Sunday).

In the 1870s and ’80s, Frontenac was in its heyday. During the steamboat days following the Civil War, Frontenac became one of the most fashionable summer resorts in the country. High society of New Orleans, St. Louis, and St. Paul came to stay at the Lake Side Hotel and to relish the peace and charm of Frontenac.

In 1870 the railroad came to southeastern Minnesota. As railroad traffic increased, steamboat travel decreased. Many towns up and down the river had hoped to become important trade centers, but as the use of the river waned so did the importance of the river towns. Old Frontenac remains a nostalgic reminder of Minnesota’s past.

The history of the park dates back to 1935 when the National Park Service pointed out the potential of the area. Early attempts to establish a park failed. In 1954, a group of citizens formed the Frontenac Park Association. They felt the area should be set aside to preserve its natural beauty and historical significance. A bill was

introduced in the 1955 state legislature, but because of funding priorities, it was not passed. When an important tract of land was put up for sale, the Frontenac Park Association raised funds for its purchase. Spurred by the commitment of the local people, the 1957 legislature established Frontenac State Park.

**WILDLIFE:** Since 1900 Frontenac has been recognized as an excellent place to watch bird migration. Most famous for its variety of warblers, the bottomland hardwood forest of Frontenac is one of the few areas in Minnesota that provides nesting habitat for the prothonotary warbler. Over 200 species of birds can be observed in the area every year, including two of the world’s greatest travelers—the sanderling and the ruddy turnstone. These robin-sized waders travel from southern South America to the Arctic and back every year.

In winter, bald and golden eagles frequent the area. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has re-introduced the peregrine falcon in the area.

Of particular interest is the timber rattlesnake. It is not numerous and offers little or no threat to park visitors. If one should encounter a rattler on the trail, leave it alone! Do not attempt to capture or kill it. There is no danger unless it is frightened or provoked. All wildlife in state parks is protected by state law.

Lake Pepin contains a variety of fish—walleye, northern pike, crappie, bluegill, and channel catfish. Unfortunately, PCBs (poly-chloro-byphenols) have found their way into the lake’s fish, particularly in carp. Human consumption of the lake’s fish should be limited. Consumption guidelines are available at the park office.

**SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY THE PARK. . .**

- The park belongs to all Minnesotans. Please treat it with respect and help us to protect it by following the rules.
- The park is open year-round. On a daily basis, the

park is closed from 10:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M. the following morning except to registered campers. Loud noises and other disturbances are not allowed after 10:00 P.M. in the campground.

- Camp only in designated locations.
- The use of firearms, explosives, air guns, slingshots, traps, seines, nets, bows and arrows, and all other weapons is prohibited in state parks.
- Pets must be restrained on a leash no longer than six feet. Pets are not allowed in park buildings.
- Park in designated areas only.
- Motor bikes and other licensed vehicles are allowed only on park roads, not on trails.
- Enjoy the park wildlife and plants, but please respect them. Do not pick or dig up plants, disturb or feed animals, or scavenge dead wood.
- Build fires in designated locations—fire rings or fireplaces. Wood is available for purchase from park staff. Portable stoves or grills are permitted.
- Daily or annual permits are required for all vehicles entering a state park. They may be purchased at the park headquarters or the Information Center in St. Paul (see “FOR MORE INFORMATION” to left).

This information is available in alternative format upon request.

**“The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is an Equal Opportunity Employer.”**

