

Minnesota Valley

National Wildlife Refuge

Long Meadow Lake & Black Dog Units

Trail Map



About the Long Meadow Lake Unit

The 2,339 acre Long Meadow Lake Unit features large areas of marshes and lakes, as well as bluff and floodplain forest. Thirteen miles of trails, the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center and refuge headquarters are located in the unit.

Trail Descriptions

Hillside Trail at Bloomington Education and Visitor Center 0.4 mile loop

This loop trail descends steeply into floodplain forest to an observation platform overlooking Peterson Pond. Look for migratory waterfowl, turtles and beaver or muskrats before ascending back up towards the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center through restored prairie. This trail is steep and contains stairs.

Long Meadow Lake Trail 3.5 miles, one way

With a trailhead 0.4 miles from the METRO Blue Line American Blvd station, this trail begins below the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center heading south and west through floodplain forest and marshlands. Travel 3.5 miles to the Hwy 77 pedestrian bridge or continue 3.7 miles on a minimally maintained trail to the Lyndale Ave trailhead and boat launch. Hike, bike, snowshoe, or cross-country ski this rustic two-track trail. This trail is mostly flat and floods seasonally.

Old Cedar Ave Trailhead

To the north of the parking area, enjoy views of the marsh where waterfowl nest nearby. Views of Long Meadow Lake and a fishing dock are available north of the natural play area. From the trailhead

and parking area head northeast under the Hwy 77 bridge to access the Bass Ponds. Travel southwest for views of Long Meadow Lake from the boardwalk or to access the Bluff Trail. Cross the Old Cedar Ave bridge to access the Long Meadow Lake Trail or continue east across the Minnesota River under the Hwy 77 bridge to the north to access the primitive Mendota Trail.

Bass Ponds Trailhead, Bass Ponds Trail 0.7 mile loop Hogback Ridge Trail 1.3 miles one way

Stocked fishing ponds are available. Accessible parking at bottom of hill available by request. These trails are flat and may experience seasonal flooding.

The Bass Ponds Trail loop is a premier birding hot spot on the refuge. Visit this former Izaak Walton League fish hatchery to spot some of the 250+ bird species that visit the refuge each year. Walk down a steep driveway to flat loop trails that circle ponds, marsh and a spring-fed stream.

The one-way Hogback Ridge Trail connects the Bass Ponds and Old Cedar Ave trailheads. Travel west past the stocked fishing ponds, fishing dock, marshes and Long Meadow Lake for exceptional bird watching and easy walking.

Contact information:

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
3815 American Blvd E. Bloomington, MN 55425-1600
952/854 5900

Visit us online:

www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota_valley
www.facebook.com/MNvalleyNWR/

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service www.fws.gov
1 800/344 WILD (9453)

Deaf/hard of hearing individuals may reach Minnesota Valley NWR through the Federal Information Relay System at 1 800/877 8339

Revised August 2021

Bluff Trail 3.4 miles one way

The trail can be accessed from the Old Cedar Ave Trailhead, Mound Spring Park at 11th Ave South near Indian Mounds Elementary, Pond-Dakota Mission Park, Hopkins Road or Lyndale/Sorensen Landing. This narrow trail rises and falls over forested hills and natural springs, with drainages leading to wetlands below. Bicycling is not allowed between Old Cedar Ave and the Mound Spring Park/11th Ave spur trail for the safety of all trail users.

Mendota Trail 6 miles one way (DNR)

Access from Jens Caspersen Boat Landing or Fort Snelling State park, a MN State Park permit is required for parking. This unmaintained trail follows the river and wetlands from Jens Caspersen Landing north to the I-494 bridge and beyond. Near I-494, walk 0.25 miles east to locate access to the walkway up to the I-494 pedestrian trail, providing access to the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center. The trail also continues north into state park lands on the north side of the freeway. This trail floods seasonally.

About the Black Dog Unit

The 1,501 acre Black Dog Unit features Black Dog Lake, marshlands, fen, and forests near the river, supporting a variety of wildlife habitat. Uncommon species of both plants and birds call this home or make a “rest stop” here during migration.

Trail descriptions

Minnesota River Greenway- Black Dog Segment 3.7 miles, one way

Fishing pier available on west end. MN State Park permit required on east end. This pedestrian and bicycle trail is reached from the west by Minnesota Riverfront Park (City of Burnsville) or from the east by Jens Caspersen Landing (DNR). Heading east, the trail winds through forest and along the river. A short spur leads to an observation deck overlooking Black Dog Lake. The trail continues through grassland then winds between the road and river to the east trailhead. This trail is flat and floods seasonally.

Black Dog Trail

Use the Black Dog Trail and the new 35W pedestrian bridge to travel between Lyndale/Sorensen Landing and the Minnesota River Greenway. To access the Cliff Fen Trail from the pedestrian bridge, travel .7

miles on the Black Dog Trail to Cliff Road. Follow Cliff Road 1 mile to Cliff Fen Park. This trail floods seasonally.

Cliff Fen Trail 1.5 miles, one way

From Cliff Fen Park, the natural surface, grassy trail begins at the kiosk at the back of the soccer field. It crosses a working railroad track (cross with care) and winds through wet meadow called a fen. Enjoy views of marsh and grassland birds or listen for frogs calling. The trail ends at a gate near Black Dog Lake. This trail floods seasonally.

Parking

Long Meadow Lake Unit

Bloomington Education and Visitor Center:

3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington, MN 55425

Bass Ponds Trailhead:

2501 86th St E, Bloomington, MN 55425

Cliff Fen Park (City of Burnsville):

120 East Cliff Rd, Burnsville, MN 55337

Trailhead is east of playground at back of ball field.

Old Cedar Ave Trailhead:

9551 Old Cedar Ave S, Bloomington, MN 55425

Lyndale/Sorensen Landing:

11135 Lyndale Ave S, Bloomington, MN 55420

Pond Dakota Mission Park (City of Bloomington):

401 East 104th St, Bloomington, MN 55420

Black Dog Unit

Jens Caspersen Landing (DNR):

(No Street Address) In Eagan, take Hwy 13 north/east to Silver Bell Rd, then north to Nichols Rd, then turn right and drive to the parking area under the Hwy 77 bridge. A State Park permit is required to park here.

Minnesota Riverfront Park (City of Burnsville):

600 Black Dog Rd, Burnsville, MN 55337

Note: Restrooms are available at the Bloomington Education and Visitor Center and the Old Cedar Ave Trailhead during open hours. Portable restrooms are available at the Minnesota River Greenway trailhead off Black Dog Rd.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge Boundary
 - Parking Lot
 - Amphitheater
 - Point of Interest
 - Visitor Center
 - Boat Launch
 - Fishing Pier
 - Restroom
- TRAILS**
- Trailhead
 - Paved
 - Unpaved
 - Bicycling
 - No Bicycling
 - Boardwalk
 - Wildlife Viewing

TRANSPORTATION

- Interstate
- U.S.
- State
- County
- Highway
- Street
- Driveway
- Railroad

