

Minnesota Valley

National Wildlife Refuge

Chaska, Rapids Lake & Louisville Swamp Units

Trail Map



About the Chaska Unit

The 557 acre Chaska Unit occupies a bend in the MN River stretching between the towns of Chaska and Carver. You'll find lake, marsh, restored farm fields, and floodplain forest to explore.

Trail Descriptions

Chaska Lake Trail 1.7 miles, one way

Starting from either the Chaska Athletic Park or Riverside Park in Carver, the trail winds through floodplain forest along the MN River, as well as passing wetlands, Chaska Lake, former farm fields and a wooded slough. Enjoy hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing on this trail. This trail is mostly flat and floods seasonally.

About the Rapids Lake Unit

Upland prairie, oak savanna, marsh, floodplain forest, and forested river bluffs can be found on the 2,259 acre Rapids Lake Unit. The area also includes the Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center.

Trail Descriptions

Rapids Lake Trail 1 miles, one way

Beginning at the Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center, this trail follows river bottom forest and marsh for much of its length. At 0.6 miles, you will pass a pond at the base of the ridge. River rapids can be viewed (at low river levels) 1.0 mile from the visitor center. The trail no longer connects to the Carver Creek Loop due to flooding damage. Return along the same path to the Visitor Center. Look for tracks from raccoons and deer.

Forest Trail 0.6 mile loop

Leaving from the asphalt trail below the Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center, this mostly level trail courses through oak and hickory forest, with a brief view of a slough connecting to Long Lake. View wood ducks in the slough and listen for frogs calling.

North Hunter Lot Trail 1 mile, one way

This trail is a mowed service road running from the parking lot on CR11 (Jonathan Carver Pkwy) to the northeast, where it ends at the refuge boundary. View native wildflowers, bur oaks, woodpeckers, and prairie skink in this restored oak savanna.

Carver Creek Trail 1.6 miles

This trail system has two entry points: Bluff Park and Ash Street (downtown Carver). Connect to Bluff Park from the west (Bluff Park Spur, 0.3 mi) or Ash Street from the north (0.2 mi). Portions of this trail experience seasonal flooding.

Levee Trail 2 miles one way

This paved trail runs along the levee top from Carver to Chaska, passing Riverside Park and Chaska Athletic Park

About the Louisville Swamp Unit

The 2,623 acre Louisville Swamp Unit includes marsh, lakes, streams, oak savanna, rock formations, floodplain forest, upland forest and historic homesteads. It is also one of the most isolated areas

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

of the refuge, offering a setting more distant from urban influences. The Carver Rapids Unit, part of the MN Valley State Recreation Area (DNR), is located entirely within the Louisville Swamp Unit.

Trail Descriptions

State Trail Access 1.0 mi, one way

This straight, level trail goes 1 mile to a junction with the MN Valley State Trail to the north. Continue west on the State Access Trail to join the Mazomani Trail to the south and loop back to the parking area at W 145 St.

MN Valley State Trail (DNR) 5.0 mi, one way

From north to south through the refuge, the trail passes the State Access Trail then drops to cross a bridge over Sand Creek. It veers west to follow the river most of the way through the Louisville Swamp Unit. The trail passes a junction with Middle Road before exiting the Refuge. This trail is mostly flat and floods seasonally.

Mazomani Trail North 2.8 miles, one way

Starting at the W 145 St parking area go 0.4 miles south past the kiosks to the trail junction. Travel west to loop back to the parking area via the State Access Trail. Enjoy a beautiful vista above Louisville Swamp where soaring hawks and Yellow warblers can be seen.

Mazomani Trail South 3.8 miles, one way

Starting at the W 145 St parking area go 0.4 miles south to the trail junction. Continue south passing the historic Ehmler home site. Cross the bridge over Sand Creek at 0.8 miles. The trail goes through upland forest, across creeks, and past wetlands until it meets Middle Road. Head east, passing a large glacial erratic boulder. Travel west 1.6 miles through forest to Jabs Farm historic site. Return same way.

Middle Road 1.5 miles, one way

Middle Road passes through areas of marsh, crosses a large stream, and passes the junction with the Mazomani Trail South, then wanders through restored prairie and forest until it meets the State Trail junction heading south. This trail experiences seasonal flooding.

Parking Chaska Unit

Chaska Athletic Park (City of Chaska)
725 W 1st St, Chaska, MN 55318

Carver Riverside Park (City of Carver)

300 E Main St, Carver, MN 55315

Bluff Park (City of Carver)

102 Carver Bluffs Parkway, Carver, MN 55315

Rapids Lake Unit

Jonathan Carver Parkway North Hunter Lot

14905 Jonathan Carver Parkway/CR 11, Carver, MN 55315

Carver Highlands Hunter Lot

15847 Rapids Lake Rd, Carver, MN 55315

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center

15865 Rapids Lake Rd, Carver, MN 55315

Louisville Swamp Unit

Louisville Swamp North Trailhead (Main Parking Area)

3801 W 145th St, Shakopee, MN 55379

Middle Road Trail Parking

16210 Jordan Ave, Jordan, MN 55352

Park next to the fence, walk past the house and turn west past the barn. You will briefly be passing through private property. Be respectful. Refuge entrance is across the railroad tracks.

Note: The nearest restrooms to these units are at the Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center, North Hunter Lot Trailhead and Louisville Swamp North Trailhead. Restrooms at these locations are available daily from sunrise to sunset.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Map Legend

- Refuge Boundary
- Trailhead
- Parking Lot
- Restroom
- Point of Interest
- TRAILS
 - Paved
 - Unpaved
- TRANSPORTATION
 - U.S. Highway
 - State Street
 - County Railroad

