Public use of refuge lands, facilities, and parking lots is permitted 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset.

Hiking and cross-country skiing are permitted on designated trails.

Dogs and other pets must be on a leash at all times.

Bicycling is permitted only on refuge service roads.

Fishing is not permitted along the banks of the Platte River or Rice Lake.

Many access sites to the river and the lake are available in the local area.

Camping, overnight parking, and open fires are not permitted.

Horses, dog sleds, skijoring, snowmobiles and all other off-road utility vehicles (ORUV) are not permitted.

Dog training and target shooting are not permitted.

All collection or removal of items, including antler sheds and wildflowers, from the refuge is prohibited.

Drones prohibited; launching, landing, or disturbing wildlife by aircraft (drones) on the refuge is prohibited.

Special hunts are available for persons with disabilities. See the refuge hunting map and regulations sheet, or contact Complex Headquarters for detailed information.

The refuge is located in central Minnesota, approximately 8 miles southeast of Little Falls and 30 miles north of St. Cloud. From U.S. Highway 10 take Morrison County Highway 35 east. Travel 4.5 miles to the Platte River Bridge. After crossing the bridge, take the first left to the Platte River Trailhead and the Maintenance Office.

Crane Meadows is part of the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Complex and is managed out of the Complex Headquarters in Zimmerman, MN. Visitors may contact staff at Complex Headquarters with recreation, public use, habitat management and volunteering questions.

Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
19502 Iris Road
Little Falls, MN 56345

Complex Headquarters: 763-389-3323
FAX: 763-389-3493

Crane Meadows Maintenance Office: 320-632-1575
FAX: 320-632-5471

TTY users may access the Federal Information Relay Service at 800-877-8339

Crane Meadows Website Address: www.fws.gov/refuge/crane_meadows/

Crane Meadows Email Address: CraneMeadows@fws.gov

January 2020
Crane Meadows National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1992 to preserve a large, natural wetland complex and is one of four refuges that make up the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Complex. A wide variety of wildlife may be seen or heard as they use the sedge meadows, shallow lakes, and other wetland habitats on the refuge. Restored tallgrass prairie and oak savanna habitats host a wealth of songbirds, as well as an array of wildflowers. The refuge serves as an important stop for many species of migrating birds in the spring and fall. This area harbors one of the largest nesting populations of greater sandhill cranes in Minnesota. 

The Platte River Hiking Trail is a scenic 3.7 mile accessible hiking trail that leads the visitor along the banks of the Platte River to the edge of Rice Lake. There are two wildlife observation decks, with one adjacent to the Platte River near the trailhead, and the other, outfitted with a spotting scope, overlooking Rice Lake. The trail is for foot travel only; bicycles and horses are not permitted. Dogs and other pets must be on a leash at all times.

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The refuge is open to visitors 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset within the guidelines listed in this brochure. Consult the website for refuge conditions, upcoming events, and recent sightings.

The “Blue Goose” symbolizes the National Wildlife Refuge System, a network of over 567 refuges protected and managed for wildlife, habitat, and people.