

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. It consists of about 600 acres of lake, marsh, restored farm fields, and floodplain forest.

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 2.7 miles, one way

This trail begins at the Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center. It 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 north end connects to the Carver Creek Loop Trail. This trail is mostly flat and floods seasonally. Look for tracks along the trail after wet periods.

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 Loop Trail 1.6 miles (loop)

This trail system has three entry points: Bluff Park, Ash Street (downtown Carver), and the Rapids Lake Trail. 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.

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 of the Refuge, offering a setting more distant from

Contact information:

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Visit us online:

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

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Revised February 2020

urban influences. The Carver Rapids Unit, part of the MN Valley State Recreation Area (DNR), is located entirely within the Louisville Swamp Unit. See regulations issued by the DNR for this location.

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 Lot
15847 Rapids Lake Rd, Carver, MN 55315

Rapids Lake Environmental 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 restroom to these units is at the Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center. An outdoor restroom at this location is available daily from sunrise to sunset.

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Legend

- Refuge Boundary
- Trailhead
- Parking Lot
- Point of Interest

TRAILS

- Paved
- Unpaved

TRANSPORTATION

- U.S. Highway
- State Street
- County Road
- Railroad

Scale

- 0 to 0.5 miles
- 0 to 0.5 kilometers

