

TIPS FOR USING THE CANOE TRAIL

Wyalusing State Park and the U.S. Fish Wildlife Service maintain a canoe/kayak area in the backwaters of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Visitors can bring their own canoes/kayaks or rent them from the Concession Stand in the Peterson Shelter on the Wisconsin Ridge Campground.

Getting on the canoe trail:

To get to the canoe trail, turn right (north) at the boat landing and look for the canoe trail signs on the island on the left.

Getting through the canoe trail:

At several points along the canoe trail, logs and branches may appear to block the trail, but there should be a small opening in each. The park and refuge maintain the trail with openings just large enough for canoes to pass (but too small for speedboat traffic). Should a tree be completely blocking the trail, please mark the spot on this map and inform the park staff at the office.

Safety tips:

All craft must be equipped with a Coast Guard approved lifesaving device for each person aboard. Wearing of these devices at all times is recommended. Don't overload your craft and never attempt to stand in your canoe. While canoeing on the Mississippi River you will likely be sharing the river with other watercraft and you may experience wave and current action. If you canoe on the main channel, plan your route to canoe downstream and stay as close to the shoreline as possible.

We want you to have a safe and enjoyable trip!

Answers to frequently asked questions

The large birds often seen wading in shallow water or sometimes perched in trees are herons or egrets, not cranes. Great blue herons are blue-gray and about 4 feet tall. Great egrets are white and about 3 feet tall.

The fairly large mammals swimming with just their noses and eyes out of the water are usually muskrats, not beavers. Beavers are nocturnal, so they are not often seen during the daylight hours. Muskrats are diurnal and lack paddle-shaped tails.

The tan snakes with brown "saddles" seen sunning themselves on logs or actually swimming in the water are water-snakes, *not* water moccasins. Water moccasins do exist in the Mississippi River, but occur about 400 miles downstream. Northern watersnakes are non-poisonous, but are aggressive and will bite hard.

The shells found scattered along backwater shores are those of mussels, not clams. Fresh-water mussels are a favorite food of the normally vegetarian muskrat, which leaves the shells after eating the animal inside. Shells along the main channel usually are those of mussels which are stranded as the water level fell.

The large, jelly-like masses attached to submerged branches, seen when the water is low, are formed by tiny colonial animals called bryozoans.

While on the trail you must follow the refuge's public use regulations which are posted at the boat landing.

Some flowers commonly seen blooming along the canoe trail are:

Waterlily—white flowers floating in water. In bloom late June, July.

March Milkweed—purplish-pink, milkweed-shaped flowers. In bloom July, early August.

Buttonbush—white, cottonball-like flowers. In bloom July, early August.

Arrowhead—3-petaled, white flowers with arrowhead-shaped leaf. In bloom August.

Marshmallow—large, white flowers with pink center. In bloom August.

New York Ironweed—deep purple composite flowers. In bloom August.

Cardinal Flower—small, brilliant, scarlet flowers. In bloom August.



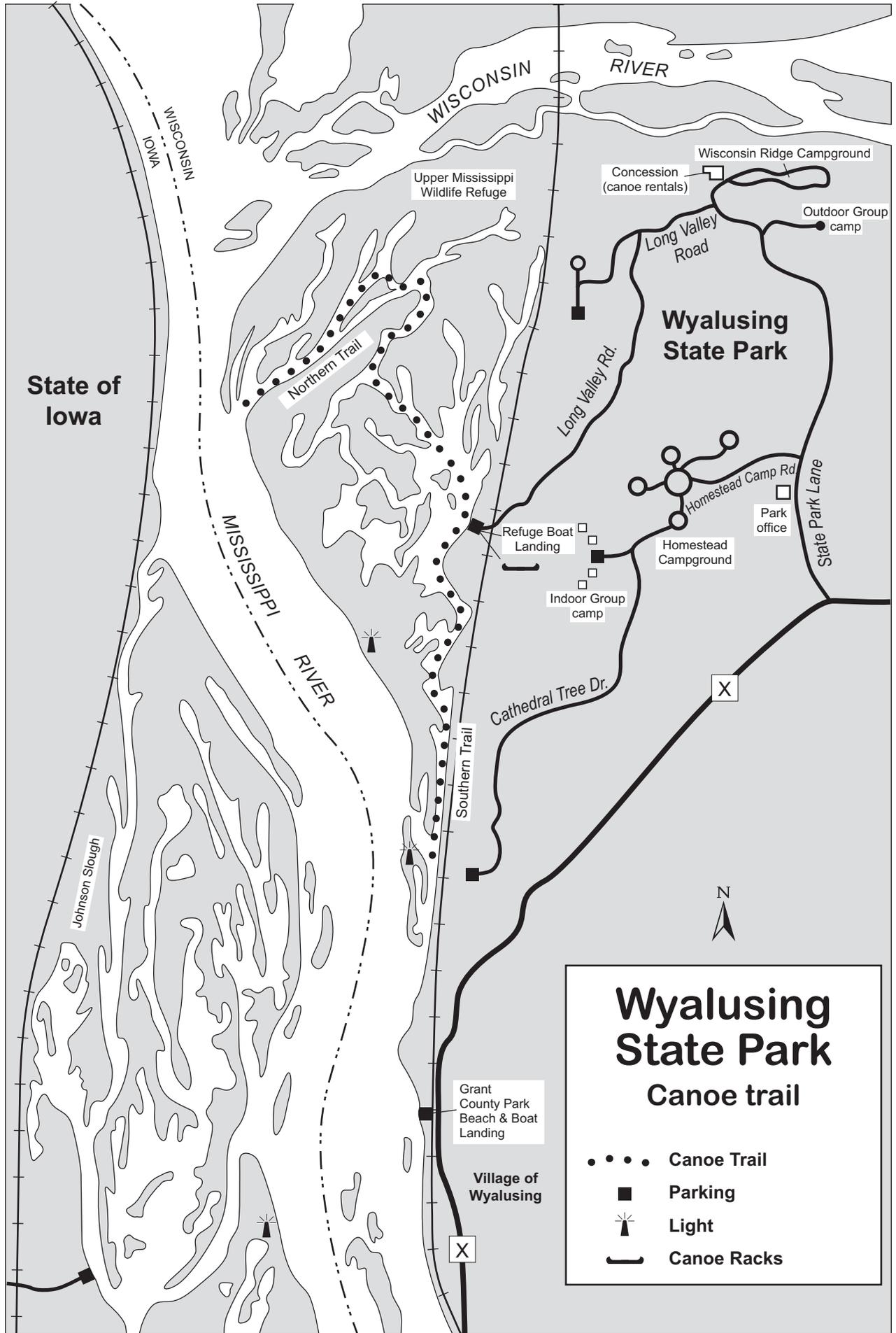
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Wyalusing State Park

Canoe trail

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