

A STATE WATER TRAIL GUIDE TO THE OTTER TAIL RIVER

WATER TRAIL DESCRIPTION

River Miles are the system used to determine distances and locations on rivers. River Miles follow the center line of the river as it meanders and should be considered approximate due to changing river conditions. Right (R) and left (L) refer to the right and left banks respectively when facing downstream. River Miles start at the mouth of the Otter Tail where it joins with the Bois de Sioux in Breckenridge, Minnesota to form the Red River of the North. Otter Tail River Miles end at river mile 186 where the Otter Tail River begins flowing out of Elbow Lake in Becker County, Minnesota. *Text in red indicates warning statements.*

The Otter Tail River flows through several lakes, which may have features such as trailer accesses, fishing piers, public docks, parks, and resorts. Those facilities, because they are not directly on the river, can't be identified with a river mile. Refer to this map and state, county and private maps for their location.

Poison ivy is abundant. Watch for it at rest stops, access sites, trailer accesses and portages. Please see the other side for more information.

Paddling on lakes during very windy conditions can be dangerous. Use caution.

The Otter Tail River varies from a serene placid river with slow current to a river that flows over some dangerous dams and rapids and through culverts. Even experienced paddlers should get out and walk ahead to survey obstructions before making a decision to paddle over them.

Bridges and culverts may have bolts, nails, concrete, or metal projections that can be dangerous to water trail users and their vessels. Stay alert!

Bridges may have control structures (dams) located under them. Do not enter a culvert or go under a bridge unless you are aware of what you may encounter. This route description has identified where those features are located. If in doubt, stop, get out and look!

This route description was accurate at time of printing. However, conditions can change suddenly due to weather, water releases at dams, trees falling across the river, or by recent construction changes to bridges and dams. Stay alert!

The Otter Tail River State Water Trail begins at River Mile 157.2 in Rochert. Paddling, tubing, or boating is not allowed from River Miles 186.0 to 157.2, trailer accesses in Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and Hubbell Pond Wildlife Management Area are for access to the lakes only. In order to preserve wildlife habitat, no travel on the river is allowed. Check with Tamarac and Hubbell Pond for more information.

RIVER MILE

- 186.0 Start of the Otter Tail River on the SE side of Elbow Lake. Except for some lakes, paddling on the majority of the next 28.8 miles is not allowed.
- 159.2 The Otter Tail River State Water Trail starts here. County Hwy #29 culvert. Depending upon flow conditions, experienced paddlers can make it through. Others should start downstream of the culvert. From this point to River Mile 154.4, State Hwy #34, there are several commercial tubing vendors using the river. Paddling will be extremely difficult on popular weekends.
- 157.5 Flow increases through former bridge/rock dam location.
- 156.9 335th Avenue bridge. Possible one foot drop on downstream side. During low flow, passage is difficult.
- 156.6 State Hwy #34 bridge. Can be paddled during most flow conditions. No parking on highway right of way is strictly enforced. Congested area during tubing season.
- 155.7 Small private bridge. Impassable due to low clearance. Portage on private property is necessary (either side).
- 154.8 Hwy #29 culvert. Second crossing. Depending upon flow conditions, experienced paddlers can make it through. Others should portage on either side. Watch for steep banks and traffic when portaging.
- 151.2 Wannigan Road carry-in access. Easy to pass under during most flow conditions. Difficult portage due to barbed wire fence connected to bridge on all four corners. Close gate behind you, and respect private property!
- 144.9 Private covered bridge.
- 144.8 Old bridge remnants. Watch for concrete and rebar.
- 144.1 State Hwy #87 bridge/North Lake Street. Entering Frazee.
- 143.8 Five man-made rock weirs. They constrict and speed up the flow.
- 143.5.L Riverside Park carry-in/rest area.

- 143.5 East Main Avenue bridge. Depending upon flow conditions, experienced paddlers can make it through. Others should portage on either side.
- 143.3.L Two-foot diameter utility pipe across river. If river is low, possible to pass under by ducking. Otherwise, 30 yd. portage.
- 143.2 R Three bridge crossings consisting of two roads and one railroad bridge passing over the roads. No passage underneath first bridge. Portage on right along road. Watch for traffic!
- 142.5 R Dam. Portage right 100 yds under a wooden stairway in Lions Park. Fifteen foot drop with four rows of boulders. Bathrooms, picnic shelter, playground, statue of a turkey.
- At River Miles 142.0, 134.0, and 116.0, the river passes through culverts under State Hwy #10. Paddling through these culverts is not recommended except by experienced paddlers. Be sure to scout them first for hazards such as high and/or fast water, drop offs, floating logs, and other obstructions. DO NOT portage over Hwy #10.
- 142.0 Hwy #10 culvert (first of three crossings). Do not portage across the four-lane highway. Do not paddle without scouting first. Possible one foot drop at end of culvert. Use caution.
- 137.6 Enter Rice Lake.
- 136.5.L Rice Lake trailer access.
- 136.2 Leave Rice Lake.
- 134.2 Black Diamond Road culverts. Often blocked by floating logs.
- 134.0 Hwy #10 (second crossing). Two long culverts immediately followed by three culverts under the railroad. Do not portage across the four-lane highway. Do not paddle without scouting first. Use caution.
- 133.5 403rd Avenue bridge.
- 131.9 Hwy #60 bridge.
- 128.9 425th Avenue bridge.
- 128.8 Enter Mud Lake.
- 125.7 Hwy #51 bridge. Leave Mud Lake. Enter Little Pine Lake.
- 125.6.R Paul Miller Park access and rest area.
- 124.0.R Dam. Portage 50 yds. Otter Tail River leaves Little Pine Lake. Highway #8-455th Avenue bridge. Trailer access and primitive toilet.
- 123.0 Enter Big Pine Lake.
- 122.8.L Big Pine Lake Carry-in access.
- 121.5 Multiple trailer accesses on Big Pine Lake.
- 119.9.R Dam. Portage right 50 yds. Otter Tail River leaves Big Pine Lake. Land access to this site is through private property by permission and payment of fee at Big Pine Lodge.
- 116.3 Railroad bridge.
- 116.3 Hwy #80 bridge.
- 116.0 Hwy #10 bridge (third crossing). Culvert. Do not portage across the four-lane highway. Do not paddle without scouting first. Use caution.
- 111.1 390th Street culverts.
- 109.1 Hwy #14/380th Avenue culverts.
- 108.0 Enter Rush Lake.
- 104.9.R Leave Rush Lake. Trailer access with parking and primitive toilet. Dam upstream of Hwy #78. Portage 50 yds.
- 103.0 Railroad bridge.
- 101.1 Hwy #1. First crossing of three.
- 100.0 Enter Otter Tail Lake.
- 100.9.L Otter Tail Lake Sportsman's and Pelican Bay trailer accesses.
- 99.0.R Five man-made rock weirs. They constrict and speed up the flow.
- 95.3.R Amor Park Rest Area.

- 92.0.L Leave Otter Tail Lake. Hwy #72 with dam below. Portage left 75 yds. Watch for heavy traffic. Riverside trailer access with parking and primitive toilet. Heavy tubing use on warm days.
- 91.9.L Carry-in access on Otter Tail Lake.
- 90.0 Hwy #83 bridge. Enter Deer Lake.
- 90.0.L Deer Lake trailer access.
- 89.1 Leave Deer Lake. Enter East Lost Lake.
- 87.6 Leave East Lost Lake.
- 87.9 Hwy #1 (second crossing).
- 85.9 Hwy #45 bridge.
- 84.2.R Phelps Mill and Dam, carry-in. 285 yd. portage to inlet near parking lot. Restrooms in county park.
- 80.8 Hwy #35 bridge.
- 80.7.L Enter West Lost Lake, trailer access.
- 78.9 Water Street Road bridge. Leave West Lost Lake.
- 75.5 Hwy #43 bridge.
- 74.0 Enter Red River Lake.
- 72.6 Hwy #3 bridge. May encounter swimmers. Make yourself known if people are on the bridge.
- 72.5.R West Red River Lake trailer access with parking.
- 70.5.R Leave Red River Lake. Friberg/Taplin Gorge Dam. Portage right 200 yds. Do not enter concrete-lined channel which leads to hydro power plant. Private property, but access allowed between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Parking allowed. Long carry to river from the parking lot.
- 68.2 Hwy #10 culverts. Can be paddled during most flow conditions. A USGS stream gauge is also located here.
- 63.4 245th Street bridge.
- 63.2.R Diversion Dam. Portage right 75 yds. on Diversion Drive to dirt path downstream of dam.
- 61.8 Hwy #1 (third crossing).
- 61.8.R Hwy #1 carry-in access with parking.
- 58.8 Sophus Anderson Road bridge.
- 55.2 Ridgewood Circle bridge.
- 55.1.L Hwy #210 carry-in access with parking.
- 52.8-52.1 Remnants of Page and Broken Down Dams. Portage left 225 yds. around remnants. Long walk to dam from parking site. Popular photography site.
- 51.4 Hoot Lake Power Plant bridge #1.
- 51.2 Hoot Lake Power Plant bridge #2.
- 50.9.L Hoot Lake Power Plant railroad bridge.
- 50.7 Hoot Lake Dam and Power Plant. Depending upon flow conditions, experienced paddlers can make it through. Others should portage on the left 240 yds. (difficult portage).
- 50.2 Local swimming area. Potential hazard - may encounter rope strung across river at water level.
- 50.1.L Mt. Faith Avenue/Main Street Bridge. Carry-in access with parking.
- Paddling is not recommended from River Miles 49.0 to 48.3 because of dangerous obstructions.
- 49.5 Concord Street bridge.
- 49.1.R Fishing pier.
- 48.9 Lincoln Avenue and railroad bridges.
- 48.8 Cascade Street bridge.

- 48.7 Central Dam, Veteran's Memorial Park carry-in access. 700 yd. portage on paved "River Walk" to Wright Park on left.
- 48.6 Mill Street bridge.
- 48.5 Court Street bridge.
- 48.4 County Road 1/Union Street bridge. Wright Park carry-in access, river left.
- 48.3 Railroad bridge.
- 48.0.L Robert Hannah Park trailer access and rest area.
- 47.1 Pisgah Dam. 75 yd. portage left around the dam. Limited parking available. County Road 1/Tower Road bridge.
- 46.3 1-94 bridge. Caution: There is often debris obstructing culverts under 1-94, culvert on far left is best option.
- 44.5.L Confluence of Pelican River. 200 yd. paddle up Pelican River will take you to an unimproved carry-in access.
- 43.2 County Road 15 bridge.
- 40.4.R Dayton Hollow Reservoir trailer access.
- 39.1.R Dayton Hollow Dam and Park, 135 yd. portage on left.
- 34.8-35.6 Orwell Wildlife Management Area. Non-motorized watercraft allowed from May 11-Aug. 31. No hunting allowed. No trespassing on shore in this portion of river. Buoy mark upstream start of sanctuary.
- 35.5.R Shore fishing, parking, picnic grounds, interpretive signs, and outdoor bathrooms. trailer access by playground.
- 34.8 Orwell Dam, 600 yd. portage on left.
- 34.5 Hwy #15 bridge. Lots of rocks in this next reach, especially during low flow.
- 23.3 Hwy #19 bridge. (Old Crossing Bridge) a plaque on right side commemorates a local historical oct cart crossing. A USGS stream gauge is also located here.
- 20.1 Man made rock riffles, class I. Can be paddled in most flow conditions.
- 18.8 Hwy #169/290th Avenue bridge. In the next reach, look for remnants of old dams.
- 16.0 Hwy #17/270th Avenue bridge. (Everdale bridge).
- 9.9 Hwy #14 bridge. May encounter swimmers. Make yourself known if people are on the bridge.
- 7.1.L Breckenridge Lake trailer access.
- 7.1.L Breckenridge Lake Dam/rapids and pedestrian bridge. Depending upon flow conditions, experienced paddlers can make it through. Others should exit on left side adjacent to culvert 50 yards south of dam and portage.
- 6.8 Hwy #10 bridge.
- 2.9 Hwy #16/11th Street bridge.
- 2.8.R Floodwater diversion channel. Stay left.
- 2.0.L Lions Park trailer access with picnic shelters and parking.
- 2.0 Highway #75/5th Street bridge.
- 1.2.L Water Plant Dam. Depending upon flow conditions, experienced paddlers can make it through. Others should portage left. No verified portage.
- 1.0 Hwy #5/Main Street bridge.
- 0.3.R During high flows, water overflows banks into Red River. Concrete riprap may damage watercraft. Stay left.
- 0.3 Nebraska Avenue bridge.
- 0.1 Walking bridge access to Welles Memorial Park, camping.
- 0.0 Confluence with Bois de Sioux River and start of Red River of the North. End of Otter Tail River Water Trail. Welles Memorial Park. Unimproved carry-in access on the Red River with parking, fishing dock, and interpretive kiosks.

