

Minnesota Great River Road Driving Directions:

(April 2016)

Mississippi Headwaters Region

Lake Itasca State Park to Bemidji - 30 Miles

Begin the Great River Road journey at the Mississippi River headwaters in Lake Itasca State Park, about 20 miles north of Park Rapids. Follow the Wilderness Drive through the park's interior to Clearwater Co. Rd. 2, through the town of Lake Itasca. Turn east onto Clearwater Co. Rd. 40 to Hubbard County 9, through Becida. At Hubbard Co. Rd. 10 turn north. This road becomes Beltrami Co. Rd. 7. Follow it into Bemidji.

Mississippi Northwoods Region

Bemidji to Grand Rapids – 100 Miles

The Great River Road through Bemidji follows MN 197 between Lakes Bemidji and Lake Irving. At 1st Street turn east and continue north and east on Beltrami Co. Rd. 12 (Lake Avenue). At Beltrami Co. Rd. 27 turn south, then east on Beltrami Co. Rd. 8. At Lake Andrusia, follow Beltrami Co. Rd. 33 northeast around Cass Lake. At Beltrami Co. Rd. 12 turn east to Pennington, then follow Co. Rd. 39 south and turn east on National Forest Service Road 2171. Continue east on National Forest Service Road 2167 (also known as Cass County 91/Beltrami County 54) to US 2 along the south side of Lake Winnibigoshish. Continue on US 2 at Bena and then northeast on Cass Co. Rd. 9. Head southeast on MN 46 and take Itasca Co. Rd. 39 along the lower edge of Ball Club Lake, through the community of Ball Club, back to US 2. The Great River Road crosses the Mississippi on Itasca Co. Rd. 18 and continues on Cass Co. Rd. 3. Travel south on Cass Co. Rd. 74 to Schoolcraft State Park, then south on Co. Rd. 28 and north on MN 6. At Itasca Co. Rd. 64 turn east and continue north and east on Co. Rd. 63 past the intersection of Co. Rd. 76. At Co. Rd. 23, turn east to Grand Rapids.

Mississippi Crossings Region

Grand Rapids to Little Falls - 143 Miles

Grand Rapids to Aitkin (58 miles)

Begin traveling the Great River Road south of Grand Rapids on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 3. Go south on CSAH 10, a partially gravel road, to Palisade. Continue on CSAH 10 to TH 169. Continue from this point on CSAH 21, also a gravel road, and then south on CSAH 1 into Aitkin.

Aitkin to Brainerd (45 miles)

From Aitkin the Great River Road travels west on TH 210 to Deerwood and then merges with TH 6 continuing into Crosby. From TH 6 travel west on CSAH 11. Turn west onto CSAH 19 and then south on CSAH 3 through Merrifield to Brainerd, continuing west on TH 210. At the junction of TH 210 and 371B, follow 371B south to Laurel Street. Travel west on Laurel Street to East River Road, then south on East River Road to College Drive. Go west on College Drive to TH 371 in Baxter and then south on TH 371.

Brainerd to Little Falls (40 miles)

Follow TH 371 to TH 115. Go west on TH 115. Go South on Cty Rd 213 along the river to CSAH 13. Turn Left (south); this turns into Paul Larson Memorial Drive as you near Little Falls city limits.

Scenic Mississippi Region

Little Falls to Elk River – 92 Miles

Little Falls to St. Cloud (42 miles)

Turn south onto Broadway Avenue, then west onto Lindbergh Drive (Morrison Co. Rd. 52), which takes you directly to the Lindbergh State Park and Historic Site. Continue on Morrison Co. Rd. 52 to Morrison Co. Rd. 25, then southeast on Morrison Co. Rd. 21. At the Stearns County line the road becomes Stearns Co. Rd. 1. Continue on Co. Rd. 1 to Sartell, then take Co. Rd. 78 over the river bridge to Benton Co. Rd. 33 (Benton Drive). Head south on Co. Rd. 33 to the Sartell/Sauk Rapids city line. Continue on Benton Co. Rd. 33 to First Street South, then over the Mississippi River to Stearns Co. Rd. 1 (9th Avenue North) in St. Cloud. Head south on 9th Avenue North to 9th Avenue South (Clearwater Road/Stearns Co. R. 7). Continue south to Stearns Co. Rd. 75.

St. Cloud to Elk River (50 miles)

Continue southeast on Stearns Co. Rd. 75 to the Wright County line, where the route becomes Wright Co. Rd. 75. Follow this south to Wright Co. Rd. 39 in Monticello. Continue east on Wright Co. Rd. 39 into Elk River.

Metro Mississippi Region

Elk River to Hastings – 75 Miles

Detour Notice – Beginning Summer 2014, through Fall 2016

A one-mile segment of West River Parkway, between 4th St. S and Franklin Ave, will remain closed to vehicle and pedestrian / bicycle traffic due to safety concerns. Soil boring test results and continued slope erosion following rainfalls confirm that the parkway slope remains unstable. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) environmental and planning staff, University of Minnesota Medical Center Fairview staff, and consulting engineers are working to determine how to best stabilize the hillside so traffic can resume. The MPRB hopes to begin construction this fall on temporary or permanent repairs that will keep the hillside stable, but that work likely will not be completed until 2015. Until the work is completed and the parkway reopens, the existing detour will remain in place. For a detour map, go to <http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/documents/WestRiverPkwDetour.pdf>. Visit <http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/default.asp?PageID=1504> for project updates.

Elk River to Downtown Minneapolis (28 miles)

The Great River Road continues past Elk River east on Wright Co. Rd. 39, then south to Wright Co. Rd. 42, then east to the Hennepin County line (Co. Rd. 12). Go south on Co. Rd. 12. Across the Mississippi from Anoka, head southeast along Hennepin Co. Rd. 12 (West River Road) to 97th Avenue. Head east briefly on 97th Avenue to West River Road, then southeast to Brookdale Drive. Go west on Brookdale Drive to Minnesota Highway 252. Go south on MN 252 to I-694. Cross the Mississippi River on I-694 and take East River Road (Anoka Co. Rd. 1) to the Anoka-Hennepin County line (the road becomes Hennepin Co. Rd. 23/Marshall Street) at the north edge of Minneapolis. Continue along Marshall Street to Broadway Avenue (Hennepin Co. Rd. 66) and head west on Broadway to West River Parkway.

Downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul (12 miles)

Take West River Parkway south to Godfrey Parkway. Look for the entrance to Minnehaha Park. Follow Godfrey Parkway to the roundabout in front of the Longfellow House, then turn right onto Minnehaha Avenue (one block), left onto 46th Street East (one block), then left (south) onto Minnesota Highway 55, where you will head southeast toward the Hennepin-Dakota County line (at the Minnesota/Mississippi River confluence). At the Dakota County line, take Minnesota Highway 13 (Sibley Memorial Highway) northeast to Interstate Highway 35E. Take I-35E north. Turn right on Shepard Road, which becomes Warner Road (Ramsey Co. Rd. 36).

From downtown St. Paul to Hastings (26 miles)

From Warner Road, take U.S. 61/10 south to I-494 west, which crosses the river. Exit south on Minnesota Highway 56, then turn east on Minnesota Highway 55 toward Hastings. Take Dakota Co. Rd. 42 northeast to U.S. 61/10. Turn south on U.S. 61 to Hastings. Turn south on Highway 361 to U.S. 61 and continue south on U.S. 61.

Mississippi Bluffs Region

Hastings to Iowa Border - 140 Miles

Bridge Construction Update – Spring 2016

See I-90 Dresbach Bridge Traffic impact information at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/dresbachbridge/>

Beyond Hastings, follow U.S. 61 south all the way to LaCrescent. From LaCrescent, the Minnesota Great River Road travels south on MN 16 and MN 26, ending at the Iowa border. The National Great River Road, however, continues its journey through Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana as the Mississippi River makes its way to the Gulf of Mexico- nearly 3,000 miles total!