

WHITEWATER STATE PARK

FACILITIES AND FEATURES

- Whitewater Valley Visitor Center
- 2 semi-modern campgrounds with a total of 112 campsites
- Dump station, showers, and flush toilets
- 6 walk-in sites
- A modern group camp with cabins, dining hall, and sanitation building with showers and flush toilets (capacity 132)
- A primitive group camp (capacity 100)
- 2 picnic grounds with an open shelter (capacity 75) and a total of 150 tables
- Swimming beach with changing room and rinse showers
- 10 miles of hiking trail
- 2.5 miles of self-guided
- 4 miles of cross-country ski trail
- Year-round interpretive program
- Chimney Rock Geological Center

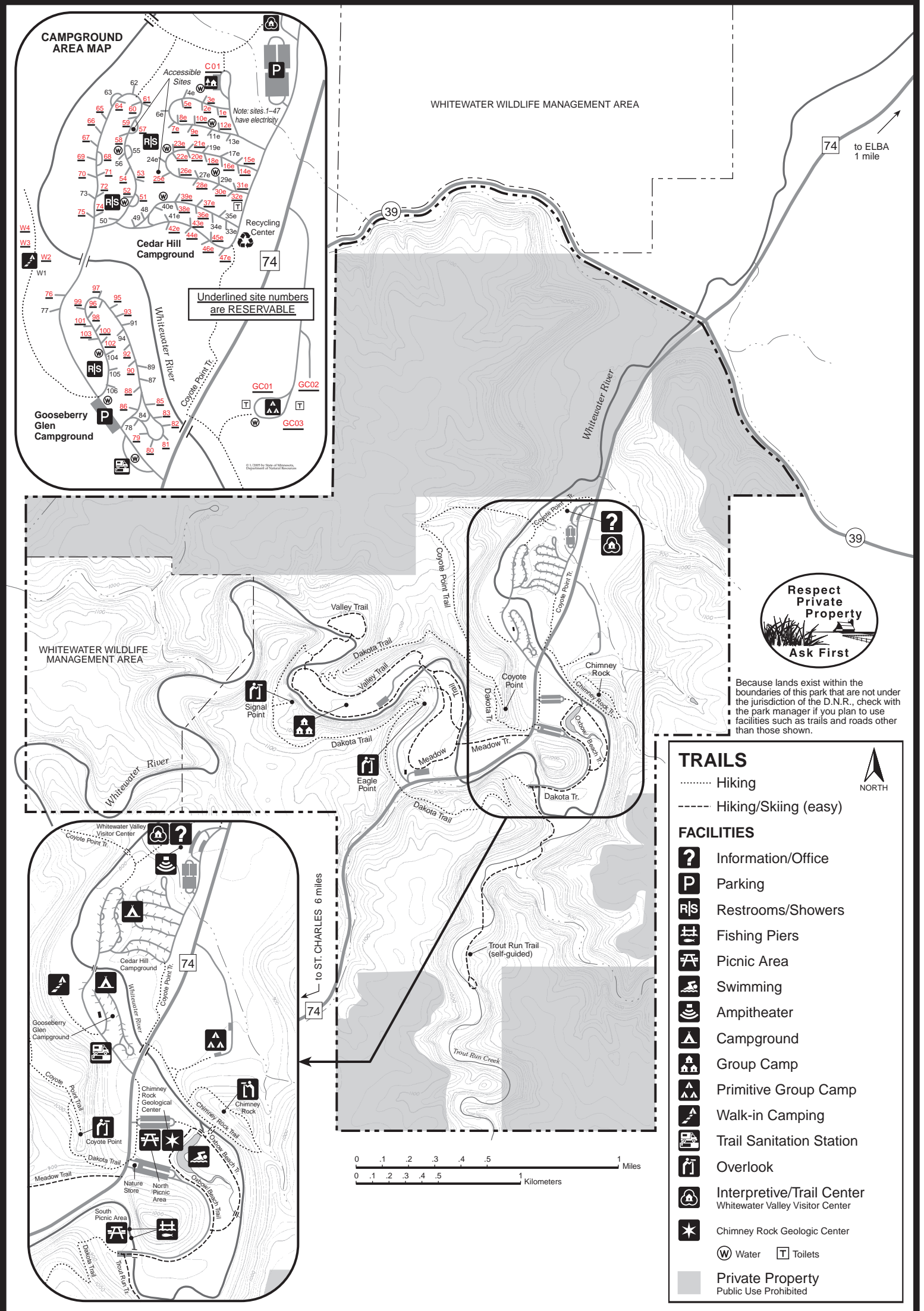
VISITOR FAVORITES

- Chimney Rock—follow Chimney Rock Trail
- Coyote Point—follow Dakota Trail
- Live timber rattlesnake—in the Visitor Center

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

The DNR has mapped the state showing federal, state and county lands with their recreational facilities. Public Recreation Information Maps (PRIMs) are available for purchase from the DNR gift shop, DNR regional offices, Minnesota state parks and major sporting and map stores.

Check it out - you'll be glad you did.



WHITEWATER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

74 to ELBA 1 mile

39

39

Underlined site numbers are RESERVABLE



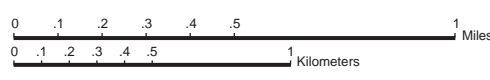
Because lands exist within the boundaries of this park that are not under the jurisdiction of the D.N.R., check with the park manager if you plan to use facilities such as trails and roads other than those shown.

TRAILS

- Hiking
- Hiking/Skiing (easy)

FACILITIES

- ? Information/Office
- P Parking
- RS Restrooms/Showers
- F Fishing Piers
- PA Picnic Area
- SW Swimming
- AT Amphitheater
- CA Campground
- GC Group Camp
- PGC Primitive Group Camp
- WC Walk-in Camping
- TSS Trail Sanitation Station
- OV Overlook
- ITC Interpretive/Trail Center
Whitewater Valley Visitor Center
- CR Chimney Rock Geologic Center
- W Water
- T Toilets
- PP Private Property
Public Use Prohibited





WHITEWATER STATE PARK

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Whitewater State Park
Rt. 1, Box 256
Altura, MN 55910
(507) 932-3007

Department of Natural Resources
Information Center
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040

(651) 296-6157 (Metro Area)
1-888-646-6367 (MN Toll Free)

TDD (Telecommunications
Device for Deaf)
(651) 296-5484 (Metro Area)
1-800-657-3929 (MN Toll Free)

WHITEWATER STATE PARK is located in southeastern Minnesota, three miles south of Elba on State Highway 74. Map index: M-20.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The blufflands of southeastern Minnesota are well represented by Whitewater State Park with its dolomite cliffs, trout streams, and hardwood forests. Examples of the geology, plants, animals, and history typical of this part of the state can be found within the boundaries of this 2,800 acre park which has diverse recreational opportunities and a noticeable absence of mosquitoes.

GEOLOGY: Five hundred million years ago, a shallow sea covered much of North America including southeastern Minnesota. On its bed, sediment accumulated which later turned into rock hundreds of feet thick.

Since the sea withdrew, 400 million years ago, erosion has cut through this bedrock shaping the valleys and bluffs found in Whitewater State Park today.

HISTORY: The next chapter in Whitewater's story began about 12,000 years ago as the last ice sheet was retreating from Minnesota. An agricultural branch of the Dakota Indians was already hunting, farming, and gathering wild foods in the valley of the river now known as Whitewater. The Indians named the river Whitewater because in the spring it turned milky white as high water eroded the light-colored clay deposits of its banks.

In 1851 a treaty opened up most of southern Minnesota for white settlement, including the Whitewater area. By removing the original vegetation and farming, burning, and grazing the hillsides, the land was left open to erosion. In 1900 the floods began.

In 1919, spurred by local efforts to protect natural resources, Whitewater State Park was established.

As poor soil conservation practices continued, flooding increased leading to the abandonment of valley farms. In 1938, the nearby town of Beaver flooded 28 times.

In the 1940s state and federal conservation officials with the support of local landowners implemented sweeping conservation measures. Richard Dorer, of the Minnesota Department of Conservation, designed a plan for the revival of the Whitewater River Valley. Grass, shrubs, and trees were planted on the slopes. On the uplands, contoured fields and terraces were laid out. Dikes were built forming ponds. Burning was banned. Erosion prone lands were purchased. Today, this land makes up the 28,000 acre Whitewater Wildlife Management Area adjacent to Whitewater State Park in the Whitewater River Valley.

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE: When the settlers arrived, they found a great diversity of plant and animal life. In the valleys were rich bottomland forests and clean, spring-fed streams that produced an abundance of native brook trout. Oaks dominated most slopes though sugar maples and basswood grew on some north and east facing slopes. Some of the upland was oak savanna—gently rolling prairie with scattered oaks.

Remnant stands of white pine and other plants usually found further north remain from a time when the climate was colder and glaciers were not far away. In the various plant and animal communities are species found nowhere else in Minnesota. These plants and animals, like the shagbark hickory and timber rattlesnake, survive here on the fringe of their range. As many as 49 kinds of mammals and 237 kinds of birds use the Whitewater River valley in the course of a year.

Wild turkeys were successfully reintroduced into the Whitewater Wildlife Management Area in the early 1960s. Many of these wary game birds are now found in the valley, some within Whitewater State Park.

FISHING: Fishing is allowed in Whitewater State Park, subject to Minnesota fishing laws.

Trail	Access From	Average Time: hours	Distance: miles (kilometers)	Goes to Blufftop	Self Guided Trail	Difficulty: easy moderate difficult	Description
Coyote Point Trail	Visitor Center	2	2.7 (4.2)	X		D	Plan to see various kinds of hardwood forests, meadow and scenic overlooks on this medium length trail. Deer, wild turkeys and bluebirds often frequent this area. Wooden steps and walkway have been installed to make hiking safer and to protect fragile soil and plant resources.
Dakota Trail	North Picnic Area	3.5	4.2 (6.7)	X		D	See the valley from many points of view on this longest park trail. You will travel through forests and remnant prairie and along river and clifftop. If you like to get away from the crowds and visit more remote areas, you will enjoy this trail. Several route options exist as this trail intersects many others.
Meadow Trail	North Picnic Area	1.5	1.7 (2.7)		X	E	See for yourself the impressive changes that have occurred in this meadow that was once forest, cornfield and golf course. Your chances of seeing, and catching trout, are good as stream improvements have been made by DNR Fisheries and Trout Unlimited. Walk the extra loop for an extended meadow experience.
Valley Trail	Angler's Parking Lot	1.75	2.4 (3.8)			E	This trail is particularly good for group center visitors to explore the bottomland forest. Wildlife and wildflowers abound along these two river-hugging trail loops that lead below several spectacular cliffs.
Chimney Rock Trail	North Picnic Area	1	.7 (1.1)	X		M	This is the most popular, shortest and easiest trail to the blufftops. Stone steps climb to the ridgetop where the trail turns taking you to Chimney Rock and the lookout beyond. From there you will enjoy a breathtaking view of the valley and watch hawks and other soaring birds.
Oxbow Beach Trail	North Picnic Area	.5	2 (3.1)			E	You will travel through beautiful bottomland forest and around the beach on this short, accessible loop trail. The beach was built in a river oxbow by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930's. This is the best place in the park to see a favorite mammal; beaver.
Trout Run Creek Trail	South Picnic Area	1.5			X	E	Venture deep into a lush valley on this somewhat remote, dead-end trail. Wildlife abounds; from red-tailed hawks screaming overhead in the spring to trout spawning in pristine waters in fall. Limestone bluffs form this trail which has a small turn-around loop at its end.

TAKE A HIKE!
Which park trail is the trail for you? Do you want to climb the bluffs? How much time so you have?
What plants and animals do you want to see?
The following feature grid and trail description will help you make your decision.

The Middle Branch of the Whitewater River provides good habitat for brown trout. Brook and rainbow trout are also found in the river. A portion of the river has been open for an experimental winter catch and release season.

TRAILS: Park trails provide visitors with an opportunity to explore the natural and historic features of the park.

Trails in Whitewater State Park meander along the river on the valley floor and climb 200 feet to the blufftops. Trail length and difficulty varies greatly. Care must be taken on hiking trails that lead to overlooks and steep dropoffs.

Though rattlesnake sightings are rare, they do live within the park. Hikers should report any sightings to the park office.

Please help protect the park's sensitive soils and vegetation by hiking only on designated, open trails.

Some park trails are suitable for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Snowmobiling and horseback riding are not allowed.

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES: Through Whitewater's year-round naturalist programs visitors call wild turkeys, make maple syrup, explore caves, observe wintering eagles and find fossils of animals that predate dinosaurs. Through walks, field trips, demonstrations, evening programs, self-guided trails and auto tour, interpretive facilities and even games, visitors hear the many stories the Whitewater River Valley has to tell.

Schedules of interpretive activities appear in local newspapers and on park bulletin boards.

Whitewater State Park has two interpretive facilities; the Whitewater Valley Visitor Center and the Chimney Rock Geological Center. The visitor center serves as a park office, interpretive center and orientation facility for the entire valley. The visitor center has a Discovery Room with displays, an auditorium/classroom space and a trail center with a wood stove and large windows providing a view of the wooded valley and a bird feeding station. The Chimney Rock Geological Center exhibits a slide show and displays on the geological history of southeastern Minnesota's Blufflands. Leaders of organized groups interested in scheduling an interpretive activity should contact the park naturalist to make arrangements. List of possible activities are available at the park office.

All interpretive services are available free of charge.

SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY THE PARK...

- The park belongs to all Minnesotans. Please treat it with respect and help us to protect it by following the rules.
- The park is open year-round. On a daily basis, the park gate is closed from 10 P.M. to 8 A.M. the following morning except to registered campers.
- Camp only in designated locations.
- The use of firearms, explosives, air guns, slingshots, traps, seines, nets, bows and arrows, and all other weapons is prohibited in state parks.
- Pets must be restrained on a leash no longer than six feet. Pets are not allowed in park buildings.

- Park in designated areas only.
- Motor bikes and other licensed vehicles are allowed only on park roads, not on trails.
- Enjoy park wildlife and plants but please respect them. Do not pick or dig up plants, disturb or feed animals, or scavenge dead wood.
- Build fires only in designated locations—fire rings or fireplaces. Wood is available for purchase from park staff. Portable stoves or grills are permitted.
- Daily or annual permits are required for all vehicles entering a state park. They may be purchased at the park headquarters or the Information Center in St. Paul (see "FOR MORE INFORMATION" to left).

This information is available in alternative format upon request.

"Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is available to all individuals regardless of race, color, creed or religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, age or disability. Discrimination inquires should be sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4031; or the Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240."

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DNR Maps