

Detail Map and Trail Notes

Mississippi River Gorge Region

Franklin Avenue Bridge (river mile 851.5) to the Ford Parkway Bridge (river mile 847.8)



Trail Notes and Gaps:

1. East River Flats Park: This Park is located below the bluffs of the U of M campus, right off East River Road, between Washington and Franklin Avenues. It is best known for its landscaped, open spaces, close proximity to the Mississippi River, and the University's rowing club. A well-kept secret of this park is its access to a more secluded, 1.6-mile trail that closely follows the river, passing waterfalls and a cantilevered bridge right above the water. The trail begins at the south-end of the parking area, follows the river for a ways, and then switches back up an extremely steep hill to East River Road. There is a set of steps, but these, too, are very steep. Feel free to turn around, retrace your route, and enjoy this tranquil segment once again, perhaps stopping for a picnic in the park before heading back up to where you began. The East River Flats trail is a nice

diversion from the busier trail along the bluff, although both provide wonderful views depending on how close you want to get to the river. Since the lower trail is in a secluded area, it is recommended that you travel with a companion.

2. The Winchell Trail is a multi-segment hiking-only trail on the west bank between Franklin Avenue and 44th Street. Unpaved paths break away from the main trail along the bluffs and cut into the woods, allowing you to really experience the lower gorge. One section drops down to the sandy shore of the Mississippi River and another takes you through an oak savanna restoration area. Some sections are rugged and others are closed for vegetation restoration, so follow the signs and stay on the path. These unpaved trails can often be muddy after it rains and have a number of stairways--some dating back to the 1930s. Between 38th Street and 44th Street the Winchell trail doubles as the paved, pedestrian-only segment of the separated bike/pedestrian trail along the bluffs. Here pedestrians can slip away for West River Parkway and descend into the gorge.

3. If you are on the Ford Bridge it's easy to miss the west bank trail, and if you are on the west bank trail it is easy to miss the Ford Bridge. The west bank trail continues under the bridge and connects with Minnehaha Regional Park. The bridge comes to a five-way intersection with no trail in sight. If you are on the bridge turn left on 46th Avenue South. If you are on the trail look for 46th Avenue South near the eastern entrance to Minnehaha Park and follow it north. Turn right at the first stoplight onto the Ford Bridge.