












# Cannon River Wilderness Area

-  Canoe Launch
-  Camp Sites
-  Parking Lots
-  Picnic Shelters & Restrooms
-  Trails
-  Creeks
-  Cannon River
-  Roads
-  Prairie Area
-  Cannon River Wilderness Area
-  Contour Interval (10 Feet)

FARIBAULT BLVD

HWY 3

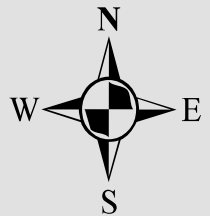
CANNON CITY BLVD

RICE COUNTY  
SOLID WASTE FACILITY

# Cannon River Wilderness Area

Rice County, Minnesota

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 Miles



# Cannon River Wilderness Area



RICE COUNTY  
Minnesota

## History

That this area should persist in such diversity and beauty while other areas around it have experienced dramatic change is owed largely to the efforts of landowners out of whose property the park was carved.

In the 1960s, neighbors of the park, Jackie May and Aylmer (Barney) Code, initiated a campaign to encourage Rice County to take steps to preserve the area. In 1966 the Parks Board recommended the purchase of land for the park to the Rice County Board of Commissioners.

Funding from the state and a federal Department of Interior grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund enabled the county to acquire properties from 13 landowners to create the park. The park was officially dedicated in 1976.



## Geology

Huge amounts of glacial meltwater during the waning stages of the last ice age incised the Cannon River through the Wilderness Area. The river now cuts through the top of the Shakopee dolostone.

At the top of the bluffs on either side of the valley are successive layers of bedrock including St Peter sandstone and Glenwood shale and Platteville dolostone at the top of the hill laid down during the Ordovician period (480 million years ago). Water percolating down through the St Peter sandstone creates many springs and seeps at the base of the bluffs.

## Plants

The 800-plus acres of the Cannon River Wilderness Area include a wide variety of vegetation. Some of these plant communities, such as the calcareous fen, bluff prairie and floodplain forest, are quite rare in Minnesota.

Low areas in the river floodplain include examples of flood plain forest, hardwood swamps, shrub wetland, wet meadow, calcareous fen, and lowland hardwood forest.

The upland areas of the park are dominated by the maple basswood forest that once covered much of the Big Woods region of Minnesota, but there are also areas of oak forest, dry oak savanna and dry prairie.

The surrounding area is primarily agricultural, and within the park there are old field remnants which are in the process of succeeding to forest.

The trails that originate near the picnic shelter on the west side of the park provide easy access to some very different plant communities.

If you head toward the river you will walk through flood plain forest. The vegetation here must be able to survive wet roots for weeks or months at a time, as well as soil disturbance and the deposition of sand and silt during spring floods. The large trees are primarily silver maple and black willow.

Many native shrubs, herbs and vines provide support for the valley's abundant wildlife, including raspberries, river grapes, Virginia creeper, and wild clematis. In spring, the bright yellow of marsh marigolds will catch your eye at the bottom of the limestone cliffs and along the muddy edges of the walking path.

Wildflowers abound in the park in spring and early summer. The trees overhead include sugar maple, hackberry, red oak, basswood, bitternut hickory, black walnut and others.

## Birds

There are a minimum of 50 species of nesting birds in the park. All year round one may see or hear great horned or barred owls at dawn or dusk or on moonlit nights.

Also seen are red tailed hawks (rare in winter), ruffed grouse, wild turkeys, pileated, red bellied, hairy and downy woodpeckers, nuthatches, blue jays, crows,



chickadees, cardinals, and goldfinches.

Each spring and fall a stream of migrants (at least 50 species) pass through. May and June nesters include at least 50 additional species. Especially interesting and sometimes observable are woodcocks, vultures, crested flycatchers, wood thrushes, house wrens, ovenbirds and redstarts.

The late summer is a quiet season when the birds store fat for their fall migration. Nevertheless, one can see and often hear indigo buntings, redstarts, red-eyed vireos, red-winged blackbirds, phoebes and kingfishers.

## Other animals

Ten kinds of mammals, five amphibians, and three snakes are all likely to be living and reproducing in the park. With luck, one can see a white-tailed deer, coyote, red fox, badger, striped skunk, opossum, gray squirrel or pocket gopher.

For more information, scan the QR codes below.



friendsofcannonriver-  
wildernessarea.org



CRWA:  
ricecountymn.gov



Friends Of The  
Cannon River  
Wilderness Area

FCRWA

RICE COUNTY  
Minnesota