

MINNEHAHA CREEK MAP



Credit: Michelle Birckmoor

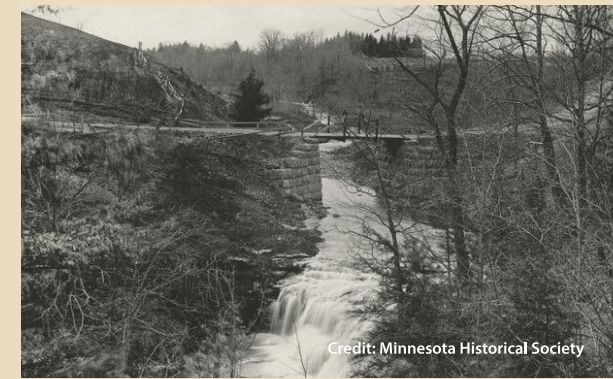


GRAY'S BAY DAM AND WATER LEVELS

A variety of structures have managed the flow of Minnehaha Creek out of Lake Minnetonka since the late 1800s. The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District built the current dam in 1979 to address flooding issues on Lake Minnetonka and Minnehaha Creek.

The dam is a key tool in keeping the lake and creek from becoming either too high or too low. There are lots of factors to consider, and it took the communities around the lake and creek nearly a decade to come up with an operating plan. The District uses that model, approved by its communities and the Minnesota DNR, to operate the dam. Operation of the dam considers current water levels on the lake and creek, recent and projected rainfall, time of year, and if the lake is on track to be low enough before ice-in to prevent flooding in the spring.

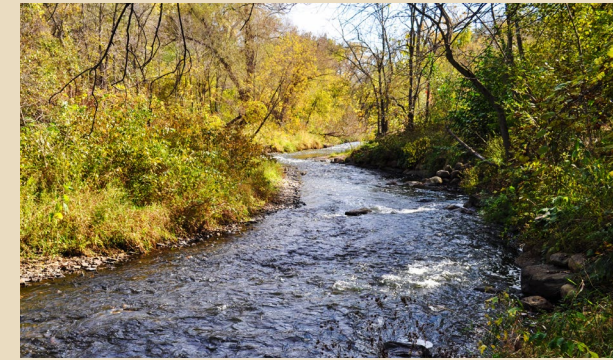
www.minnehahacreek.org/headwaters



Credit: Minnesota Historical Society

WATERSHED HISTORY

Artifacts show that people have been living in the watershed for at least 8,000 years. The Dakota called this area home and were here when Europeans arrived in the late 1600s. Treaties signed in 1805 and 1851 paved the way for European settlers to move into the region. The area became a popular tourist spot and development began in the watershed, altering the creek. The MCWD is now working to restore the creek to preserve this historical waterway.



WATER QUALITY IN THE CREEK

While paddling, you may not see many fish in the creek. This is because of how the creek has been developed, ditched, and straightened in the past. These alterations to the creek, as well as areas along the creek where water infiltrates to underground aquifers, mean that there isn't a consistent base flow of water, causing the creek to run dry in sections and making it undesirable for fish. Additionally, habitat along and in the creek has been lost, so fish have fewer places to live and feed.

Winter maintenance practices also have a big impact on fish in the creek. The salt that is applied to roads, sidewalks, parking lots, and driveways in the winter runs into the creek when the snow and ice melts. It only takes 1 tsp of road salt to permanently pollute 5 gallons of water. The increase in salinity alters aquatic environments and harms fish, plants, and wildlife.



Credit: Clean Water MN

STEWARDSHIP TIPS

Whether you live along water or not, the rain that falls on your property can pollute nearby lakes and streams. Here are 5 actions you can take to protect clean water at home.

- 1. Redirect Runoff and Capture Stormwater**
Route downspouts away from pavement and into your yard to let water soak into the soil. Install a rain garden, rain barrel, or permeable pavement to catch runoff on your property before it flows into storm drains.
- 2. Sweep Pavement and Keep Storm Drains Clean**
Pick up grass clippings, leaves, excess fertilizer and de-icing salt left on pavement.
- 3. Scoop Poop**
Grab a bag when you grab a leash. Prevent your pet's waste from washing into waterways.
- 4. Use Chemicals Wisely**
Store them securely, use only those specific to your needs, follow label instructions, and consider other remedies for weeds and pets.
- 5. Mow Grass High or Replace with Native Plants**
Thick, deep rooted grass and plants prevent erosion.

Learn more at:
www.minnehahacreek.org/get-involved



MINNEHAHA CREEK GREENWAY

For much of the first half of the 20th century, Minnehaha Creek was ignored and treated like a ditch for polluted rainwater flowing off the landscape. Later, during the post-World War II building boom, urban expansion did not mix well with the meandering creek. Wetlands were drained and filled and the creek was moved out of the way.

But there's an effort to carefully restore the creek to its former state by redirecting the water through a series of curves, rebuilding wetlands and wildlife habitat, and incorporating opportunities for public access. When the work is done, Minnehaha Creek will look and function more like it did decades ago, improving water quality and providing recreational enjoyment for generations to come.

By sustaining our focus on the area and building relationships with public agencies, businesses, and community groups, the District has been able to enter into a number of unique partnerships that improve Minnehaha Creek while also reaching the goals of its partners. The work has resulted in one of the largest urban stream restorations in Twin Cities' history.

www.minnehahacreek.org/greenway



ABOUT THE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

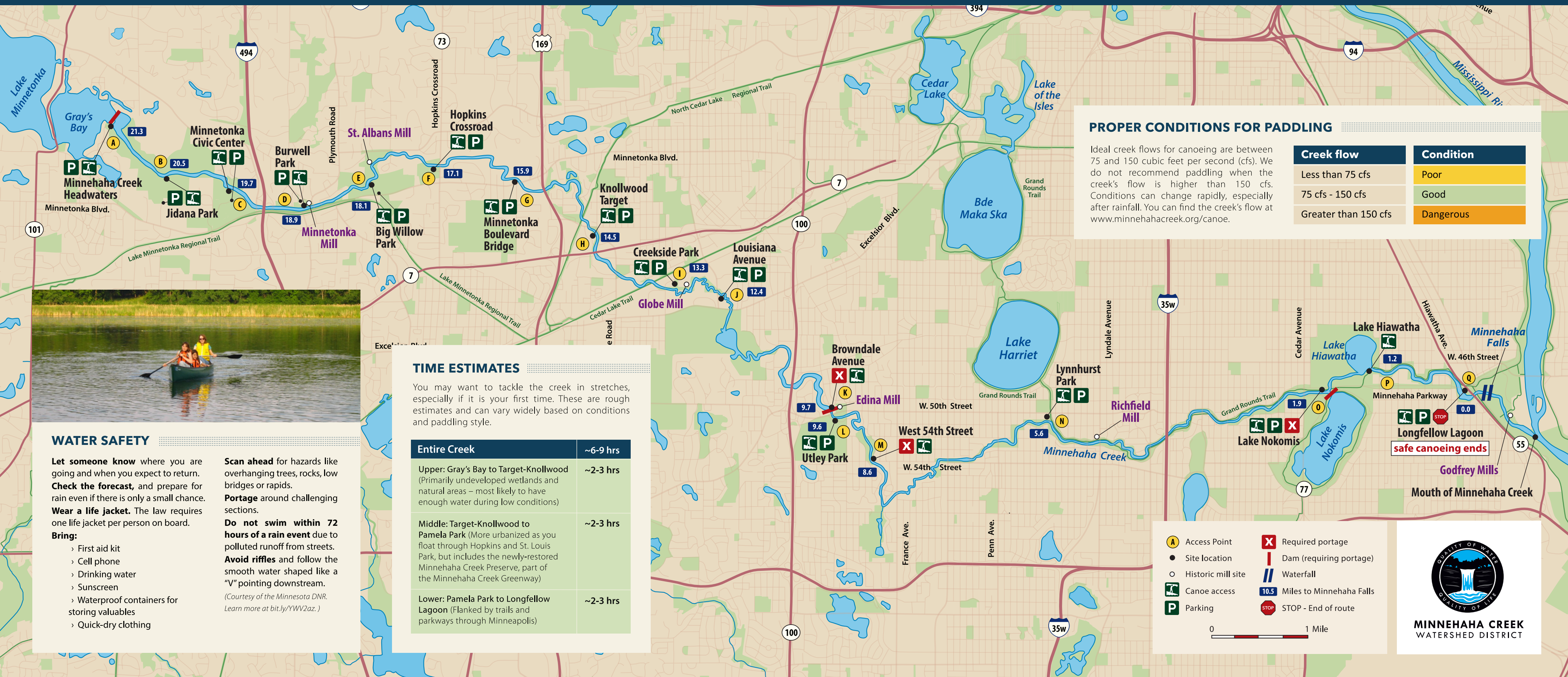
The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) is the local unit of government responsible for managing and protecting the water resources in the area that drains to Minnehaha Creek and eventually the Mississippi River. The 178-square-mile area stretches from Watertown Township to Minneapolis and includes Lake Minnetonka, Minnehaha Creek, the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, and Minnehaha Falls. The area includes 129 lakes, eight major creeks and thousands of wetlands. The MCWD also includes all or part of 27 cities and two townships in Hennepin and Carver counties.

MCWD collaborates with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations. The District's work aims to support thriving communities by improving water quality, water quantity, and ecological integrity.



| | |
|-------|---------------|
| 1 | WATERFALL |
| 8 | MAJOR STREAMS |
| 129 | LAKES |
| 178 | SQUARE MILES |
| 3,000 | WETLANDS |

MINNEHAHA CREEK



PROPER CONDITIONS FOR PADDLING

Ideal creek flows for canoeing are between 75 and 150 cubic feet per second (cfs). We do not recommend paddling when the creek's flow is higher than 150 cfs. Conditions can change rapidly, especially after rainfall. You can find the creek's flow at www.minnehahacreek.org/canoe.

| Creek flow | Condition |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Less than 75 cfs | Poor |
| 75 cfs - 150 cfs | Good |
| Greater than 150 cfs | Dangerous |



WATER SAFETY

Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. Check the forecast, and prepare for rain even if there is only a small chance. Wear a life jacket. The law requires one life jacket per person on board.

Bring:

- First aid kit
- Cell phone
- Drinking water
- Sunscreen
- Waterproof containers for storing valuables
- Quick-dry clothing

Scan ahead for hazards like overhanging trees, rocks, low bridges or rapids.

Portage around challenging sections.

Do not swim within 72 hours of a rain event due to polluted runoff from streets.

Avoid riffles and follow the smooth water shaped like a "V" pointing downstream.

(Courtesy of the Minnesota DNR. Learn more at bit.ly/YVW2az.)

TIME ESTIMATES

You may want to tackle the creek in stretches, especially if it is your first time. These are rough estimates and can vary widely based on conditions and paddling style.

| Entire Creek | ~6-9 hrs |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Upper: Gray's Bay to Target-Knollwood (Primarily undeveloped wetlands and natural areas – most likely to have enough water during low conditions) | ~2-3 hrs |
| Middle: Target-Knollwood to Pamela Park (More urbanized as you float through Hopkins and St. Louis Park, but includes the newly-restored Minnehaha Creek Preserve, part of the Minnehaha Creek Greenway) | ~2-3 hrs |
| Lower: Pamela Park to Longfellow Lagoon (Flanked by trails and parkways through Minneapolis) | ~2-3 hrs |

ACCESS POINTS

Please be respectful of private property. Land only at designated sites described in this route description. Mileage figures refer to miles upstream from Longfellow Lagoon, the final landing before Minnehaha Falls. GPS coordinates can be entered into any major mapping software to find parking locations.

A (Mile 21.3) Minnehaha Creek Headwaters [Lake Elev. 929.4].
Parking | Restrooms

Getting there: Follow Gray's Bay Boulevard until it ends. (GPS: 44.952976866, -93.487682161)

B (Mile 20.5) Jidana Park [Elev. 924].
Limited Parking | Picnic

Getting there: Follow Jidana Lane north from Minnetonka Boulevard until it ends. (GPS: 44.941860141, -93.477039156)

C (Mile 19.7) Minnetonka Civic Center [Elev. 922].
Parking | Restrooms | Picnic

Getting there: Pull into the Minnetonka Civic Center campus and follow the road until it ends, just past the ice arenas. (GPS: 44.942467668, -93.463048753)

D (Mile 18.9) Burwell Park [Elev. 920]
Parking | Picnic

Getting there: Follow Plymouth Road north of Minnetonka Boulevard to McGinty Road and turn left into parking lot. (GPS 44.9420287181, -93.4473902674)

E (Mile 18.1) Big Willow Park [Elev. 915].
Parking

Getting there: Park in the small lot just west of the baseball field complex. Follow the walking trail about 300 yards to the creek. (GPS: 44.94338045, -93.434215256)

F (Mile 17.1) Hopkins Crossroad (Co. Rd 73) [Elev. 910].
Parking

Getting there: Turn into the parking lot from Hopkins Crossroad just north of Minnetonka Boulevard, near the site of the brush & yard waste drop off site. (GPS: 44.947344345, -93.422671029)

G (Mile 15.9) Minnetonka Boulevard Bridge [Elev. 905].
Parking

Note: Only two small parking spaces and no dock.

Getting there: Turn into the small, dead-end "E Street" on the north side of Minnetonka Boulevard, about a quarter-mile west of US-169. (GPS: 44.94527890, -93.40554780)

H (Mile 14.5) Knollwood Target [Elev. 899].
Parking

Getting there: Located just north of Highway 7, across the Target-Knollwood parking lot. (GPS: 44.937434100, -93.389443823)

I (Mile 13.3) Creekside Park (Minnehaha Creek Preserve trailhead)[Elev. 895].
Parking | Picnic

Getting there: From Excelsior Boulevard, go north on Meadowbrook Road, which becomes Oxford Road. Turn right into Creekside Park's parking lot, just west of the Municipal Service Center. (GPS: 44.930522365, -93.373441764)

J (Mile 12.4) Louisiana Avenue [Elev. 890].
Parking

Getting there: Follow signs for Methodist Hospital offsite parking west of Louisiana Avenue, just north of Excelsior Boulevard. Look for parking spots reserved for paddlers. (GPS: 44.92872352, -93.364853081)

K (Mile 9.7) Browndale Avenue [Elev. 880]. X
Parking

Note: Required portage around the Edina Mills dam

Getting there: Browndale Ave. north of 50th Street. Street parking available. (GPS: 44.912405290, -93.342279610)

L (Mile 9.6) Utley Park [Elev. 870].
Parking | Restrooms | Picnic

Getting there: South side of 50th Street, just west of Wooddale Ave. (GPS: 44.9111856941, -93.342317161)

M (Mile 8.6) West 54th Street / Arden Park [Elev. 861]. X
Parking | Restrooms | Picnic

NOTE: Required portage around the 54th Street dam. Facilities located in Arden Park, upstream of the dam.

Getting there: Launch available on the east side of Minnehaha Creek just north of 54th Street. Street parking available. (GPS: 44.905593159, -93.333884296)

N (Mile 5.6) Lynnhurst Park [Elev. 840].
Parking | Restrooms | Picnic

Getting there: Lynnhurst Recreation Center is located on W Minnehaha Pkwy, just south of 50th Street. (GPS: 44.911466826, -93.298822460)

O (Mile 1.9) Lake Nokomis [Elev. 814].
Parking | Restrooms | Canoe rental (Amenities available on Lake Nokomis public beaches)
A portage is required to enter Lake Nokomis.

Getting there: Parking lot available on E Minnehaha Pkwy just east of Cedar Ave. (GPS: 44.915882352, -93.242957411)

P (Mile 1.2) Lake Hiawatha [Elev. 813].
Restrooms | Picnic | Beach

Getting there: Street parking available along S 28th Avenue just north of E Minnehaha Pkwy. (GPS: 44.918693381, -93.232164201)

Q (Mile 0) Longfellow Lagoon [Elev. 804].
Parking

STOP END OF ROUTE: FALLS AHEAD!

Note: All paddlers must land at this end point of the canoe route.

Getting there: Parking available at Longfellow Gardens, on E Minnehaha Pkwy just west of Minnehaha Avenue. (GPS: 44.916125473, -93.215040979)

Minnehaha Falls [Elev. 798].
Parking | Restrooms | Picnic

Mouth of Minnehaha Creek [Elev. 687]

REPORTING DOWNED TREES OR OTHER OBSTACLES:

Contact the city where the tree or obstacle is located.

City of Minnetonka:
(952) 988-8421

City of Hopkins:
(952) 939-1382

City of St. Louis Park:
(952) 924-2562

City of Edina
(952)-826-0308

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board:
(612) 313-7710



STOP THE SPREAD OF AIS

Zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) have been found in Lake Minnetonka and Minnehaha Creek. To avoid spreading them, you are required to:



CLEAN all visible plants, mussels, and other debris from boats and equipment before leaving the water access



DRAIN all water related boats and equipment before leaving the water access



DRY all boats and equipment before entering a new waterbody

