



## Paddling Guide to the St. Croix River (Gordon Dam to Highway 70)

Water levels on the St. Croix River depend on the amount of precipitation that falls in the watershed, but tend to be adequate for paddling once ice goes out along this stretch. Water level information and detailed section maps indicating campsite and landing locations can be obtained from Riverway visitor centers or online at [www.nps.gov/sacn](http://www.nps.gov/sacn). River miles (**for example S89.7**) correspond to the river miles indicated on section maps. Not all landings or facilities are listed here so it is best to use this guide with the maps. Some non-National Park Service landings require fees.

River Stretch	Description
Gordon Dam to Scott Bridge	About one mile downstream of <b>Gordon Dam (S155.0)</b> there are Class I rapids around a large island and then there are wide shallows and riffles. Approximately 300 yards of boulders, plus Class 1 and II rapids come up suddenly before the <b>Scott Bridge (S153.4)</b> . It is best to stay to the left when paddling these rapids.
Scott Bridge to Dry Landing	The river deepens after Scott Bridge with occasional riffles. You can sometimes run the chute of <b>Coppermine Dam (S148.8)</b> , but make sure you scout it first (the chute second from the right is usually best) or use the portage on the right. The river then becomes shallow with many riffles and small rapids continuing to just below <b>Schoen Park Landing (S142.8)</b> . This stretch can be very challenging in low water conditions, causing paddlers to continually dodge large rocks and boulders. Then the river slows and paddling is easier to <b>Dry Landing (S141.8)</b> .
Dry Landing to CCC Bridge Landing	Calm water ends once you reach <b>Big Fish Trap Rapids (S140.0)</b> . These winding Class I and II rapids are considered the most challenging on the Riverway and no portage exists. During low water conditions it is often helpful to stay to the left. Starting just before the bridge and <b>CCC Bridge Landing (S138.9)</b> , there is a smaller set of Class I rapids called Little Fish Trap Rapids. Make a sharp left turn under the bridge to reach the landing.
CCC Bridge Landing to Riverside Landing	Rapids continue below the landing, then the river becomes deeper and slower for the next 2 miles. There are more rapids and riffles about a mile before the confluence with the Namekagon River. The river bottom is rocky and water levels are shallow especially around <b>Big Island (S134.0)</b> . Riffles continue to just above <b>Riverside Landing (S131.7)</b> .
Riverside Landing to Thayers Landing	Keep right of the islands ( <b>S129.5</b> ) a few miles downriver from Riverside. The river slows then and paddling is easy for the next 10 miles. Large groups of people on tubes may be encountered upstream of the Highway 48/77 bridge. Stay to the left at the rock ledge ( <b>S118.0</b> ). Continue staying left as <b>Thayers Landing (S118.3)</b> is located immediately downstream of the bridge.
Thayers Landing to Nelsons Landing	Paddling is easy with few obstacles and good water levels between Thayers Landing and <b>Nelsons Landing (S101.4)</b> . the main landing for <b>St. Croix State Park (S108.5)</b> is located behind an island on the right side of the river—don't miss it.
Nelsons Landing to Highway 70 Landing	Rapids begin downstream of <b>Nelsons Landing (S101.4)</b> . The left channel is usually easiest around the first small island. Several large islands exist farther downstream that are hard to distinguish as islands. Stay to the left if you want to be in the deeper main channel. The entrance to the <b>Kettle River Slough (S100.7)</b> can be identified by a channel that angles 90 degrees to the right of the first big island. Near the Kettle River <b>confluence with the St. Croix (S96.7)</b> there is a series of fast and steep rapids. You will miss <b>Fox Landing (S99.3)</b> when taking this route. There are also several short stretches of easy rapids in the main channel. Wide shallow and easy rapids characterize the river once it joins up with the Kettle. Paddling is easy from this point other than occasional riffles from here to <b>Highway 70 (S89.7)</b> . The <b>Sandrock Cliffs channel (S91.3)</b> is two miles past <b>Soderbeck Landing (S93.6)</b> on the left. It can dry up in low water.

## Distance Chart for the St. Croix River (Gordon Dam to Highway 70)

Map 4: Gordon Dam - Riverside	9.1	County Road T Landing																						
	10.3	1.2	Louise Park Landing																					
	12.2	3.1	1.9	Schoen Park Landing																				
	13.2	4.1	2.9	1.0	Dry Landing																			
	16.1	7.0	5.8	3.9	2.9	CCC Bridge Landing																		
	23.3	14.2	13.0	11.1	10.1	7.2	Riverside Landing																	
Map 5: Riverside - Sand Crk	31.7	22.6	21.4	19.5	18.5	15.6	8.4	Yellow River Landing																
	36.7	27.6	26.4	24.5	23.5	20.6	13.4	5.0	Thayers Landing															
	43.8	34.7	33.5	31.6	30.6	27.7	20.5	12.1	7.1	Little Yellow Banks Landing														
	46.5	37.4	36.2	34.3	33.3	30.4	23.2	14.8	9.8	2.7	St. Croix State Park Main Landing													
	50.3	41.2	40.0	38.1	37.1	34.2	27.0	18.6	13.6	6.5	3.8	Sand Creek Landing												
Map 6: Sand Creek - Highway 70	51.0	41.9	40.7	38.8	37.8	34.9	27.7	19.3	14.3	7.2	4.5	0.7	Norway Point Landing											
	53.6	44.5	43.3	41.4	40.4	37.5	30.3	21.9	16.9	9.8	7.1	3.3	2.6	Nelsons Landing										
	55.7	46.6	45.4	43.5	42.5	39.6	32.4	24.0	19.0	11.9	9.2	5.4	4.7	2.1	Fox Landing									
	61.4	52.3	51.1	49.2	48.2	45.3	38.1	29.7	24.7	17.6	14.9	11.1	10.4	7.8	5.7	Soderbeck & Snake River Landings								
	63.7	54.6	53.4	51.5	50.5	47.6	40.4	32.0	27.0	19.9	17.2	13.4	12.7	10.1	8.0	2.3	Sandrock Cliffs Camping Area							
	65.3	56.2	55.0	53.1	52.1	49.2	42.0	33.6	28.6	21.5	18.8	15.0	14.3	11.7	9.6	3.9	1.6	Highway 70 Landing						

### Directions for Distance Chart Use

To calculate the distance from one landing to another, start at the landing farthest upstream. Move down the column to the row labeled with the end landing. For example, to find the distance between Riverside Landing and Nelsons Landing, move down the Riverside Landing column to the Nelsons Landing row. You should read 30.3. All distances are in miles.

### International Scale of River Difficulty

**Class I:** Moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.

**Class II:** Easy rapids with waves up to three feet and wide clear channels that are obvious without scouting. Some maneuvering is required.

**Class III:** Rapids with high, irregular waves often capable of swamping an open canoe. Narrow passages often require complex maneuvering. May require scouting from shore.

For more trip planning information:  
St. Croix River Visitor Center  
401 North Hamilton St., St. Croix Falls, WI 54024  
(715) 483-2274

Riverway website: [www.nps.gov/sacn](http://www.nps.gov/sacn)  
Online river maps: [www.nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/maps.htm](http://www.nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/maps.htm)  
Water levels: [www.nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/current-conditions.htm](http://www.nps.gov/sacn/planyourvisit/current-conditions.htm)

Namekagon River Visitor Center  
PO Box 100, Trego, WI 54888  
(715) 635-8346