

# *A Legacy of River Exploration*

*A tour along the National Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway*

\*Three-day itinerary for spring, summer, and fall.

\*For best accommodations, groups of less than 25 are recommended.

## **DAY ONE:**

### **11:00 – 11:30am**

Where else to start your journey but at the beginning of the river! Your tour begins in Ortonville at the head of the Minnesota River. Visit where the river starts at the foot of Big Stone Lake.

### **11:30 – 1:00pm**

Take a cruise on the only cruise boat in Western Minnesota, the Eahatonka! Enjoy lunch on the boat as you cruise the shores of Big Stone Lake. Discover the history of the area as your guide narrates you through time.

### **1:00 – 3:00**

Take a stroll through Ortonville's downtown district. Take note of the numerous buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places including the Ortonville Commercial Historic District in the vicinity of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Madison Avenue and Monroe Avenue. Enjoy the fine shops throughout downtown.

### **3:00 – 4:00pm**

Head down the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway to the Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge. Take a leisurely drive through the Refuge's Auto Tour Drive and get an up close look at the river's abundant wildlife!

### **5:00 – 6:00pm**

Check into select hotel in Montevideo. Enjoy dinner at one of the dining establishments in Montevideo's revitalized downtown district, situated near the Minnesota River.

## **DAY TWO:**

### **9:00 – 10:00am**

Enjoy continental breakfast at your hotel.

### **10:00 – 12:00pm**

Step back into time and see how pioneer settlers lived, worked and played at Historic Chippewa City in Montevideo. This late 1800's replication of a pioneer village includes authentic log cabins, a 1914 hearse, and other replicated buildings.

### **12:00 – 1:00pm**

Receive a tour of the restored Milwaukee Railroad Heritage Center Depot adjacent to downtown Montevideo. Browse through memorabilia and view the restored turntable.

**1:00 – 3:00pm**

Enjoy lunch at a select restaurant and explore downtown Montevideo.

**3:00 – 5:00pm**

Drive north up the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway along the shores of Lac qui Parle Lake. Here, your tour takes you to the site where the first church bell rang in Minnesota, Lac qui Parle Mission. At this Minnesota Historical Society site, view the reconstructed mission and hike the walking trails that interpret the site where many Dakota people had their first contact with Euro American culture. Ring the church bell and hear echoes of the past!

**5:30 – 7:00pm**

Enjoy dinner at a select Montevideo establishment.

**7:30 – 8:00pm**

Take a short drive west of town to visit the first State Park in Minnesota history! The Camp Release Monument was erected by the State of Minnesota in 1894 to commemorate the release of 259 captives during the U.S.-Dakota Conflict.

**DAY THREE:****8:30 – 11:30am**

Take a drive south on the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway to Upper Sioux Agency State Park, southeast of Granite Falls. Bask in the marvelous beauty of where the Minnesota and Yellow Medicine rivers conjoin. Visit the interpretation center and learn about native prairie species and life along the river valley. View the location of the original Upper Sioux or Yellow Medicine Agency that served as a distribution point as well as an attempt to convert the Dakota people's assimilation into white society.

**12:00 – 1:30pm**

Enjoy lunch at a select restaurant in Granite Falls and enjoy their beautiful downtown district situated along the shores of the Minnesota River. Safe travels home!

**For more information or help on planning your tour contact Western Minnesota Prairie Waters toll-free at 1.866.866.5432 or by e-mail at [Rebecca.Jackson@UMVRDC.org](mailto:Rebecca.Jackson@UMVRDC.org). Additional information on Western Minnesota Prairie Waters can be viewed online at [www.prairiewaters.com](http://www.prairiewaters.com).**