



Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge Tour

Session Description:

Experience the beautiful fall colors with a visit to Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge, a 14,000 acre refuge corridor only minutes from the airport. The refuge provides habitat for a large number of migratory waterfowl, fish, and other wildlife species. We will meet with staff to hear about their oak savanna prairie restoration efforts, spot some migratory birds, and learn about the importance of habitat conservation on a forest walk with staff from the Ruffed Grouse Society.

On-Site Contact:

Ashley Peters

Schedule:

- 1pm:** Board bus and depart Intercontinental Hotel
- 1:30pm:** Arrive at Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge and meet biology staff for a session on habitat restoration, the importance of conservation in urban areas, and some bird watching!
- 3:30-4:30pm:** Nature walk with Ashley Peters of The Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock Society
- 4:40pm:** Depart refuge and return to Intercontinental Hotel

Bathrooms and drinking fountains will be available at the refuge. Please bring along a refillable water bottle if you have one.

Session Description:

- The tour will be conducted rain or shine, with cancellation only for extreme and dangerous weather. Fall in Minnesota can be unpredictable—please check the weather forecast in advance of the Congress and pack accordingly! Generally, plan for cool temperatures, and wear sturdy footwear that you are okay with getting muddy.
- Stick with the group—stay within earshot of tour leader
- Watch where you step! Some paths may be uneven or muddy.



Urban Minneapolis Tour

Session Description:

Explore the urban heart of Minneapolis on a guided walking tour of Minneapolis's beautiful riverfront district, directly next to downtown. The tour starts at the historic Guthrie Theater, and includes the famous Stone Arch Bridge, St. Anthony Falls, and an introduction to Minneapolis's vibrant Northeast Arts District.

There will also be an opportunity to pay respects at a guided pilgrimage to George Floyd Square, the commemorative memorial and protest zone at the site where George Floyd was killed in 2020. We will learn from community leaders who tend to the memorial about their experiences, developing our understanding of the significance of the square and the ongoing fight for racial justice and how we can support these efforts in the places we are from.

On-Site Contact:

Dawn Simmons

Experience the Twin Cities Tour

Guide: Michelle

Schedule:

- 12:15pm:** Meet in the InterContinental Hotel lobby. (We may depart a few minutes prior to 12:30pm, to ensure an ontime arrival for our tour.)
- 12:30pm:** Depart Intercontinental Hotel
- 1-2:30pm:** Riverfront walking tour
- 2:30pm:** Board bus and drive to George Floyd Square
- 3-4:30pm:** Pilgrimage journey at George Floyd Square
- 4:30pm:** Board bus for return to Intercontinental Hotel

Things to know:

- All participants will be required to sign an Experience The Twin Cities (ETTC) waiver, in addition to the Women's Forest Congress waiver. Be prepared to complete the ETTC waiver upon arrival at the first tour stop.
- We will be outside much of the tour, and fall in Minnesota can be unpredictable—please check the weather forecast in advance of the Congress and pack accordingly! The tour will be conducted rain or shine, with cancellation only for extreme and dangerous weather. Generally, plan for cool temperatures, and wear sturdy footwear comfortable for walking.
- George Floyd Square is an active memorial and protest zone. Please be respectful of others at the square, the memorial itself, and the significance of the site for community members.
- Please adhere to the following guidance from George Floyd Square Pilgrimage Journeys regarding photography at the square: "The memorial was birthed out of a movement in which photography and video recordings were integral parts of the protest. To continue that legacy, photos are allowed. However, we ask that people 1) Do not photograph or videotape others without first asking for permission 2) Do not photograph or videotape isolated offerings, as such content may be used to exploit the offerings for financial gain."



Forest and Nature Therapy Experience

Thank you for registering for the Nature and Forest Therapy experience on Monday, October 17th. We are looking forward to seeing you and being in nature together. We have a few suggestions to prepare for this Pre-Congress Workshop.

Please be ready to board and depart the bus in front of the InterContinental hotel at 1pm. We will return to the hotel by 5pm.

Guides:

- Annie Hejny, Certified Forest Therapy guide and local artist
- Kristen Mastel, Forest Therapy Hub certified guide & Outreach & Instruction Librarian at U of Minnesota Twin Cities

WHAT TO EXPECT:

We will focus on our senses in a slow and mindful way of walking. While we won't be walking very far, the walk will last about 3 hours and will include group sharing circles.

WHAT TO BRING:

Wear sturdy shoes and comfortable clothing that you won't mind getting dirty if we sit on the ground. Bring water and anything else you may want to be comfortable outdoors. We will provide sit mats but you may choose to bring something else small and portable to sit on. If you enjoy journaling, you may bring a small notebook.

COLD WEATHER:

Minnesota weather is unpredictable and currently it looks like a high of 44 degrees. Please dress in layers to stay warm, more than you think you'll need including hat, gloves, scarf, etc. We will be moving at a leisurely pace under the shade of the trees, and something not moving at all, so it may be cooler than you think and you won't be able to rely on body heat to keep you warm. If you'd like, you may bring a thermos with a hot drink. Again, think in terms of wearing one more layer than you think you'll need. We will hope for a nice sunny day for some additional warmth!

LOCATION:

We will be guiding you at Crosby Farm Regional Park which is the largest natural park in St. Paul and is mostly floodplain forest along the Mississippi River. You can read more about this location [here](#).

RESTROOMS:

While there is a portable toilet on site at the park, we recommend using the facilities at the hotel before departing on the bus to the park.



Native American Cultural Sites Tour

Session Description:

We will first visit Bdote, the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, an area of great importance for Minnesota. The Dakota people honor the area as part of their creation story, and it remains the centerpoint of many sacred sites in the area. However, when the US Army built Fort Snelling on a bluff overlooking Bdote in the early 1800s, the site became one of mass imprisonment and death of Indigenous people. Today, the area is managed as part of Fort Snelling State Park, with public access and walking trails for people to experience the natural beauty of the area and learn about this difficult history.

Next, we will participate in an interpretative tour of Oheyawahe, or Pilot Knob, a historic indigenous burial ground and gathering place. Oheyawahe, which overlooks Fort Snelling, in the Dakota language means “the hill much visited.” Once threatened by private development, it is now preserved through partnerships with tribal groups and the city of Mendota Heights.

On-Site Contact:

Barb Spears

Tour Partners:

Jim Bear Jacobs, Director of Racial Justice for Minnesota Council of Churches and founder of “Healing Minnesota Stories,” an initiative dedicated to creating events of dialogue, education, and healing.

Pilot Knob Preservation Association, a partnership group who works for the protection of Oḥéyawahe/Pilot Knob.

Things to know:

- The tour will be conducted rain or shine, with cancellation only for extreme and dangerous weather. Fall in Minnesota can be unpredictable—please check the weather forecast in advance of the Congress and pack accordingly! Generally, plan for cold temperatures, and wear sturdy footwear.
- The sites we are visiting contain great spiritual, historical, and cultural importance for many people. Please be respectful of the sites and follow the guidance of tour leaders.
- Stay safe! Watch where you step, stay with the group, and dress appropriately.
- Bathrooms will be available at the state park, with pit toilets available at Pilot Knob/Oḥéyawahe