

[Dells of the Wisconsin River](#)

[Dells of the Wisconsin River State Natural Area](#) is owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, also known as the Wisconsin DNR. It is located in the [Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965](#) area at the intersection of four counties: Columbia, Juneau, Sauk and Adams counties. The Dells of the Wisconsin River is a gorge about 5 miles long carved out by the Wisconsin River. It features rock formations, cliffs, tributary canyons and amazing views. There are three main parking areas giving access to the public areas all North of The Dells; one on the West side of the river and two on the East side. All three locations offer trails for hiking. Some parts of the State Natural Area are not open to the public, mainly along the river with steep banks. There is also a section leased out by one of the local river boat tour companies.

WI DNR Sign Reads: "Area Open – 5:00 am to 10 pm between May 15 and September 15th and 5:00 am to 8:00 pm between September 16 and May 14. NO Fires, NO Camping, NO Glass Containers."

[Dells of the Wisconsin River - Witches Gulch Trail](#) (North Parking Lot) | [Chapel Gorge Trail](#) (South Parking Lot) | [61st Street Parking Area](#) | [Wisconsin River](#)

Dells of the Wisconsin River State Natural Area

<iframe width="800" height="615" src="https://54321.video/index.php?option=com_allvideoshare&view=video&id=95&tmpl=component" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

[Wisconsin River](#)

Dells of the Wisconsin River Designated Parking Area

North Parking Lot – Witches Gulch Trail

This area is located on River Road East of the Wisconsin River and North of Wisconsin Dells along Witches Gulch, which is part of the Dells of the Wisconsin River. There is a section of it along the Gulch that is not open to the public due to a private lease with one of the local river boat tour companies. The rest of the area is open to the public and is mostly used for hiking on the Witches Gulch Trail. Some parts right around the Wisconsin River are not open to the public for safety reasons because of the steepness. This area is mostly large pine trees. A sign there reads "140,000 Pines Planted in The Dells 1925 – 1926". There are lots of ferns, wild flowers, vines, mushrooms, berries, moss and maple trees. The terrain there is lightly rolling for the most part, but steep by the river. This part of the Dells of the Wisconsin River State Natural Area is home to Whitetail Deer, Wild Turkey, Squirrels, Coyotes, Birds of Prey, Song Birds, Wood Chucks, Porcupines, Chipmunks, Snakes and other Wisconsin Wildlife.

South Parking Lot – Chapel Gorge Trail

The South parking lot at Chapel Gorge Trail is located on River Road East of the Wisconsin

River and North of Wisconsin Dells. The parking lot starts the Chapel Gorge Trail that goes through the woods and turns into a loop. At the end of the loop is a nice sandy beach on the river. This is basically the only spot on the East side of the Wisconsin River in the State Natural Area where you can get to the water. The rest of the shoreline is closed due to safety concerns because of the steepness and to protect the lands natural features. The hiking trail is 1.62 miles long in total with a maximum altitude of 1,010 ft above sea level. At the beach area you can see parts of the 5 mile long gorge where the river caved away exposing some of the Cambrian Sandstone cliffs, canyons and rock formations.

Note: You must park in the designated parking area and NOT on the street or your vehicle might be towed!

Sign: Open to hiking and other foot travel. CLOSED to Horses, Bicycles, and Motorized Vehicles and NO Fires, Camping, Glass Containers, Trash, Hiking in Closed Areas, Overnight Mooring of Boats on Sand Bars, Pets off Leashes (except actively hunting in season). Hunting is Allowed see additional postings during season...

61st Street Parking Area

The 61st Street parking area is located on the West side of the Wisconsin River, North of Wisconsin Dells and is also part of Dells of the Wisconsin River State Natural Area. It is the best maintained but probably the least attended parking lot. It's set in the rolling terrain behind some small farms and most wouldn't even think to venture back to this hidden gem. There is a good sized paved parking lot with a large restroom building, information kiosk, an overlook of the river with a deck and sitting benches with a small mowed path creating a trail. The coolest feature of this part of the State Natural area is an old boat launch that is now closed with a paved road that goes down to a bay of the Wisconsin River. The bay features cliffs on two sides with woods behind on a very wide section of the river that has a sandy beach. This is a picture perfect setting especially when the sky is bright blue with big fluffy clouds. Throw in a fishing line while you watch the area wildlife, jumping fish and in the warmer months observe a variety of river boats cruising the waters. This part of the Dells of the Wisconsin River requires a State Park Sticker to enter!

A plaque attached to a rock overlooking the river by a wooden bench reads: "Dells of the Wisconsin River – This area of striking geological features, natural communities, and rare plants and animals is dedicated to scientific research, the teaching of natural history, and the preservation of its wild and scenic values for future generations. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources June 23, 1997"

Wisconsin River

The Wisconsin River is about 430 miles long and is known for its amazing historical background Several popular flowages are created from it including Lake Du Bay, Lake Petenwell and Castle Rock Lake. The river begins at the northeast

corner of Wisconsin flowing southwest and ends in the west central part of the state at the Mississippi River. One of the most popular sections of the river is about 5 miles long which is known as the Dells of the Wisconsin River. It is better known as the famous Wisconsin Dells that is filled with fun attractions and historical landmarks. Thousands of years ago the ice that formed Lake Wisconsin melted away causing an overflow which cut a portion of the Wisconsin River out. In turn that created the **Wisconsin Dells** that had previously been called Kilbourn. Today the river offers outdoor activities like swimming, boating, kayaking, fishing, canoeing, tubing, photography, sitting by the water and even transportation. There are all types of aquatic life here including clams, catfish, sturgeon, musky, bass, panfish, mud puppies, snakes, turtles, and also terrestrial wildlife including deer, turkeys, bald eagles, cranes, song birds, and more that live in and around the mighty Wisconsin River.

Dells of the Wisconsin River

Featured Wisconsin Dells Area Real Estate for Sale

WI Cabins & Homes for Sale

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Wisconsin Land & Acreage for Sale

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Commercial Buildings

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<script loading="lazy" charset="UTF-8" type="text/javascript" id="idxwidgetsrc-77067" src="//idxwi.thelandman.net/idx/customshowcasejs.php?widgetid=77067"></script>
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Condos

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<script loading="lazy" charset="UTF-8" type="text/javascript" id="idxwidgetsrc-77068" src="//idxwi.thelandman.net/idx/customshowcasejs.php?widgetid=77068"></script>
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Multi-Family

<script loading="lazy" charset="UTF-8" type="text/javascript" id="idxwidgetsrc-77069" src="//idxwi.thelandman.net/idx/customshowcasejs.php?widgetid=77069"></script>



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