



Points of Interest

Historic **Lift bridges** that were raised to allow boat and barge traffic through still stand at **Lock 21, Lock 22, & Lock 26** but are not operable. The Lock 21 lift bridge is the only bridge on the canal that can be accessed with a public motor vehicle. There are also remnants of an old dry dock at Lock 21, which was used to repair canal boats. The cement runners are all that remain of these historic docks.

Original **iron truss bridges** still exist on the canal at **Bridges 15, Bridge 24, and at Locks 2, 11, 14, and 17**. The Lock 2 iron truss bridge opened and closed for canal waterway traffic on a **railroad track system**. The cantilevers can still be seen under the bridge, but the bridge has been altered to allow pedestrian traffic to safely cross.

NO working locks remain on the Canal, however, a traditional **Marshall gate** remains at Lock 16. Marshall gates opened & closed on the principle of buoyancy. The only other locks that still have wooden gates in place are **Lock 22, Lock 23, & Lock 24**.

When the locks were in operation, the locktenders that manned them were required to live along the canal. Several "Locktender Houses" still stand at Lock 17, Lock 20, Bridge 16, & Lock 33. One of the houses at Lock 33 was the Canal overseer's house and is used today as an office by the IDNR staff.

There are six remaining aqueducts on the Canal: **Aqueducts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 9**. Most of them can only be viewed by walking along the Canal trails, however, you can get a glimpse of aqueduct 3 from County Road 1400N, just east of Wyanet.

Bicycling

There are more than 70 miles of biking enjoyment on the Main Canal, 29 miles along the Feeder Canal, and 3 miles along the Milan Section.

Equestrians use the grassy side of the trail, except where the trail is a shared gravel trail. Bicycles may use both sides of the trail but remember that horses have the right-of-way. There is only trail on ONE side of the canal around the aqueducts.

Big Island

Locks 30, 31, and 32 make up the "Milan Section" of the Hennepin Canal, also referred to by the local community as Big Island, is the confluence point where the Rock River meets the Mississippi. This section of the canal is supported and maintained by a group called the Big Island Soil & Water Preservation Association (BISAWPA).

BISAWPA conducts Xtreme Clean-ups, invasive species removal of the primitive trail at Lock 32, maintains the Pollinator Prairie Garden at Lock 31, and host a booth at Lock 31 every Mother's Day weekend for the Get Out and Trail (GOAT) event in Milan. They have also donated a shelter, trail signs, and their time toward preserving and beautifying the Hennepin Canal. www.bisawpa.org

HENNEPIN CANAL STATE PARK RECREATIONAL GUIDE



Park Regulations

Fires are only permitted in state installed fire pits/grills

Firewood: It is unlawful to cut any living tree along the Canal corridor. It is permissible to use downed wood for campfires, but no wood may be taken from the park without a permit.

Pets must be leashed at all times on a leash no longer than 10 feet.

No **fireworks** of any kind are permitted.

It is unlawful to operate any **motor vehicle** other than on posted roadways. The towpath is off limits to all, but authorized vehicles.

Swimming is prohibited in all canal waters.

Visit us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/HennepinCanalStatePark>

Park trails open 24/7, year-round

Visitor Center

16006 875 East St.
Sheffield, IL 61361
M - F / 7:30am - 3:30pm
Phone: 815.454.2328
Fax: 815.454.2042

Skiing/Ice Skating

Ice skating is allowed on canal waters at your own risk. There is a cross-country ski trail in the Main Complex area, which begins at the visitor center parking lot and extends south toward Township Road. This 2.3 mile trail has gentle up and down hills.

The cross-country ski trail is **closed from 31 October-the 2nd weekend in January**, when the area is used for archery deer hunting.

Trapping

The Canal is a popular trapping location for muskrat, beaver, mink, otter, and raccoon.

Prospective trappers may apply for a permit to trap at Mautino SFWA, Hennepin Canal, and Lake Sinnissippi by filling out a site specific trapping permit application, available at the Visitor Center.

Applicants need to provide their Customer number, a copy of their driver's license, and license plate information of the vehicle that will be used when trapping. Trappers **must return their harvest reports** to the visitor center within 15 days of the close of the season.

Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling on the Hennepin Canal trail is allowed when the trails are declared open by site staff. To check if the trails are open, call the visitor center at 815-454-2328. A pre-recorded message is left during winter hours to indicate daily trail status. Or visit us on Facebook for trail status. The trail is either open or closed; there are NO partial openings/closings. To declare the trail open requires 4 inches of snow on the ground & 6 inches of frost in the ground. **When the trail is closed, the entire park is closed to snowmobile use.**

Our trails are NOT groomed. Riding the ice is at your own risk, as the snowmobile trails are the **only DESIGNATED** place to ride snowmobiles.

Mainline canal snowmobile routes		Miles
Lock 2-Bridge 15	South towpath	21.7
Bridge 15-Bridge 17A	North towpath	4.8
Bridge 17A-Bridge 18A	South towpath	0.5
Bridge 18A-Bridge 39	North towpath	23.7
Bridge 39-Bridge 40	South towpath	2.7
Bridge 42A-Lock 29	South towpath	1.5
Feeder canal snowmobile route		Miles
Bridge 45-Mainline	West towpath	27.5

Parking

The Hennepin Canal has parking lots all along the canal and its trails. Large parking lots are shaded in the table below. The parking locations in the unshaded cells are smaller parking lots that can hold only 2-3 cars. Vehicular and trailer parking is permitted in any of our parking lots while you ride the trails and the parking lots are **open 24/7**. The Visitor Center has the largest parking lot on the canal.

Mainline canal parking lots:				Lock 3	Lock 6	Lock 11	Lock 17	Lock 21	Bridge 14
Visitor Center	Bridge 15	Bridge 16	Bridge 17	Bridge 18A	Lock 22	Bridge 22	Bridge 23	Lock 23	Bridge 29
Bridge 30	Bridge 38	Bridge 39	Lock 26	Bridge 41	Lock 28	Lock 29	Lock 30	Lock 31	Lock 32

Feeder canal parking lots:									
Bridge 64	Bridge 63	Bridge 62	Bridge 61	Bridge 60	Bridge 59	Bridge 58	Bridge 57	Bridge 56	Bridge 55
Bridge 54	Bridge 53	Bridge 52	Bridge 51	Bridge 50	Bridge 49	Bridge 48	Bridge 47	Bridge 46	Bridge 45

Towpath Surfaces (Bicycles/Hiking)

Towpath is located on both sides of the majority of both the mainline canal and the feeder canal. There are two types of paved surfaces along the canal: gravel/aggregate lime and oil & chip. Portions of the trail must be shared by hikers, cyclists, and equestrians where towpath is located on only one side of the canal around the aqueducts. The opposite side of the paved surface side is grass for equestrian use. The grassy side can be used by cyclists and hikers, but equestrians have the right-of-way.

The **feeder canal** is oil & chip from Bridge 46 to Bridge 56. The rest of the feeder canal towpath is gravel.

Mainline canal towpath	Side of Canal	Surface Type
Lock 2 to Lock 12	South side	oil & chip
Lock 12 to Bridge 15	South side (shared)	gravel
Bridge 15 to Lock 22	North side	Oil & chip
Lock 22 to Bridge 20	North side (shared)	Gravel
Bridge 20 to Bridge 23	North side	Oil & chip
Bridge 23 to Bridge 24	North side (shared)	Gravel
Bridge 24 to Bridge 32	North side	Oil & chip
Bridge 32 to Bridge 33	North side (shared)	Gravel
Bridge 33 to Bridge 39	North side	Oil & chip
Bridge 39 to Lock 25	South side	Oil & chip
Lock 25 to Bridge 40A	South side	Gravel
Bridge 40A to Bridge 40	South side	Oil & chip
Bridge 40 to Lock 29	North side	Oil & chip

Camping

Camping at the Hennepin Canal is on a "first come, first serve" basis. Reservations not accepted. The canal site security officer visits campsites nightly to **collect camping fees in-person**. Camping on/along the trails or in the main complex area around the visitor center is **NOT** permitted. Camping is allowed only in our nine designated camping locations as noted in this table:

Lock 6	Lock 11	Lock 17	Lock 21	Bridge 14
Lock 22	Bridge 23	Lock 23	Lock 26	

Equestrian camping is allowed only at Lock 21. All campsites have vehicular access & vehicular camping is permitted, however, there are no dumping/pump-out stations. There is no price difference between mode of camping, i.e. tent, RV, pop-up camper. Showers & electricity are not available at any of the sites, but there are toilets at each site (no running water). Quiet hours are observed from **10pm – 7am**.

Class C rate = \$8.00/family
Youth Groups = \$20.00 minimum daily fee. After minimum has been met, additional persons are \$2.00 each/per day (supervised young people age 18 or under).
IL Senior citizens (65+) = Monday—Thurs is free, Fri—Sun is \$8.00.
IL Disabled persons w/ Class 2 or 2A card = Free, Sun—Sat.

Canoeing/Kayaking/Boating

Canoeing/kayaking is permitted on the canal, however, it is recommended that you do not canoe further west than Lock 26 on the main portion of the canal. The main canal from Lock 21 to Lock 2 is very scenic but has 23 portages required to get around or traverse.

The following are some portage free routes: Lock 22 - Lock 23 = 9.1 miles / Lock 23 - Lock 24 = 10.1 miles / Lock 24 - Lock 25 = 5.4 miles

Mainline canal boat ramps:		
Lock 21	Lock 22	Bridge 15
Bridge 23	Bridge 28	Lock 24
Bridge 39	Lock 29	Izaak Walton League
Feeder canal boat ramps:		
Bridge 64	Bridge 56	Bridge 45

A 10-horsepower maximum is established on all canal waters, except between Lock 24 & Bridge 37, which is posted unlimited horsepower. Overnight mooring of water craft is prohibited on the Canal. Watercraft moored for more than 6 hours will be considered abandoned and subject to penalties.

The Canal **does not have** boat docks or a canoe concession; however, the following privately owned businesses offer rentals:

Geneseo Campground: Canoes, kayaks, pedal carts, & fat tire bikes available for rental to the general public
309-944-6465 / 22978 IL Highway 82 Geneseo, IL 61254

Hickory Grove Campground: Rentals available to HGC guests only 815-454-2400 / 7478 1745 North Ave. Sheffield, IL 61361

The Tiskilwa Inn: Rentals available to Tiskilwa Inn guests only 815-646-1300 / 155 High Street Tiskilwa, IL 61368

Fishing / Ice Fishing

Fishing on the Canal is allowed **24hrs/day**. There is a limit of 2 poles/person for pole and line fishing. Bank pole fishing is illegal (unattended poles stuck in the bank). Jug fishing is only allowed from sunset to sunrise.

The most prevalent species of fish in the Canal are large and smallmouth bass, catfish, walleye, crappie, and bluegills. In the winter months, ice fishermen bring their tents & heaters, often frequenting the lagoon in the main park complex area.

Trout Program: On the 1st Saturday in April & the 3rd Saturday in October, at 6 a.m. the lagoon behind the visitor center is open for trout fishing. IDNR staff net off the lagoon & release several hundred pounds of trout twice per year. Fishing for the trout is not allowed before sunrise on these days, but the program is open to the public. A fishing license & an Inland Trout Stamp are required, unless you are under 16, blind, disabled, or an IL resident on leave from active duty in the Armed Forces.

Friends of the Hennepin Canal

Many IL state parks have "friends" groups – volunteer groups who are avid supporters of a particular park, its programs, and preservation. The canal is lucky that a group of avid park goers created the Friends of the Hennepin Canal.

The "Friends" participate in trash clean-ups, organized hikes, raise awareness about our programs and needs, advocate for the restoration of working locks, and have generously donated time and useful items to the Hennepin Canal. In the spirit of their love for the canal, they go on a hike once per month, which is open to the public.

If you'd like a guided tour of the canal or want to learn a wealth of information about its history, while seeing its beauty, we recommend tagging along on one of these hikes with the Friends. They hike the canal in segments throughout the year, usually 3-5 miles at time. There is **no fee** to participate and membership to the Friends group is not required.

The hikes are on Sundays and the Friends provide transportation from the end point back to the start point. To find out more information, you can email: info@friends-hennepin-canal.org

Hiking

The Hennepin Canal offers over 100 miles of scenic hiking on the towpaths that abut the canal the entire length of the waterway. The towpath is mostly gravel, but there are some sections of paved surfaces (see **Towpath Surfaces** section).

Check out the "Distances on the Hennepin Canal" sheet online or at the visitor center, which indicates the distances between locks and aqueducts along the entire canal.

The Hennepin Hundred Ultramarathon

The first Saturday of October the canal welcomes the **Hennepin Hundred**, a 100-mile ultramarathon that includes 50-mile & 50k points, and a 100-mile relay. The Hennepin Hundred is hosted by **Ornery Mule Racing**, who actively works to raise awareness for Illinois trails and contributes to their preservation and repair. Proceeds donated by the Hennepin Hundred each year are used to repair and improve the trail and its features.



The race starts at Rock Falls, along the feeder canal, with a turnaround (50-mile finish) at Lock 17. The 100-mile finish line is at Colona. Runners begin in the morning and run through the night, stopping at some of the most interesting and enthusiastic volunteer-run aid stations in the ultramarathon community.

Whether you participate in the race, donate to support our trails, or just come out to watch and show support, check out the Hennepin Hundred at their website: www.hennepinhundred.com

Hunting

Archery deer: Archery deer hunting at the canal is through a site run lottery. Applications can be obtained at the visitor center or on the IDNR website under the park's Hunter Fact sheet page. Applications must be turned in to the visitor center by **31 July**. Winners will be loaded into the Free Windshield Card permit system, so they can print their windshield cards. The lottery is open to IL residents only. Coyote/raccoon hunting & Fall turkey hunting are only allowed during archery deer season and only to winners of the site's archer deer lottery. Firearm/shotgun hunting is not permitted at the Hennepin Canal, with the exception of dove hunting.

Dove hunting: drawings for dove hunting plots begin the 1st day of dove season in September. To enter the drawing, prospective hunters must be present at the time of the drawing. The canal staff run a drawing at Hennepin Canal and our satellite park, Mautino SFWA. There are approximately 50 food plots at Mautino's and 29 at Hennepin Canal. Non-toxic shot only.

Duck hunting: A duck blink drawing for duck hunting at Lake Sinissippi is held by our staff each year on the last Saturday in July. To enter the drawing, prospective hunters must be present at the time of the drawing.

For additional information, please see the Hunter Fact Sheet for specific sites at:

www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/FactSheets/Pages/Northwest

The Visitor Center does not sell hunting tags/permits of any kind. To purchase hunting tags or find a list of vendors, please visit: www.dnr.illinois.gov/LPR

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding on the canal is permitted from **15 April - 31 October**, unless otherwise posted due to soft ground. Horses are restricted to the equestrian trails (grass trails) and only between **Lock 2 - Lock 24** on the mainline canal and only south of Bridge 46 (I-88) on the feeder canal. The trail is shared with hikers and cyclists around aqueducts where there is only trail on one side of the canal.

Please clean up after your horses by pushing droppings off to the side of the trail. Tethering horses to trees, riding in day use areas, & portable electric fences are **prohibited**. An equestrian campground is located on the south side of Lock 21's day use area. The table below denotes with an asterisk (*) where the trail is shared & which side of the canal the equestrian trail is on:

Mainline canal horse trails:		Feeder canal horse trails:	
L2 - L4	North Side	B46 - B60	East Side
Shared around Aqueduct 1		B60 - B61	West Side
L4-L12	North Side	B61 - B18A	East Side
L12-B15	South Side		
B15-L22	South Side		
*L22-B20	North Side		
B20-B23	South Side		
*B23-B24	North Side		
B24-B32	South Side	Key	
*B32-B33	North Side	L = Lock	
B33-L24	South Side	B = Bridge	

School & Group Visits/Events

The canal staff is happy to accommodate group activities, events, school visits, etc. Groups of 25 or more using the canal for any reason (bike trips, kayaking, etc.) are required to complete out a **Group Use Permit** with the park office.

Public events, such as charity runs, require applicants complete an **Activity Permit & a Permit To Sell**, including proof of insurance. School groups wishing to collect flora & fauna need to apply for a permit from Springfield in advance of their trip. For groups planning to see the Visitor Center museum, please call ahead to avoid any closure dates that may result from staff obligations.

Shelter Reservations

The Hennepin Canal has a total of five shelters: one large and two small shelters in the Main Park Complex area by the Visitor Center, one at Lock 21, & one at Lock 24.

Only the large shelter in the Main Park Complex can be reserved. The fee is \$25/day. To reserve please call or stop by the Visitor Center to request an application. All of the other shelters are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. A public grill & picnic tables



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