

The Bench Project

A Bench is ... a Story about a Place



Marine on St. Croix, MN 2009



Designed by 4th and 5th graders from Marine Elementary School with local artist Karron Nottingham, this bench was inspired by Native

American and lumber history as well as the St. Croix River's natural beauty. The bench was constructed by the artist, current and former students from Marine Elementary, their families and other community members. Minnesota Historical Society's Mill Site Park marks the site of the first commercial sawmill on the St. Croix.



The Bench Project is a regional, community art project that engages young people to design, create, locate and care for a bench – each a unique work of art.

Located throughout the St. Croix Valley, each bench uses creativity and civic engagement to:

Build relationships and a sense of civic responsibility.

Spark appreciation for the St. Croix River – its history and wildlife – and other special qualities of each participating community.

Draw residents and visitors to the region's rich natural and cultural offerings.

Each bench is constructed by youth and local citizens with an artist or craftsman. Everyone takes part in the project, each expressing their creativity.

St. Croix Falls, WI 2006

Nine summer school students ages 9 to 12 worked with artists, poets and naturalists to design this bench over two action-packed weeks. They hiked trails, toured Franconia Sculpture Park and created bronze sculptures with local artist James Shoop. In their own words, the children wanted the bench to reflect



"the importance of keeping the natural environment intact, the past of the natural environment, the hope for its future and the great beauty of St. Croix Falls."



Bayport, MN 2006



This bench grew out of several intergenerational storytelling gatherings involving local Girl Scout Troops 92, 515, 1204, 1610 and 2138 and senior

residents of Croixdale, a senior living center. Together, they worked with Stillwater artist Judy Sell to build the bench and to create and apply the mosaic designs. "Kindness is Key" was inspired by the keys that hang on the bench. They represent the 40-year history of Croixdale residents.



Somerset, WI 2008

Through a series of community-building and educational activities, 38 special education elementary and high school students worked



with local craftsman Bruce Martell to design and create this stone and tile bench that reflects Somerset's unique history and place in the watershed. The stone was quarried not far from town, and the students found objects in and around their homes and school that they then pressed into clay tiles.



Prescott, WI 2008



Sixty community members worked on this bench with artist John Turula, including Friends of Freedom Park volunteers, youth from the

Helping Hands 4-H and Prescott High School's Ecology Club members. Through presentations on Dakota wildlife, butterfly habitat and a number of art-making workshops, participants determined the shape and orientation of the bench, shaped and glazed all of the tiles by hand, and worked together to attach and grout the tiles.



Hudson, WI 2006

The River Bench was created by 60 Hudson children and parents who contributed more than 1,000 hours to the project, working with local artist Lynn Jermal. The history of Hudson's connection to the St. Croix River is expressed in mosaic designs throughout the fish-shaped bench, including Native Americans paddling their canoes, birds and



other wildlife and children playing along its shores. An engraved stone timeline also marks Hudson's history.



THE PHIPPS
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

St. Croix Valley
Community
Foundation

The Bench Project is a partnership of The Phipps Center for the Arts and the St. Croix Valley Foundation with community groups throughout the St. Croix Valley.

Take in the St. Croix Valley Bench by Bench



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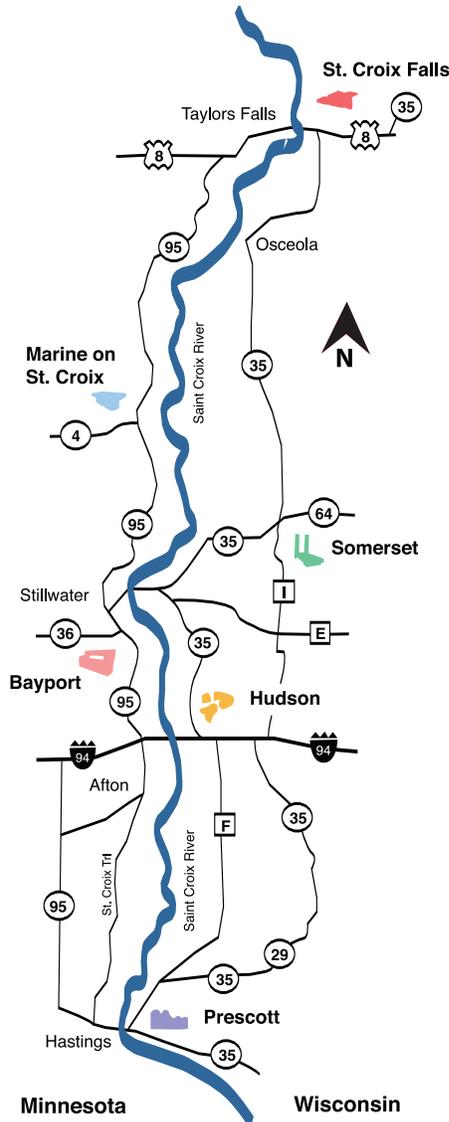
Directions:
In *Minnesota Historical Society's Marine Mill Site Park* on Judd Street, south of the General Store and Village Hall. Accessible from Minn. Hwy. 95, 11 miles north of Stillwater.

Bayport, WI 2006

Directions:
At the main entrance to *Croixdale* at the north end of Bayport and across from the Andersen Windows plant - 750 Minn. Hwy. 95.

Prescott, WI 2008

Directions:
In the butterfly garden near the entrance to *Great River Road Visitor and Learning Center at Freedom Park* - 200 Monroe Street, one block from Wisc. Hwy. 35.



St. Croix Falls, WI 2006

Directions:
In *Gaylord Nelson Riverwalk*, south of the *National Park Service's St. Croix River Visitors Center* in downtown St. Croix Falls - 401 North Hamilton, off Washington Street.

Somerset, WI 2008

Directions:
In *Larry Forrest Memorial Park*, on the east side of Sunrise Drive/Cty. Rd I, north of the Somerset School Campus and south of Main Street or Cty. Rd. C/Business Route 64.

Hudson, WI 2006

Directions:
In the playground near the Marina at the south end of *Lakefront Park*, near First and Buckeye Streets.