

## Valley City Segment

Valley City hosts a beautiful 4.5 mile segment of the NCT. This segment runs through wooded hillsides, residential areas, the central business district, Valley City State University, Medicine Wheel Park, and City Park. A number of the city's beautiful and historic bridges are crossed. The trail follows portions of the Sheyenne River Valley National Scenic Byway and the Historic Bridges tour in Valley City. Parking along the trail is available at the Rosebud Visitor Center and Medicine Wheel Park.



## Lake Ashtabula Segment

### Hannaford Wildlife Management Area to Karnak Landing

The trail travels south from the north end of the Wildlife Management Area for two miles following the fields and riparian habitat along the east shore of the Sheyenne River. At two miles the trail travels west across the Hannaford Bridge to the west shore of the Sheyenne River at which point it turns south again. South of the Hannaford Bridge the river widens into a marsh. The trail travels through pastures and wild grasslands for four miles to Karnak landing. Views of the Karnak railroad bridge are available on this route.

### Karnak Landing to the Village of Sibley

The trail travels south from Karnak landing along the west shore of Lake Ashtabula for six miles. South of Karnak Landing the marsh opens up to form Lake Ashtabula. The trail travels through grazed pastures and wild grasslands. The terrain is gently rolling and offers many scenic views of Lake Ashtabula. A remote campsite is available at about four and a half miles south of Karnak. This segment ends in the Village of



Sibley and Highway 26 where hikers will find a nearby swim beach and a convenience store offering food and supplies.

## Village of Sibley to West Ashtabula Crossing

The trail leaves Sibley and travels south behind the Keyes cabin area and then back again to the Lake Ashtabula shoreline. The trail travels for three miles through a pasture, grasslands and prairie thicket. At the Old Hwy 26 WMA the trail winds around large bays and travels inland for a while before returning to the Lake Ashtabula shoreline. It then follows the shoreline for 3 miles through grazed pasture to the West Ashtabula Campground.

## West Ashtabula Crossing to Wesley Acres Trailhead

This segment travels south from the West Ashtabula Campground through a few grazed pastures along the north side of Baldhill Creek through the Wieland WMA. The Wieland WMA offers some unique plant communities including prickly pear, sagebrush and yucca. The segment ends at the Wesley Acres trailhead at Barnes County Highway 19.

## Wesley Acres Trailhead to Katie Olson's Landing

From the Wesley Acres trailhead, hikers will travel south across the bridge and then along County Hwy. 19 for a mile before turning east for a half mile to the gate at the Baldhill Creek WMA. There is a campsite located in the Baldhill Creek WMA near the west end of Kuders Bay. There are many opportunities for wildlife and wildflower viewing as you travel south through the Baldhill Creek and Katie Olson WMA, behind the Lee's cabin area and on to Katie Olson's Landing.

## Katie Olson's Landing to Baldhill Dam

This segment follows the Lake Ashtabula Shoreline south along the west side of the lake. The majority of the trail traverses grazed pasture areas but also passes through 4 cabin developments-just follow the signs through the cabin areas. There are a few scenic vistas including Martins WMA which offer great views of the lake. The segment ends at the Baldhill Dam trailhead.

## Geology of the area

The Sheyenne River travels through a 200 foot deep river valley. The soils are comprised of glacial till with many boulders and gravel deposits. The north and east facing slopes and ravines are covered with groves of Bur Oak, Green Ash, Box Elder, Cottonwood and Quaking Aspen. The



drier west and south facing slopes are home to a variety of grasses and herbaceous plants native to the Great Plains.

## Wildlife

A variety of wildlife abounds at Lake Ashtabula. Common mammals that can be seen along the trail include white tailed deer, raccoon, striped skunk, fox squirrels, mink, beaver, muskrat, coyote, and red fox. Lake Ashtabula is home to many species of birds and waterfowl. Some species of interest include Sharptail Grouse, Hungarian Partridge, Ringneck Pheasant, White Pelican, Double Crested Cormorant, Western Meadow lark, Canada Geese, Northern Shovelers, Mallards, Red heads, Canvasbacks, Gadwalls, Red tailed hawk, Goshawk, Swainsons Hawk, and American Kestrel. Occasional visitors to the area include Moose, Bald Eagle and Wild Turkey.

## Ladies Line / Clausen Springs Segment

The new 5.4 mile trail segment consists of 4.5 miles of abandoned rail bed. Of special interests is a 1.8 mile loop which follows the shores of Clausen Springs Lake. The loop meets up with the Ladies Line (rail bed) trail and includes some very pretty lake views, several secluded camping and picnic areas, pine forest and a trek across an earthen dam. The Ladies Line Trail from Clausen Springs to Kathryn is a great place to see pheasant and to hear the frogs in nearby ponds. Railroad spikes, bolts and plates can still be found along the trail! From Valley City: Travel south on Highway 21 about 17 miles, turn right on county road 58 about 4 miles, left (S) 1 1/2 miles, then left (east) into Clausen Springs about 3/4 mile.

## Fort Ransom State Park Segment

The North Country Trail enters Fort Ransom State Park from the south along the old township road. Follow the NCT signs through the West Side Campground, past the Elm Tree Amphitheater and to the Bjone House Visitor Center and Park Office. Water and restrooms are available at the visitor center. The NCT then follows the west bank of the Sheyenne River northward past the Riverside Horse Corral and Camp Area. Now the trail opens to hay fields and restored native prairie. Views of the park's Sunne Farm (site of Sodbuster Days events) can be seen. Soon the trail will drop into a wooded section of trail right on the riverbank. You may notice tree damage from a 1999



tornado. After a short rise you will come to a park boundary fence. This is the end of this segment of the North Country Trail.

## Sheyenne State Forest Segment

The Sheyenne State Forest is comprised of about 509 acres in Springer Township of Ransom County. This segment winds through bottomland and upland forests with some very scenic areas overlooking the river valley. The trail is marked and maintained and is open to hiking but no motor vehicles are permitted on the trail or off of the roads. The State Forest is also a quiet refuge for hunting in season, birding and fishing.



## Oak Ridge Trailhead to Martinson Bridge Trailhead

The Oak Ridge Hiking Trail was the first segment in North Dakota to be designated as part of the North Country National Scenic Trail. This one and a half mile loop is located at the east end of the state forest and contains some breathtaking views of the river valley. A 1/2 mile connector segment connects the Oak Ridge Loop to the Mineral Springs Segment at the Martinson Bridge Trailhead. Of special interest in the connector segment is a planting of white pine that would make an awesome place for a picnic!

## Martinson Bridge Trailhead to Mineral Springs Campsite

The Mineral Springs trail segment is the longest section at 1.6 miles and stretches from the Martinson Bridge trailhead to the Mineral Springs campsite. This is a back country campsite near a spring that flows out from a hillside beneath a stately Basswood tree. This is a beautiful hike any time of year but the fall colors make this a beautiful way to spend a morning or afternoon.

## Mineral Springs Campsite to Waterfall Campsite

The waterfall segment is .6 miles. It is a quiet, wooded and serene hike along an old abandoned roadbed. The waterfall, the only registered waterfall in the state, flows year-round and is the site of another of the back country campsites. Let the sound of the waterfall lull you to sleep at night!

From Lisbon:

At the red light go west on Highway 27 for approximately 9 miles and then go north about 4 miles on the township road (122nd Ave.). The trail head is located on the right side at the bottom of the hill.

From Fort Ransom:

Travel east of Fort Ransom for about a quarter mile on County Highway #58. Turn right (south) for 3 miles until you get to the township road. (122 Ave. County Rd 13)