

## ***Our Favorite Haunts...***

The geography of the [driftless region](#) in our tri-state area plays a picturesque role in the *The Root River Anthology (RRA)*. As you listen to the stories unfold from this series, we encourage you to do so amidst the beauty of SE Minnesota, whether that's right out your own back door or even somewhere along our beloved Root River. In fact, we have several suggested locations provided below! Some of these are personal favorites of the artists who are in and around Lanesboro, MN. Take a walk or a drive to any of these spots as our story begins...

*Please use the maps linked below, of the Root River Trail and Lanesboro, to assist you on your journey (they are .pdf files):*

[Root River Trail](#)

[City of Lanesboro](#)

### **Lanesboro**

- **Top of Church Hill:** Talk a walk to the top of **Kenilworth Ave S** off of **Elmwood St E**. Across from the **Bethlehem Lutheran Church**, have a seat on one of the two benches and take in the view of **Sylvan Park**, the dam, and beyond! Bald eagles have been spotted flying across the area towards the Root.
- **Gazebo in Sylvan Park:** A great spot on a spring or summer day. Watch the geese and ducks waddle about in the pond and enjoy the park. Maybe even take a walk over to the just-out-of-view “bunny trail” on the hill side of the pond.
- **Gravel road towards Avian Acres:** Looking for a long walk? Elizabeth Dunn from the Commonweal recommends parking at the **Bass Pond** and heading up the old ox cart trail! (**Ox Trail Road**) First up, you'll have a beautiful view of the **dam**, Lanesboro High School's **football field**, and beyond. Continue on for about 1/4 mile until you hit farmland on your left, where you can cut through to the **Root River State Trail** and head back into town. Along the way, you can hear a cacophony of peepers (frogs) from mid-Spring to mid-Fall. If you're looking for a longer route, stay on Ox Trail Rd., which becomes **Grit Road**. Continue past **Avian Acres**, until it intersects with the Root River State Trail, take a left onto it and to head back to Lanesboro. About a 3.75 mile loop.

- **Walking bridge(s) over the Root:** You've got two options here. Grab a cup of Kickapoo coffee (or beverage of choice!) at **Parkway Market** and then stroll down **Coffee St. W.** until you hit the old iron **Coffee Street Bridge**—you might see some folks fishing down below. Stroll along the path to your left, crossing under **Hwy. 8**, until you hook up with the **Root River State Trail**. To your left is the second bridge, carrying the **Root River Trail** (It's a great spot of the river where the Amish have been spotted fishing from time to time.)
- **Phone booth:** This might be the perfect spot to begin or end. Located next to the **Lanesboro Museum**, the phone booth plays a rotating selection of actual stories about life in Lanesboro. Head down to the patio located below the museum; as you stretch out on one of the picnic tables, take in a view of the river and listen to *RRA*.
- **The Historic Lanesboro Dam:** Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Lanesboro Stone Dam was built in 1868 and is one of only six gravity arch dams left in the United States. If you go there now, you'll actually see it undergoing a *major* renovation to help preserve it. Where is the best place to sit and check it out? Glad you asked:
  - The benches on the embankment along **Parkway Ave. S.**, across from the **Community Center**—nice view of the river here as well. You can park in the **Sylvan Park** parking lot.
  - If you walk behind the **Thompson House**, you'll find a gazebo and a platform that overlooks the dam and river.
- **The Cemeteries:** You might need to pull up Google Maps for this one. (As Joyce in *RRA* says, "Google it!") Where **Auburn Ave S.** meets **Zenith St.**, you'll come to the Lanesboro Cemetery. Mosey up the gravel road until you come to a spectacular view of the hills that lie beyond Lanesboro—right where the cemetery meets the golf course.

## **Root River Trail towards Preston**

Bike about 2.5 miles west towards **Preston**. There is a nice riverside picnic table spot that gets pleasant shade and plenty of butterflies.

## Root River Trail towards Whalan

- **Confluence:** If you head east on **Hwy. 250** out of Lanesboro, at about 1.3 miles from the cement bridge you come upon a dirt turnout where the highway veers sharply left. It's directly beside the **Root River Trail**. Park here, and if you head to the right (west) down the trail, you'll come across **Frank Wright's Oz Garden** (complete with the **Wheel of Misfortune!**). Oz is described as four-and-a-half acres of meadow, orchard and perennial gardens with riverfront acreage to be enjoyed! Take the trail the other direction (east) and you'll reach the long bridge where the south branch of the Root River converges with the north branch. It's a spot loved by so many of us here in Lanesboro.
  - Wanna walk there instead? Just pick up the trail in town where **Coffee St. E.** meets **Kenilworth Ave N.** It's about a two-mile walk to the confluence.
- **Secret Spot:** In between Frank Wright's garden (Oz) and the confluence, there is a culvert under the road and trail funneling a seasonal stream to the river. If you climb over the fence, you can make your way under **Hwy. 250** and climb up to the stream bed on the other side of the trail. It's an amazingly quiet and serene experience, knowing that no one knows you're even there nor what you're up to. Jeremy van Meter from the Commonweal does his best thinking there. Don't take this route when there's water running in the culvert or it's raining!

## Whalan

- Bike (via **Root River Trail**) or drive down to Whalan and hang out in the park under the gazebo.
  - Treat yourself to a slice of fantastic pie from **Aroma Pie Shoppe**
  - And you can pick up some handmade cards from local artist Diane Knight. They're perfect for sending to loved ones when it's difficult to connect in person. Check out her work at [dmardelle.weebly.com](http://dmardelle.weebly.com)

## Rushford

- If you drive to the top of **Magelssen Bluff Park** above town, you have two options for spectacular views of Rushford and beyond (as far as the eye can see!) Follow both roads to these overlooks, and take in the beauty of southeastern Minnesota.