Farm Island Recreation Area

Nature Exploration Trail

Type of trail: Hiking, biking, interpretive/viewing nature, interpretive history

Trail surface: Gravel/limestone

Rated: Easy, appropriate for all ages

Fee required: Park Entrance License

Length of trail in miles: Three miles

Location of the trailhead: South end of causeway

Facilities at or near the trailhead: Toilet, parking

Facilities along the trail: Toilet and bench

Will there be interpretive information available: Yes

What lodging opportunities are provided IN the park: Tent camping, electrical and non-electrical campsites, wheelchair accessible campsite, camping cabins

Does this trail connect with any other trails: No

Nearest facilities for purchasing snacks, sunscreen etc.: In Pierre – 2.5 miles

Nearest motels/restaurants OUTSIDE the park: In Pierre – 2.5 miles

Nearest Chamber of Commerce:
   Pierre Chamber of Commerce, 800 W. Dakota Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501, (605) 224-7361

Emergency phone numbers:
   Ambulance - 911
   Sheriff - 911
   Fire Department - 911

Do most cell phones work on this trail: Yes
Farm Island Recreation Area

Nature Exploration Trail

There have been many changes to Farm Island from when the first fur traders or when Lewis & Clark came up the Missouri River.

The fur traders who planted and tilled gardens on the island named the Island. Surrounded by water, their crops were relatively safe from prairie fires or enemies who could burn or steel the produce. By an Act of Congress in March 1889, the 1,800 acres of Farm Island were given to the City of Pierre.

The isolation of the island was changed in 1934 when crews of the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed a half-mile-long causeway across the North Fork of the Missouri River. By 1946, the upkeep of this popular island became too great an obligation for the City of Pierre and ownership was transferred to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

The island served as a state recreation area until Big Bend Dam was completed in 1965. Buildings and other facilities were then moved off the island. When the 80-mile-long lake behind the dam filled with water, much of Farm Island was flooded. Today, Farm Island has regained much of its original wilderness atmosphere.

During the past 200 years the island has changed from undisturbed nature to crude farming, to resort-recreation facilities, and then back almost to wilderness. Old roadways may be found beneath the encroaching vegetation. Nature has all but reclaimed the island.

As you walk along the trail, ponder about how the trees, birds, flowers, animals, and shorelines must have appeared to members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804. The party stopped on the island to pick up elk that members of the expedition had killed for meat.

There are numerous maintained trails that will allow you to explore the island like many people have done long before this area was developed.

Please observe normal trail courtesy, leave wild plants and wildlife where you find them and deposit litter in proper containers. Pause frequently to listen, observe and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature.
Farm Island Recreation Area

Lewis and Clark Trail  
Connects Farm Island Recreation Area, LaFramboise Nature Area, and Oahe Downstream Recreation Area

Type of trail: Hiking and biking

Trail surface: Paved/gravel/limestone  
Rated: Easy, appropriate for all ages

Fee required: Park Entrance License if starting at Farm Island or Oahe Downstream Recreation Areas

Length of trail in miles: 14.5 miles from Farm Island to Oahe Downstream

Location of the trailheads: Farm Island Recreation Area, LaFramboise Island Nature Area, Oahe Downstream Recreation Area

Facilities at or near the trailheads: Parking lots and vault toilets

Facilities along the trail: Resting benches and views of the Missouri River

Will there be interpretive information available: No

What lodging opportunities are provided IN the park: Tent camping, electrical and non-electrical campsites, wheelchair accessible campsite, camping cabins

Does this trail connect with any other trails: Connects with trails in Farm Island Recreation Area, LaFramboise Island Nature Area, and Oahe Downstream Recreation Area

Nearest facilities for purchasing snacks, sunscreen etc.: In Pierre – 2.5 miles

Nearest motels/restaurants OUTSIDE the park: In Pierre – 2.5 miles

Nearest Chamber of Commerce:  
Pierre/Ft. Pierre Chamber of Commerce, 800 W. Dakota Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501, (605) 224-7361

Emergency phone numbers:  
Ambulance - 911  
Sheriff - 911  
Fire Department - 911

Do most cell phones work on this trail: Yes