

Riverside Park- Yankton, SD

Loop 2- self-guided art and history tour. Starts at the Meridian Bridge parking lot to the west of the bridge. The tour follows the trail to the Levee Street trail crossing north up into The Lawn and Meridian Bridge Plaza area, back south down to Levee Street and across the lower deck of the Meridian Bridge, north over the Meridian Bridge upper deck, and then back to the parking lot.

Extra walking and a bonus site: Pierre Dorion monument.

Please take pictures and selfies and post to social media with the hashtags: #celebratetrails #yanktonsd

Year-round restrooms can be located on the south side of the Yankton Water Purification Facility. Look for the large restroom sign above the doors along the waterfront trail to the east of the Meridian Bridge.

Riverside Park Loop 2- 1.5 miles.

1. Start @ the Meridian Bridge parking lot to the west of the Meridian Bridge.
2. Art- "The Bear" is a sculpture by Eric Thorsen. The statue is located on the south side of Levee Street on the east side of the trail/street crossing. It was donated to the City of Yankton by Dona Knapp.
3. Art- "Flight of the Dragonflies" is a piece created by Christopher Powell. The sculpture is located toward the south end of The Lawn and on the west side of the trail. It was purchased by the Yankton RiverWalk group as its 2012 People's Choice Award winner. The top of the sculpture spins by turning the disc at the base of the piece.
4. Art- "River Flight" is a piece created by Jake Balcom. The metal sculpture is located on the east side of the trail at The Lawn. It was purchased by the Yankton RiverWalk group as its 2010 People's Choice Award winner.
5. Art- "Totem Head" is a piece created by E. Spencer Schubert. The sculpture is located along the path that heads east under the Meridian Bridge and is on the west side of the path.
6. Art- "Old Man River" is a piece created by Scott Luken. The sculpture is located on the east side of the Meridian Bridge upper deck ramp on the west side of the trail.
7. Art- "Sioux Pipe Maker" is a piece created by Roger Huntley. The sculpture is located on the east side of the Meridian Bridge upper deck ramp on the west side of the trail. It was purchased by the Yankton RiverWalk group as its 2011 People's Choice Award winner.
8. Art- "2023 Yankton Community Mural" is a painting made up of tiles painted by those attending Yankton's Music at the Meridian concert series each summer. The mural is attached to the west side of the Meridian Bridge upper deck ramp.
9. Art- "Aqua Life" is a piece created by Scott Luken. The sculpture is located on the west side of the Meridian Bridge upper deck ramp on the east side of the trail at The Lawn.
10. Meridian Bridge original identifying plaque with original acorn light atop lamp post. Located to the west of the Meridian Bridge lower level entrance. The Yankton County Historical Society had this plaque refurbished and hired Robert G. Hanson to build a concrete pedestal similar to the one on which the plaque would have been mounted originally. Mr. Hanson used blueprints and shop drawings from the original bridge construction for the building of the pedestal. This piece was dedicated during the 75th birthday party for the bridge on October 16, 1999.
11. USS Scorpion Monument and three flags (US, SD, Navy). Located to the west of the Meridian Bridge identifying plaque. The memorial was presented and dedicated by the U.S. Submarine Veterans of WWII South Dakota Chapter in 2002.

12. Governor McMaster plaque. Located on west side of entryway to the lower deck of the Meridian Bridge.
13. National Park Service (NPS) educational wayside exhibit on west side of entryway to the lower deck of the Meridian Bridge. Topic is Meridian Bridge Connects Continent from North to South.
14. NPS educational wayside exhibit on east side of entryway to the lower deck of the Meridian Bridge. Topic is Missouri River Nature Trail.
15. NPS educational wayside exhibit on east side of Meridian Bridge on the lower deck. Topic is Crossroads of Culture.
16. NPS educational wayside exhibit on west side of Meridian Bridge on the lower deck. Topic is the Flood of 1881.
17. Meridian Bridge- upper deck expansion joints. As you walk up and across the upper deck of the bridge, you will pass over metal planks. These are the expansion joints built into the bridge to allow it to expand and contract with the SD summer heat and winter cold. These joints can be found on both levels of the bridge.
18. Meridian Bridge history- The bridge was originally built with the intention to have vehicle traffic on the top deck and railroad tracks on the bottom deck. The railroad idea never came to be and vehicle traffic was added to the lower deck in 1953. From October 1924 to December 1953, the upper deck was a toll road. More than five million vehicles had paid the toll to cross the bridge by 1953. The Meridian Bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in May of 1993.
19. Meridian Bridge- lift span and towers. Designed by Harrington, Howard & Ash of Kansas City, MO. The lift span operated in the same way as an elevator or a double-hung window sash. Concrete counterweights-weighing the same as the span itself- descended, to allow the bridge decks to ascend, giving river craft a clearance of 40 feet above the water line. The bridge was also designed to allow for the entire lift span to be moved to another span if the river channel ever shifted! If such a channel shift would have occurred, it is possible to dismantle the towers and to move the operating machinery to one of the other spans thus making it the movable span instead.
20. The tall smoke stack that can be seen north of the bridge up on 2nd Street. The original brewery was operated by C.F. Rossteucher & Company and originated in 1866 and was the Dakota Territory's first brewery. In 1901, the brewery was purchased and became The Schwenk-Barth Brewing Company, which produced Rosebud Beer and was sold nationally. The business was closed in 1917 when the state of South Dakota went dry for prohibition.
21. Meridian Bridge- the piers that hold the bridge in place. Below the river floor, the piers measure 16-by-58 feet at the bottom and 9 ½-by- 37 ½ feet at the top. The midstream piers are approximately 68 ½ feet in height with 35 to 40 feet of that sunk deep into the Missouri's hard shale bed. If the water level of the river is low enough, you can view the wood caissons (used in working below the water level during construction) still attached. One other fact to note, is that there were intakes built into the mid-river piers which would allow for future supply of water to be pumped from below the river surface to the City of Yankton. Though, no water was ever pumped from the bridge to the community.
22. Bonus loop- distance .75 miles starting and ending at the Meridian Bridge Parking lot- Pierre Dorian Monument- intersection of Locust, West 2nd Street, & West Riverside Drive. Take the trail heading west from the Meridian Bridge parking lot. Go down the slope and to the switch back on the west side of the Discovery Bridge, go up the switch back and then go 2 blocks west on the sidewalk. There is a sitting bench at this location.