



DAY TRIP TO FORESTVILLE

From Preston · Fillmore County, Minnesota



FARM AND
RANCH



Photo: Tony Webster from Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

HISTORIC SITE, GROUNDS OPEN

A Minnesota Historical Society site inside Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park. Grounds open dawn to dusk (MNHS, June 2026); building hours not posted in October 2026.

From Preston, Forestville is a half-hour drive and an easy half day. The grounds and the trails are open every day, so you can walk the townsite whenever you come. Seeing inside the store and house depends on MNHS's schedule, which was not posted when we checked, so call ahead.

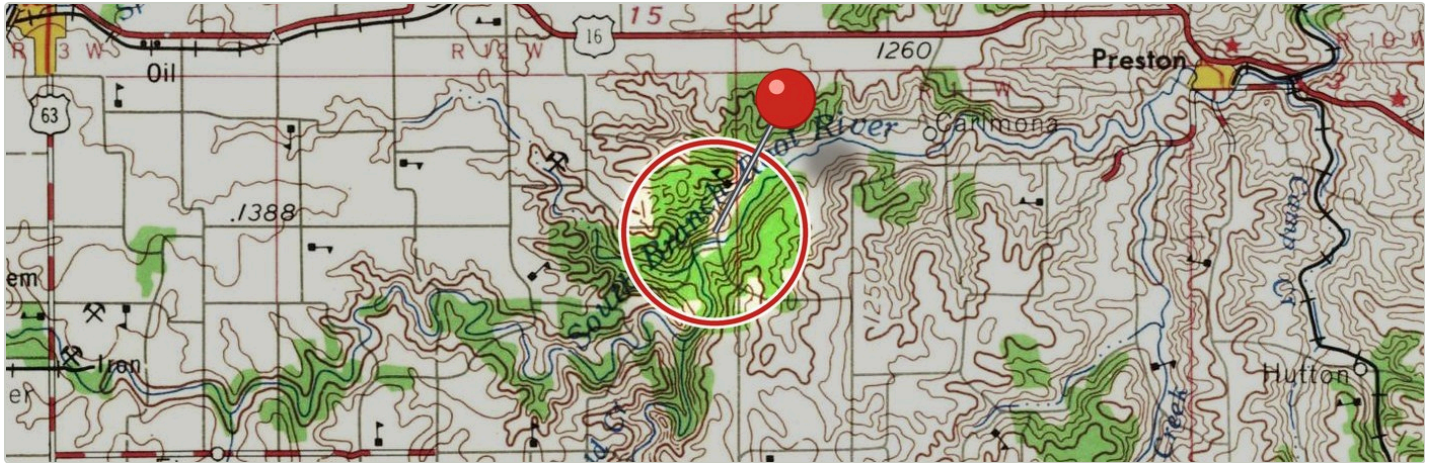
A SAMPLE DAY

- ☐ 9:30 a.m. Leave Preston. The drive is 17.5 miles, about half an hour, by MN 16, County 5 and County 118. Buy the vehicle permit at the park office.
- ☐ 10 a.m. Park at the Historic Forestville lot and walk over the pedestrian bridge to the townsite.
- ☐ 10:15 a.m. Walk around the brick store and house, the granary and the barns, and find the marked sites of the mill, distillery, cemetery and schools.
- ☐ 11:30 a.m. Take one of the park trails that run through the townsite.
- ☐ 12:30 p.m. Picnic. There is no food service on site.

If MNHS has the buildings open, add an hour inside the store and house. The DNR runs tours of Mystery Cave in the same park; check the DNR for times before you plan around one.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The store front.** The clapboard front, the porch and the picket fence face the road. Shoot from across the road to get the brick wing in too.
- **The picket fence lane.** The white fence runs along a mown lane past the buildings, a good leading line.
- **The barns.** The red barn with the brick store behind it makes a layered view.
- **The river crossing.** The 1899 bridge is away for repairs, so the crossing looks different from older photos.
- **Drones.** This is a state park and an MNHS site. Ask before you fly.



USGS topographic map, 1954 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	17 mi, about 32 min each way from downtown Preston. From Rochester: 41 mi, about 1 h 04 min.
OPEN	Grounds: typically daily, dawn to dusk (MNHS, June 29, 2026). Buildings: no regular hours posted on October 20, 2026. In 2026 they opened for self-guided tours during the July 11 Bat Festival, 1 to 7 p.m.
ADMISSION	MNHS's hours page listed admission as free in October 2026. Its 2026 self-guided building tours cost \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors 65 and over, military and college students, and \$8 for children; MNHS members save 20%.
PARKING	A state park vehicle permit or daily parking fee is required. State law sets the one-day permit at \$7 and the year-round permit at \$35.
RESTROOMS	MNHS: "Restrooms are not available on-site."
FOOD AND WATER	No food service on site. Picnics are welcome. Bring water.
ON FOOT	Park south of the river and cross the pedestrian bridge. MNHS says access for visitors with limited mobility "can be challenging" at its sites; the lot has accessible spaces. Pets are allowed on a leash.
PHOTOGRAPHY	MNHS's pages say nothing about photography or drones. Ask staff or the park office.
WEBSITE	mnhs.org/forestville

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Keep out of unstable buildings and off fenced ruins.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 43.64284, -92.21483 • 43°38'34"N
92°12'53"W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/minnesota/forestville/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.