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Five Minnesota Vacation Favorites: Make the most out of your time away from the office this summer!

By Sara Nagel Newberg, Director of the St. Paul Campus Career Center at the University of Minnesota

Since you'll be in the neighborhood anyway attending the Midwest Association of Colleges and Employers annual conference in Minneapolis, why not extend your stay in Minnesota for a little R&R? From the bright lights of the Twin Cities to the quiet rambling rural biways to the scenic vistas overlooking Lake Superior, there's a vacation plan to meet every taste. In fact, there are so many options, it's hard to know where to begin. So being a typical friendly Minnesotan, I thought I'd share my top five favorite Minnesota destinations.

Bluff Country

Head to the southeastern part of the state for a quieter, simpler world where babbling trout-filled streams meander through quaint farms and sleepy villages. The area draws bicyclists from far and wide to its 60 miles of paved bike paths trailing the Root River beneath 300 foot bluffs. Lanesboro, the hub of the vicinity, provides opportunities to dine well, shop for Amish wares, attend the theatre, sleep peacefully at one of the numerous bed and breakfasts and/or bike till you drop! Bicycle rentals are available right there in town or, if the weather is fine, you might prefer tubing down the river. See www.rootrivertrail.org

Duluth and North Shore

Duluth, located two hours north of the Twin Cities, offers numerous cultural opportunities, museums, an aquarium, harbor tours, and antique shops. I love it



because it feels like an ocean harbor with its large tanker ships traveling to and from destinations around the world. Duluth is also the gateway to the north shore of Lake Superior, featuring rocky shoreline, pine and maple forests, and streams and waterfalls all along the way. I find the best way to explore all of this is by foot via the Superior Hiking Trail, a 235-mile footpath which follows the shoreline of Lake Superior. For more info, check out visitduluth.com/home.php

Boundary Waters Canoe Area

For the ultimate nature experience, plan an excursion into this unique wilderness area. Motorized vehicles are prohibited here and a permit system limits the number of travelers are allowed into the area making this one of the few places you can go and experience almost no human impact - it's all nature. The transportation of choice is canoe (and/or your feet). The lakes are so close together, you can travel miles into the wilderness by portaging (i.e. carrying) your canoe from one lake to the next.

This is not a drop-in sort of place; you'll need to plan this one in advance with the help of an outfitter, generally out of Ely or Grand Marais - both about 4 hours north of the Twin Cities. You can learn all about it at www.bwca.com.

The Lakes

We don't call it the Land of 10,000 Lakes for nothing. Whether it's the fishing or boating or waterskiing or just sitting peacefully and listening to the call of the loons on a glassy lake you'll not be disappointed if you head "up north" to lake country. It's hard to say where to begin as there are so many wonderful cabins, campgrounds and resorts in that part of the state. Try Brainerd or Alexandria areas for starters. My all time favorite site to locate lodging and learn about destinations in Minnesota is www.exploreminnesota.org.

Twin Cities

If you're more apt to seek out the culture of the big city over all these nature ventures, then stick around the Twin Cities after the conference you'll find plenty to keep you entertained. The Twin Cities boasts one of the largest concentrations of theatres in the U.S. Museums are everywhere - I especially recommend the Mill City Museum which describes the history of the milling industry in the Twin Cities. The Science Museum of Minnesota and the Children's Museum, both located in St. Paul are must-sees for all ages, but especially if you are bringing the kids along.

About the author

Sara Nagel Newberg is the Director of the St. Paul Campus Career Center at the University of Minnesota. Her 19 years in Higher Education includes roles within academic advising, internship programs and career services at both small liberal arts colleges and large research institutions. She holds a Master's Degree in College Student Personnel from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and a Bachelor's Degree from Hamline University. Follow us on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/stpaulcareers>

Though I'm not a big baseball fan, even I will find it difficult to resist a visit to our newly opened Target Stadium, home of the Minnesota Twins. But my favorite pastime of all in the Twin Cities is just strolling and people-watching around one of the many lakes located just minutes from downtown Minneapolis (or for more adventure, strap on a set of rollerblades!) A great website with more info is www.meetminneapolis.com

By now I'll bet you're just itching to plan your Minnesota vacation. And while you're in planning mode, don't forget to register for the Midwest ACE conference itself at www.mwace.org (click on conferences). See you this summer in Minnesota!

Check out the Midwest ACE Group on [LinkedIn](#) for more reviews, news, and discussion!

Be sure to check out more Midwest ACE E-News next month!

