

# SPREAD YOUR WINGS

## AT ELM STREET PLAZA

### WISCONSIN DELLS, WI

#### Wisconsin River

The Wisconsin River holds profound significance for Wisconsin Dells due to its role in shaping the area's iconic landscape. Over millions of years, the river's waters carved deep gorges and unique rock formations into the sandstone, resulting in the steep-sided canyons and the "Dells" of the Wisconsin River.

#### Pinecone

The Wisconsin Dells area ecosystem contains a mosaic of plant communities including northern and southern pine/oak forests, oak savanna, and moist and dry cliffs.

#### Fish

With more than 15,000 lakes and 84,000 miles of river, there is no shortage of fishing in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Dells is right in the center of it all, offering lakes, rivers, and streams holding everything from northern pike, sturgeon, and catfish to bass, panfish, and trout. You can even go fly fishing and bowfishing!

#### Camera

Henry Hamilton Bennett (1843-1908) who revolutionized photography with his invention of the stop-action shutter "snapper," opened a portrait photography studio in Wisconsin Dells in the mid 1800s. Considered among the top 10 landscape photographers of all time, Bennett's beautiful photos of the river and the bluffs tempted visitors from Chicago to travel to Wisconsin Dells for rowboat tours.

#### Maple Leaf

The sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) was designated the official state tree of Wisconsin in 1949.

#### Crane

Cranes are among the most endangered families of birds in the world, with 10 of the 15 species threatened. The Wisconsin River is one of a few spots that has a large enough body of water and nearby food for sandhill cranes to gather and prepare for migration. The shallow, wide water basin has plenty of sandbars that give cranes a place to safely roost.

#### Rowboat

The first entrepreneur to bring Wisconsin Dells sightseers closer to this spectacle of nature was lumber rafter Leroy Gates. His river guide service consisted of loading guests into a rowboat and making them row while he pointed out sights and provided commentary. This "first Dells boat tour" inspired other guides to start businesses in the late 1850s and 1860s, until the first steamboat started operating in 1873.

#### Stand Rock

Perhaps you've seen the photo of a young man leaping from a rock ledge to Stand Rock. It's titled "Leaping the Chasm" and is one of H.H. Bennett's most famous. During the 1930s and 1940s, it wasn't unusual to see visitors line up to watch the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial.

#### Kilbourn Bridge

Originally constructed in 1857 to accommodate a rerouted railroad, the Kilbourn Bridge facilitated the development of Kilbourn City (now Wisconsin Dells) and reshaped the local landscape. Its double-deck design, with a road beneath the train track, provided a unique feature until 1955. Today, this bridge stands as a gateway to Wisconsin Dells, symbolizing its transformation into a premier vacation destination.

### THE MURAL AT ELM STREET PLAZA

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Created by artist Kelsey Montague as an installment in her [#WhatLiftsYou](#) series.

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