

# Backcountry Camping Planner

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore



Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore backcountry offers opportunities for physical challenge, solitude, and inspiration. The North Country National Scenic Trail passes through the 42-mile long park and runs adjacent to Lake Superior. Backcountry camping is available at 14 small campgrounds (each with multiple sites).

The key to a successful trip is careful planning and preparation. **Please read this publication thoroughly.** When planning your itinerary, keep in mind the time of year, terrain, weather, and the physical condition of everyone in your party. You can only travel as fast as the slowest person in your group.



## Backcountry Permits

Overnight camping is permitted only in designated backcountry sites. These sites can only be reached by hiking or paddling (a few sites are accessible by boat).

A backcountry camping permit is required for all overnight stays - year-round. A permit is valid only for the dates, locations, and party size specified. Permits are not required for day hiking; however, day hikers must observe backcountry regulations.

Each backcountry campground has restrictions on group size, water access, wood fires, and length of stay.

Individual campsites are available for camping parties of 1-6 people (2 tent/hammock limit). Groups of 7-20 people must camp in designated group sites.

Reservations are for specific sites in a specific campground. The individual sites within that campground are numbered for those with reservations.

### Reservations

All backcountry campsites must be reserved through:

[www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)

or by calling: 1-877-444-6777.

The international number is:  
1-518-885-3635.

There is a reservation fee of \$15, and a user fee of \$5 per person, per night. There are no refunds after your permit has been printed off. Permits can be printed as early as 14 days prior to your trip. After you print the permit, no changes can be made.

**A reservation confirmation is NOT a permit.** You must print an official backcountry permit through your Recreation.gov account before you begin your trip. **PRINT** before you get to the park!



# Be Prepared

## Weather

The weather at Pictured Rocks can be unpredictable. High winds and storm conditions on Lake Superior are common. The area is the second-most cloudy region of the United States, characterized by an annual mean cloud cover of 70 percent. Much of the cloudiness occurs in autumn and winter, and can be attributed to cool air flowing over Lake Superior being warmed along the shore and forming clouds. This often results in rain, fog, and snow. Spring is relatively clear due to the cold water surface of the lake. The average summer daytime temperatures are in the low 70s.

Month	Avg. High Temp.	Avg. Low Temp.	Avg. Precip.	Avg. Snowfall
January	24°F -4.4°C	11°F -11.7°C	3.27 inches	43 inches
February	27°F -2.8°C	12°F -11.1°C	2.01	27
March	35°F 1.7°C	20°F -6.7°C	2.09	19
April	47°F 8.3°C	31°F -0.6°C	2.2	8
May	60°F 15.5°C	40°F 4.4°C	2.99	0
June	69°F 20.6°C	49°F 9.4°C	3.35	0
July	74°F 23.3°C	56°F 13.3°C	3.27	0
August	73°F 22.7°C	56°F 13.3°C	3.46	0
September	65°F 18.3°C	49°F 9.4°C	4.06	0
October	53°F 11.6°C	38°F 3.3°C	4.21	1
November	40°F 4.4°C	28°F -2.2°C	3.74	13
December	29°F -1.7°C	17°F -8.3°C	3.74	41



## Mosquitoes and Flies

Biting Insects are a fact of life in the north woods: Black fly, mosquito, and tick season is spring and early summer. Deer flies and horse flies appear by mid-summer, generally when the mosquitoes and black flies decrease in number. Stable flies presence is dependent on weather. If the forecast calls for hot days and a south wind, stable flies will be found throughout the trails and beaches. They tend to bite legs and ankles. Use protective clothing and/or insect repellent. In case of an allergic reaction, carry allergy medicine or antihistamine.

## Hiking During Hunting Season

When you are enjoying the park during the fall and winter months you may see a few hunters on the trails. Hunting is allowed after Labor Day weekend through March 31 of each year. For safety reasons, we recommend you wear a visible blaze orange piece of clothing such as a vest or hat.



## Trailheads and Shuttles

There are 15 trailheads in Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Trailhead locations from west to east:

1. Munising Falls	9. Twelvemile Beach
2. Sand Point	10. Hurricane River
3. Miner Castle	11. Log Slide
4. Miners Beach West	12. Grand Sable Lake Overlook
5. Miners Beach East	13. Grand Sable Lake Picnic Area
6. Little Beaver Lake	14. Grand Sable Visitor Center
7. Beaver Basin Overlook	15. Sable Falls
8. Chapel Road Parking Lot	

- Shuttle services are available for a fee to get to and from trail heads.
- Reservations must be made ahead of time.
- Pick ups for exiting the backcountry early or from a different location are very difficult to arrange. Cell phone coverage is almost non-existent.
- Services such as taxis, Uber, & Lyft are not available.
- Park your vehicle at your ending location and ride the shuttle to your starting location. That way you will not have to be in a hurry to catch the shuttle at a specific time on your last day. Your vehicle will wait for you; the shuttle will not.
- Make sure you have your car keys and keep them in a safe place during your trip.
- For authorized shuttles, check the park's web page: [www.nps.gov/piro/planyourvisit/shuttle-service.htm](http://www.nps.gov/piro/planyourvisit/shuttle-service.htm)

# General Information and Regulations

When planning your itinerary, check the mileage between each campground that you plan to stay at. No more than 10 miles per day hiked is recommended. You can only travel as fast as the slowest person in your group. Pack the enough water, food and gear for your trip. Add an extra day of food for emergencies.

When hiking in the backcountry, most people will average about 2 to 3 miles per hour. Hiking on a backcountry trail can be more strenuous than walking on a paved path. Trail terrain varies: fairly level ground with few obstacles, muddy, root-covered, hills with rustic stairs, to soft sand.

Backcountry campgrounds are generally located at two to five mile intervals along the trails. Each campground has a specific number of campsites and capacity. Individual campsites within each backcountry campground are identified by a numbered post.

The Pictured Rocks are spectacular but can be dangerous to the careless hiker. Fifteen miles of the North Country Trail are atop 50-200 foot high cliffs. Cliff tops are covered with loose sand and gravel. Unsupported overhangs of soft sandstone are common. For your safety, stay away from the cliff edge.



## General Regulations

- ◆ A backcountry camping permit including payment of fee is required year-round.
- ◆ A backcountry camping permit allows occupancy of the campsite until 11 am of the day the party is scheduled to leave.
- ◆ Camp only in designated sites and follow permit itinerary.
- ◆ 6 people maximum for individual sites, 3 tents or 3 hammocks (or combinations thereof) maximum per individual site.
- ◆ 7-20 maximum people must use Group Sites. Group sites can have up to ten tents or hammocks or combination not exceeding ten.
- ◆ Pitch tents or hammocks within 15 feet of the numbered post, keeping within existing impacted area.
- ◆ Hammocks must stay within 15 feet of the numbered post at the campsite. Because trees are not available at all sites, tents are recommended.
- ◆ No pets or domesticated animals allowed in the backcountry.
- ◆ No bikes, wheeled, or motorized vehicles.
- ◆ You may encounter bears and other wildlife in the backcountry. Keep a clean camp. Store food in provided bear proof food lockers.
- ◆ Pack out all trash.
- ◆ Campfires allowed only in communal metal fire rings. Use only downed dead wood. Never leave a fire unattended. Make sure it's out before leaving.
- ◆ No campfires at Chapel Beach Campsite or Mosquito River Campsite.
- ◆ No beach fires ever.
- ◆ Use toilets when available! For all other times, human waste must be deposited in a hole 6-8 inches deep, covered with soil, and at least 200 feet from trails, campsites, and water sources.
- ◆ No glass containers.
- ◆ Kayakers/paddlers should check the park website for specifics about water accessible sites, gear, and safety considerations. Paddlers should check in at a visitor center before starting their trip.
- ◆ Vehicles may be left overnight in all parking lots in the park. Camping is prohibited in parking lots.
- ◆ Drone use is prohibited in all areas of the park.



# General Information and Regulations - continued 2

## Winter Camping



- \* All camping regulations apply for winter camping.
- \* Winter camping is only allowed in existing backcountry sites. Dispersed camping is not allowed.
- \* Finding backcountry campgrounds may be difficult in deep snow. Use GPS coordinates.
- \* Stoves are strongly recommended. Campfires are allowed in communal metal fire rings only, which may

be hard to find in deep snow. Finding dry down and dead wood in winter is unlikely.

- \* When the ground is frozen and snow too deep, pack out solid human waste and toilet paper. Do not bury human waste or toilet paper in snow. Snow is not soil.
- \* Snowmobiles can access main parking lots. Then hike, snowshoe or ski to the backcountry sites.



## Drinking Water

Many sites are close to water (stream, creek, lake, or Lake Superior). Water needs to be boiled for one full minute or filtered through a one micron filter before using.

Backcountry water may look clean and refreshing, but contaminants such as the microscopic protozoan *Giardia lamblia* may be present. Ingesting giardia can cause giardiasis, an intestinal disorder that may appear weeks after your trip.

If staying at Trappers Lake, ask visitor center staff for current water quality information.



## Emergency Communication & Cell Phones

Backcountry users should not count on their cell phones as a reliable means of emergency communication. Cell phone coverage is lacking in most of the park. Some can get coverage close to Munising and Grand Marais, and at Au Sable Light Station. Satellite phones typically have better coverage, but are not 100% reliable due to varying satellite coverage. Regardless of whether you carry a phone, all backcountry visitors should have a plan for what to do in case of an emergency.

Always tell someone your itinerary, including when you expect to be out of the backcountry.



## Human Waste in the Backcountry

The park backcountry serves over 25,000 overnight hikers annually, plus thousands of day hikers. With this many visitors, human waste is a public health, ecological, and aesthetic concern. To minimize impact to the landscape and other hikers, please follow these methods:

Urinating: Select a location at least 200 feet from the trail, camp or water. Think of the “next person” who may visit that area.

Fecal matter: Follow the steps below. In winter when ground is snow covered, pack out solid waste and toilet paper.



Select a location at least 200 feet away from a water source, trail, and campsite.



Dig a cat hole, 6-8 inches deep



Bury all human waste. Scatter leaves and duff on top. Pack out all toilet paper and sanitary items. Use a zip lock bag.

# General Information and Regulations - continued 3

## Black Bears and YOU

To protect yourself and the bears, do the following:

### Store

Store food in the food storage locker provided in each backcountry campground. Store anything possibly edible by a bear such as food, food scraps, trash, toothpaste, medications, lip balm, and cosmetics.

### Clean

Keep your campsite clean. Take food out of the food locker only when actively engaged in preparing, eating, or cleaning up your meal. At all other times, store those items including food scraps and trash. Never take food in your tent.

You must clean out the food locker before you vacate the campground. Pack out all unwanted and unused food, as well as all trash.

Don't throw trash or food scraps on the ground or in fire rings. Burnt food residue will attract wildlife.

### Noisy and BIG

If a bear challenges you for your food, make noise, assume a "large" stance, and get others to help you. If the bear shows aggressive behavior (e.g. growling, "chuffing" or physically challenging you) slowly back away from the animal, maintaining your stance and noise.

### Report

Report any bear/human interactions to park staff at 906-387-3700.



**Don't let your actions cause a bear or other animal to be relocated or destroyed. If you leave food out and unattended, you are inviting a bear into your camp. Why? A bear has an acute sense of smell. A bear conditioned to human food is more likely to be aggressive and, subsequently, to injure or kill people in an attempt to obtain this easy source of food. When such a bear poses a risk of injuring someone, it is often necessary to destroy that bear.**

## Ticks

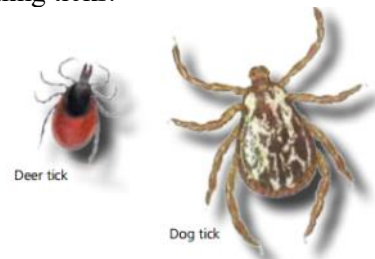
While it is a good idea to take preventive measures against ticks year-round, be extra vigilant in warmer months (April-September) when ticks are most active.

Remember:

- Avoid wooded and bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Walk in the center of trails.
- Repel ticks with DEET or permethrin. Use repellents that contain 20% or more DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on exposed skin for protection that lasts up to several hours. Always follow product instructions.
- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing.
- Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks, and tents. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and remains protective for up to 70 washings.
- Find other repellents on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/>.

### Find and Remove Ticks from Your Body

- Bathe or shower as soon as possible to wash off and more easily find ticks.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Look for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in your hair.
- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, clothing, tents and packs. Tumble dry clothes on high heat for an hour to kill remaining ticks.



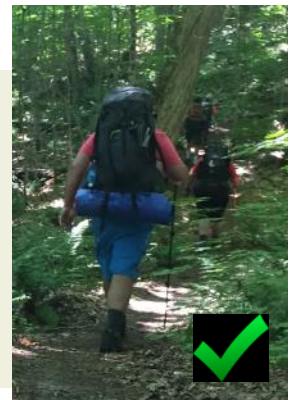
# Leave No Trace Principles

## 1. PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- ◆ Plan based on the skills and abilities of trip participants.
- ◆ Gain knowledge of the area and research the rules and regulations for backcountry camping in the park.
- ◆ Bring equipment and clothing for comfort, safety, and Leave No Trace qualities. Bring a camp stove.
- ◆ Prepare for weather changes, hazards, and emergencies. Bring maps, food, and water filtration devices.
- ◆ Check with park staff for any important updates before starting your trip.

## 2. TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- ◆ Durable surfaces are established trails and campsites.
- ◆ Don't create or use social trails, which can cause erosion, scar the landscape, and negatively impact natural communities.
- ◆ Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy. This prevents unnecessary widening of trails and prevents social trails.
- ◆ Camp in designated sites only. Do not go beyond 15 feet from the site post.



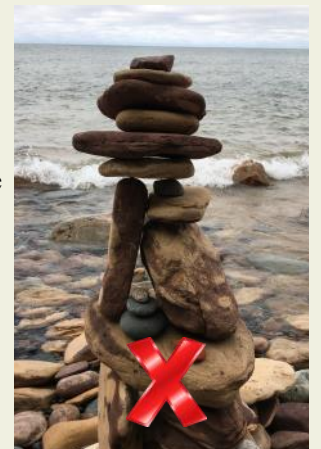
## 3. DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- ◆ Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food (including apple cores, pistachio shells, etc.) and litter. Carry bags to haul your trash. Do not burn food waste.
- ◆ Bring a small shovel. Deposit solid human waste in cat holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep and 4-6 inches wide and at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Use toilet paper sparingly and only plain, white, non-perfumed brands. Cover and disguise the cat hole with dirt and leaves when finished.
- ◆ Tampons and hygiene products must be packed out. Do not bury them as they don't decompose fast enough and animals may dig them up. Large Ziploc bags covered with duct tape work well!
- ◆ To wash dishes, carry dirty dishes and water 200 feet away from streams or lakes. Use hot water, elbow grease and soap if absolutely necessary. Strain dirty dishwater and pack out contents in a plastic bag. Broadly scatter water.
- ◆ Soap, even when it's biodegradable, can affect water quality of lakes and streams, so minimize its use. Always wash yourself well away from shorelines (200 feet), and rinse with water carried in a pot or jug.



## 4. LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- ◆ Preserve the past: examine, but do not alter or remove cultural or historic structures such as shipwreck pieces.
- ◆ Keep nature natural. Leave wildflowers, leaves, rocks, bark, bones, and other natural objects as you find them. Let others enjoy the same sense of discovery.
- ◆ Do not hammer or hack in trees. Carving initials into trees and rocks is permanent damage and is unacceptable!
- ◆ Do not build and leave rock towers (cairns).
- ◆ Minimize your impact. Do not build structures or furniture, or dig trenches. Leave your campsite as you found it.
- ◆ Clean and inspect your gear to avoid introducing or transporting non-native species while hiking and camping. Use boot brush stations where provided. Shake out tents before leaving your campsite.



# Leave No Trace Principles



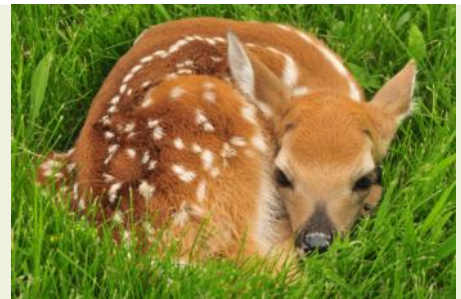
## 5. MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- ◆ Use a lightweight stove for cooking. Stoves operate in almost any weather condition and they eliminate concerns for firewood availability.
- ◆ Wood is not always available. Only use wood that is dead and on the ground.
- ◆ Don't bring firewood from home. Either buy it from a local source or gather it responsibly where allowed.
- ◆ Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- ◆ Use legal existing fire rings. Do not make fires anywhere else.
- ◆ Burn all wood and coals to ash. Put out campfires completely—with water (not dirt).
- ◆ Scatter unused wood to keep the area as natural looking as possible.



## 6. RESPECT WILDLIFE

- ◆ Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Do not force them to flee.
- ◆ Quick movements and loud noises are stressful to animals. Travel quietly.
- ◆ Do not touch or pick up wild animals. It is stressful to the animal, and it's possible that the animal may carry rabies or other diseases. If you find sick animals or animals in trouble, you should notify park staff.
- ◆ Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers. Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- ◆ Remember that you are a visitor to their home.



**Tip:** Extend your arm and thumb in front of you and close one eye. As you view wildlife - deer, chipmunk - you should be able to fully cover the animal's image with your thumb. If you can still see it, you are too close!

## 7. BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- ◆ Pictured Rocks has nearly 1 million visitors per year! So it's especially important to be respectful and courteous.
- ◆ Give other visitors space while camping and hiking. The feeling of solitude is often enhanced when group size is small, contacts are infrequent and behavior is unobtrusive.
- ◆ Let nature's sounds prevail. Keep voices low and avoid loud music and other noises.
- ◆ Technology use is a personal preference, such as hiking with earbuds in and not hearing someone wanting to pass you, or taking pictures of everything around you. Be sure to consider how your experience is affecting the way someone else enjoys the outdoors.
- ◆ **Let's be kind to nature and each other.**



Learn more about Leave No Trace outdoor ethics at [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)

# Campsites - General Information

Campsite Name	# of Sites	Backcountry Pit Toilet	Site Information and Restrictions
Cliffs	3	Yes	One designated fire ring, no water
Cliffs Group	1	Yes	One designated fire ring, no water
Potato Patch	3	Yes	One designated fire right, no water
Mosquito River Group	1	Yes	No fires, water source is Mosquito River or Lake Superior
Mosquito River	5	Yes	No fires, water source is Mosquito River or Lake Superior
Chapel	6	Yes	No fires, water source is Chapel Creek and Lake Superior
Coves Group	1	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Lake Superior
Coves	5	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Lake Superior
Lowney Creek Group	1	No	One designated fire ring, water source is Beaver Lake and Lowney Creek
Lowney Creek	4	No	One designated fire ring, water source is Beaver Lake and Lowney Creek
Beaver Creek	6	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Beaver Creek or Lake Superior
Pine Bluff	5	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Lake Superior
Trappers Lake	5	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Lake Superior
Trappers Lake Group	1	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Lake Superior
Sevenmile Creek	5	No	One designated fire ring, water source is Sevenmile Creek or Lake Superior
Sevenmile Creek Group	1	No	One designated fire ring, water source is Sevenmile Creek or Lake Superior
Benchmark	6	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Lake Superior
Au Sable Point East Group	1	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Lake Superior
Au Sable Point East	6	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Lake Superior
Masse Homestead	3	No	One designated fire ring, no water
Masse Homestead Group	1	No	One designated fire ring, no water
Grand Sable Lake (Boat-in Only)	1	Yes	One designated fire ring, water source is Grand Sable Lake

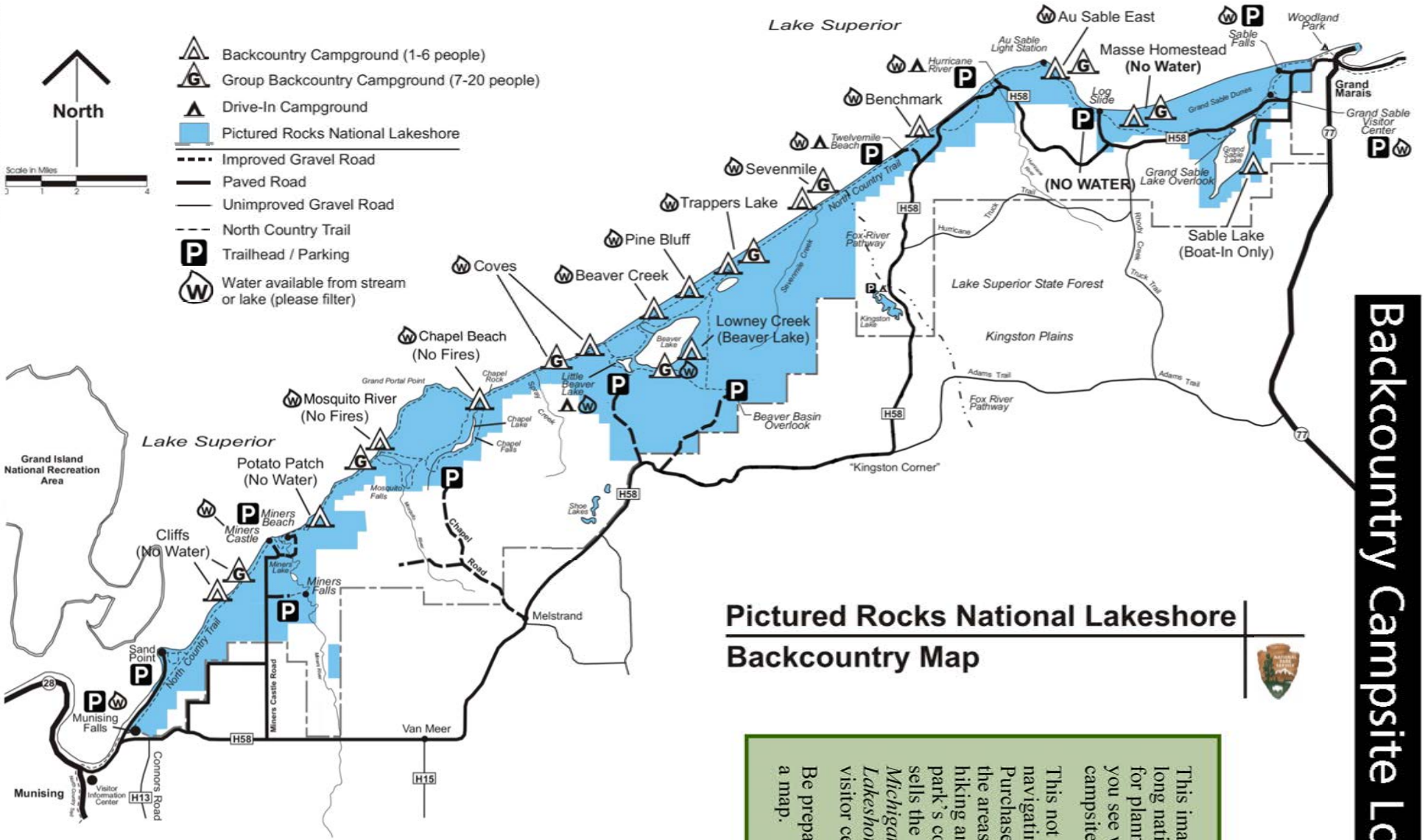


\* backcountry campsites

<b>Backcountry Trail Mileage</b> * backcountry campsite	Grand Sable Visitor Center	Masse Homestead*	Log Slide	Au Sable Point East*	Hurricane River Campground	Benchmark*	Twelvemile Beach Campground	Sevenmile Creek*	Trappers Lake Trail	Pine Bluff*	Beaver Creek*	Coves*	Coves Group*	Chapel Beach*	Mosquito River*	Potato Patch*	Miners Castle	Cliffs Group*	Cliffs*	Sand Point Junction	Munising Falls
Grand Sable Visitor Center		4.1	5.3	7.1	8.7	11.2	11.5	14.4	18	18.9	20.4	21.7	23.2	26	30.4	33.5	35.4	36	37.3	39.5	42.4
<b>Masse Homestead*</b>	4.1		1.2	3	4.6	7.1	7.4	10.3	13.9	14.8	16.3	17.6	19.1	21.9	26.3	29.4	31.3	31.9	33.2	35.4	38.3
Log Slide	5.3	1.2		1.8	3.4	5.9	6.2	9.1	12.7	13.6	15.1	16.4	17.9	20.7	25.1	28.2	30.1	30.7	32	34.2	37.1
<b>Au Sable Point</b>	7.1	3	1.8		1.6	4.1	4.4	7.3	10.9	11.8	13.3	14.6	16.1	18.9	23.3	26.4	28.3	28.9	30.2	32.4	35.3
Hurricane River	8.7	4.6	3.4	1.6		2.5	2.8	5.7	9.3	10.2	11.7	13	14.5	17.3	21.7	24.8	26.7	27.3	28.6	30.8	33.7
<b>Benchmark*</b>	11.2	7.1	5.9	4.1	2.5		0.3	3.2	6.8	7.7	9.2	10.5	13	14.8	19.2	22.3	24.2	24.8	26.1	28.3	31.2
Twelvemile Beach	11.5	7.4	6.2	4.4	2.8	0.3		2.9	6.5	7.4	8.9	10.2	11.7	14.5	18.9	22	23.9	24.5	25.8	28	30.9
<b>Sevenmile</b>	14.4	10.3	9.1	7.3	5.7	3.2	2.9		3.6	4.5	6	7.3	8.8	11.6	16	19.1	21	21.6	22.9	25.1	28
Trappers Lake	18	13.9	12.7	10.9	9.3	6.8	6.5	3.6		0.9	2.4	3.7	5.2	8	12.4	15.5	17.4	18	19.3	21.5	24.4
<b>Pine Bluff*</b>	18.9	14.8	13.6	11.8	10.2	7.7	7.4	4.5	0.9		1.5	2.8	4.3	7.1	11.5	14.6	16.5	17.1	18.4	20.6	23.5
<b>Beaver Creek*</b>	20.4	16.3	15.1	13.3	11.7	9.2	8.9	6	2.4	1.5		1.3	2.8	5.6	10	13.1	15	15.6	16.9	19	22
<b>Coves*</b>	21.7	17.6	16.4	14.6	13	10.5	10.2	7.3	3.7	2.8	1.3		1.5	4.3	8.7	11.8	13.7	14.3	15.6	17.8	20.7
<b>Coves Group*</b>	23.2	19.1	17.9	16.1	14.5	12	11.7	8.8	5.2	4.3	2.8	1.5		2.8	7.2	10.3	12.2	12.8	14.1	16.3	19.2
<b>Chapel Beach*</b>	26	21.9	20.7	18.9	17.3	14.8	14.5	11.6	8	7.1	5.6	4.3	2.8		4.4	7.5	9.4	10	11.3	13..5	16.4
<b>Mosquito River*</b>	30.4	26.3	25.1	23.3	21.7	19.2	18.9	16	12.4	11.5	10	8.7	7.2	4.4		3.1	5	5.6	6.9	9.1	12
<b>Potato Patch*</b>	33.5	29.4	28.2	26.4	24.8	22.3	22	19.1	15.5	14.6	13.1	11.8	10.3	7.5	3.1		1.9	2.5	3.8	6	8.9
Miners Castle	35.4	31.3	30.1	28.3	26.7	24.2	23.9	21	17.4	16.5	15	13.7	12.2	9.4	5	1.9		0.6	1.9	4.1	7
<b>Cliffs Group*</b>	36	31.9	32	28.9	27.3	24.8	24.5	21.6	18	17.1	15.6	14.3	12.8	10	5.6	2.5	0.6		1.3	3.5	6.4
<b>Cliffs*</b>	37.3	33.2	30.7	30.2	28.6	26.1	25.8	22.9	19.3	18.4	16.9	15.6	14.1	11.3	6.9	3.8	1.9	1.3		2.2	5.1
Sand Point Junction	39.5	35.4	34.2	32.4	30.8	28.3	28	25.1	21.5	20.6	19.1	17.8	16.3	13.5	9.1	6	4.1	3.5	2.2		2.9
Munising Falls	42.4	38.3	37.1	35.3	33.7	31.2	30.9	28	24.4	23.5	22	20.7	19.2	16.4	12	8.9	7	6.4	5.1	2.9	

9 Backcountry Planner

Trail Mileage



- Backcountry Campground (1-6 people)
- Group Backcountry Campground (7-20 people)
- Drive-In Campground
- Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
- Improved Gravel Road
- Paved Road
- Unimproved Gravel Road
- North Country Trail
- Trailhead / Parking
- Water available from stream or lake (please filter)



## Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore Backcountry Map



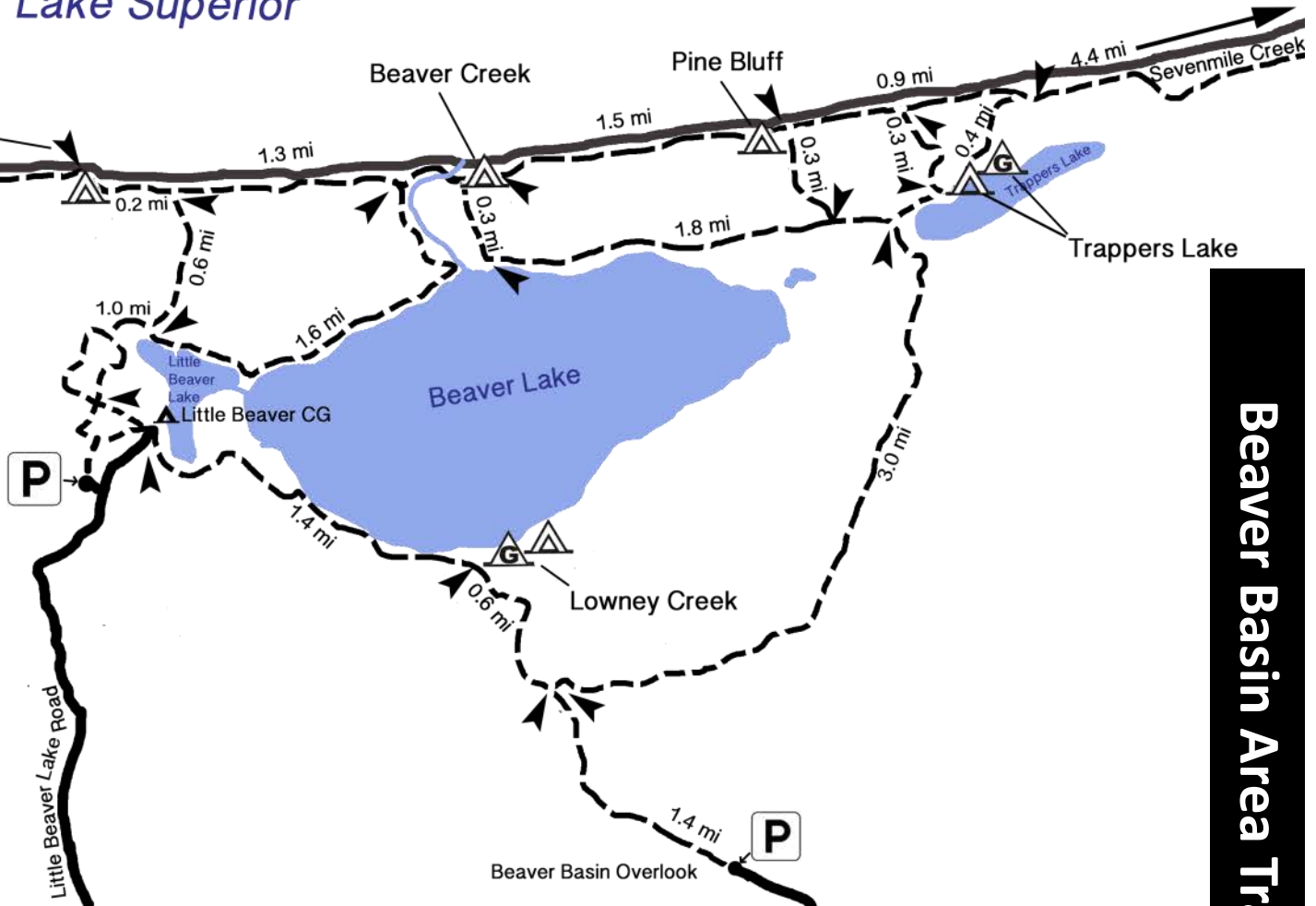
This image shows the 42 mile long national lakeshore. This is for planning purposes to help you see where backcountry campsites are located.

This not a map for hiking and navigating to your campsite. Purchase or obtain maps for the areas that you will be hiking and camping. The park's cooperating association sells the *Classic Trails of Michigan Pictured Rocks - Lakeshore Trail* map in park visitor centers.

Be prepared and always carry a map.

# Backcountry Campsite Locations

# Lake Superior



## Be prepared and know the rules!

Pets are prohibited on trails. Dogs can stress wildlife, make them flee, and expose them to predators. Porcupines, skunks, and wolves can hurt dogs.

Permits are required for all camping!  
Permits available via [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)

Leave natural objects where you find them, including rocks, feathers, and flowers.

Protect Resources! Please stay off closed areas including Chapel Rock. Do not carve into trees, cliffs, or signs.

Pack out all trash and food. Do not put trash in toilets or bear boxes.

Human Waste: For everyone's health, if a toilet is not available, go 200 feet from any water source and bury human waste 6–8 inches in the soil and pack out toilet paper.



No Pets



No Bicycles



No Drone Use

### Map Key:

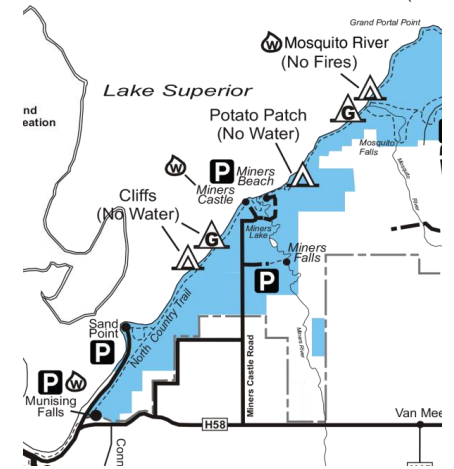
- Drive in Campground
- Backcountry Campsite
- Backcountry Group Campsite
- Trail Head Parking
- Vault Toilets
- Hiking Trail
- Primitive Road



# Trail Descriptions

## Munising Falls to Mosquito River

The North Country Trail starts at the Munising Falls Visitor Center and gradually climbs up the hill/escarpment parallel to Sand Point Road. The trail continues to the east overlooking Lake Superior. Past Sand Point, the trail travels on top of the cliffs in a dense forest. The trail can be wet in this area, though there is boardwalk in the wettest locations. You will hike past Cliffs group and Cliffs backcountry campgrounds before reaching Miners Castle. The North Country Trail delivers you to the paved trail at Miners Castle Overlook. Hike towards the parking lot and around the wooden deck building. The trail picks up again on the east side of the building. The paved path turns to dirt as you start your descent to Miners River. Once you cross over Miners River, follow the trail along the Miners Beach bluff. This level trail is sandy and covered with pine needles. You will have a view of Miners Beach and Lake Superior for about a mile until you pass through the trailhead parking lot at the east end of Miners Beach and head back up the escarpment. At the top of the hill, you will pass by the Potato Patch backcountry campground entrance. Continuing on, the trail wanders along the cliff line until it slowly descends near Mosquito River. The Mosquito River group campground is on the west side of the river, before the bridge.

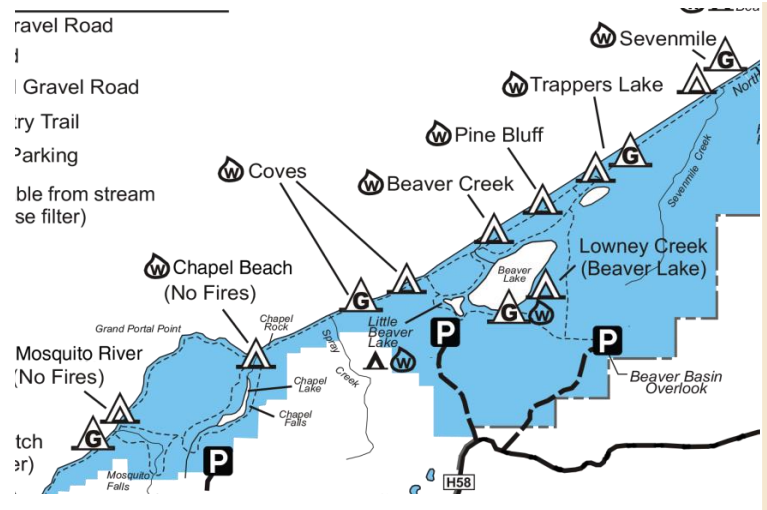


## Mosquito River to Spray Falls

Crossing over the Mosquito River bridge, ahead is the Mosquito River individual backcountry campground. Continue to head east on the North Country Trail to reach the Chapel area. The trail from the Mosquito River to the Chapel River is the most popular section of the North Country Trail, and the only section of the trail that gives you spectacular views of the cliffs and Lake Superior. The trail has both shaded and sandy open windblown sections—use care when walking the trail and make sure to stay back from the cliff edge. The trail drops in elevation and travels over the Chapel Beach bluff and past the Chapel backcountry campground. Just past Chapel Beach is Chapel Creek and Chapel Rock. Continuing east, the stairs will lead back up on the cliffs towards Spray Falls.

## Spray Falls to Sevenmile Creek

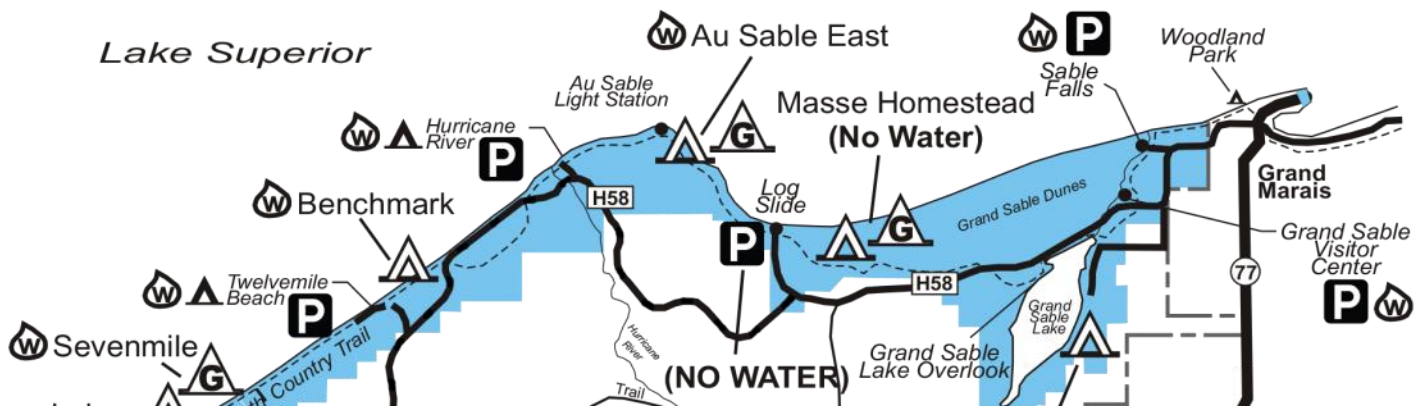
Once you hike over the Spray Creek bridge, you have entered the Beaver Basin Wilderness zone. Just beyond the bridge you will have an opportunity to view Spray Falls cascading into Lake Superior. Beyond Spray Falls, you will hike up and down rustic stairs and in and out of the Coves area. The scenery is picturesque, but the hiking can be strenuous in this section. The trail passes by Coves group campground, which is still along the cliff line. Before reaching Coves individual campground east of the group site, the terrain changes. The coves and cliffs give way to many miles of beach. The North Country Trail continues along a low bluff parallel to the beach to Beaver Creek. The sandy trail dips down to cross over Beaver Creek then leads back up into the pines. The trail continues to follow the bluff and parallel the beach passing by Pine Bluff backcountry campground. If your destination is Trappers Lake or Trappers Lake campground, take the trail about 0.5 miles east of Pine Bluff campground. If you remain on the North Country Trail, it will wind in and out of the forest and lead to Sevenmile Creek backcountry campground. Past the campground, cross the bridge over Sevenmile Creek and hike through Sevenmile group backcountry campground.



# Trail Descriptions (continued)

## Sevenmile Creek to Au Sable Light Station

The hike from Sevenmile Creek to Twelvemile Beach Campground is fairly level through the forest and provides views of the beach and Lake Superior. The North Country Trail leads through Twelvemile Beach Campground and picks up again before the day use parking area for Twelvemile Beach. Between the drive-in campground and H-58, the trail is soft sand and follows the shoreline. Once you cross over H-58, the trail leads into an old growth hemlock forest until crossing back over H-58. Upon crossing H-58 for the second time, the North Country Trail follows the shoreline and leads through the Hurricane River Campground. Hike through the drive-in campground and past a gate. As you pass by the gate, the Au Sable Light Station is only a mile and a half away on a level path. Note the signs on the North Country Trail that guide you to the beach to see remnants of a shipwreck. For more shipwreck information visit <http://www.nps.gov/piro/historyculture/upload/Shipwrecks.pdf>. As you near the Au Sable Light Station, the large buildings will begin to appear through the trees.



## Au Sable Light Station to Grand Sable Visitor Center

The North Country Trail guides you through the Au Sable Light Station grounds with views of the Grand Sable Dunes. It continues past the light station to the Au Sable Point East individual and group campgrounds. If neither of those campgrounds is your destination, head east on the trail into the Grand Sable Dunes. The trail continues uphill through the forest and past the Log Slide area, which provides views of the Au Sable Light Station and the dunes. East of Log Slide, the trail goes behind the dunes and is fairly level. You will pass the trail for Masse Homestead individual and Masse Homestead group backcountry campgrounds. Continuing east, cross H-58 and remain inland. The North Country Trail leads to Grand Sable Lake and the day use picnic area. Travel through the picnic area to H-58 then follow H-58, which is sandwiched between Grand Sable Lake and Grand Sable Dunes. At the east side of Grand Sable Lake, there is a small trailhead where the North Country Trail leads back into the forest for a short time. The trail opens up into an old apple orchard and passes by the Grand Sable Visitor Center.



## Grand Sable Visitor Center to the east boundary of Pictured Rocks

Most visitors start or end their backpacking journey at Grand Sable Visitor Center. However, if you are continuing your journey east, the North Country Trail heads through the forest to Sable Falls and beyond. The trail leads down the walkway and steps to Sable Falls and to the shore of Lake Superior. As you head down the beach towards the town of Grand Marais, in less than a mile you will come to the eastern boundary of the park.

# Backcountry Campsites

## From West to East

**Cliffs** Campground rests high above Lake Superior inland from the North Country Trail. The three campsites are in an open area with little cover between sites. During the summer months when the foliage is at its peak, you cannot see Lake Superior from the campground. There are places along the trail where you can sneak a peek of Grand Island and the lake.



**Cliffs Group** Campground is one mile east of Cliffs Campground. It too lies high above Lake Superior and inland from the North Country Trail. You will not be able to see the lake from the campground in the summer. There are spots along the North Country Trail near the campground to get a glimpse of Grand Island and Lake Superior.



**Potato Patch** Campground is inland from the North Country Trail. Follow a trail through an open field with the sounds of a waterfall at your back. The fire ring is at the entrance to the campground. Follow the trail to the right and to reach each of the three sites. Within the campground, the view of Grand Island and Lake Superior is blocked during the summer by birch and maple leaves.



**Mosquito River Group** Campground is on the west side of Mosquito River just a few steps away from the North Country Trail. There is a bluff near the campsite overlooking Lake Superior, which provides easy access to Mosquito Beach and River.



# Backcountry Campsites

**Mosquito River** Campground is on the east side of the Mosquito River high above the lake. Depending upon which of the five sites you choose, you can hear the waves crashing on the cliffs or the Mosquito River flowing into Lake Superior.



**Chapel Beach** Campground sits on the sand bluff above Chapel Beach and Lake Superior. As you wind your way through the campground trail, the first three sites are hidden in the trees and offer a bit of privacy. The fourth site provides a view of Lake Superior and the cliff line. The fifth site is hidden among the ferns and pine trees.



**Coves Group** Campground is three miles east of Chapel Beach. You are still up on the cliff line, but have started your descent towards Twelvemile Beach. Hike east on the North Country Trail about a quarter mile to find a trail to a small cove and beach on Lake Superior for water access.



**Coves** Campground is inland from the North Country Trail, hidden behind the pine trees and ferns. There are two entry points to the campground. The campground trail leads through the forest where you will find five campsites and two designated metal communal fire rings. There is Lake Superior and beach access from the low bluff along the North Country Trail.





# Backcountry Campsites

**Lowney Creek Group** Campground is one mile from Little Beaver Lake Drive-In Campground and two and a half miles inland from Lake Superior within the Beaver Basin Wilderness. The trail to the campground follows the Beaver Lake shoreline. There is access to Beaver Lake.



**Lowney Creek** Campground is one and a half miles from Little Beaver Lake Drive-In Campground and three miles inland from Lake Superior. Lowney Creek Campground is also in the Beaver Basin Wilderness. The five sites are in a meadow scattered with big trees on the south shore of Beaver Lake.



**Trappers Lake** Campground is in the heart of the Beaver Basin Wilderness. The five campsites are on the north shore of Trappers Lake. This campground is a quiet hideaway located about one mile inland from the North Country Trail.



**Trappers Lake Group** Campground is a little over a mile inland from the North Country Trail and 0.2 miles east of Trappers Lake Campground. It too is on the north shore of Trappers Lake in the Beaver Basin Wilderness.



# Backcountry Campsites

**Beaver Creek Campground** is on the bluff above Lake Superior and Beaver Creek in the Beaver Basin Wilderness. The six campsites are dispersed throughout the sandy grounds, shaded by pine trees. There is one communal fire ring with a view of Lake Superior. Beaver Creek and Lake Superior are easily accessible from the campground.



**Pine Bluff Campground** is on a sandy bluff above Lake Superior just off the North Country Trail. The five campsites are on a sandy open area covered in ferns with pine trees scattered throughout the area. Access the beach and Lake Superior from a trail on the bluff at the entrance to the campground.



**Sevenmile Creek Campground** is on the west bank of Sevenmile Creek. The North Country Trail wanders through the campground and past the communal fire ring. The sites are separated by trees, which offer a bit of privacy. Three of the five sites are along the creek. Lake Superior access is on the east side of the creek through the Sevenmile Creek Group Campground.



**Sevenmile Creek Group Campground** is on the east side of Sevenmile Creek. The North Country Trail guides you over a foot bridge, through the woods and opens up into the group site. It is a wide open area with access to Lake Superior.



# Backcountry Campsites

**Benchmark Campground** is on a sandy bluff above Lake Superior. The sites are sandy and open. There are social trails that lead down to Lake Superior, but it is a steep climb back to your campsite. When hiking from the west, walk through Twelvemile Beach Drive-In Campground to the trailhead and day use area to connect back to the North Country Trail.



**Au Sable Point East Group Campground** is 0.2 miles west of the Au Sable Light Station and inland from the North Country Trail. The group site is surrounded by a coniferous forest. There is access to Lake Superior with a view of the Grand Sable Dunes.



**Au Sable Point East Campground** is next to the Au Sable Point East Group Campground. Due to the dense forest, you are unable to see the neighboring campground. The six campsites are scattered throughout the trees.



**Masse Homestead Campground** is at the base of the dunes (south side) and sheltered due to the thick forest canopy. The three campsites are close together at the base of the dunes. There is no water access at this campground.



# Backcountry Campsites

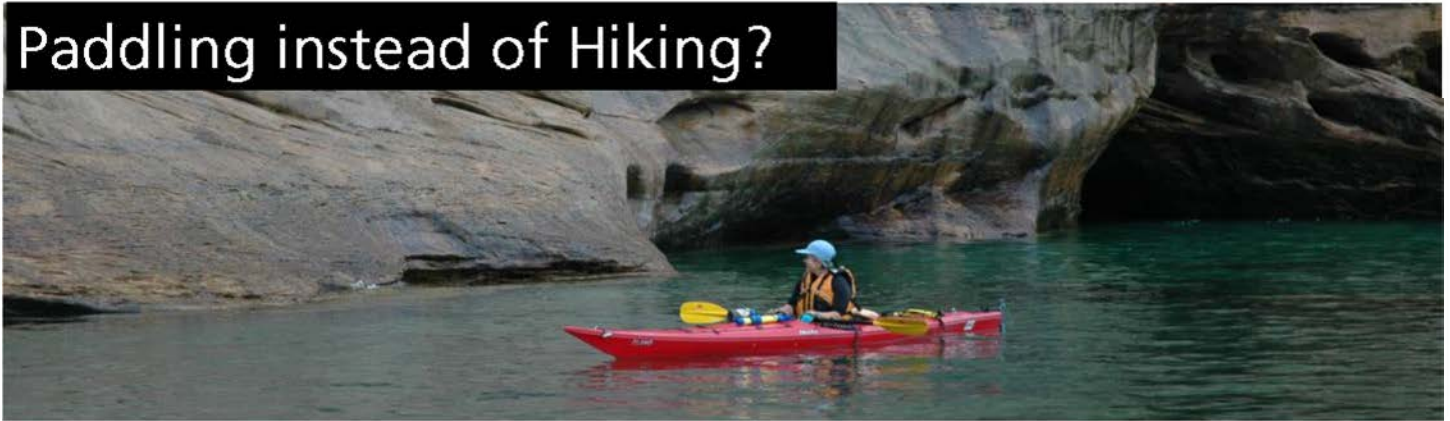
**Masse Homestead Group Campground** lies to the west of the regular campground. It too is at the base of the dunes in a thick forest canopy and has no access to water.



**Grand Sable Lake Campground** is the only campsite in Pictured Rocks that is boat-in only. Put your vessel in at the Grand Sable Lake boat launch and travel south along the shore about 3/4 of a mile to this site. It rests on the east shore of Grand Sable Lake.



# Paddling instead of Hiking?



Thinking of paddling to some backcountry sites? Check out the Beaver Basin Wilderness Area or Grand Sable Lake. Both are great places to canoe or kayak and see few people.

Hoping to experience the Pictured Rocks Cliffs by kayak? Think hard and think about the skills of all paddlers. Kayaking on Lake Superior can be a fantastic experience, but it can also be dangerous. Whether you're kayaking at Pictured Rocks or anywhere, conditions can change rapidly. If you have an emergency here on Lake Superior, rescue could be hours away. We have responded to many rescues where kayakers were ill-equipped or ill-informed. Occasionally, kayakers will be properly prepared, and Lake Superior will still overwhelm them. We implore anyone interested in kayaking Lake Superior to seriously consider the risks, and to properly prepare before setting out. Even experienced kayakers have been overpowered by the Lake.

**Before you set out to kayak Lake Superior, ask yourself (and each participant) these questions:**

1. Do I have the proper kind of kayak?
2. Do I have the required life jacket and whistle? And other safety equipment (see list below)?
3. Do I know the marine forecast?
4. Am I completely prepared for the conditions?
5. Did I tell others where I'm going?
6. And most importantly: can I save myself (and get back in my kayak from the water)?

**If the answer is “no” to any of the questions, don't go!**

## What kind of boat do you plan on using?

Only sea kayaks should be used on Lake Superior. Sea kayaks are 16 to 19 feet long, with hatches and bulkheads in front and behind the paddler that prevent water from flooding the kayak. A spray skirt and wet suit should be used year-round.



## Do you have the Right Safety Equipment:

Marine Radio	Bilge Pump	Wet Suit
Spray skirt	Paddle Float	Whistle
Life jacket (PFD)	Lighting Device	Map
Compass/GPS	Extra Paddle	Tow Line
Waterproof Matches	1st Aid Kit	Rain Gear
Dry Storage	Insect Repellant	Stove
Extra Day of Food		

## Can you save yourself?

Help is not a phone call away! You are on your own! Cell phones usually won't work in the park's backcountry. Even if you are able to get a 911 call out, help is still far away, 30 minutes at least. Rescue time of 60 to 90 minutes or longer is more likely. If the weather is very rough, no one will be able to respond until the weather calms down.

- You need to be able to perform a self-rescue. Read, research on-line, take lessons. And then practice, practice, practice!
- Always wear your life jacket! Wear a wetsuit. Cold water can cause shock, impair ability to think clearly, and numb extremities. **Cold water kills!**
- Paddle with others. Make sure they know how to perform rescues too.
- Leave a float plan with someone who cares about you. Don't forget to tell them when you get back so they don't start a search.

# Paddling (continued)

## Hypothermia

Wet or dry suits are recommended due to Lake Superior's cold water. Except for shallow beaches, Lake Superior's temperatures rarely reach above 55 degrees. Hypothermia can happen in as little as 15 minutes. Hypothermia occurs when your body's core temperature is reduced below normal levels. Cold water conducts heat away from your body 25 times faster than cold air. Uncontrollable shaking, slurred speech, or difficulties moving are all warning signs -- you must be warmed immediately. If submerged in Lake Superior, it is important to conserve body heat to increase your chances for survival. Wear your flotation device at all times, huddle with others, or pull legs together and up to chest to help conserve heat. Do not attempt to swim long distances.

## Weather/Marine Forecast

Lake Superior is unpredictable! Kayakers must be prepared for cold temperatures, high winds, fog, and rough seas that may occur at any time. Be constantly alert to changing conditions. Consult the current marine forecast before starting any trip (NOAA 906-475- 5212 or Marine Band Radio Channel 16).

Summer storms are common on Lake Superior. Most storm systems come from the northwest -- you are fully exposed to the winds when paddling on Lake Superior. There are no protected anchorages at any backcountry or front country campgrounds.

## Additional Equipment

Besides your PFD, wet suit, spray skirt, whistle/emergency signal device, bilge pump, and weather radio, don't forget: lighting device, self-contained stove, extra paddle, compass, maps, first aid kit, insect repellent, tow line, rain gear, waterproof matches, and dry storage containers.

## US Coast Guard Equipment Requirements

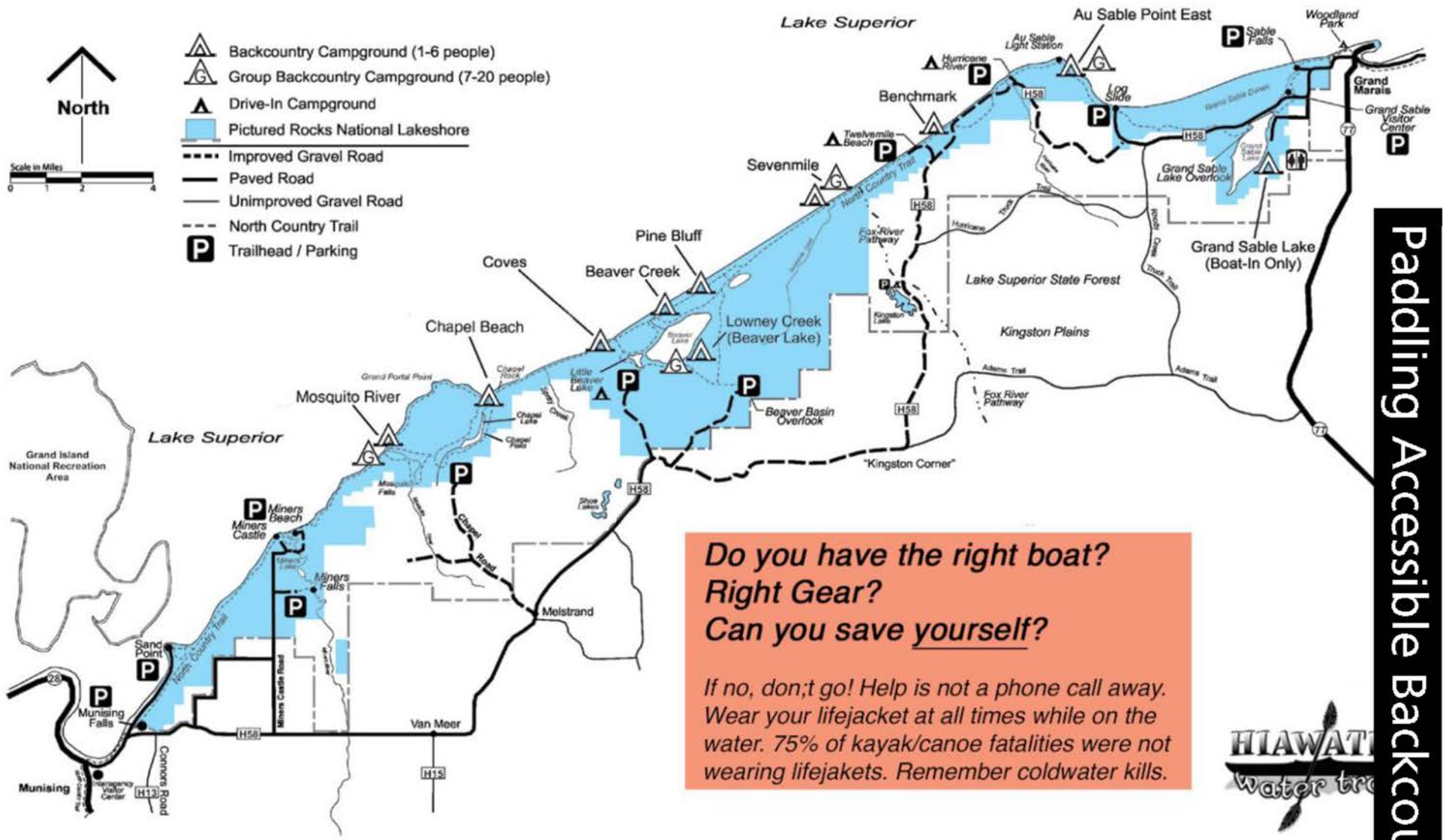
- Everyone must have a wearable Personal Flotation Device.
- Each boat must have a sound providing device that is audible for one half mile for 4 to 6 seconds (such as a horn or whistle).
- Navigation lights must be displayed between sunset and sunrise and during periods of restricted visibility. A hand-held electric torch or lighted lantern showing a white light can be used, and shall be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.
- While paddling between sunset and sunrise on coastal waters, you must carry one of the following: Flares (Must have at least 3 Night, 3 day/night, or a combination.) or one electronic Distress Light for boats.



## Leave a Float Plan / Backcountry Plan

A float plan contains important information such as your name and address, vessel description, number of people in your group, safety equipment, planned route, length of trip, and return date. Leave your float plan with a friend or family member and tell them who to call if you are overdue or an emergency arise. The park does not know whether you complete your trip or not.

- Watch for tour boats that leave Munising on a regular basis during summer months. They run fairly close to shore with a turnaround point at Chapel Beach or Spray Falls. Give them plenty of room, and watch their wake.
- Lake Superior launch points for kayakers are Sand Point, Miners Beach, Twelvemile Beach, and Hurricane River. In Grand Marais, the Grand Marais harbor beach and marina.
- Backcountry campsites easiest for kayakers to identify from Lake Superior are Mosquito Beach, Chapel Beach, Beaver Creek, and Sevenmile Creek. Other campgrounds such as Coves, Pine Bluff, Benchmark, and Au Sable Point East are also accessible but a little more difficult to identify.
- Backcountry campsites NOT accessible from Lake Superior are Cliffs, Potato Patch, Coves Group, Lowney Creek, Trappers Lake, Masse Homestead, and Grand Sable Lake Boat-In.
- To reach Lowney Creek campsite by canoe or kayak, launch from Little Beaver Lake campground launch.



**Do you have the right boat?  
Right Gear?  
Can you save yourself?**

*If no, don't go! Help is not a phone call away. Wear your lifejacket at all times while on the water. 75% of kayak/canoe fatalities were not wearing lifejackets. Remember coldwater kills.*



**Padding Accessible Backcountry Map**

- Backcountry campsites easiest for kayakers to identify from Lake Superior are Mosquito Beach, Chapel Beach, Beaver Creek, and Sevenmile Creek. Other campgrounds such as Coves, Pine Bluff, Benchmark, and Au Sable Point East are also accessible but a little more difficult to identify.
- Backcountry campsites NOT accessible from Lake Superior are Cliffs, Potato Patch, Coves Group, Lowney Creek, Trappers Lake, Masse Homestead, and Grand Sable Lake Boat-In.
- To reach Lowney Creek campsite by canoe or kayak, launch from Little Beaver Lake campground launch.

**Hiawatha Water Trail**  
The Hiawatha Water Trail is 120 miles long and includes the park's shoreline. The trail runs from Big Bay to Grand Marais, Michigan, on Lake Superior's south shore.

# Beaver Basin Wilderness

The Beaver Basin Wilderness is 11,740 acres of designated Wilderness. In this special place, you can find:

- Excellent examples of glacial geology, escarpments, and ancient beach ridges.
- Beech-maple upland hardwood forest.
- Extensive wetlands and clear streams providing habitat for many native fish species.
- Habitat for black bear, grey wolf, migrating songbirds and other wildlife.
- Opportunities for quiet, solitude, physical challenge, education, and spiritual renewal.
- Opportunities for hiking, backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice climbing, hunting, fishing, and more.
- 8.4 miles of North Country National Scenic Trail, 8.5 miles of other park trails and 6 backcountry campsites.
- Electric boat motors may be used on Little Beaver and Beaver Lakes. Other forms of motorized recreation or mechanical transport within the designated wilderness are prohibited.

As a visitor to the Beaver Basin Wilderness, you have a special obligation to use and enjoy the area in ways that are consistent with its management as wilderness. Be courteous to others who are seeking a wilderness experience. Travel and camp quietly. Use **Leave No Trace** camping techniques. Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photos. Let the wilderness change you!



**The Wilderness Act defines wilderness as** “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain; an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements of human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions; which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticed; has outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation; and which may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

