



# BRULE RIVER STATE FOREST VISITOR

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources • Brule River State Forest • 6250 S Ranger Road • Brule, WI 54820 • <http://dnr.wi.gov>

## THE SUSTAINABLE FOREST— FORESTRY FOR THE FUTURE AT BRULE RIVER

Brule River State Forest is part of an outstanding system of forests in Wisconsin; but what makes a state forest unique? The answer lies in the concept of sustainability; protecting and preserving a resource so that it can be enjoyed in many ways by future generations.

State forests take their mission from state statute 28.04, updated in 1990 with input from citizens, lawmakers, and foresters to set the long-term direction for forest management. The law charges the Division of Forestry to “manage the forest to benefit the present and future generations of residents of the state” in a manner that supports timber production, provides recreation opportunities, and protects the natural environment. This multiple-use, sustainable perspective ensures that Wisconsin’s forests will be around for our great-great grandchildren to enjoy.

Management at Brule River State Forest reflects a commitment to sustainable practices in all areas: recreation, forestry, and environmental protection.

Recreation opportunities on the Brule are carefully regulated to be consistent with the unique features, opportunities, and vulnerabilities of the forest, especially in the heart of the forest: the river. Certain activities may be regulated to preserve the sense of quiet, peaceful reflection that characterizes the “Brule experience.” Special fishing regulations protect resident and lake-run fish populations, so that tomorrow’s anglers will still pursue world-class trout and salmon fishing in the Brule’s waters. Canoeers and kayakers are only allowed to launch and land at designated canoe landings in order to protect the banks of the river from erosion.

The forester’s work on the state forest is also driven by sustainable management practices. Foresters evaluate an area and determine a management plan, which might have several goals, such as restoration of native communities, increasing wildlife habitat, or producing useful or valuable types of timber for forest products.

The Brule River State Forest’s resources are also managed to protect the water quality of the Bois Brule River, while enhancing wildlife habitat, fisheries, aesthetics, recreation, and timber production. All management practices are carried out with an eye toward these meeting forest goals in a manner that provides for present needs of citizens and the economy while safeguarding the future health and ability of the forest to sustainably provide products and recreation.

Each area of the forest is managed for the ecological potential of the site. In some areas, such as the northern hardwood forest

between Highways 2 and 13, foresters are actively managing the land to promote certain species of trees that represent a unique forest type. By contrast, some areas, such as the Brule River corridor and the Brule bog, are left relatively untouched to preserve their scenic beauty and ecological value.

Timber harvests and thinning of forest stands are management tools used in the state forest to meet management goals. Logging practices are carefully implemented under close supervision of foresters to provide benefits to the forest as well as to the surrounding communities.

Foresters have planned what will regenerate on a site before logging even commences. Natural regeneration is the preferred method of starting a forest of young trees, but seeding and planting is also done to facilitate the restoration of the desired forest community.

The Brule River State Forest is certified as being sustainably managed through two independent third party certification systems, The Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council.



Photo: Cathy Khalar

### FROM GLACIERS TO GROWING TREES: THE HISTORY OF THE BRULE RIVER

The story of the Brule River begins at the end of the Ice Age, when the Bois Brule River Valley and the uppermost St. Croix River Valley were carved by melt water flowing south from glacial Lake Superior and the surrounding uplands. As the glaciers receded, a divide was formed out of which the Brule and St. Croix Rivers flow today in opposite directions.

As a major waterway between Lake Superior and the Mississippi via the St. Croix River, the modern paddler on the Brule River takes part in a tradition that stretches all the way back to early Native Americans. The Mascoutins, Souix, and Sauk were active in the Brule area as early as the 1400s. In the 1600s the Chippewa moved into the area from the east, giving the Brule River its first recorded name: “Misacoda,” or “burnt pines.”

Native peoples undoubtedly used the Brule as a travel route between Lake Superior and ultimately the Mississippi, establishing a portage trail between the Brule and Lake St. Croix that still exists today.

The first recorded visit by Europeans to the Brule was by Daniel Greysolon Siur du Lhut in 1680. DuLhut wrote in his journal that he cut through some 100 beaver dams while navigating the Brule River. Early French fur traders and missionaries gave us the river’s modern name, Bois Brule, meaning “burnt wood river.” Many other explorers, traders, missionaries, and trappers used this water highway up until the mid-19th century.

In 1840, the Jacob Astor Company undertook copper exploration and mining operations near the Brule. The remains of mining operations may be seen along the Old Bayfield Road Trail, once the main overland route from Superior to Bayfield. Hikers in the state forest can follow in the footsteps of the horse-drawn wagons that once traveled there.

The Brule area began to be recognized as a recreational destination in the mid-1800’s, when early visitors came to experience tremendous trout fishing, which can

still be enjoyed on the river today.

Cutting of the pine forests began in the 1890’s. Logging dams and log drives had severe impacts on the river during that period of exploitive logging, in which entire forests were clear-cut to make way for farms. Natural and man-made fires flared, creating significant changes in the landscape.

The idea of the Brule River State Forest began in 1907 when timber baron Frederick Weyerhaeuser gifted over 4000 acres to the state of Wisconsin. This land was officially declared a state forest in 1936. By this time, most attempts at agriculture in the area were abandoned, and a fledgling forestry program began. The Civilian

*Continued on p. 2*

#### CONTENTS

Fishing on the Brule .....	2
Insect Hatches of the Bois Brule River .....	2
Lamprey Barrier and Fish Ladder .....	2
The Bois Brule— a Paddler’s Paradise .....	3
Hunting .....	3
Boat Landings .....	3
Rules of the River .....	3
Brule River State Forest map ..	4–5
After Hours Ski Trails .....	6
Snowmobiles & ATVs .....	6
Safety Messages .....	6
In the Area .....	6
Leave Firewood at Home .....	6
Hiking .....	7
The Brule Bog .....	7
Wildlife in the Forest .....	7
Sticker & Fees Required .....	8
Accessible Forest Facilities .....	8
Emergency Information .....	8
Camping maps .....	8



Photo: Cathy Khalar

## FISHING ON THE BRULE

### FISHING SEASON ON THE BRULE

Anglers will find different fishing opportunities throughout the year on the Bois Brule River.

The spring steelhead (rainbow trout) spawning run begins in late March and extends through May. During the first several weeks of the early season, the vast majority of steelhead caught remained in the river from the previous fall run. Larger numbers of fresh, spring-run fish start appearing in April and continue through early May; water temperatures dictate peak movement. Most fish are taken on yarn flies, spawn, large caddisfly imitations, and various types of hardware (spoons and spinners). The deep runs and pools are favorite holding areas for the fish.

Chinook salmon begin migrating up the Brule in early July and continue through mid-October. The peak period is from mid-August to late September. Most chinook are taken soon after they enter the stream; they are still silver and are quite a battle, even for the experienced angler. They seem to prefer flashing lures like spinners or spoons, and tend to hold in the slower, deep water.

Coho salmon are found moving up the Brule from late August to late November. Depending on water conditions, the peak run is usually sometime in September. They are fairly aggressive when they first enter the stream and can be caught on a variety of bait selections. They seem to prefer the slower water areas.

The Lake Superior brown trout run begins in early July and extends through late October. The peak is from mid-July to mid-September. Favorite baits include spoons, spinners, minnow imitating baits, and live bait such as night crawlers. The brown trout is not an easy fish to catch but persistently fishing the slower, deep holes during low-light periods will increase your odds.

The fall run of steelhead begin moving up the Brule in mid-August and continues through late November. The largest runs usually occur sometime between mid-September and late October. Water conditions (e.g. temperature, level, clarity) will affect the exact timing of the run, so the peak will vary from year-to-year.

Fish are often found in moderate velocity areas, behind or near some type of current break (e.g. rocks, logs, stream bank). They will tend to hold in the deeper holes as the water temperature drops later in the season. Yarn flies, spawn, minnow imitating lures, and all types of spoons and spinners seems appealing to the aggressive fall-run steelhead.

You can play a big part in maintaining this magnificent species by practicing catch and release. This is a very effective tool and has produced great results on other steelhead fisheries. Tagging studies on the Brule have shown the same fish caught and released up to three times, some a year apart.

### ACCESSING AND FISHING THE RIVER

The river north of US Highway 2 has many well-marked access points all the way to Lake Superior. They are located throughout the lower river (see map) and provide an excellent opportunity to fish different sections of the river as it changes character. State Forest angler parking lots are for day use only; overnight camping is limited to designated campgrounds.

The section of river south of Highway B is noted for its resident brown and brook trout fisher. Some of the best fishing occurs in the stretch between County Highway S and County Highway B. This part of the river is slow and wide and is excellent for fly-fishing. The larger hatches of mayflies occur in this area around the end of June. This area gets a fair amount of canoe traffic during the warmer summer months. Land adjacent to the river in this area is largely privately owned; please respect private property.

The Brule River trout fishery has fairly restrictive fishing regulations to help protect and maintain this outstanding fisher. For current trout rules and regulations be sure to read Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations and Guide, or stop by the Brule River Ranger Station. For further fisheries information contact the Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division, 1705 Tower Avenue, Superior, Wisconsin 54880, and phone (715) 392-7988.



Photo: Kevin Feind

## INSECT HATCHES OF THE BOIS BRULE RIVER

For the fly-fisherman knowing when the “hatch” is on – or when aquatic insects become active and emerge as adults from the nymph stage of their life cycle – is very important in determining when and where to fish. The successful fly fisherman knows that to “match the hatch” is key to success.

Learning how to identify certain aquatic insects such as mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies can help you tremendously throughout the spring and summer. Those three orders, or types of insects, often make up a very large proportion of the diet of trout during certain time periods.

On the upper Brule River, the mayfly hatches may be the most critical. Since mayflies often synchronize their emergence into a short time span, they provide a valuable, available, abundant food supply that can lead trout into a “feeding frenzy”.

Other mayflies such as the light cahills, ginger quills, pale evening duns, and tiny blue-winged olives have hatches that are of lesser importance to anglers, but can bring up a fair number of fish if you find some hatching at the right time and place.

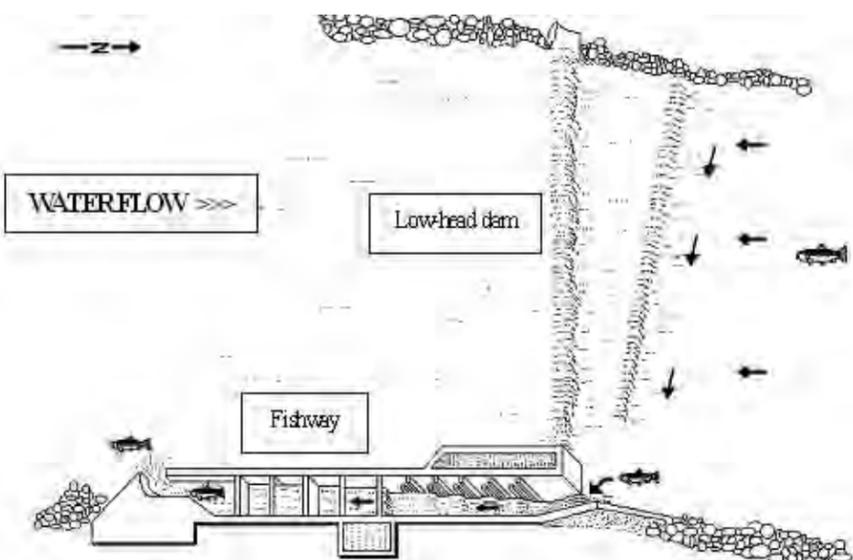
Abundant caddisfly hatches from late May to late June can also be very important to match for fly fisherman, and will encourage many eager trout to rise. Later in the summer, midge hatches and terrestrial insects such as ants and hoppers can do the same.

On the lower Brule, fishing stonefly patterns are good for enticing a large brown or steelhead during appropriate times of the year. Take some time to learn how to identify aquatic insects, so when you see them on the river you can pick the right fly pattern.... See you soon on the river!

Hatch (Common & Scientific Name)	Approximate Time of Emergence	Importance
Hendricksons, <i>Ephemera subvaria</i>	Late April–Mid May, Mid afternoons	High
Sulphurs, <i>Ephemera</i> sp.	Late May–Mid June, Late afternoons/evening	High
Baetisca Mayfl, <i>Baetisca laurentina</i>	Early–Mid June, Evenings	High
March Browns, <i>Maccaffertium vicarium</i>	Late May–Mid-June, Evenings	Moderate
Gray Drakes, <i>Siphonurus quebecen</i>	Early–Late June, Evenings/Dusk	Minor
Brown Drakes, <i>Ephemera simulans</i>	Middle of June, Evenings/Dusk	Very High
The Hex, <i>Hexagenia limbata</i>	Mid/Late June–Mid July, Evening/Dusk	Very High
Speckled Wing Duns, <i>Callibaetis</i> sp.	Early June–Late July, Day/early evening	Somewhat
Tricos, <i>Tricorythodes</i> sp.	Late July–Mid September, Morning	High
Blue Wing Olives, <i>Baetis</i> sp.	Various emergence times, May–September	Moderate



Mayflies



### Brule River History, continued from p. 1

Conservation Corps established a camp at Brule and engaged in early fire control and reforestation efforts from 1933 to 1941.

It was not until the late 1950's that a full-time Superintendent was assigned to the Brule River State Forest and a sustained yield forestry program and recreation facilities developed. The first forest staff was stationed at the former Gordon State Forest Nursery. In 1963, the staff was moved to quarters in the Brule Ranger Station.

Since the forest's founding, the state has continued to purchase lands, bringing the Brule River State Forest to its current 47,000 acres. Today, the state forest contains the entire length of the Bois Brule

River; the river is spring-fed and runs cold and clear with a steady flow. The river falls 420 feet from its source to Lake Superior, resulting in numerous rapids and ledges.

These attributes help give the Brule its reputation as an excellent cold-water fishery and canoeing stream. Anglers still come from all over the country to fish the river, and kayakers and canoeists dip their paddles as native peoples and fur traders did two hundred years ago. Famous past visitors include 5 U.S. presidents: Ulysses Grant, Grover Cleveland, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, and Dwight Eisenhower; perhaps you will make some memories here as well!

### LAMPREY BARRIER AND FISH LADDER: PROTECTING THE BRULE RIVER FROM INVADERS

In 1985, a lamprey barrier and fish ladder was constructed 6.5 river miles from the mouth of the Brule. This structure allows migrating fish to safely make their way upstream for spawning, while trapping the sea lamprey, an aggressive invasive parasite of large fish. The first year in operation, over 7000 sea lamprey were trapped and destroyed.

Another benefit of this structure is the underwater viewing window, which allows fish managers to observe all migrating fish. Species, sex, and size of fish are recorded continuously to give fishery experts excellent information on the lake run fishery of the Bois Brule. You may visit the lamprey barrier and fish ladder by driving to the end of Loveland Road, located north of Highway 13 on the east side of the river. Park by the gate and walk the final mile to the structure on the service road.

# THE BOIS BRULE —A PADDLER'S PARADISE

Whether you are in the mood for a peaceful float with the family or the challenge of an exciting ride through whitewater, the Brule River can fulfill your dream. This unique river varies from a meandering stream in a conifer bog to a tumbling, churning torrent falling madly toward Lake Superior.

The spring-fed Brule River lies in a small watershed, so the water levels remain relatively constant. The total elevation drop of the river is 418 feet, with 328 feet of that drop in the last 19 miles. There are ten designated State Forest canoe landings; in order to protect and preserve the shorelines of the river, all watercraft launching and landing on state lands are restricted to these ten sites. Two of those sites are at the two state forest campgrounds, Bois Brule and Copper Range, and serve primarily those who are camping (see map).

The most popular canoe trip on the Brule begins at Stone's Bridge canoe landing. This trip starts out on calm water winding through cedar, spruce, and balsam bog forests. As you travel downstream, the river bottom will brighten from silt to clean gravel, and current will increase noticeably. The river traveler will soon pass through the first of the privately owned estates and lodges along this stretch of river.

After a few easy rapids, the canoeist will come upon a narrow chute where the river scurries out of a small placid lake. From there to Big Lake, a widening in the river occurs and there are a few more exciting runs. After Big Lake, it takes approximately one hour to arrive at Winneboujou canoe landing; paddlers have the option of taking out here or continuing through some moderate rapids to the Hwy 2 canoe landing.

Hwy 2 to Pine Tree is a stretch of river known as the "meadows" and has relatively undeveloped shorelines with bends in the river.

The confirmed whitewater canoeist or kayaker will be interested in getting right into the action by starting at Pine Tree landing. This trip takes the paddler through nearly continuous stretches of ledges and rapids before arriving at the Highway 13 landing. Before embarking on this trip, newcomers should scout the river from Highway FF bridge and/or Mays Ledges angler access. During times of high water, increased caution is urged before considering this section of river.

From Hwy 13 to the Mouth of the Brule at Lake Superior you will encounter a mix of rapids and deep pools, with one short portage around the sea lamprey barrier. From there, paddlers can end their journey in the waters of Lake Superior.

## HUNTING

Hunting and trapping opportunities on the Brule River State Forest are abundant, with the diversity of habitat types providing a home for many game species. Hunting and trapping is allowed in most areas of the forest during open seasons.

The forest's diverse range of habitats provides an opportunity for sportspersons to pursue many species, but deer, upland game birds, waterfowl, and bear are the most common. Brule River State Forest maintains over 60 miles of hunter walking trails to allow hunter access. These trails are signed and closed to motorized vehicle use (see page 7 for locations).

### SOME TIPS FOR HUNTING ON THE BRSSF:

- ✓ Hunting is not allowed within 100 feet of campgrounds, picnic areas, or within the Brule River State Fish Hatchery.
- ✓ Cutting shooting lanes or otherwise damaging trees or vegetation is prohibited.
- ✓ Artificial ground blinds and tree stands must be removed from state land each night, and must bear your DNR customer number when not occupied.
- ✓ Know and respect private land boundaries. This is just a brief list; all state laws apply while hunting on public land. For hunting and trapping seasons and regulations, stop by the ranger station or visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/hunt/>.
- ✓ ATV use is not allowed on hunter walking trails.

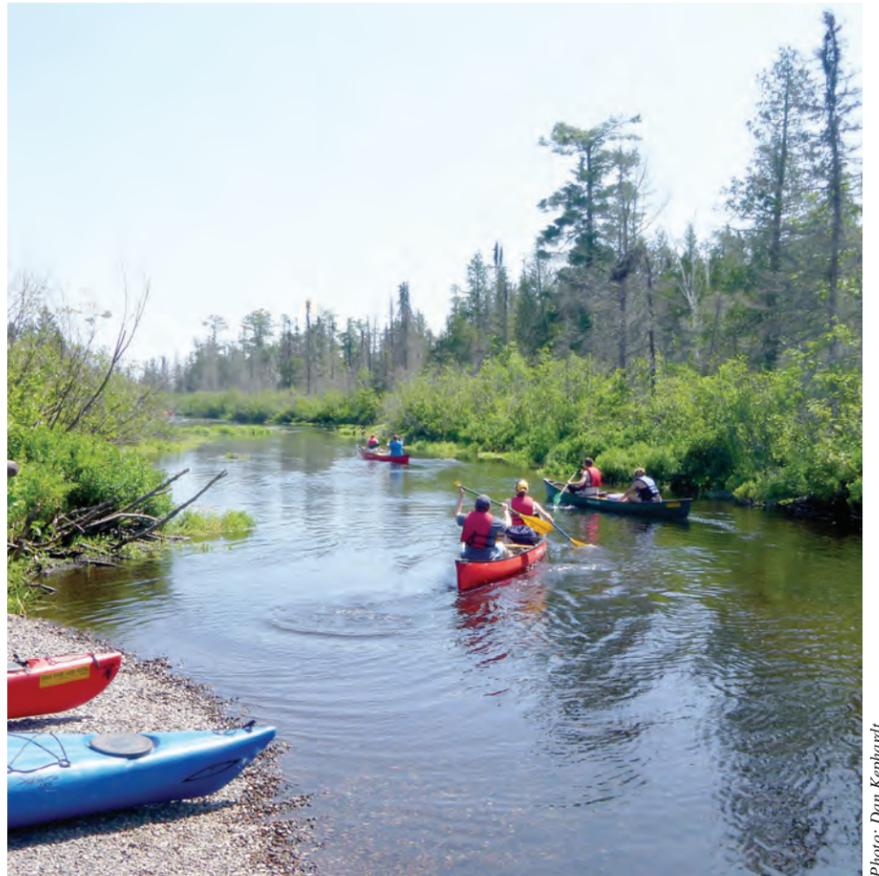


Photo: Dan Kephart

## APPROXIMATE TIMES BETWEEN LANDINGS

Stones Bridge to Winneboujou	4 hours
Stones Bridge to Bois Brule Picnic/Canoe Landing	4¼ hours
Winneboujou to Bois Brule Picnic Area/Canoe Landing	45 minutes
Winneboujou to Hwy 2	1¼ hours
Hwy 2 to Pine Tree	4 hours
Pine Tree to Hwy 13	5 hours
Hwy 13 to Mouth of the Brule	4 hours

### CLASSIFICATION OF RAPIDS

The following ratings are based on the International Scale of River Difficulty (ISRD), as described in *Whitewater; Quietwater*<sup>1</sup>. The rapids and their location are indicated on the map. These ratings are intended to give the paddler an idea of what to expect along the river. The water levels can fluctuate. It is important for the paddler to be aware of river conditions and the seasonal variations that occur. The Department does not monitor the river for these changing conditions and cannot guarantee the accuracy of the ratings for any given time. Please be careful, use common sense, and enjoy your trip on the Bois Brule River.

**Class I**—These are very easy rapids that have small, uniform waves with clear channels. If there are obstacles (e.g. rock gardens) that require maneuvering to avoid, there is little current to interfere or to increase the hazard of a mistake. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves are characteristic. Class I rapids should cause no problem for novices in open canoes.

**Class II**—These are relatively easy rapids with only intermediate difficulty or with longer, more continuous stretches of easy rapids. Novices with decked craft should have few problems with class II. Occasional maneuvering may be required which can be handled by persons of intermediate ability using open canoes.

**Class III**—These are difficult rapids with numerous, large, irregular waves, capable of swamping an open canoe. Intricate maneuvering, physical strength, and canoeing know-how are all necessary to get through class III rapids. We recommend using only decked boats, thereby avoiding all chance of swamping. Some experts are able to run class III rapids in open boats; however, we recommend against this.

<sup>1</sup>Palzer, Bob and Jody, *Whitewater; Quietwater*, 8th edition, 2nd printing, Birmingham, AL: Menasha Ridge Press, 2001.

## RULES OF THE RIVER

Canoeists, kayakers, anglers, riverside dwellers, and others come to appreciate and respect the Brule River for its natural beauty. Adhering to the river regulations of the Brule River State Forest will provide a positive and enriching experience while on the river while protecting this outstanding resource.

### REGULATIONS:

- ✓ Launching or landing only at designated sites on state lands (see map).
- ✓ Camping allowed only at state designated campgrounds (see map).
- ✓ Motorized watercraft and inflatable watercraft are prohibited on the river, except within 1 mile of the mouth at Lake Superior.
- ✓ A Coast Guard approved, wearable PFD (personal flotation device) – one for each occupant is legally required and is recommended to be worn.

- ✓ Glass bottles are prohibited.

- ✓ Unopened or empty beverage containers must be secured in a larger container that is securely fastened to the watercraft.

### COURTESY:

#### Remember

- ✓ Leave no trace
- ✓ Whatever you pack in you pack out
- ✓ Use quiet voices on the river and within the forest.
- ✓ Show respect and sensitivity to others enjoying the river, enjoy nature!

# BRULE RIVER STATE FOREST

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Office located one mile south of HWY 2 on Ranger Road.  
Phone: 715-372-5678



**Legend**

- Forest Boundary
- State Forest Lands
- Cities & Villages
- Interstate, U.S. & State Highways
- County Roads
- Roads
- Hiking Trail
- North Country National Scenic Hiking Trail
- State Forest Snowmobile / Winter ATV Trail
- Interconnecting Snowmobile / ATV Trail
- Cross-Country Ski / Biking Trail
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Campground
- Boat Landing
- Rapids (approximate location)
- Hiking
- Archery
- Fish Hatchery
- Snowmobile

### RECREATION INDEX

	Camp Units	Fishing	Picnic Area	Trail Access	Trail Water	Toilets	Drinking Water	Handicap Facilities	Fee Required
<b>Campgrounds:</b>	Bois Brule	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Copper Range	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Canoe Landings:</b>	1) County Road 1*	X							
	2) Stone Chimney	X							
	3) Stones Bridge	X							
	4) Winneboujou	X							
	5) Bois Brule	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	6) Highway 2*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	7) Copper Range Campground	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	8) Pine Tree	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	9) Highway 13*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	10) Mouth of Brule	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Boat Landings:</b>	11) St. Croix Lake	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	12) Rush Lake (Carry-in Only)	X							
<b>Hiking Trail:</b>	Historic Portage Trail								1.9
<b>Nature Trail:</b>	Stoney Hill Nature Trail								1.7
<b>Snowmobile Trail:</b>	Brule-St. Croix								26
<b>X-Country Ski:</b>	*After Hours Trail*								14

\*fee for skiing only

### Rapids Index

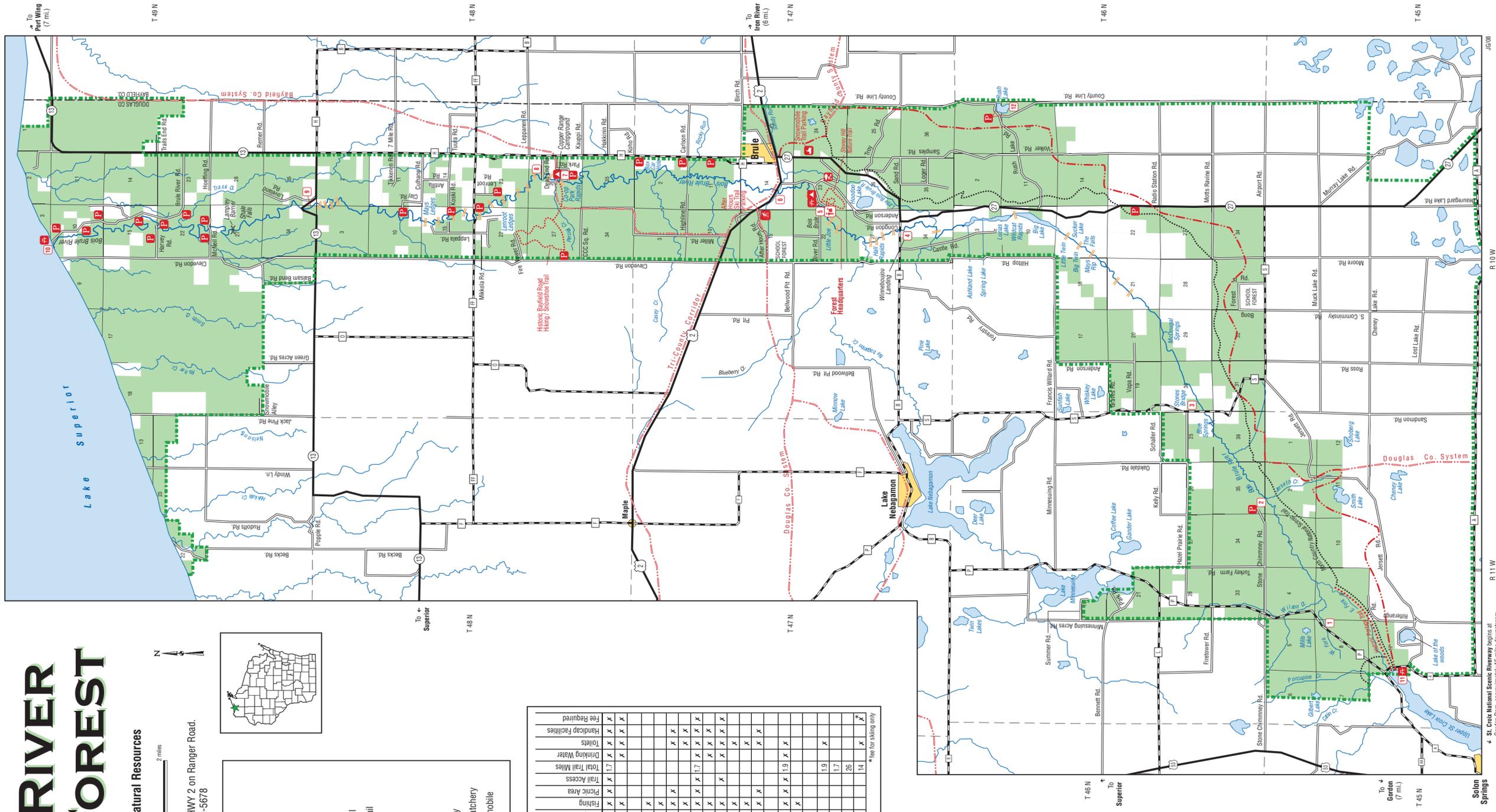
Rapids Index	Class
The Falls	I
Big Twin Rapids	I
Little Twin Rapids	I
Wildcat Rapids	I
Hall Rapids	I
Little Joe Rapids	I
Co-op Parks Rapids	I
Lenroot Ledges	II-III
Mays Ledges	II-III
HWY 13 Rapids	I-II
Shale Falls	I

### Canoe Landings

Canoe Landings	Approximate Times between Landings
Stones Bridge to Winneboujou	4 hours
Winneboujou to Bois Brule	45 minutes
Bois Brule to Highway 2	40 minutes
Highway 2 to Pine Tree	4 hours
Pine Tree to Highway 13	5 hours
Highway 13 to Mouth of the Brule	4 hours

### White pine After-hours Ski Trails

White pine After-hours Ski Trails	Length	Level
Entry	1.5 km	Beginner
Maple	1.4 km	Beginner
Aspen	1.1 km	Beginner
Spruce	1.4 km	Beginner
Oak	4.7 km	Intermediate
River	2.2 km	Intermediate
White Pine	4.4 km	Intermediate
Loop	3.1 km	Intermediate
Little Joe	1.0 km	Advanced



St. Croix National Scenic Riverway begins at Gordon Dam—approximately 16 miles downstream.



## AFTER HOURS SKI TRAILS



The Brule River State Forest has an extensive network of some of the finest and best-maintained cross-country ski trails in the region for both classical and skate skiing. The 25 kilometer After Hours Ski Trail is located west of Brule on the Afterhours Road, just south of US Hwy 2. The trailhead has restroom facilities and a warming shelter cooperatively maintained by the Brule Valley Ski Club and the Brule River State Forest.

Various loops provide a variety of terrain, from easy beginner runs to challenges for the advanced skier. The River and White Pine trails both provide scenic views of the river.

A candlelight ski is held annually, timed around the full moon in early February. Approximately 4 kilometers of trail are lighted with candles, and hot cocoa, cider, and a grill are provided at the trailhead for this free event.

The annual Riverview Loppet ski race for both classic and skate skiers is held the first weekend in March. This is a combined effort by the Brule River State Forest, the Brule Valley Ski Club, and the Brule Lions Club.

Cross country ski learning events are hosted several times each year by the Brule Valley Ski Club.

A Wisconsin State Trail pass is required for those age 16 years and older and is available by self-registration at the trailhead. Up to date trail conditions can be found posted on the internet at [www.skinnyski.com](http://www.skinnyski.com)



Photo: Kevin Feind



## SNOWMOBILES & ATVs

The Brule River State Forest has 32 miles of snowmobile trails; they can be accessed on the forest from a parking area on State Highway 27, just south of the Town of Brule. The Brule-St. Croix Trail is 26 miles long and connects the parking area on State Highway 27 to St. Croix Lake. Connecting trails link up to Bayfield and Douglas County trails. These trails are also open to ATVs in the winter; note that ATV's are not allowed on the snowmobile trails when they are not snow covered.

The Tri-County Corridor Trail links Superior to Ashland, crossing the forest parallel to and north of US Highway 2, and is also available for snowmobiles and ATVs. There is also access to a 4 1/2 mile trail from Miller Road north to Park Road via the Tri-County Corridor trail.

Most town roads within Brule and Highland townships are open as ATV road routes and are signed accordingly. Snowmobile and ATV use on the Brule River State Forest is limited to marked trails and properly signed road routes. No off trail use is allowed. For up to date trail conditions call the Douglas County Trail Report number at 715-378-4528 or go to [www.brulerriveriders.com](http://www.brulerriveriders.com).

## SAFETY MESSAGES



### Biking—Be a smart cyclist.

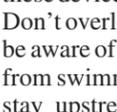
For your protection, wear shoes, pant leg clips, and a helmet when bicycling. Wear reflective clothing and use a light for bicycling at night. Keep your bike under full control at all times. Pull off the road or trail to view wildlife, flowers, or scenery. Be cautious in areas with loose gravel or sand, wet leaves, or other loose materials. Forest roads follow the natural terrain and often have steep downgrades with corners and intersections. Be alert to traffic



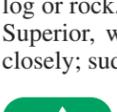
### Boats & Canoes—All watercraft must be equipped with a Coast Guard approved, wearable lifesaving device for each person aboard. Wearing of these devices at all times is recommended. Don't overload your craft. Boaters should be aware of their wake and stay well away from swimmers. If capsized in fast water, stay upstream of your craft; don't get caught between a swamped craft and a log or rock. If you venture out into Lake Superior, watch the weather conditions closely; sudden storms may occur.



### Fire—Don't become complacent about fire. Watch children very closely when near a fire. Build fires only in provided rings. Watch the wind direction to ensure sparks aren't near flammable materials. Put the fire out if wind changes cause concern. Don't remove hot material from the ring or grill. Make sure the fire is out and the grill or fire ring is cool before leaving the area. If using your own grill, place the coals in an available forest ring or at designated disposal sites.



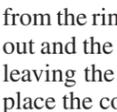
### Hiking—Be aware that trails may vary in difficulty. Stay well away from cliffs that aren't protected by a barricade or barrier. Trail surfaces can become slippery when wet or leaf-covered and will occasionally have loose sand or gravel or exposed rock.



### Swimming—There are no designated beaches in the Brule River State Forest. The waters of Lake Superior can be very cold with dangerous currents. Don't swim alone, at night or in unfamiliar places. Don't dive from bridges, high banks, or into water of unknown depth. Use caution when wading in unknown waters, as depth may change abruptly. Watch small children closely near water. Lifeguards are not provided. Public beaches are available at Lake Minnesueing and Lake Nebagamon near the forest.



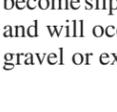
### Use Areas—Designated use areas are developed areas such as trails, campgrounds, and picnic areas, or other developed areas, which are inspected or maintained by the DNR and shown on the official property map. All other areas are considered undesignated, and are not inspected or maintained. Users are encouraged to limit their activities to designated areas.



### Cross-Country Skiers—Trails are groomed, but conditions vary. Ski within your abilities. Always follow designated trail directions and leave plenty of space between you and other skiers. Ski touring is also permitted on unmarked trails throughout the forest. Ask at the forest office about trail difficulty.



### Ice—The DNR does not monitor ice conditions. Be extremely cautious about ice conditions at all times. Springs, currents, and even animal activity may cause thin ice.



### Snowmobile and ATV Users—Winter use trails are marked and groomed for your use. Stay on designated trails and ride within your abilities. Wear helmets and protective clothing. Be especially careful at night and use the buddy system or be sure someone knows your destination and planned arrival time.

## IN THE AREA



Photo: Cathy Khalar

### Village of Lake Nebagamon

- ✓ Public beach, ball field, tennis courts, businesses, restaurants.
- ✓ 8 miles west of State Forest on Highway B.

### Amnicon Falls State Park

- ✓ Waterfall, scenic covered bridge, developed camping
- ✓ 13 miles west of forest on US Highway 2

### Pattison State Park

- ✓ Tallest waterfalls in Wisconsin.
- ✓ Developed camping, hiking, picnic areas
- ✓ 24 miles west of forest on County B

### Town of Iron River

- ✓ Fishing, boating.
- ✓ Businesses and restaurants.
- ✓ 8 miles east of forest on US Highway 2.

### Brule Fish Hatchery

- ✓ Grounds open 8:00am–4:00pmdaily June–September, Weekdays October–May
- ✓ Group tours available upon request, self-guided tours also available, fish food available for families with kids.
- ✓ Produces 400,000 trout and salmon each year for stocking in the Great Lakes.
- ✓ Information signs and visitor center, on site restrooms.
- ✓ Former site of the Brule CCC camp, interpretive signs describing the camp near parking area.
- ✓ Located between ranger station and Highway 27 on Hatchery Road.

## PETS



Dogs and other pets are allowed in most camp areas, on roads and trails, and in other areas of the forest that are not developed for public use. Pets on any hiking trail, campground, or within any developed area must be on a leash no longer than eight feet and under control at all times. No pets are permitted in buildings and picnic areas or on cross-country ski trails and the Stoney Hill Nature Trail. You are responsible for your pet's actions.

If your pet is legitimately disturbing others, it is possible that you may be asked to leave the forest, be issued a citation, or both. Please clean up after your pet. Thank you for being a responsible pet owner.

## LEAVE FIREWOOD AT HOME

KEEP WISCONSIN'S PARKS, FORESTS AND CAMPGROUNDS HEALTHY



For many people, a campfire is an important part of the camping experience. It's the family room of the campsite; a place to share a laugh, eat meals and toast marshmallows.

But the fir wood that fuels your campfire could also be transporting harmful insects and diseases to the forested areas in Wisconsin, including your favorite park or campground. Trees in your own backyard or neighborhood could also be at risk.

Pests and diseases such as the emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, oak wilt and beech bark disease are easily spread through infested fir wood. For example, emerald ash borer is now in Wisconsin. This beetle commonly moves around on fir wood and has already killed millions of trees in other states and in Canada.

"It's not uncommon to see campers bringing their own fir wood from home," said Jane Cummings-Carlson, forest health expert with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. "We have park visitors from all over the state and from across the country. The fact is we have no idea where all that fir wood is coming from, and some of that wood might just be the source of our next big problem."

While nurseries, logging, mills, and other wood industries are easy to regulate when threats are detected, fir wood remains the last major way for invasive hitch-hikers to reach new areas.

Campers can take some simple steps to help protect the state's healthy forests:

### 1. Leave fir wood at home.

a. Only purchase firewood that has been certified by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture (DATCP) and treated to kill lurking threats from invasive hitch hikers. Find a list of certified fir wood dealers online at: [www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov](http://www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov).

b. Or, buy fir wood at or within 10 miles of your campsite and within Douglas County due to EAB quarantine. You may have heard about regulations that limit the distance from which fir wood may be brought onto state properties in previous years. Private sellers have local wood available near the campground. Wood cannot be transported out of Douglas County.

### 2. Burn all of your fir wood at your campsite; do not take it with you to another destination.

3. Reduce your need for open fires by cooking over gas or charcoal. Instead of an evening campfire, explore new night-time activities like star-gazing or viewing wildlife by flashlight.

Campfires remain an important part of the outdoor experience in Wisconsin, but we must all take a few precautions to keep our forests and campgrounds—and our city parks and yards—healthy.

"There's a wealth of natural beauty in Wisconsin, much of it on our state properties for everyone to enjoy. Taking some precautions with firewood will help ensure that these terrific resources are around for years for generations to enjoy," Cummings-Carlson said.

Campers will find reasonably-priced fir wood from local sources in and around the town of Brule. Wood from unapproved sources may be confiscated and destroyed. Ask a ranger or attendant about fir wood rules, or visit online:

[www.dnr.wi.gov/invasives/firewood](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/invasives/firewood)



Photo: Cathy Khalar

## HIKING THE HISTORIC BRULE

### ST. CROIX PORTAGE TRAIL

The Brule to St. Croix Portage, just under 2 miles one way, was created and used originally by Native Americans, explorers, traders, trappers, and missionaries as an important connecting link from the waters of Lake Superior to the Mississippi River via the Brule and St. Croix. Daniel Greysolon Sieur duLhut was the first to record the existence of this trail in 1680. DuLhut was followed by many other notables of early American history, including Jonathon Carver and Henry Schoolcraft who were credited with discovery of the source of the Mississippi. The trail is on the National Register of Historic Landmarks.

This hike follows the upper Brule along scenic bluff tops and pine flats. Along the trail you will find several stone markers commemorating early trail users. The trail begins at the picnic area at the north end of Lake St. Croix. Parking is available in the St. Croix picnic area.

### NORTH COUNTRY NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

A 22 mile segment of the North Country National Scenic Trail passes through the forest on its route between North Dakota and Maine. The trail may be accessed from a parking area ½ mile off of Hwy 27 along Samples Road; a trailhead and marker dedicated to Senator Gaylord Nelson, located 8 miles south of Brule along WI Highway 2; a NCT trailhead on Highway S at the Highland Town Hall; and at the north end of Lake St. Croix on County Highway A, where the Brule/St. Croix Historical Portage Trail and the North Country Trail follow the same route for the first 2 miles. A noteworthy segment of this trail is a boardwalk through the Brule Bog which can be accessed from Hwy A or Hwy P just north of Lake St. Croix. If you enjoy the trail, consider becoming a member of the Brule/St. Croix chapter of the North Country Trail Association. Check out [www.northcountrytrail.org/bsc](http://www.northcountrytrail.org/bsc).

### OLD BAYFIELD ROAD HIKING AND SNOWSHOE TRAIL

This approximately 2 ¼ mile trail is located 3 miles north of Highway 2 on Clevedon Road. The trail goes eastward down a hill, past some old copper mine sites, and then climbs back up a scenic ridge passing near the Clevedon fire tower (please do not climb, it is illegal and unsafe without proper training and gear). The trail continues south and loops back to the parking lot. During the winter months the trail is a great destination for snowshoeing.

### STONEY HILL NATURE TRAIL

The 1.7 mile self-guided nature trail begins and ends at the Bois Brule Campground. Parts of the trail are steep, but a rest stop and overlook at the top of Stoney Hill provides an enjoyable break, with a breathtaking view of the Brule River Valley.

### HUNTER WALKING TRAILS

There are over 60 miles of hunter walking trails within the Brule River State Forest.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Casey-Percival Creek</b> —14 mile trail near Copper Range campground. | near Winneboujou Landing                                    |
| <b>Beaupre Springs</b> —5 mile trail near Lake St. Croix                 | <b>Fisher/Smith Creek</b> —12 mile trail near Lake Superior |
| <b>Afterhours Road</b> —15 mile trail off of Highway 2                   | <b>Trails End</b> —3 mile trail along Hwy 13                |
| <b>Hilltop</b> —8 mile trail on County Road B                            | <b>Anderson Road</b> —5 mile trail south of Lake Nebagamon. |

### ANGLER WALKING TRAILS

Access to both angling and hiking opportunities along the river are provided by a network of angler walking trails. They are generally unmarked, but can provide excellent opportunities for exploration. They can be accessed from many angler parking lots. Stop at the forest headquarters for maps and additional information.

## WILDLIFE IN THE FOREST

The great diversity of habitat provides abundant opportunities for viewing, photographing, or harvesting wildlife. The key to this diversity lies in the landforms that the Brule River has carved out in its path.

The headwaters start in the Brule Bog, an area of densely forested conifer swamp, lowland hardwoods, and alder thickets along the river. Groundwater seepage from sandy soils surrounding the headwaters provide the cold water base flow that contributes to the excellent trout fishery and water quality. Conifer trees found here are balsam fir, white cedar, black spruce, and white spruce. It provides a haven for 171 plant species, including 6 orchids, 38 species of birds, and dozens of mammals. Uncommon birds that may be found here are black-backed three-toed woodpeckers, red crossbills, Lincoln's sparrow, and Cape May warblers. The thermal cover provided by the conifer swamps attracts wintering deer in large numbers.

This sand soils area is also important to the upland wildlife of this disturbance-dependent community. Natural fires were once common on these dry soils and created a mosaic of large open grassy areas, shrubs, and sparse trees intermixed with mature forests dominated by Jack and red pines. This habitats attracts 110 species of upland birds (30 more use the scattered small lakes and wetlands) and 19 species of mammals. Some birds in decline nationally are common here: sharp-tailed grouse, upland sandpipers, clay-colored sparrows, and vesper sparrows. Whip-poor-wills are a common bird nesting in large open grassy areas and are easily heard on warm summer nights. Uncommon mammals that can be seen here are badgers and grey wolves.

As the Brule River winds northward, it cuts through an area of sandy loam soils called the Mille Lacs Upland. This landform stretches from northwestern Minnesota to its eastern most edge here on the Brule River State Forest. The fertility and moisture levels of this land type are intermediate between the wet soils of the Brule Bog and the infertile, dry soils of the sands region. This allows a diverse mixture of plants and animals to flourish here. This area supports the greatest area of northern red oak, attracting large numbers of animals that feed on nature's crops of acorns in preparation for northern Wisconsin harsh winters. Gray squirrels, black bears, and deer are abundant here and attract much attention during the fall hunting seasons.

As the Brule nears the end of its journey to Lake Superior, it increases its speed as it races through the old lakebed that deposited deep layers of red clay soils. The original forests and wildlife were

comprised of a mixture of species found more commonly in both the true boreal forests to the north and deciduous hardwoods to the south.

Early settlers found these forests rich in spruce and pine, as well as in the red clay soils suitable for farming. Agriculture and logging came, and with them wildfires; these changes greatly altered the land. Steep ravines dissecting a patchwork of upland forests comprised of early successional species such as aspen, wooded wetlands, and farmland now characterize this area. Ravines offer shelter from winter cold and snow for wildlife such as deer, songbirds, coyotes, and bobcats. Aspen forests provide excellent habitat for ruffed grouse, deer, bear, snowshoe hares, and woodcock for those interested in hunting opportunities. The fallow fields attract songbirds such as bobolinks, meadowlarks, marsh hawks, vesper sparrows, and upland sandpipers that historically were found in native prairies and savannas. Wetlands attract a variety of nesting and migratory shorebirds, waterfowl, and amphibians.

With such a rich mixture of flora and fauna, the Brule has wildlife viewing and harvesting opportunities for everyone; get out and enjoy it!



Photo: Cathy Khalar

### WOOD TURTLES

The wood turtle, a threatened species in Wisconsin, is found in the Brule River State Forest. As they prefer clean rivers with steady flow and adjacent wetlands and upland forests, the Brule provides the perfect habitat. They spend most of their lives within 300 meters of the river, breeding primarily during spring or fall. They lay eggs in a nest in gravel or sand pits near the river, which typically hatch in August.

To improve the survival and breeding prospects of this threatened species, Wisconsin DNR wildlife staff have established several nesting sites in suitable locations around the forest. These sites allow to nest near the river and avoid crossing or nesting in roadways. The sites are even ringed with electric fences to protect nesting turtles and their young from predators.



## THE BRULE BOG

Once viewed as "waste-lands," swamps and wetlands were often drained and converted to more "useful" purposes, like development and agriculture. Fortunately, some areas, such as the upper Bois-Brule River Bog and its associated swamp wetlands, escaped the devastating impacts of wetland drainage. This area remains in near pre-settlement condition and provides bountiful opportunities for viewing native plants and animals.

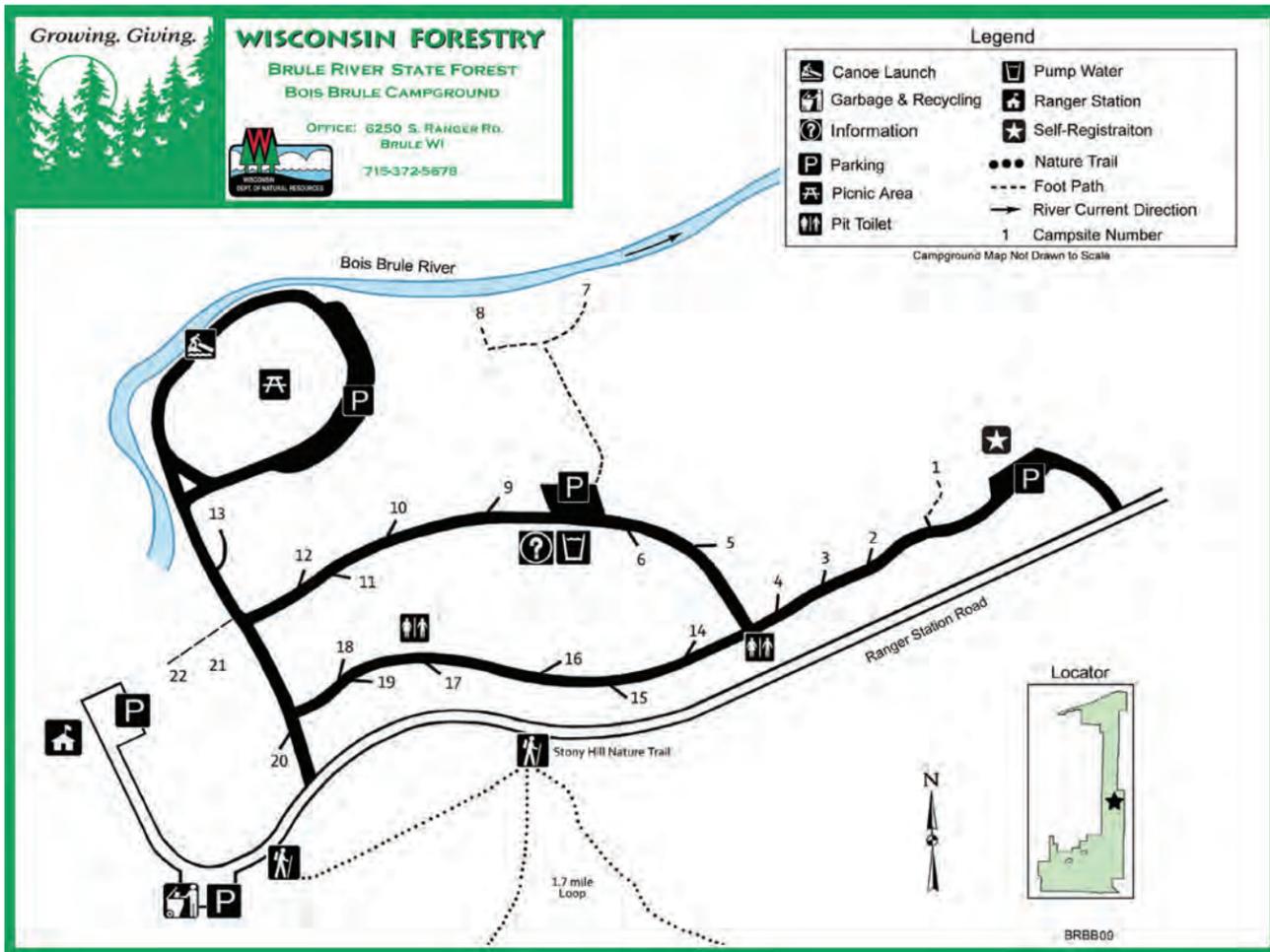
The Brule Bog is headwaters to both the Brule River as well as the St. Croix River. These wetlands can be found stretching up the river, from near Highway B to Highway P, just northeast of Solon Springs. The swamp wetlands are comprised of 4 major habitat types: lowland conifers (balsam fir, white cedar, tamarack, black spruce, and white spruce); cedar swamps (>50% white cedar); lowland hardwoods (>50% black ash, red maple, mountain maple, and balsam poplar); and alder thickets.

The white cedar swamps are the most striking; these trees are 160 to 200 years old! Six species of orchids, including one endangered species, may be observed here; there are a total of 171 plant species found in the swamp wetlands. The Brule Bog can be accessed off of Hwy P north of Solon Springs on the North Country Trail boardwalk that crosses the bog area.

# FOREST CAMPGROUNDS

Brule River State Forest has two campgrounds. Copper Range has 15 campsites and is located approximately 4 miles north of the Village of Brule on County Hwy H. Bois Brule campground, with 22 campsites, is near the Brule Forest Headquarters approximately 1 mile south of Hwy 2 on Ranger RD. Some sites are available for reservation on [reserveamerica.com](http://reserveamerica.com); others are first-come, first-served.

Most campsites provide adequate space for either tents or a trailer. Each site has a picnic table, half log bench, fire grate, and parking for 2 vehicles. Each campground has a disability accessible site. Pit toilets and hand pumps for water are provided. Both campgrounds feature canoe landings. Electric sites are not available. A state park and forest admissions sticker is required year-round for all motor vehicles entering the state forest campgrounds, in addition to the camping fee.



## STICKER AND FEES REQUIRED

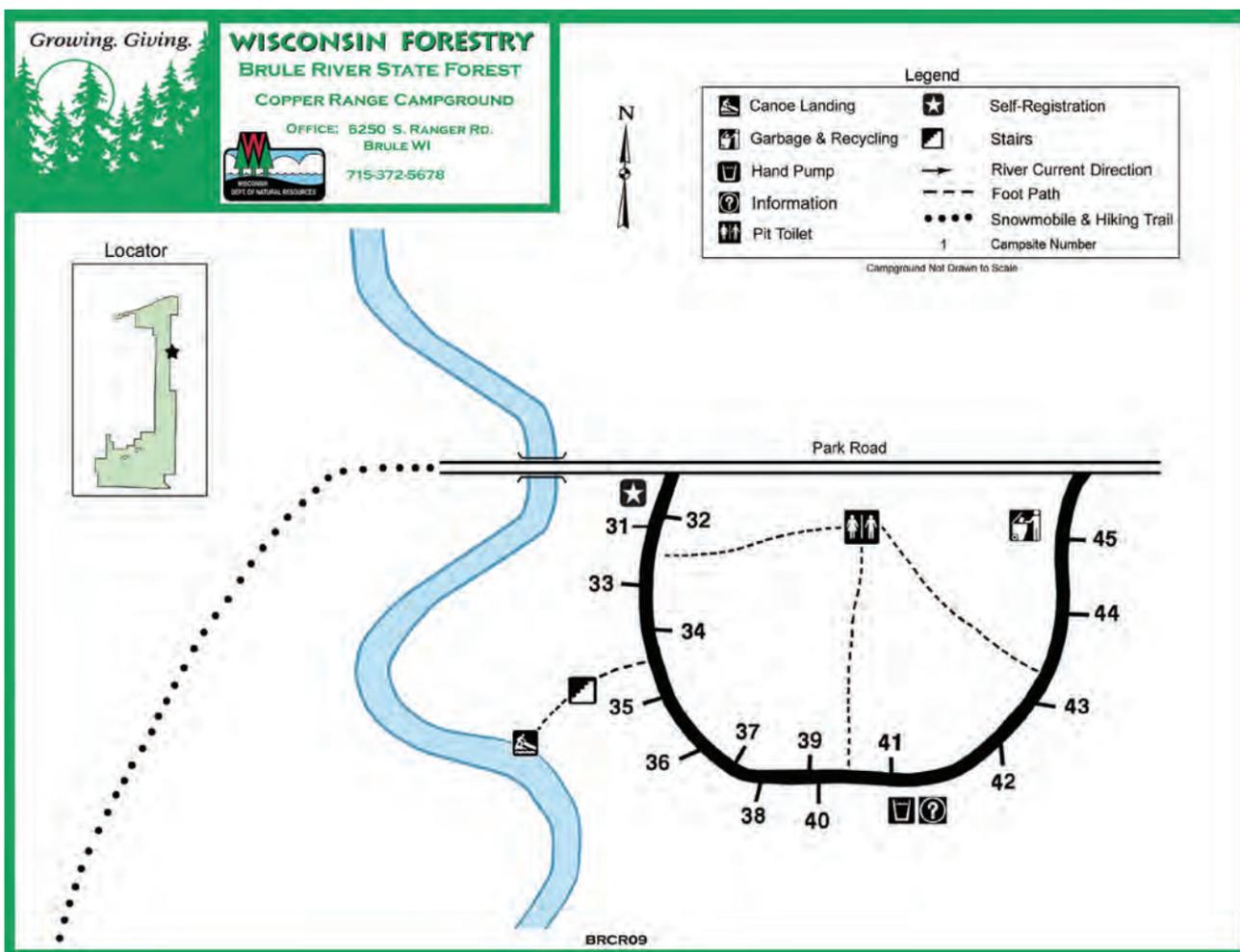
Annual or daily admission stickers are required on all vehicles entering and stopping in the Brule River State Forest campgrounds and the Bois Brule picnic area. The annual sticker is valid at all state parks, forests, and recreation areas for the calendar year.

An additional camping fee is required for each night spent at a campsite. A State Trails Pass is also required for winter users of the Afterhours cross country ski trail.

Vehicle admission, camping, and trail pass fees help to support the state forest and park system.

## THIS PAPER AIMS TO HELP YOU ENJOY YOUR VISIT

The Visitor is published by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to help you enjoy your visit. The information it contains represents the answers to the questions most commonly asked about the Brule River State Forest. If you have other questions, please ask forest staff for assistance. The Visitor is free to forest visitors. Any material in it may be reproduced as long as the Department of Natural Resources is acknowledged as the source. Please don't throw the Visitor away. Take it home for future reference or pass it on to a friend. Thank you for visiting the Brule River State Forest!



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

This publication can be made available in alternative formats (large print, Braille, audio tape, etc.) upon request. Please call 608-266-8204 for more information.



PUB-FR-158 2015

# EMERGENCY INFORMATION

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In case of emergency notify Brule River State Forest Headquarters at 6250 S. Ranger Road, Brule WI 54820 (phone 715-372-5678), notify State Forest staff, or call 911.

## PHONES

Phones are located at local businesses and a public payphone is located at the Brule River Canoe rental on Hwy 2 in Brule. Cell phone reception is poor within the campgrounds and along the river. Best cell phone reception is found on high points on the landscape or within the Hwy 2 corridor east and west of the town of Brule.

## EMERGENCY MESSAGES

Emergency messages Emergency messages can be left for campers by calling the forest headquarters at (715) 372-5678 or the Douglas County Sheriff's Department (715) 395-1371.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Medical assistance Medical assistance is available at St. Mary's Hospital of Superior, 3500 Tower Ave., (715) 392-8281, 25 miles west of the forest.

## NON-EMERGENCY MESSAGES

Non-Emergency messages Notify the forest headquarters or staff. Messages will be delivered to campers by calling the forest office (715) 372-5678 or may be mailed to the Brule River State Forest, 6250 S. Ranger Rd., Brule, WI 54820

## ACCESSIBLE FOREST FACILITIES



The Department of Natural Resources is making an effort to provide accessible recreation facilities for people with special needs. We would like to hear from you regarding this effort and welcome your comments and suggestions. Currently the Brule River State Forest offers two accessible campsites, one at each campground. The Bois Brule picnic area also has accessible parking and a fishing platform. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan.