**History of the Bayfield Trail**

Along this route, the first road between Superior and Bayfield was built in 1870. The road was used to transport freight, mail, and passengers between the cities until it was replaced by the railroad in 1885.

- **About** a half mile from the parking lot, you will come to a fork. To the right is the copper range spur that meanders 1.6 miles where it crosses the Brule River and ends at copper range campground. It is reported that two taverns used to exist at this crossing. One had rooms for travelers and could accommodate up to eight teams of horses. This was a “layover” between the two cities on the two day journey.

- Hook a left at the fork and shortly after you will see a rocky rise with a fence on top (north of the trail). This is the location of the old Percival Mine. Stay outside the fence for your safety. Imagine the amount of work it took to operate steam driven drills and pumps back in the 1870’s. In 1873 a copper vein was reported to have been found only 15 feet down. Exploration continued, but in 1874 prospecting appeared to fail. There were several additional attempts to mine for copper here from 1899 through WWII. The shaft at one time reached a depth of 90 feet.

- Continuing on, you will come to a wooden bridge that crosses a small unnamed stream that flows in to Percival Creek. Shortly after the bridge, look for an old foundation left of the trail. It is believed that this is what remains of the quarters the miners used in the 1870’s. The Percival mine employed eight to fifteen men.

- Eventually you will come to a left turn in the trail and have to walk up a steep grade. This is where the trail leaves the route the Bayfield Road and continues on to the lookout a mandatory rest stop on your hike!

- After taking in the breathtaking view, continue on into one of the rarest ecological sights on the forest. This is one of the only locations you will find a sugar maple and hemlock stand on the Brule River State Forest. This is an indicator of a nutrient rich soil.

- The remainder of your hike will take you past the old fire tower, along a series of boardwalk through a mixture of varying cover types until you reach your point of origin back at the trail head.
Mining History

Mining exploration occurred in the area around Bayfield trail between the 1840’s and the end of World War II.

Percival mine, named after its last owner, James G. Percival was one of the more well known copper mines in the area. The land, formerly known as the copper range, was first explored by John Jacob Astor and the North American Fur Company who searched for copper along the south shore of Lake Superior. Numerous other mining attempts were made by different people that purchased the mines in hopes of turning a profit, but the results were minimal. In 1873 the mines were purchased along with a large tract of land on the west side of the mouth of the Brule by Englishman Samuel Budget. The land was finally sold in 1898 to Percival Mining Company which is where the mine got its name. After the land went into public ownership, all of the structures were removed leaving only remnants of foundations, and abandoned mine shafts that can still be visited as you hike the trail.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

Brule DNR Headquarters:
6250 S. Ranger Rd.
Brule, WI 54849
(715) 372-5678

OTHER TRAILS ON THE BRSF

Stoney Hill Nature Trail
(1.7 miles)
1 mile south of Hwy 2 on Ranger Rd.

After Hours Ski Trail
(15 miles of groomed trail during the winter and available for hunting in the fall)
0.4 miles west of Brule on Hwy 2

Historic Brule/ St. Croix Portage Trail
(2 miles)
Off of Hwy. A at the north end of Lake St. Croix

North Country Nat’l Scenic Trail
(22 mile segment on BRSF)
northcountrytrail.org/bsc/

HISTORIC BAYFIELD ROAD
HIKING & SNOWSHOE TRAIL
(Approximately 2.25 miles)

2.25 Miles on the
Brule River State Forest