Welcome!

Stay the Night or a Few Days in this Tranquil Equestrian Playground

With more than 40 miles of maintained, well-marked horse trails winding through breathtaking upland terrain and multiple forest types, Governor Knowles is your Northwoods destination for equestrian riding and camping.

Trade River Equestrian Campground offers 40 campsites with picnic tables, fire rings and horse tie lines. Electrical hookups are available for an additional fee at some sites, and firewood is available for purchase. Vault toilets and water are located within the campground. The campground and trails are open May 1st through November 15th. Water is available throughout the weekend closest to Columbus Day unless there are unseasonably warm temperatures.

Barrens Loop Trail (Brown)
Barrens Loop is the 21-mile main trail of the Trade River Equestrian Trail System. The trail takes the rider through forested and barrens habitat and is comprised of tote roads and fire lanes. The trail is rated easy with only one steep hill along the way.

Sunrise Shortcut Trail (Green)
Sunrise Shortcut divides the Barrens Loop in half for those who want a shorter ride (about 12 miles). After leaving the Barrens Loop Trail, this three-mile shortcut meanders through scrub oaks, pine forests and up into some hardwoods. Riders frequently view birds of prey soaring overhead.

Wolf Creek Trail (Red)
Wolf Creek is a five-mile loop that travels east from the Barrens Loop toward Wolf Creek. The northern portion travels through a scenic forested area at different successional stages from old growth to young forest. The southern portion follows the St. Croix River Valley, home to a wide variety of wildlife including deer, ruffed grouse and many song birds. When riders reach Wolf Creek, they may at their own risk choose to tread the shallow rippling river, or cross the wooden bridge – sometimes using it as a sounding board to compete with friends to determine whose horse has the purest gait. Riders frequently take this trail to Wolf Creek Tavern to enjoy a cold drink, burger or Friday night fish fry!

Harris Loop Trail (Yellow)
Harris Loop is a quick two-mile loop trail located at the southeast corner of the Barrens Loop. This trail winds through stands of oak, and jack and white pine.

Trade River Day Use Area
East of the equestrian campground, this area provides trail maps, water, restrooms, horse tie lines and self-registration on-site. Another parking area with maps is along the northern portion of the horse trail located at 340th Street and 290th Avenue. All vehicles require an annual admission sticker (or payment of a daily fee).

A Wisconsin State Trail Pass is required for riders 16 years and older. Passes can be obtained through self-registration at the trailhead or at a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Service Center.

Camping Fees
- Resident $16/non-electric
- Non-resident $21/non-electric
- $26/electric
- $31/electric

State Parks and Forest Admission Sticker
- A State Parks and Forest Admission Sticker is REQUIRED year-round on vehicles in the campgrounds.
- A Wisconsin State Trail Pass is required for riders 16 years and older.

Local Non-emergency Contacts
- Burnett County Sheriff: 715-349-2121
- Polk County Sheriff: 715-485-8300

Questions? Contact Governor Knowles State Forest Headquarters at 325 West State Road 70, Grantsburg, WI 54840. 715-463-2898
Other camping opportunities in the state forest include family camping at the St. Croix Family Campground, group camping at the Sioux Portage Group Campground, and backpack camping.

Governor Knowles State Forest is sustainably managed for wildlife, water quality, forest health, and wood products. You may encounter timber cutting operations within the forest.

Photos by John Haack, UWEX; Brandi Buchholz, Kyle Anderson and other WDNR staff.