



Three campgrounds in the Black River State Forest have nature trails, water, vault toilets, firewood and picnic facilities. Campsites may be reserved between Memorial Day and Labor Day, through Reserve America at 888-947-2757.

**Castle Mound Campground** has 35 reserve-able sites, 5 of which have electrical outlets. Castle Mound also has showers, flush toilets, handicap accessible facilities, and a sanitary dump station. **Pigeon Creek Campground** has 38 campsites. No electric sites are available at this campground. Handicap accessible facilities are available. A portion of the sites are on the reservation system. **East Fork Campground** has 24 campsites, half of which are located on the banks of the East Fork of the Black River. No electricity is available. A canoe landing is located near the campground entrance. Half of the sites are reservable.

## Camping



Additional camping opportunities in the State Forest include:

**The horse campground** has 12 sites available on a first come, first served basis and all include a picnic table, fire ring, and tethering post. Vault toilets and solar-powered pump for water are available but there is no electricity at this campground. The forest offers a wilderness camping experience with **backpack camping**. Permits are required and are available on the state forest web site or by calling the Forest Headquarters. Backpack camping is free but campers must camp at least one mile away from their parked vehicle and 100 feet from any road or trail.

**The group camp area** is secluded and can accommodate up to 50 people outdoors. Water, vault toilets, picnic tables, cooking grills, a dog kennel, and large fire ring are provided. There is a four-season cabin that sleeps 12 people comfortably. The wood bunks. This ADA compliant cabin has a stove, refrigerator, gas fireplace, heated floors, and bathroom with a shower. Reservations are required with a two-day minimum on weekends and can be made by calling 888-947-2757 or through our online reservation system at <http://wisconsinparks.reserveamerica.com>.

Two canoe campsites are located on the Black River south of Black River Falls. These campsites are on the east side of the river and includes a picnic table, fire ring, and Port-a-Pot. This site is available on a first come, first served basis and is limited to canoers for one night only.

# Black River State Forest



## Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

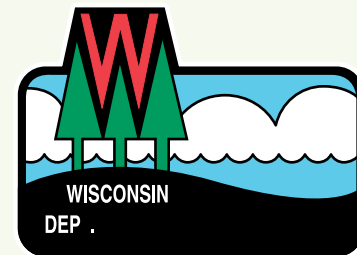
### Emergency Information

Black River Memorial Hospital..... 715-284-5361  
 Ambulance.....911  
 Poison Control Center..... 800-222-1222  
 Jackson County Sheriff..... 911 or 715-284-5357  
 Forest Headquarters..... 715-284-4103  
 DNR Service Center..... 715-284-1400



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Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
 Black River State Forest  
 910 Hwy 54 E  
 Black River Falls, 54615  
 715-284-4103  
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Brochure design by Sara M. Schmidt. Map by Ralph Weible. Photo Credits to Michele Windsor, Kyle Zenz, Jamie Dahl, and Sara M. Schmidt. Union Street Design, LLC

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## Picnicking

Picnic facilities are located at the Castle Mound, Pigeon Creek, and East Fork Campgrounds. Castle Mound and Pigeon Creek have playground equipment. All have hand pumps for water, picnic tables, grills and vault toilets. Perry Creek Park and Xbow Pond provide limited facilities. An enclosed shelter located at Castle Mound is available for reservations.



## Hiking

There are many opportunities for hiking in the Black River State Forest. There are several different trail systems, 24 miles of which are designated for hiking, biking, and skiing. The Wildcat and Smrekar Trailheads provide parking for trail access. A nature trail at Castle Mound campground is complete with interpretive signs

and leads to an extraordinary view from the top of Castle Mound. A 1.5 mile interpretive trail at Pigeon Creek Campground illustrates sustainable forest management. East Fork Campground has a less developed nature trail that runs parallel to the East Fork of the Black River. Perry Creek Park also has a hiking trail along Ferry Creek, which is excellent for exploring the sandstone outcropping typical of this region.

## Biking

There are 29 miles of biking trails, five of which are located at the Pigeon Creek Campground. This five-mile segment links to the remaining 24 miles of hiking, biking, and skiing trails located northeast of Pigeon Creek Campground.

## Cross-country Skiing & Snowshoeing

The Smrekar and Wildcat Trails of the Black River State Forest provide easy, intermediate, and difficult terrain for cross-country skiers. A warming cabin is located at the Smrekar trailhead and is open during the winter months for skiers. Ski loops are designed for one-way travel but trail links are two-way. Trails are groomed for both traditional and skate skiing after new snow fall or heavy weekend use. A day use or annual trail pass is required for all skiers 16 years of age and older. Snowshoeing, hiking, and pets are not allowed on groomed trails. A one mile snowshoe trail starts from the Smrekar Trail Parking lot. Snowshoeing is also allowed on the Ferry Creek bike trail and the Pigeon Creek Nature Trail.



## Canoeing and Kayaking

The Black River and East Fork of the Black River offer excellent canoeing and kayaking opportunities. East Fork is scenic with some mild rapids and moderately rocky areas. Canoeing or kayaking on the East Fork when water levels are low is not recommended. The Black River from Lake Arbustus to North Bend on Highway 54 is an excellent canoeing river from late spring through fall. The river provides a scenic trip through sparsely populated areas and great opportunities for fishing.



## Dike 17 Wildlife Area

Within the State Forest boundary lies the Dike 17 Wildlife Area. This 5,000 acre area is primarily managed for waterfowl, sharp-tailed grouse, and grassland song birds. Keep your eyes and ears open for sandhill cranes, eagles, grasshopper sparrows and wolves. The twenty flowages of the Dike 17 area were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) crews in the 1930s. These are still maintained today and can hold such rare birds as the whooping crane or the more common Canada goose. Some endangered and threatened wildlife species which can be found are the osprey, Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, Cooper's hawk, Blanding's turtle and the Karner Blue butterfly.



## Swimming

Pigeon Creek Campground has a sandy beach, picnic area, drinking water and toilets. Swimming is also available at Jackson County's East Arbustus and Lake Wazee campgrounds. The State Forest beach does not have life-guards. Swim safely and please do not swim alone, at night, or in unfamiliar places.



## Snowmobiling, ATVs & Motorcycling

A network of snowmobile trails joins Jackson County Forest trails to total 150 miles of trails. The trails are groomed after snowfall. Motorcycles must be dual purpose, legal for road riding. Thirty-three miles of ATV and motorcycle trails in the state forest link with Jackson and Clark County Forest trails to total approximately 230 miles of trail. Contact the WDNR Black River Falls Service Center or Forest Headquarters for supplemental brochures and information on trail conditions, parking, lodging, etc.

## Hunting and Fishing

Public hunting is allowed in the Black River State Forest but NO hunting is allowed in the following areas: 1) Campgrounds or day use areas, 2) Other areas that are signed and designated as closed, 3) On private lands within the state forest boundary unless permission is expressly given by the land owner with the exception of private tax law lands designated as "open." The Forest supports numerous huntable wildlife species. White-tailed deer, black bear, raccoon, bobcat, ruffed grouse, woodcock, turkey, and waterfowl are all found throughout the property. In addition, the area offers trapping opportunities with a healthy population of fisher, bobcat, otter, and beaver. Camping is available at the Castle Mound and Pigeon Creek campgrounds year round. When hunting, camping outside campgrounds is permitted ONLY during the 9-day deer gun season starting the Thursday prior to opening day and requires a permit. The Black River is a great fishery for walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass, muskellunge, and catfish. The East Fork of the Black River is also good for smallmouth bass, muskellunge, and walleye fishing.



## The Forest

The Black River State Forest was established in 1957 after the Federal Government transferred 59,000 acres of forest land to the Wisconsin Conservation Department. Through further land purchases, the Forest has grown to its present size of approximately 68,000 acres.

The Black River Sate Forest has unique geological features. This area lies on the edge of the glaciated central plain of the rough coulee region or driftless area of Wisconsin. Looking east from the top of Castle Mound, one can observe what was once the bed of glacial Lake Wisconsin. Unglaciated buttes, sandstone hills, and castellated bluffs such as Castle Mound dot the forest landscape.

Through integrated resource management techniques, the Forest is managed for multiple uses such as: recreation, wildlife, woodproducts, aesthetics, biodiversity, watershed protection and fisheries.

## Forest Management

Managing the Forest for wood products has been a major use for the property since the 1950's. The wood products from this Forest help support the second largest industry in Wisconsin and provide hundreds of people with jobs. The harvests of today are managed by foresters who practice sustainable forestry, unlike logging during the 1800's.

Several harvest systems are used depending on tree species involved. Jack pine, aspen and oak are all clear-cut because the young seedlings require full sunlight to get established. White pine, which is moderately shade tolerant, is selectively harvested so enough sunlight is permitted to stimulate young seedlings and to allow larger trees to grow.

Whenever possible, natural regeneration of a desirable tree species is encouraged. Where natural regeneration is inadequate or where forest areas have been devastated by fire or other disturbances, trees are planted.