



Welcome to the Spirit of the Woods Chapter of the North Country Trail Association.

The North Country National Scenic Trail is one of our Nation's premier hiking and backpacking trails, extending 4,600 miles from upstate New York to west central North Dakota.

- It links outstanding scenic, natural, recreational, historic and cultural areas. First conceived in the 1960s, it was authorized by Congress in 1980.
- The trail is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) in cooperation with many public agencies, private organizations and generous landowners across seven northern states.
- The North Country Trail Association, working closely with the National Park Service, plays a leading role in the effort to complete the trail, organizing and directing the volunteer effort to build and maintain the trail.
- The national North Country Trail website is northcountrytrail.org for information on volunteering to help build, maintain and protect the North Country Trail. Detailed maps are also available from the North Country Trail Association. Phone 1-866-HIKE NCT (445-3628).

The Spirit of the Woods Chapter's section of the North Country Trail is largely within the Manistee National Forest.

- In the south it winds through Sterling Marsh with boardwalk and gravel sections. The terrain is generally flat land in the south. As you move north you will encounter rolling terrain. Glacial movement left the Ward and Udell Hills in Manistee County as well as some challenging terrain with some steep grades in the Red Bridge Semi-Primitive Area in the north. The trail passes the abandoned Red Bridge fire tower, highest point in Manistee County.
- Almost all the trail in our chapter traverses mixed hardwood forest dotted with stands of birch, red & white pine and cedar. It passes thru or near swamps, wetlands and bayous. The NCT crosses the Pere Marquette River and follows Big Manistee River high on a ridge, then descends to the river shore. The trail crosses the Big Sable and Little Manistee Rivers and passes the High Bridge and Saw Dust Pile Memorials.



Join us for monthly outings.



A workday on the boardwalk in Sterling Marsh

- Spur trails connect to Forest Service campgrounds and also cross the largest pedestrian suspension bridge east of the Mississippi to create a popular 19-mile backpacking loop with the Manistee River Trail. See northcountrytrail.org for maps of this loop.
- In the southern part of Lake County is another loop offered by the Bowman Lake trail with the North Country Trail.
- The NCT offers day hiking, backpacking, running, mountain biking and forest access for hunters. There is river access to renowned salmon and steelhead fisheries. When the snow flies, cross-country skiing and snow shoeing opportunities abound.

The U.S. Forest Service offices in Manistee and Baldwin also have information about the Spirit of the Woods section of the North Country Trail.

- The Manistee office phone number is 231 723-2211.
- The Baldwin office phone number is 231 745-4631.



Spirit of the Woods Chapter of the North Country Trail Association

Join Us for Social Outings and Trail Work

- The Spirit of the Woods Chapter conducts meetings, outings, hikes, events and trail workdays.
- Save the first Saturday of every month to come with us on a hike (or snowshoe or ski during the winter).
- On the first Saturday in June, we celebrate National Trails Day. In late September join us for North Country National Scenic Trail Day. Participating is a fun and educational experience for people of all ages and outdoor skill levels.

Our chapter email is spw@northcountrytrail.org and our website is northcountrytrail.org/spw or scan the QR code with your smartphone.



Our website has a wealth of information about the Spirit of the Woods chapter and the North Country Trail including newsletters about our activities.