

North Country National Scenic Trail Chequamegon Chapter Segments

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Overview

The majority of the North Country Trail is located on flat to gently rolling ground. Most of this trail is marked with blue rectangular painted blazes. Within the Rainbow Lake Wilderness and the Porcupine Lake Wilderness the trail is not marked with blue blazes but has directional rustic signs at some intersections. From east to west, the Chequamegon Chapter's area of responsibility includes 7 miles of trail in Copper Falls State Park. You can fee camp at Copper Falls State Park, but you need to pay at the Ranger Station at North Country Trail mileage 171.8. From Copper Falls State Park, the North Country Trail goes a short segment along the Bad River and some road walk through the City of Mellen, Wisconsin. From Mellen there is a 2.6-mile westbound road walk along Forest Road 390/ Kornstead from Mellen; and then 61.6 continuous miles of certified trail west to Bayfield County Highway A, 5 miles south of Iron River, Wisconsin. The first 60.4 miles of trail from Forest Road 390/ Kornstead Road are in the vast Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest, where camping is allowed without a permit so long as the camp is more than 100 feet from the trail or water's edge.



Bears

Northern Wisconsin has a healthy population of black bears. Because of fall hunting, 99%+ of the bears are extremely shy of humans, and will flee upon the first sight, first smell, or first sound of humans. Actual observations of black bears on the North Country Trail are rare. But for those who are camping, precautions should be taken to keep all your food in a bag well away from camp at night. The food bag should be hung 10 to 12 feet from the ground and four feet from the tree and any branches. In the alternative, you can use a bear-proof barrel or a Kevlar bag like an "Ur-Sack."

Wolves

Wolves live in the Chequamegon National Forest. Never in the history of the United States has there been a documented case of a healthy wolf killing a human being. You may hear them but seeing one in the wild may be a once in a lifetime occurrence.

Ticks

Ticks can crawl on your body and attach from Spring through Fall but are in especially huge numbers in May and June. The mostly likely areas to encounter ticks are in tall grass and vegetation. Most ticks will climb on your body from your ankle to your knee. Spraying your clothes with permethrin as directed on the label until you get a color change will kill 99% of the ticks before they can attach to your bare skin. DEET on bare skin repels ticks and is especially useful on the shins. Since it usually takes more than 24 hours for a tick to infect its host with Lyme disease, it is imperative that hikers check themselves thoroughly at least once a day before going to bed.

Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes hatch in huge numbers every year between May 12th to the 16th in this part of Wisconsin. Mosquitoes make life miserable for those outdoors until their numbers diminish, usually around early July. On peak days of mosquitoes, using a head net is advisable. Using DEET on your skin, and wearing light colored, loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts and long pants will greatly add to the enjoyment of your outdoor experience at the height of mosquito season.

Hunting Season

While the trail remains open to hikers during the hunting seasons starting in September, it is unwise to hike the trail during hunting season without a blaze orange hat and outerwear. The woods along the North Country Trail get filled with large numbers of rifle-carrying deer hunters starting at dawn on the first Saturday before Thanksgiving and continuing to the end of daylight on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. The large number of hunters in the woods during this time makes it prudent to reschedule any hikes away from this week as most do. Prudent hikers in September to the end of December wear at least a blaze orange hat and vest and backpackers put blaze orange covers on their backpacks.

Cell Phone Reception

Many of the higher elevations along the trail near Mellen and Drummond have cell phone reception of one or two bars. You can also get a cell phone signal on the hill east of Porcupine Lake and on the bluffs overlooking the Marengo River. The rest of the trail, and most of the lower elevations are strictly no coverage. TEXT messages get through in some places where your cell phone voice call gets dropped. While a cell phone can be a lifesaver in an emergency, having one should be your plan B and should not encourage trail users to take risks or push themselves beyond their normal capabilities.

Maps, Apps, and Links:

The Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country Trail's website is at:

<https://northcountrytrail.org/trail/wisconsin/che/>

To download a printable map of the Chequamegon section of the North Country Trail, go to:

<https://northcountrytrail.org/files/chapters/che/NCT-Cheq.-Pocket-Sized-Map.pdf>.

To report trail maintenance needs, please email: che@northcountrytrail.org.

To download printable maps and to access a full interactive annotated trail map, go to:

<https://northcountrytrail.org/the-trail/trail-map-and-downloads/#printable>

The National Forest Service uses and recommends the free Avenza App.

<https://www.avenzamaps.com/> The North Country Trail maps are free as well as many others.

The App puts a blue dot on the map and works off your cell phone's GPS making navigation simple. GPS and cell phone apps like Avenza make it easy to stay on the trail where the tread is not worn enough to follow and where the familiar "blue blazes" are not allowed in either the Porcupine Lake Wilderness or the Rainbow Lake Wilderness.

For National Forest Dispersed Camping rules;

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/cnnf/recreation/camping-cabins/?recid=27717&actid=34>

For wilderness regulations that you will need to follow.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/cnnf/recreation/hiking/recarea/?recid=27739&actid=42>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/cnnf/recarea/?recid=27843>

Dogs

Porcupines are found in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Dogs and porcupines do not play well. Unleashed dogs can get hurt or result in a trip to the veterinarian.

Winter

Winter camping along the North Country Trail is becoming more popular. Here are some things to consider. Single wall tents retain more heat. If you can follow all the safety guidelines, catalytic heaters reduce discomfort but only use them



while awake. When the wind chill forecast gets low, read up on how to build a snow cave. Keep in mind it may take hours to pile up that much snow and hours to wait for the snow to settle before you dig out your entrance and sleeping platform.

There will be places where you will be breaking trail through deep snow, so it might be slow going. A few places are not blazed enough for winter travel. In two places, the Rainbow Lake Wilderness and the Porcupine Lake Wilderness, blazing is not allowed because of the wilderness designation. With the snow on the ground, the tread way is not visible. The best remedy is to carry a GPS unit with trail maps to stay on the trail. The free downloaded Avenza App works well.

Some of the frozen lakes within sight of the trail have hidden dangers with running water and springs keeping the ice from freezing thick. The water over the springs is the last to freeze and the ice never gets thick over those springs. Eighteen Mile Creek Springs along the North Country Trail is one such lake. It rarely freezes over enough to support a person on the ice except real close to shore in the last half of January thru February. In summary, the North Country Trail is safe from such dangers but can tempt the people with no local knowledge to ski out over the pristine snow-covered lakes and literally end up over their heads in deep trouble.

Most of the Wisconsin segment of the North Country Trail is though wooded land that offers many lower places in the trees to set up camp out of the wind. A fair number of the adjacent National Forest Service Roads are not plowed in the wintertime. You would need to call the townships to find out if a particular National Forest Service Road to a trailhead or pick up point is plowed.

There are many snowmobilers in the CNNF and most drive safely around snowshoers and cross-country skiers. You will hear a few at a distance and may see some around road crossings and trail crossings. When such a conflict is possible get ready to get out of their way because not all of them will yield the right of way to a skier or snowshoer in the manner that is commendable.

It is not unusual to see winter days with a high temperature of -25 F and a low temperature of -45 F. Rarely it gets down to the -50's but it happens. Below zero camping is not recommended for the solo camper and not recommended for the novice camper.

Penokee Mountain Ski Trail Segment 3.1 miles

Forest Road 390 Trailhead (parking for 3 or 4 cars) on Forest Road 390/Kornstead Road 2.6 miles west of Mellen, Wisconsin to Forest Road 604 Trailhead (parking for 4 cars) on Forest Road 604/Quarry Road 1 mile north of County Road GG.

The east half of this segment is a rather flat section twisting through mixed hardwood and softwood forest with a several boggy areas, while the west half utilizes the rather flat Penokee Mountain Cross Country Ski Trails.

Starting out southbound from Forest Road 390, the trail goes though some boggy areas for 1.3 miles before crossing the North Fork of Rock Run Creek. From this wide bridge, with intermittent water, depending on Beaver activity, the trail continues .2 miles west to the next trail head, the Penokee Mountain Ski Trailhead (parking for 25 cars) which is located on County Road GG 3.6 miles southwest of center of Mellen, Wisconsin. The parking at the Penokee Trailhead at Trail milage 165.5 requires a fee. The town of Mellen has several restaurants, a small grocery store, laundromat, post office and other businesses typical for a town of 845 people.

From the Penokee Mountain Ski Trailhead, the next 1.5-mile westbound section utilizes part of the wide 16.9 kilometer of loop ski trails of the Penokee Mountain Ski Trail system for cross country skiers in the wintertime. From the parking lot, go 90 yards north down the trail to the first intersection, then left turn west bound along the 8.6 kilometer/ 5.1-kilometer ski trail loops until the right turn northbound on the 5.1-kilometer loop trail, then left turn westbound following the 5.1-kilometer ski loop to the intersection of the 8.6-kilometer loop, then continue westbound on the 8.6-kilometer ski trail to Forest Road 604/Quarry Road. Several NCT arrow signs and several ski trail maps will assist the hikers through the four intersections of the ski trail system.

Hanson Field Segment 4.2 miles

Forest Road 604 Trailhead (parking for 4 cars) on Forest Road 604/Quarry Road 1 mile north of County Road GG to the Forest Road 188 Trailhead on Forest Road 188/Hanson Road (parking for 5 vehicles) near John Frank Lake.

This segment is dominated by the forested gentle Trout Brook valley in the east and the large Hanson Field with abandoned farm homestead north of Forest Road 188 in the west. A trail re-route completed in 2009 has moved the NCT closer to Hanson Road and away from the field and has eliminated the hard to follow original trail in the field and most of the very rough ground caused by sphagnum hummocks.

From the Forest Road 604 Trailhead, the trail heads west .4 miles to the Penokee Adirondack Shelter with a fire ring and grill in a wooded setting of mature hardwoods and scattered evergreens. 46.320249, -90.747478 The shelter is first come first served. There is no reservation system. The nearest water is Trout Brook, 1.5 mile west of the shelter down the North Country Trail. The Chequamegon Chapter plans to build a campsite just east of Trout Brook in 2022.



Continuing westbound from Trout Brook a third of a mile, is a small overlook, called Sara's Overlook, with a limited view to the south. In another .4 miles you cross Forest Road 188/York Road and continue through the woods until you come to Hanson Field, about 500 feet of sometimes wet, sphagnum hummocks with very rough ground. At the southwest end of the field is the foundation and remains of an old farmhouse adjacent to the current location of the trail. Another 130 yards west bound from the foundation of the farmhouse, the trail crosses Forest Road 188/Hanson Road again, and quickly enter a mature pine plantation, followed by the mixed forest dominated by mature hardwoods. After a total distance of 4.2 miles from Forest Road 604 trailhead, you come to the Forest Road 188 Trailhead just northwest of John Frank Lake.

Brunsweler River Segment 3.8 miles

Forest Road 188 Trailhead on Forest Road 188/Hanson Road (parking for 5 vehicles) near John Frank Lake to Lake Three Trailhead (parking for 2 vehicles) on Forest Road 187/Mineral Lake Road.

This trail segment goes through mixed matured forests through the Brunsweler River Valley in the middle and passes Lake Three with an adjoining National Forest Campground on the western edge.

From the John Frank Lake Trailhead, the trail goes westbound through mixed hardwood forest slightly downhill, losing about a hundred feet of elevation until turning left to follow an old, abandoned railroad bed for 300 yards before turning right to cross the scenic Brunsweler River Bridge, 2 miles west of the trailhead. In this area in the late 1880's, a native American Indian known as Old Ice Feathers and later called Chief Namekagon used to collect native rocks of pure silver to trade for goods in Ashland Wisconsin. Many men tried to follow Chief Namekagon to where he obtained the silver without success. He died under suspicious circumstances, taking his

secret location of silver to the grave. The mineral-rich area of the Brunswailer River was thought by the locals to be the most probable location of this native load of silver.

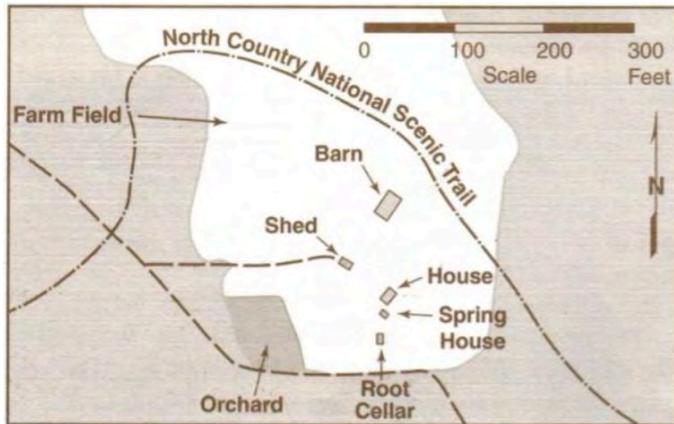
Continuing west is the Brunswailer River. At the east side of the bridge is a user made spur trail. At this spur trail, go south about 100 yards to a 2-tent pad campsite. Continuing west on the North Country Trail you will find another trail re-route completed in 2009 that changed the trail from a steep climbing grade to a gradual benched trail. From this point the trail then crosses flatter ground over six almost equally spaced foot bridges that span sometimes dry or damp or shallow stagnant water. After 1.8 miles from the Brunswailer River, the trail turns right north and after 100 yards goes along the banks of Lake Three, then west into the former Lake Three Campgrounds, currently closed by the USFS, but useable for backpackers with fire grates, run down picnic tables and unmaintained (and locked) outhouses. Leaving the former campground, the trail goes another 150 yards to the Mineral Lake Road NCT parking.

Marengo River Valley Segment 9.8 miles

Lake Three Trailhead (parking for 2 vehicles) on Forest Road 187/Mineral Lake Road to Forest Road 202 Trailhead (parking for 5 vehicles)

This segment is the most popular and scenic section of the Chequamegon Chapter's section of trail. It is dominated by many creek crossings in the east, a spur trail to the Swedish Settlement, a cement spring house, and gorgeous vistas on both sides of the wooded Marengo River Valley in the west.

From the Lake Three Trailhead, the trail goes along the south side of Seitz Lake, offering a picturesque view of a classic Wisconsin farm on the north side of the lake, and then crosses the Spring Brook and two more boggy areas north of Beaver Lake. Three miles from the trailhead, a signed spur trail going south about 200 yards takes you to the Beaver Lake Campgrounds. There is a fee for camping. Beaver Lake is populated by trout and channel catfish and has a small fee National Forest Campground with picnic tables, fire grates and a water pump. From Beaver Lake intersection, go one mile to Whiskey Creek and you will see a newly constructed backpacker campsite on a small hill with a nice campfire area and benches. 46.307282, -90.991431. Absent severe drought conditions, Whiskey Creek and Coffee Creek are dependable sources of water. After 6.1 miles from the Lake Three Trailhead the trail crosses Forest Road 383 (a/k/a Snake Trail Road). There is parking for 4 cars.



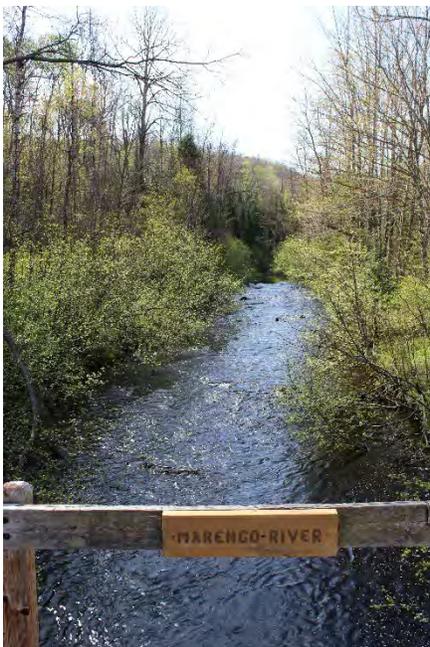
Continuing west, the trail comes to the highest trail altitude in the Chequamegon segment at the overlooks of the Marengo River valley before descending 344 feet into the valley floor. On the descent, a sign marks the spur trail to the Swedish Settlement, 200 yards south of the trail. This location was once farmed by a rather large Swedish family in the late 1800's which was abandoned at the start of the Great Depression.

What remains are the foundations of the house, barn, and other buildings, as well as an intact concrete Spring House covering a spring that flows all year.



Several remarkable juice apple trees still bear fruit in the fields below the house foundation despite a lack of care for over 80 years and winters with temperatures down to 45 below zero Fahrenheit. As you visit this historic site, remember that the removal of artifacts is illegal.

At trail mileage 146.8 some two hundred yards southeast of the Marengo River Bridge is 30-yard spur trail going south along and overlooking the river to the small Marengo River Adirondacks



Shelter on the bank of the river. The shelter is first come first served. There is no reservation system. The shelter can sleep 4 people. It has a fiberglass vault toilet outback and a fire ring in front, 46.307282, -90.991431.

A few small brook trout can be caught in the deeper pools of the Marengo River after the start of trout fishing on the first Saturday in May each year. A trout stamp is required, and the popular spots along this narrow river are quickly fished out. Climbing up out of the Marengo River Valley, the trail comes to the 50-yard spur trail to the south to the most scenic section of the Chequamegon Segment, the Juniper Rock Overlook. 46.307282, -90.991431

The overlook has a grand unobstructed view in three directions over the Marengo River valley. Weddings have been performed here. From the spur trail intersection, it is another .6 miles west to the Forest Road 202 Trailhead parking.



Long Mile Lookout Segment 6 miles

Forest Road 202 Trailhead (parking for 5 vehicles) to County Highway D Trailhead (parking for 5 vehicles) 3.9 miles south of Grand View, Wisconsin

This segment is dominated by mature mixed hardwood forest and well drained kettle moraine hills of various heights up to 260 feet of elevation gain along the trail.

From the Forest Road 202 Trailhead, the trail goes east for 1.6 miles before crossing a creek shown on the topographical maps as Twenty Mile Creek and shown on the trail maps as Pearl Creek. This creek has water in most years. From the creek it is another 150 yards to Forest Road 378/Wisco Road which has no engineered off-road parking. Near the middle of this segment, 3.5 miles from the Forest Road 202 parking, is the decommissioned Long Mile Lookout fire tower with the bottom rungs of the ladder removed. Little view can be had through the trees to the south.

Westbound from the fire tower, the trail continues through pine and hardwood forests, crossing Forest Road 201/Club Lake Road and then another .5 miles skirting the north end of East Davis Lake. In 2021 the Chequamegon Chapter constructed a backpacking campsite with a fire ring and three tent pads. The campsite is about 50 yards from the shore of the East Davis Lake just northwest of the NCT at Mileage 139.7, 46.30285, -91.090017'. Westbound, it is about .2 mile is the County Highway D Trailhead.

Porcupine Wilderness Segment 4.3 miles

County Highway D Trailhead (parking for 5 vehicles) to Porcupine Lake Trailhead (parking for 2 vehicles) on Forest Road 213/Porcupine Lake Road.

This segment is dominated by a relatively flat forested wilderness walk with no blue blazes, going by West Davis Lake, a large beaver pond, and Porcupine Lake. There are a few rustic signs but in places you will have to take time to make sure you are on the slightly worn tread way.

Westbound from County Highway D, the trail enters the Porcupine Wilderness where painted blue blazes are prohibited. At first the trail skirts very shallow West Davis Lake. This lake is surrounded by bog and contains no fish due to winter kills caused by the thick ice. The trail is flat and skirts a rather large beaver pond. Between the beaver pond and Porcupine Lake, the trail is sometimes hard to distinguish, so hikers must pay attention and look carefully for the trail tread way. Near the western edge of this segment is Porcupine Lake, an excellent pan fish lake teeming with easy to catch sunfish, bluegills, and crappie in the winter. The Porcupine Wilderness is home to the Porcupine Lake wolf pack estimated in 2009 to consist of 6 wolves. The wolves are rarely seen but can be heard howling on some nights. Flowing north out of this lake is Porcupine Creek. The lower sections are sometimes stocked with Brook and Brown Trout which can be caught on worms in the deeper holes. Along the east edge of Porcupine Lake are two idyllic campsites overlooking the lake 80 yards and 200 yards south of the trail.

At trail mileage 135.6 is a wide, a well-used trail going south some 50 yards will take you to a well-used very nice campsite, 46.293057, -91.152628. A lesser used nearby campsite is south along the east edge of Porcupine Lake. When you get to the shore of Porcupine Lake a rather large hill immediately to the north offers a good campsite at the top with a high view of the lake through the trees.



Westbound from the lake, the trail crosses this well-built rustic bridge across Porcupine Creek, then immediately goes to an intersection. The North Country Trail continues to the left westbound, and a short but wide quarter mile spur trail turns right northbound and goes to the Porcupine Lake Trailhead parking with a space for 2, maybe 3 cars. 46.296280, -91.159040

Lake Owen Segment 7.3 miles

Porcupine Lake Trailhead (parking for 2 vehicle) on Forest Road 213/Porcupine Lake Road to Lake Owen Picnic Grounds Trailhead (fee parking for up to 11 vehicles)

This segment is dominated by views along the wooded shores of clear spring-fed Eighteen Mile Spring Pond and Lake Owen, the largest lake in the Chequamegon section of trail.

From the Porcupine Lake Trailhead, go south .25 miles on the spur to the North Country Trail just west of the Porcupine Creek rustic bridge, then follow the trail generally south and west climbing up to a high ridge surrounding Eighteen Mile Spring Pond, 1.3 miles from the trailhead.

The pond has always held native brook trout and was dredged out by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in the 1970's to improve the habitat for trout. One or two brook trout can sometimes be caught on worms in the spring months after the opener on the first Saturday in May each year.

From Eighteen Mile Spring Pond, the trail crosses over a small, planked log bridge over 18 Mile Creek and then goes northwest through an area of trees blown down by a severe storm in 2005. You will see many downed trees cut up alongside the trail and heavy beaver damage at the 18 Mile Creek crossing. At 3.1 miles, a half-mile spur trail heads off west to the Two Lakes Campground, which has hundreds of campsites, a dumpster, and water pumps. There is a fee to camp there.

Following the North Country Trail 400 yards north from the intersection you cross Forest Road 213/Porcupine Lake Road leaving the wilderness area. The trail continues through generally flat, well drained mixed hardwoods for 1.5 miles before crossing Forest Road 213/ North Lake Owen Drive. Within a hundred yards the trail passes to the west of a large unnamed pond, then crosses Horseshoe Road before descending to the shores of Lake Owen.

At Trail mileage 129.6, you can take a well-used trail to the south to a site locally known as Fireplace Point, a popular camping spot with a Tarzan rope to swing out over the water, 46.293543, -91.205779. Continuing westbound you quickly come to a bench offering a close view of the lake. From the bench the trail goes through one of the seven remaining areas of virgin forests in the entire state of Wisconsin.

From the logging era beginning in the 1880's to the great depression, the entire state of Wisconsin was clear cut save for 7 acres of virgin pine in seven small areas. From these several acres of virgin red pine, white pine and rarer hemlock, the trail turns northbound following the shores of Lake Owen.



Recent archeological diggings along Lake Owen have documented that this shore was the site of an Archaic Tradition Indian occupation as early as 2,000 B.C. and a Terminal Woodland Indian occupation up to 1500's B.C., and an Initial Woodland Indian large village occupied continuously between 120 A.D. to 610 A.D.

At mileage 129.2 is an abandoned road to the west. If you take those 228 yards southwest all the way down to Lake Owen, you will come to a resort like campsite because it used to be a resort before the owners lost their lease on the property. The buildings are gone but there is an abundant open area that would accommodate dozens of tents on a large sandy area and a grassy area, 46.295177, -91.214802, all more than 100 feet from the NCT and the water's edge making it a legal site for "dispersed camping". There is a paved concrete sidewalk down to the near the lake with steps to a sandy scenic beach in a small bay.



The trail continues along the shore of Lake Owen until Melland Pond. There a spur trail goes west 250 yards to the Lake Owen Picnic Grounds Trailhead with its ample fee parking, shelter with fireplace and water pump, 46.293840 -91.191694. Camping is not allowed in the picnic grounds. Going north from this intersection, the North Country Trail crosses Forest Road 213/North Lake Owen Drive with wider shoulders that will accommodate short term parking for road vehicles.

Drummond Ski Trail Segment 3.8 miles

Lake Owen Picnic Grounds Trailhead (fee parking for up to 11 vehicles) to Old 63 Trailhead on Forest Road 235/Old 63 (parking for 5 vehicles) which is 80 yards west of the current location of U.S. 63.

This segment is dominated by mature hardwoods and evergreens in gently rolling kettle moraine hills through a maze of ski trails and old logging roads.

From the Lake Owens Picnic Grounds Trailhead, take the 250-yard spur trail east to the North Country Trail, then turn left northbound and go .2 miles until it crosses Forest Road 213/ North Lake Owen Drive. From the road 250 yards up the hill, the trail meets up with the many looped Drummond Ski Trail system. This section was extensively marked in 2009 with carsonite posts to differentiate the North Country Trail from the Drummond Ski Trails. Follow the emblems on the carsonite posts and the blue blazes through this network of ski trail northbound for 3.4 miles until you cross U.S. 63, and then another 80 yards north to the Old 63 Trailhead.

Hikers will find several restaurants and the Bear Country general store on U.S. 63 just 1.1 miles southwest of the Old 63 Trailhead, the general store has basic camping supplies, groceries, canoe, kayak, and boat rentals as well. You can use the Drummond Connector Trail, a spur trail, to hike to Drummond from the North Country Trail (see below).

Drummond Area Section 6.1 miles

Old 63 (parking for 5 vehicles) which is 80 yards west of the current location of U.S. 63 to Forest Road 382/Reynard Lake Road Trailhead (parking for 3 cars) which is .7 miles west of highway 35/Delta Drummond Road

From the Old 63 parking area just 1.2 miles west of the North Country Trail is a town campground. A connector trail following an old railroad grade runs off the combined Drummond Woods and North Country Trails near WI-124. You can also take Old Hwy 63 west, then Superior St to the campground. 46.33692, -91.25975. This campground has flush toilets, coin operated showers, and reservable tent sites. Within 4 blocks of the campgrounds, you have a bank, library with internet and Wi-Fi, museum, town park, swimming beach, post office, tavern, restaurant, and a gas station with a convenience store named Bear Country. In the past, Bear Country offered fee shuttle service for hikers and backpackers. (715-739- 6645). Summertime hours are normally 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. <http://www.bearcountrysportinggoods.com/store.htm> You can get more information at: <https://www.drummondlakecampground.com/>

This segment is dominated by gently rolling low hills in deep woods skirting the shores of Overby Lake, Esox Lake, Mirror Lake, Bullhead Lake, Nelson Lake, and Stratton Ponds.

From the Old 63 Trailhead, the trail goes north 300 yards to the largest of the last seven remaining tracts of virgin forests in Wisconsin. Towering pines averaging three feet in diameter abound for acres, shading out the under story and leaving mostly pine needle covered bare ground underneath. This is the scene just as it existed for thousands of years before the logging era from the 1880's to the 1930's, a sight to behold. The trail continues north, crossing an abandoned railroad grade .8 miles north from the Old 63 Trailhead, then over some gentle hills before descending into the Long Lake Branch river valley 1.9 miles from the Trailhead. The Long Lake Branch River used to support a population of native brook trout until successive drought years stopped the water flowing out of Drummond Lake into the river. In 2007 and 2008 the river from dam 2 miles upstream to well downstream of the North Country Trail Bridge was bone dry. Since then, rains lifted the drought and replenished the stream waters. At trail mileage 122.8, 46.360463, -91.235681 is an often-used campsite at the southwest side of the river at this bridge. This is the lowest trail altitude in the Chequamegon segment of the North County Trail.

From the bridge over Long Lake Branch River, the trail turns northwest and goes .8 of a mile to Forest Road 397/Cisco Lake Road which has no engineered off-road parking.

The trail from this forest road enters a relatively flat area going first by ~~going by~~ Overby Lake which has excellent trout fishing from stocked fish.

Going westbound next comes Esox Lake. At the northeast shore of smaller Mirror Lake at trail mileage 120.8 (N46°22.399' W91°15.398') is a two-tent pad campsite with a rock lined fire pt. Continuing westbound Bullhead Lake is next.

At 4.5 miles from the Old 63 Trailhead, the trail crosses the paved road of Forest Road 35/Delta Drummond Road that has paved parking for 3 vehicles off the west shoulder of the road. Continuing west bound, the trail goes 1.5 miles through mixed forest with puncheons over several wet areas before coming to the Reynard Lake Road Trailhead-

Rainbow Lakes Wilderness 6.4 miles

Reynard Lake Road Trailhead (parking for 3 cars) which is .7 miles west of Highway 35/Delta Drummond Road to Forest Road 228 Trailhead (parking for 2 vehicles) which is on Forest Road 228/West Delta Road at the northwest corner of the Rainbow Lakes Wilderness.

This trail segment skirts five medium sized lakes in a remote, relatively flat forested wilderness. The Rainbow Lake Wilderness is best known for its picturesque lakes and its wolf pack which on some nights can be heard howling.

Going from the Reynard Lake Trailhead, the trail goes past the southwest corner of scenic Wishbone Lake at trail mileage 118.5, take the side trail to the north for a shore view at N46°23.384' W91°16.874', then runs along north the east shore of Reynard Lake which holds some panfish.



At trail mileage 117.9 at the north end of Reynard Lake, take a lesser trail to the south towards the lake a short distance to N46°23.770' W91°17.184 where you will see a well-used camping area with at least 5 tent pads, a well-

built rock fire pit and logs for seating.

Continuing northwest for 1.9 miles from the trailhead, the trail runs 200 feet west of Bufo Lake which has some bass fishing and a primitive campsite on the peninsula on the north end. At trail mileage 116.9 off a faint foot trail going east a few feet is a cleared tent pad. Go another 75 years or so downhill toward the lake for another camping option.

Two tenths of a mile further, the trail crosses the wide Anderson Grade, an old railroad bed traversing the wilderness from an east to west direction. If you want an excellent campsite with excellent bass fishing, go west on the trail 1 mile to Anderson Lake pictured below. The campsite is on the northwest shore where beavers have cleared many trees from the north shore.



If you turn eastbound on Anderson Grade and go 1.8 miles on Anderson Grade to the Delta Drummond Road, you come out within sight of Perch Lake and the Perch Lake Campgrounds across the road and to the left. There is a fee to camp here. In most years the Wisconsin DNR annually in the Spring stock thousands of easy to catch trout.

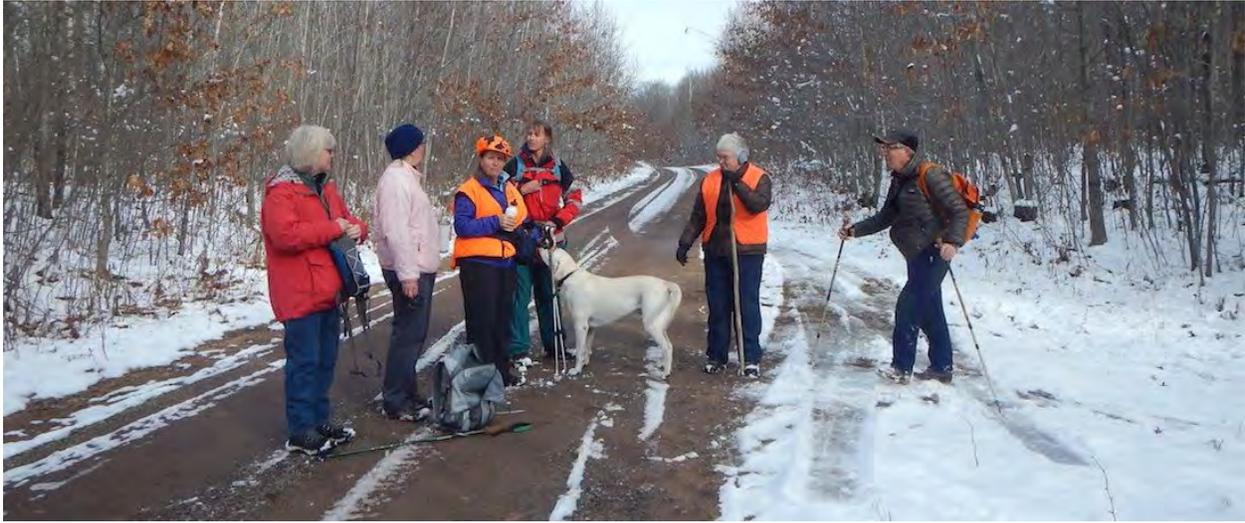
The North Country Trail continues generally northwest from the Anderson Grade going past Rainbow Lake 3.3 miles from the Reynard Lake Trailhead. At trail mileage 115.3 is a Rainbow Lake campsite 15 yards off the trail in the woods at $N46^{\circ}25.263'$ $W91^{\circ}18.811'$ which has three tent pads, crude campfire pit and good access to the lake water. The North Country Trail goes past Tower Lake 4.2 miles from the Trailhead at trail mileage 114.3. The Tower Lake campsite at $N46^{\circ}25.769'$ $W91^{\circ}18.888'$ has two tent pads and a crude fire pit. The weedy shoreline makes it hard to get water. The last 2.2 miles is through relatively mature forests.

Ruth Lake Segment 7.1 miles

Forest Road 228 Trailhead (parking for 2 vehicles) which is on Forest Road 228/West Delta Road at the northwest corner of the Rainbow Lakes Wilderness to County Highway A Trailhead (parking for 5 or 6 vehicles) on the east side of County Highway A 4.5 miles south of Iron River, Wisconsin.

This segment primarily follows old logging roads through flat to gently rolling forested hills with two moderately steep climbs. From the Forest Road 228 Trailhead, the trail first heads west for a mile before turning northwest and going past a small unnamed pond which is the only source of water visible from the trail in this segment. Of the three ponds, the pond furthest east is the most approachable. The shoreline on the north and east sides are the best. (Square Lake is not an easy source of water because of vegetation and steep banks.) After 2.6 miles, the trail crosses Forest

Road 412/ Canthook Lake Road, pictured below, which is a narrow two track road with no engineered parking but wide enough to park on the side of the road in places.



After another 2.3 miles the trail crosses a more used Forest Road 411/Musky Lake Road, but with no engineered parking spots, but wide enough to park on the side of the road in places. With a mile to go, the trail goes through several small clearings until leaving the National Forest and entering the Bayfield County Forest lands for the last .6 of a mile in this segment.