

## **Camping Possibilities Near the North Country NS Trail (Chief Noonday's section)**

**(Provided as a courtesy by Larry Hawkins, Chief Noonday Chapter)**



**There is no camping that is formally sponsored by the NCTA, but below are some options that are available.**

**I hope this helps you. I would suggest that you formalize camping plans before you start out as to costs, as we have no formal arrangements for camping with any of these camps.**

**See also the note at the bottom about possible alternatives to camping.**

**Good hiking!**

**Larry Hawkins**

## **KALAMAZOO COUNTY:**

Just as you enter Kalamazoo County from the east you will pass right by the entrance to the [Fort Custer Recreation Area](#), which is a State Park with camping. (See [map](#).) This is located right after you leave the section of Trail that goes through the Fort Custer Cemetery woodlands and head for Augusta.

## **BARRY COUNTY:**

1. Just south of the Yankee Springs section of the Trail, located not too far west of the Trail, is the [Circle Pines Center](#). Circle Pines can be reached by an easy walk down a woody gravel road. This is a camp and retreat center that sponsors a children's summer camp and a year round retreat and conference center with programs for families, children and adults. It has a small year round staff who are nice folks and would be happy to accommodate hiker campers. They have a tenting area, cabins, a bathhouse with hot showers and a swimming area on Stewart Lake. For security reasons the campground is not available to Trail users when summer camp is in session. The Chapter also built a campsite about a half-mile north of Circle Pines (MI Mile 1043.5). It has no water or bathroom facilities, but you might be able to utilize those at Circle Pines. This campsite is noted on NCTA maps.
2. Further north as you cross Gun Lake Road in the Yankee Springs Recreation Area, you come to several options, the first of which is [Deep Lake Unit campground](#), which is a primitive campsite for the Yankee Springs Recreation Area. It is east of Hall Lake, and you can follow the mountain bike trail to it -- if you don't get run over. Access the trail to the campground at [waypoint #D1 on our map mash-up](#), which shows the path up to the campground. — No "stealth" camping along trails is permitted in the YSRA.
3. Just north of the Deep Lake Unit is [Sharp Park Campground](#), which is a private campground run by Terry and Diana VanRhee. I believe they have full facilities such as hot showers and the like.
4. Also in the Yankee Springs Recreation Area you may camp at the [Gun Lake Unit campground](#) on Briggs Rd. To access the campground, from the NCNST crossing on Gun Lake Rd at Hall Lake ([waypoint #12 on our map mash-up](#)), follow Gun Lake Rd west till it morphs into Briggs Rd and watch for the campground signs. It's a 2.1 mile walk from the NCNST crossing at Hall Lake to the camping area.
5. Further along the Trail after you cross M-37 and hike into Irving, the NCNST joins the Paul Henry Trail, which is a paved bike trail to go north for a few miles. If you hike south a couple of miles, you come to [Whispering Waters Campground](#) located on the Thornapple River. This is a private full facility campground which caters mostly to trailers and campers, but I think they'd also find room for a tent.

6. Camping along trails in State Game Areas: During the summer months (between May 15 and September 10), it is illegal to camp in the Barry and Middleville State Game Areas. However, during hunting season, it is legal to camp in the game areas off the Trail. You must obtain a permit before doing any such camping, and the forms may be obtained at the [Barry State Game Area HQ](#) at 1805 South Yankee Springs Rd or the [Yankee Springs Recreation Area HQ](#), 2104 South Briggs Rd.

You may be taking your life in your hands, and I would wear hunter orange. There are no safe water sources; so you would have to draw from lakes or streams and use your filter, but that is doable.