



A CHAPTER OF THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL

Welcome to Northern Lower Michigan! Enjoy the North Country National Scenic Trail through beautiful Kalkaska, Grand Traverse, Wexford, and Manistee Counties.

For more club information visit:
<https://northcountrytrail.org/trail/michigan/gtr/>



Camping Outing, Guernsey Lake SFC, Photo by P. Warner



Summer Trail Work-Bee Day, Photo by P. Warner

About the North Country Trail(NCT)

The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) is protected through legislation that Congress passed in 1980. Since the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) was founded in 1981, there are over 4,600 miles of trail to protect & maintain, and it passes through 8 states from North Dakota to Vermont!

One of the best things about the NCT is that whether you're hiking a few miles, or planning a longer backpacking trip, the trail has so many different landscapes to offer. Learn more about the NCT & find trail updates at www.northcountrytrail.org

GTHC Membership

Join our club by becoming a member today! We'd love the camaraderie and to be your hiking partner. Membership is easy at www.northcountrytrail.org. Just select "Grand Traverse Hiking Club" when prompted to declare your allegiance.

We meet monthly at the Grand Traverse Conservation District's Boardman River Nature Center on Cass Rd in Traverse City, MI most of the year. We take a break during the summer as most of us are busy hiking during these beautiful months. Each month we highlight exciting things happening on the trail, share hiking stories, or bring in speakers to teach us something cool about nature. We're big advocates of the trail and celebrate National Trails Day with hikes and community picnics each summer.

Interested in learning more? Contact the club directly via email (gtr@northcountrytrail.org) or on Facebook for our current activities when you type in "GTHikers".



Spring wildflowers on the Trail, Photo by R. Penny

About the Club

Our chapter began with a tight knit group of volunteers in 1994. Through their hard work and enthusiasm, the club continued to grow. Today the club boasts over 150 members & diligently maintains 105 miles of trail!

Working from south to north, our trail begins at the Trail Access on Hodenpyl Dam Road, Southwest of Mesick and travels along the shores of lakes, rivers, and trout streams for much of its length. If you start at the Hodenpyl Dam Access trailhead and head north, you can hike 41 miles with scenic views of the Manistee River.

Along the way you can hike a short spur trail to visit the Trail Town of Fife Lake and complete the 20-mile Fife Lake Loop. From there head onto Sand Lakes Quiet Area and Guernsey Lake SFC before walking through downtown Kalkaska (a Trail Town). After town you'll see a variety of woods and small lakes. A quick walk through mature hardwood forest will bring you to the our Northern boundary at Starvation Lake Road.



Kalkaska Trail Town, Photo by P. Warner



Trail Towns

Fife Lake

Fife Lake is an authentic Northern Michigan village in the Lower Peninsula located a thirty-minute drive south of Traverse City. Be sure to check out the famous "Fife Lake Loop" for a perfect weekend hike in the area. Learn more at www.fifelakechamber.org

Kalkaska

Kalkaska is a quaint town in the heart of the Northern portion of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. A recent re-route brings the trail through the heart of downtown! Be sure to stop and visit "the big trout" on your hike. Learn more at: www.explorekalkaska.com



Summer mowing crew, Photo by R. Penny

Trails Connecting to the NCT

Boardman River Trail (BRT) :

This 24-mile trail will soon connect Traverse City to the NCT. Ultimately, trail users can connect on the NCT to the Vasa Pathway then onto the TART Trail to create a 46-mile loop. The BRT showcases lakes, rivers, boardwalks, bridges, scenic vistas, forest, and wildlife. For trail updates & maps visit www.traversetrails.org. Trail head parking: Brown Bridge Quiet Area, Brown Bridge Rd, Traverse City

Fife Lake Loop:

This 21-mile loop provides scenic views of the Manistee River and the forests it runs through. Hikers can enjoy the two state forest campgrounds (SFC) on the loop as well as the amenities in the Trail Town of Fife Lake. Trail head parking: M-186, US131 Manistee River Roadside Park, Spring Lake SFCG, Old US131 SFCG

Vasa Pathway:

Located on state forest land, the Vasa Pathway features a series of loops (3km to 25km) that offer users a variety of challenges from easy to difficult. While it doesn't currently connect to the NCT, there are hopes of connecting these two trail systems. Trail updates & maps found at traversetrails.org. Trail head parking: 4450 Bartlett Rd, Williamsburg, MI.

Hike 100 Challenges

Need an excuse to get out on the trail? Sign up for the Hike 100 Challenges! Yes, you read right, there are multiple hiking challenges!

Each year the NCTA issues a call to hikers to complete this challenge for a special patch and certificate of completion. It's straightforward really. Hike 100 miles on the trail (unique miles or the same mile over and over) then submit your name to the NCTA register once you've completed the miles for bragging rights and an NCTA patch to put on your hiking pack.

Our club has taken this one step further by issuing the challenge to hike all of our club's 100 miles! You can hike your own hike (North to South, South to North, or skip around), just be sure to keep track and submit your log to our club email to record your accomplishment. Once completed you'll get a car decal & your name on the club plaque that's displayed at the Boardman River Nature Center.

Find more information & GTHC Hike 100 log sheet at <https://bit.ly/2JVBNbM>



Even turtles love the NCT!, Photo by R. Penny

For everyone's enjoyment & to preserve the trails, thank you for following basic trail ethics:

- Pack out what you pack in & dispose of waste properly. Take only photos, leave only footprints.
- Only camp in authorized areas & minimize campfire impacts.
- Respect wildlife & wear hunters orange during local hunting seasons (michigan.gov/dnr).
- Not all parking areas are accessible during winter due to snow, plan accordingly for safe trail access.
- Stay on the trail, includes walking through mud & water to limit excessive erosion.

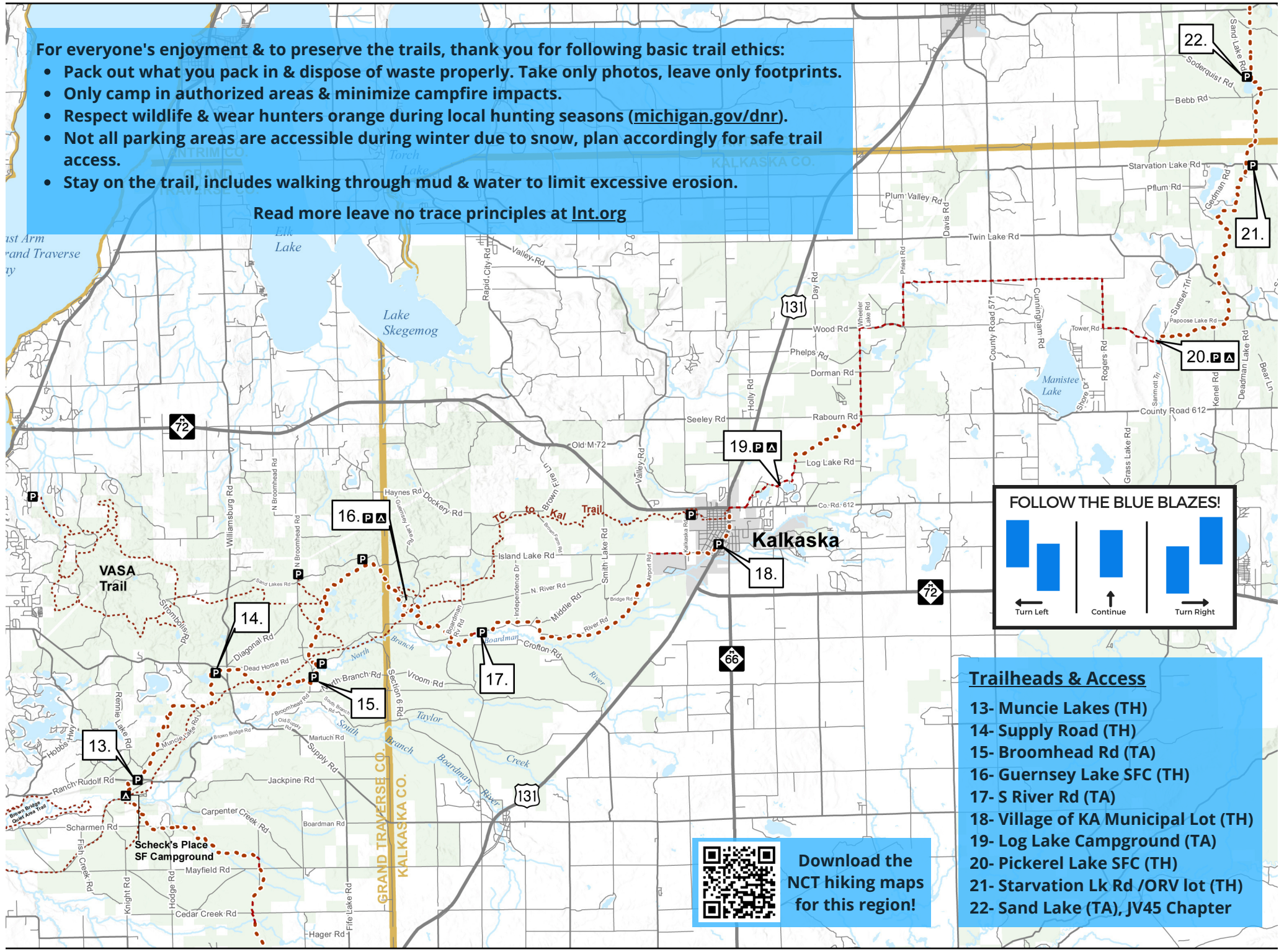
Read more leave no trace principles at Int.org

FOLLOW THE BLUE BLAZES!

Turn Left Continue Turn Right

- Trailheads & Access**
- 13- Muncie Lakes (TH)
 - 14- Supply Road (TH)
 - 15- Broomhead Rd (TA)
 - 16- Guernsey Lake SFC (TH)
 - 17- S River Rd (TA)
 - 18- Village of KA Municipal Lot (TH)
 - 19- Log Lake Campground (TA)
 - 20- Pickerel Lake SFC (TH)
 - 21- Starvation Lk Rd /ORV lot (TH)
 - 22- Sand Lake (TA), JV45 Chapter

Download the NCT hiking maps for this region!





Hike 100 Challenge

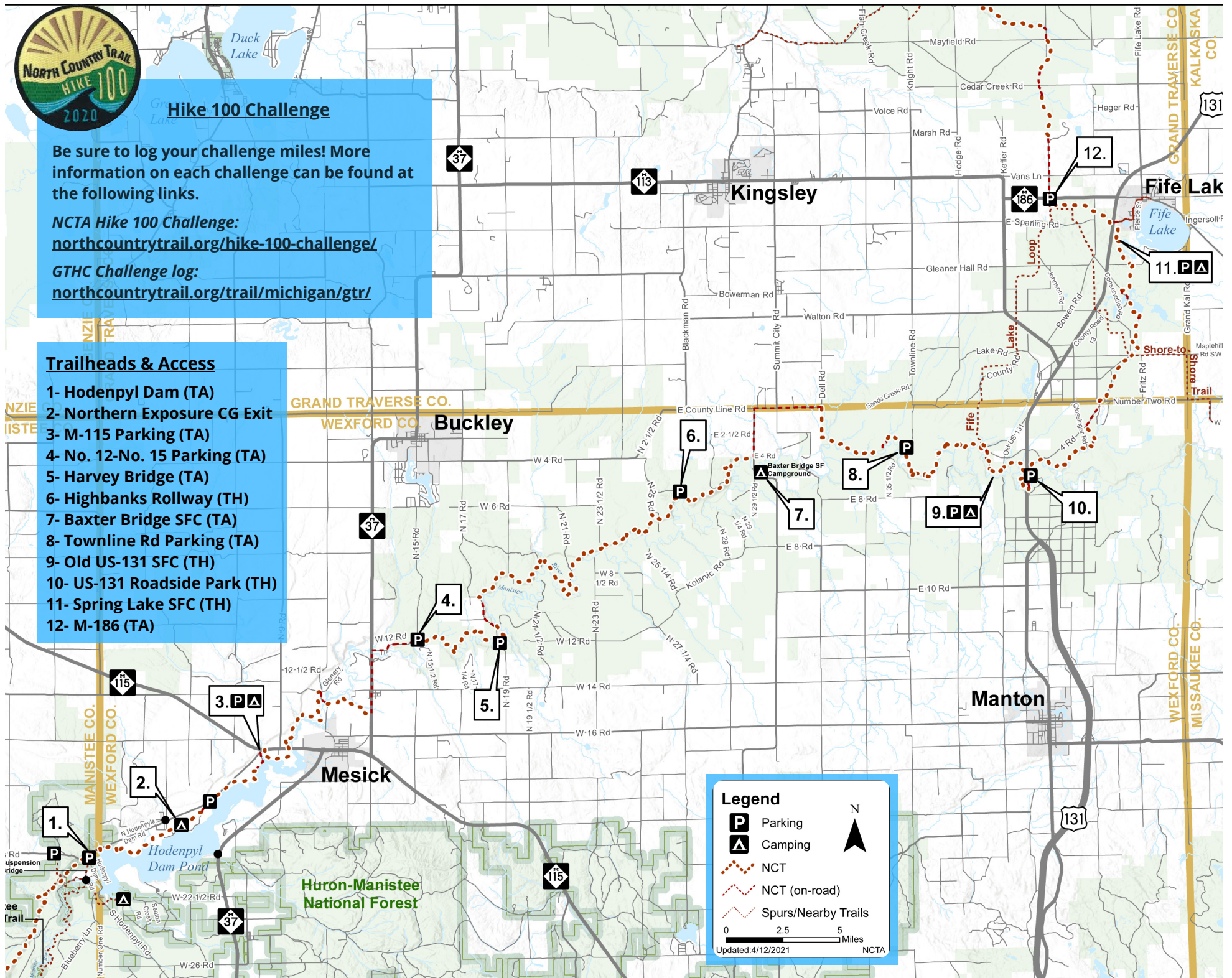
Be sure to log your challenge miles! More information on each challenge can be found at the following links.

NCTA Hike 100 Challenge:
northcountrytrail.org/hike-100-challenge/

GTHC Challenge log:
northcountrytrail.org/trail/michigan/gtr/

Trailheads & Access

- 1- Hodenpyl Dam (TA)
- 2- Northern Exposure CG Exit
- 3- M-115 Parking (TA)
- 4- No. 12-No. 15 Parking (TA)
- 5- Harvey Bridge (TA)
- 6- Highbanks Rollway (TH)
- 7- Baxter Bridge SFC (TA)
- 8- Townline Rd Parking (TA)
- 9- Old US-131 SFC (TH)
- 10- US-131 Roadside Park (TH)
- 11- Spring Lake SFC (TH)
- 12- M-186 (TA)



Legend

- P** Parking
- A** Camping
- ⋯ NCT
- - - NCT (on-road)
- ⋯ Spurs/Nearby Trails



0 2.5 5 Miles
 Updated: 4/12/2021 NCTA