

Suggested Hikes:

Powers Vista area:

Hike from Powers Vista East parking lot to Powers Bluff.

Distance: 4 miles

Milepoints on NCT on-line map: MI-11.5 to MI-7.5

Type: One Way

Convenient Parking at Both Ends: Yes

This hike mostly follows old bicycle paths. Traversing the Gogebic County Forest, it offers expansive views of Lake Superior towards the western end, and from the Powers Bluff parking lot near MI-7.5. There are no steep climbs. Raspberries and thimbleberries are abundant in late July - early August.

Black River Harbor Area:

Hike from Black River Harbor parking lot east to Rainbow Falls.

Distance: 1 mile each way (2 total)

Milepoints on NCT on-line map: MI-36.5 to MI-37.5

Type: Out and Back

Convenient Parking at Both Ends: N/A

This hike starts at the Black River Harbor parking lot. Head across the pedestrian suspension bridge, noting its original construction by CCC, and take the indicated stairs up the hill. (If you don't take the steps, you'll continue on level ground to a sandy beach on Lake Superior.) These steps are rather steep; at the top is a trail box where hikers can leave their names and thoughts. The trail continues to the south, offering an overlook of the Black River Valley at the foot of the rather steep slope.

Note the unusually large and old hemlock trees. There is a sign indicating the view of Rainbow Falls.

At this point, the terminus of this hike, the trail veers to the East, and goes to Hwy 519 about five miles away.

A National Forest parking permit (or equivalent, such as Federal Lands Pass) is required to park at Black River Harbor (except Thursdays.).

Hike from Black River Harbor parking lot south to Potawatomi Falls:

Distance: 3 miles

Milepoints on NCT on-line map: MI-36.5 to MI-33.5

Type: One Way

Convenient Parking at Both Ends: Yes

This hike starts at the Black River Harbor parking lot. Look for the NCT marker south of the parking lot and east of Black River Road. The trail goes up rather steeply to a bluff over the Black River. The trail continues to Rainbow Falls, then veers west across Black River Road and behind some dwellings on that road. Continue south, behind the houses, and watch for the tangle of trails. The NCT eventually veers to the left, back across the Black River Road. Sandstone Falls is a short side-hike away. The NCT continues south overlooking the Black River to Potawatomi Falls.

A National Forest parking permit (or equivalent, such as Federal Lands Pass) is required to park at Black River Harbor (except Thursdays.).

There are parking lots at or near Great Conglomerate Falls, Potawatomi-Gorge Falls and Sandstone Falls. Thus one can make a variety of shorter out-and-back or one-way hikes on the trail along the west side of the river.

Porcupine Mountains - Presque Isle Unit:

Waterfall Loop:

Distance: 2.7 miles

Milepoints on NCT on-line map: Parking lot is at MI-48.5

Type: Loop

Convenient Parking at Both Ends: Yes

This hike takes a loop up and down the lower part of the Presque Isle River and offers views of three waterfalls, Nawadaha, Manido and Manabezho. Going clockwise, take the path from the east end of the parking lot, down the stairs to the pedestrian bridge. Hikers will need to take a slight ford across a branch of the Presque Isle River. Look for the trail going up the east bank. Rather than follow the NCT to the east, take the East River Trail to the south. After about 1.2 miles, hikers will encounter South Boundary Road. Take the bridge across the river, and turn right and down the slope to return to the parking lot via the West River Trail on the west side of the river.

The loop includes some stairs. You will be circling the lower mile or so of the Presque Isle River. At the actual mouth of the river, under the suspension bridge, you'll find the "potholes", circular excavations carved in the shale. This area was never logged and the result is large hemlocks and maples. The sandy Lake Superior beach is nearby.

Notes: The eastern part of the loop is not part of the NCT.

One can, of course, take the loop in the other direction, counterclockwise, going south along the West River Trail, across the South Boundary Road Bridge, and north along the East River Trail.

Nawadaha Falls is in the wrong place on the NCT on-line map.

A Michigan Passport or equivalent state park pass is required for the parking lot. These can be purchased at the gatehouse going into the park, at the north end of Gogebic Cty Hwy 519.

Porcupine Mountains - Lake of the Clouds:

Escarpment Trail::

Distance: 4 miles

Milepoints on NCT on-line map: MI-64 to MI-68

Type: One Way

Convenient Parking at Both Ends: Yes

The Escarpment Trail is part of the NCT. This hike starts at Lake of the Clouds, one of the premier features in the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. Going east from the viewing platform, much of the trail is on high rocky bluffs overlooking the Lake. One can see tremendous vistas to the east and west. This is a very hilly trail; overall one is going downhill but be prepared for much climbing.

The east end of the Escarpment Trail terminates at a small parking lot on Hwy 107. The NCT continues to the south following the Government Peak Trail.

A Michigan Passport or equivalent state park pass is required for the parking lots. These can be purchased at the gatehouse going into Lake of the Clouds, or at the Visitor's Center.