

Last updated March 2024

Peter Wolfe Chapter hikes And mile by mile Trail Guide: Plains Road at Tibbets Falls Trailhead to US41 at Canyon Falls Trailhead PWC Segments 47-58

[NCTA map of PWC Segments 47-58](#)

[Avenza](#) map # 27 to #29

The Peter Wolfe Chapter has SEGMENTS that were determined years before we had this website. The segments are mostly from one road or spur access to the NCT to the next for easy maintenance access.

We try to have a volunteer adopter for each of these 67 segments across 121 miles of trail.

Segment 47 Tibbets Falls Parking area to minor 2-track NE of Plains Road

Length: 0.82 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 27

Ownership: State of Michigan, DNR

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Signs at both ends of segment. Some Boardwalk.

General description of segment: **Note: The East bound actually goes NW, and West bound goes SE on this segment!** This area was logged in 2017. Trail is rolling and passes several pretty wetland areas. If eastbound, the trail goes north a hundred feet or so on from the Tibbets Falls parking area on Plains Road before heading into the woods on the east side of Plains Road. Watch for blue blazes. The north (ie East) end of segment 47 is at an informal parking area by a wetland on the east side of the road. Westbound, the trail heads southeast into the woods a hundred feet or so south of the parking area, at a sign. The trail briefly follows the Plains Road ditch midway through the segment, to avoid a wet area in the woods watch for blue ribbons on the roadside brush and a board across the ditch to walk on.

Trail conditions This segment is mowed each season. Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Supply Store nearby! If you plan to walk to Watton: A 3 mile walk south on the Plains Road gets to the intersection with M28. Turn East to go one mile to the [Hardwood Steakhouse & Bar](#), for a delicious meal.

Or turn West to go one mile to the [Watton Country Store](#) ph 906-355-2653.

The [Post Office](#) is just across the road.

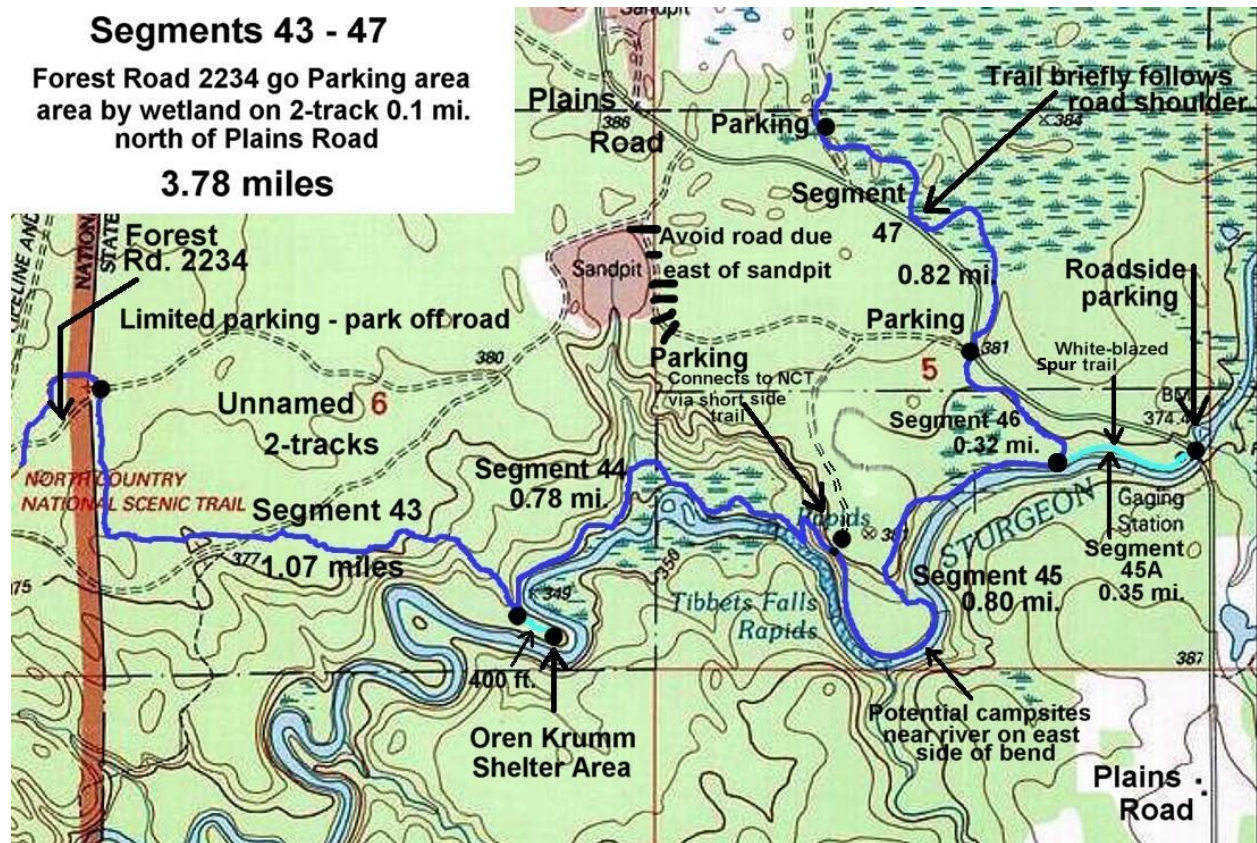
See those options [on this map](#).

Parking: West end: Good parking on west side of Plain Road at the Tibbets Falls parking area. East end: informal parking along sandy 2 track NE of Plains road, do not block the 2 track even if it looks like no one uses it.

Winter: No roads in this area are plowed in winter except Plains Road, The Tibbetts Falls trailhead usually has plowed parking for a couple cars; do not block the westbound two track from that parking area summer or winter.

Segments 43 - 47

Forest Road 2234 go Parking area
area by wetland on 2-track 0.1 mi.
north of Plains Road
3.78 miles



Segment 48

**From parking along minor 2-track north of
Plains Road to Big Lake Campground Road**

Length: 0.7 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#) from Tibbets Falls parking area, and [Avenza](#) map # 27

Ownership: State of Michigan, DNR

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Signs at both ends of segment.

General description of segment: Trail is rolling and passes several interesting wetland areas. The trail heads northeast into the woods a short distance north of the parking area, at a sign.

Trail conditions This segment is mowed each season. Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: West end: You can park along the sandy 2 track NE of Plains road; do not block the 2 track even if it looks like no one uses it.

East end: Careful sandy parking just off the Big Lake campground road.

Water: No water other than seasonal wetlands

Winter: In winter, the Plains Road is plowed, and the Big Lake Campground Road is also usually plowed.



Segment 49

Big Lake Campground Road (crossing) to beginning of road walk on Big Lake Campground Road (eastbound)

Length: 1.5 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 27

Driving on road between the East and West ends of Segment 49 [here](#).

Ownership: State of Michigan, DNR

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Signs at each end of segment.

General description of segment: **Note: This trail actually goes NW-SE in it's western half to avoid wetlands and view what was once a beautiful forest.** Trail is flat to rolling and passes several wetland areas.

Trail conditions: This segment is mowed each season. Segment 49 was clear-cut logged in 2014. Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: West end: Good informal parking area on south side of BL-CG road, at southwest end of segment (south side of road). East end: No good parking location at northeast end of segment. If parking nearby, do not block sandy roads leading to private property. Careful of soft sand!

Water: No water other than seasonal wetlands

Winter: The Plains Road is plowed and Big Lake Campground road is also usually plowed.

Segment 50

Big Lake Campground Road Road walk

Length: 0.62 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 28

Ownership: Public road, not likely to encounter traffic.

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Signs at each end of segment, blazing on trees along side road.

General description of segment: All on public road due to private lands, trail follows the gravel Big Lake Campground Road, which has very little traffic. Blazes are infrequent on this section since it is a road walk. Use the map, and watch carefully for NCT signs, where the NCT leaves the north side of road at each end.

Trail conditions: It's a gravel road; so road can be dusty in dry weather. Watch for infrequent drivers who may drive fast around sharp curves thinking they are the only ones on the road!

Parking: West end: there is No good parking location at southwest end of segment. If parking nearby, do not block gates or sandy roads leading to private property.

East end: Possible day parking near northeast end of segment where road shoulder is wide or a

couple hundred feet south of there on the west side of the road in a pull off. Caution parking - Park well off road and watch for soft sand. Suggest parking near campground, but do not block any campsites or entrance to CG. If you park inside the campground, then a Michigan Recreation Passport is needed, [click here](#).

Water: no water on this road walk

Winter: The Plains Road is plowed and Big Lake Campground road is also usually plowed. Do not block snowplow turnaround at Campground entrance.



Segment 51

Big Lake Campground Road to Big Lake Campground Entrance

see map above

Length: 0.67 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 28

Ownership: State of Michigan, DNR

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Several signs. Entrance to Big Lake Campground.

General description of segment: **Note: The East bound actually goes NW, and West bound goes SE on this segment!** Rolling terrain segment. Much of this segment was logged in 2017.

Trail conditions: This segment is mowed each season. Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: West End: Possible parking near west end of segment where road shoulder is wide or a few hundred feet south of there on the west side of the road in a pull-off. Park well off road and watch for soft sand.

East end: Good parking at east end of segment. Do not block campground entrance or any campsites. If you park inside campground, a Michigan Recreation Passport is needed, [click here](#).

Water: Big Lake water, and there is a seasonal hand-pump well inside campground with potable water.

Winter: Big Lake Campground Road is usually plowed in winter; you can call [Baraga County Road Commission](#) to verify. Do not block plow turnaround spot at park entrance. Campground is seasonal and is not plowed.

Camping: [The Big Lake State Forest Campground](#) has 15 camp sites, [pay at pipe](#), and seasonal hand pump water, vault toilets, picnic tables, boat launch, and swim spot. The large campsite to the south from the campground entrance provides the most privacy, but has no lake view and you need to walk a ways to water, the vault toilets, and the swimming beach. The campground itself was logged in 2017, cutting down many of the big shade trees in the campground. A Michigan Recreation Passport is needed to use this State campground, [click here](#).

Segment 52

Big Lake Campground Entrance to 2-track north of Big Lake

Length: 1.3 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 28

Ownership: State of Michigan, DNR

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Several boardwalks and signs.

General description of segment: **Note: on much of this section, the East bound goes NW, the West bound goes SE.** Pleasant section, with interesting wetlands. This area was clearcut logged in 2017. Passes thru [Waterfowl Management Area](#), major wildlife open fields (just north of trail in central section of segment). Walk over to field openings for great views and possible sounds and sightings of Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl. NOTE: Avoid that field during goose hunting seasons! Keep dogs on leash near this Waterfowl Management Area.

Trail conditions This segment is mowed each season. Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

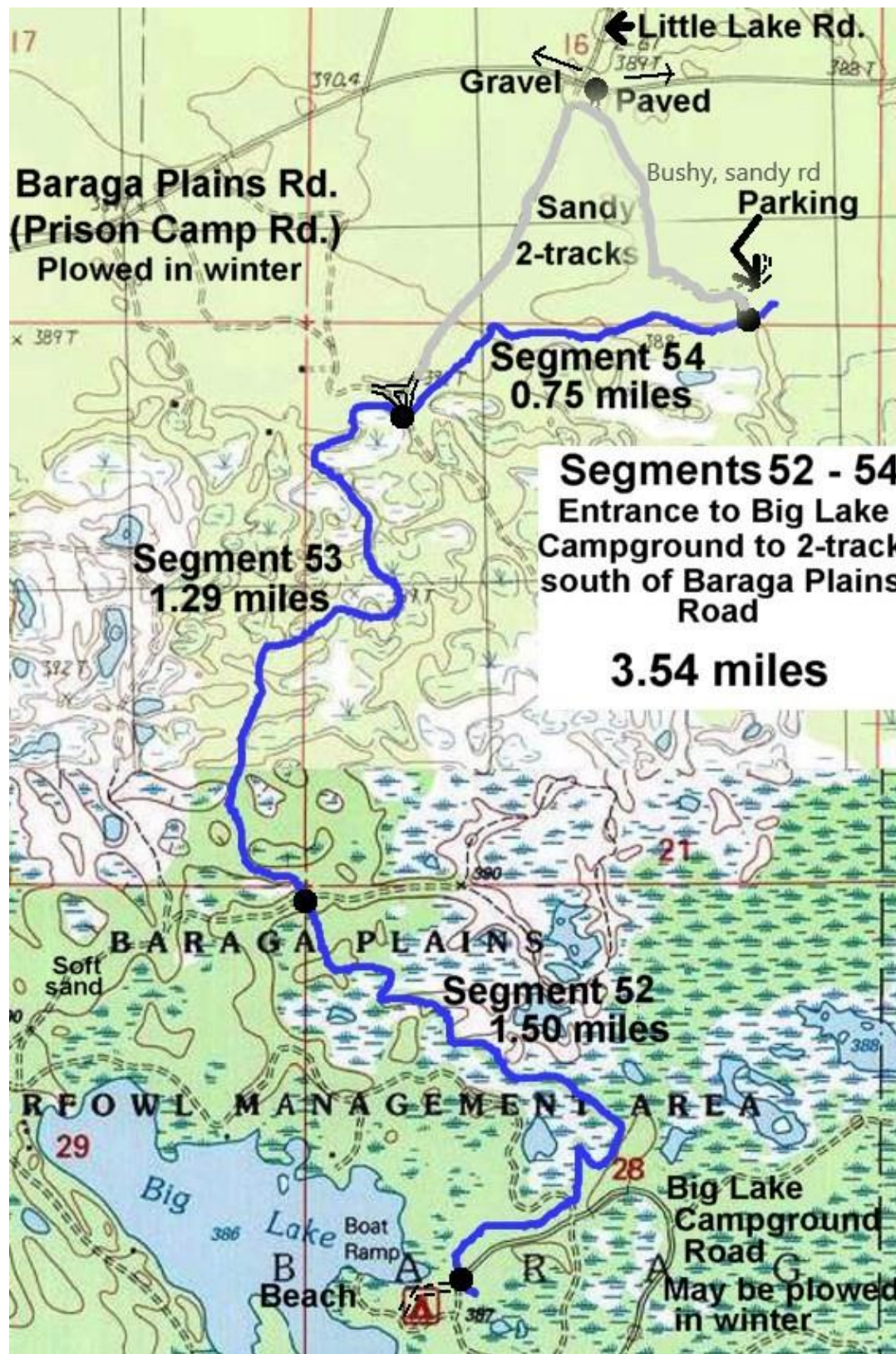
Parking: West End: Good parking near Big Lake Campground entrance. Do not block campground entrance or any campsites.

Ease End: No good parking spot at the east (north) end of this segment. (Access to that 2-track requires driving on roads with soft sand, not advisable with street vehicle.)

Winter: Big Lake Campground Road is usually plowed, you can verify with [Baraga County Road Commission](#). Be careful not to block the snow plow's turnaround spot at the Campground entrance. Big Lake Campground is not plowed. The 2-track at the north end of the segment is not plowed in winter.

Water: Big Lake water; or there is a seasonal hand-pump well with potable water inside campground.

Camping: [The Big Lake State Forest Campground](#) has 15 camp sites, [pay at pipe](#), and seasonal hand pump water, vault toilets, picnic tables, boat launch, and swim spot. The large campsite to the south from the campground entrance provides the most privacy, but has no lake view and you need to walk a ways to water, the vault toilets, and the swimming beach. The campground itself was logged in 2017, cutting down many of the big shade trees in the campground. A Michigan Recreation Passport is needed to use this State campground, [click here](#).



Segment 53

2-track north of Big Lake to Major 2-track junction south of Baraga Plains Road

Length: 1.4 miles, on NCT map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 28. Driving not advised on sandy ATV roads

Ownership: State of Michigan, DNR

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Several boardwalks and signs. Several sections of the trail (those on 2-tracks) follow the former L'Anse - Lac Vieux Desert Native American Trail, which connected Lake Superior at Keweenaw Bay, with the headwaters of the Wisconsin River.

See map above for Segments 52-53-54

General description of segment: **Note: in parts of this section, the East bound goes NW, the West bound goes SE.** Mostly a pleasant section, with interesting wetlands. Logging was done in parts of this segment in about 2016.

Trail conditions This segment is usually mowed once a season by PWC volunteers. Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: West end: There is no good parking spot at the south (west) end of this segment.

East end: There is a 0.7 mile ATV 2 track on the east end from the Baraga Plains road to the NCT which is sandy and not maintained, perhaps not suitable for a street vehicle; careful not to get stuck in the sand.

Winter: Would have to park on the side of plowed Baraga Plains Road and walk in about half mile to trail to access east (north) end of this segment.

Water: No water source on this segment

Segment 54

Major 2-track junction south of Baraga Plains Road to 2-track southeast of south end of Little Lake Road

Length: 0.8 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 28

Ownership: State of Michigan, DNR

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Signs at both ends of this segment.

See map above for Segments 52-53-54

General description of segment 54: Mostly a pleasant section. Generally follows close to the boundary between a jack pine forest to the north and about 2016 clearcut to the south.

Trail conditions Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: For both East and West ends of Segment 54: Park near the Baraga Plains road across from the northbound Little Lake road. Driving to the segment ends would require driving on unmaintained sandy ATV 2 tract roads; and perhaps not suitable for a street vehicle; careful not to get stuck in the sand. Walk the 2/3 mile to the west end, or the half mile to the east end of Seg 54 from Baraga Plains road to the NCT with a compass or Avenza app to find the NCT is the easiest option.

Winter: Baraga Plains Road (aka Prison Camp Road, to some locals) is plowed in winter, but the ATV 2-tracks used to access the NCT are not. Careful parking on the side of the Baraga Plains Road in winter so you do not block traffic on the road.

Water: No source of water on this segment

Segment 55

From 2-track southeast of south end of Little Lake Road to 2-track 1/4 mile south of Baraga Plains Road

Length: 2.75 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 28

Ownership: State of Michigan, Michigan Technological University

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Sign at each end of segment. Foot Bridge over seasonal wet spot in area shown as "Scenic Area" on map.

General description of segment: Mostly a pleasant section. Young pine stands, older forest, wetlands. Possible informal campsites in the "Scenic Area." One such area is a hundred feet or so east of the bridge. LNT!

Trail conditions Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: West end: Suggest park along Baraga Plains Road across from the northbound Little Lake road, because you can get stuck on the sandy ATV 2 track; best to walk in the half mile from the Baraga Plains road, use a compass or the Avenza app to find the trail!

East end: park on the edge of the Baraga Plains Road near the locked private gate with a blue stripe on it [on this map](#). DO NOT block the gate. Walk a quarter mile due south from the gate to

the NCT. This is the same access folks park at to hike East to Canyon Falls, often on snowshoes.

Winter: Baraga Plains Road (a.k.a. Prison Camp Road, to some locals) is plowed in winter, but the ATV 2-tracks used to access each end of this segment are not. Careful parking on the side of the Baraga Plains Road in winter so you do not block traffic on the road.

If snowshoeing between Baraga Plains road and US41 to view Canyon Falls, suggest you leave cars on Baraga Plains Road [on this map](#), rather than on US41 when the MDOT Canyon Falls MDOT parking area is locked up in winter and minimal plowed parking in front of the locked gate. (If parking on shoulder of US41, you may get a ticket.)

Water: No source of water on this segment.



Segment 56 2-track 1/4 mile south of Baraga Plains Road to Plumbago Creek Bridge

Length: 2.35 miles, on NCT map [here](#), Driving includes hike to trail, and [Avenza](#) map # 28

Ownership: private landowner

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: Signs at east end of segment and elsewhere. Plumbago Creek foot bridge is 1.2 miles from the Baraga Plains road, includes benches and Registration Box on Bridge.

General description of segment: Very pleasant and highly varied section. Mixed conifer/aspen/hardwood forest in western portion, with mainly hardwood forest east of Plumbago Creek bridge. 156-foot bridge crosses Plumbago creek and beaver pond, with benches on the bridge, a great place for taking a break and watching birds. Bridge decking was replaced in 2023.

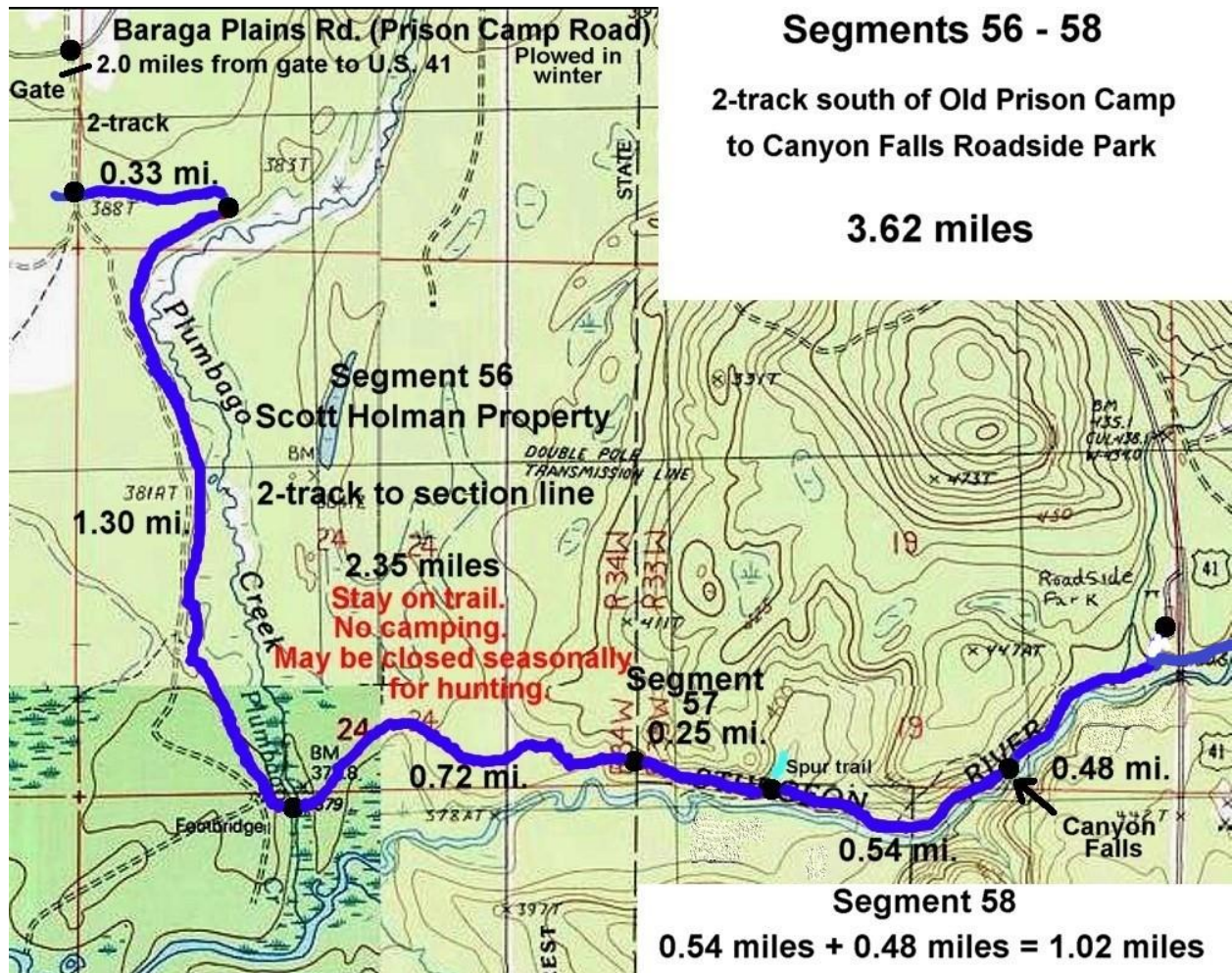
Trail conditions Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: No parking area along segment, need to park and hike to trail. West end: park on the edge of the Baraga Plains road, or near the private locked gate with a blue blaze on it [on this map](#). DO NOT block the private gate; it is important all owners have 24/7 access to their property so do not block gates. It is a half mile walk from the gate to the NCT. This is the same access folks park at to hike East to Canyon Falls, often on snowshoes. The east end of the segment must be accessed from Segment 57, the Canyon Falls Trail.

Winter: Baraga Plains Road is plowed in winter, but parking on it in winter may be difficult as there are usually no plowed-out places.

If snow shoeing between Baraga Plains road and US41 to view Canyon Falls, suggest you leave cars here on Baraga Plains Road [on this map](#), rather than on US41 when the MDOT Canyon Falls parking area is locked up in the winter and minimal plowed parking in front of the locked gate. (If parking on shoulder of US41, you may get a ticket.)

NOTE: This section is on private land. No camping is allowed, and please stay on the trail. The section may be closed during firearm deer season in the last half of November. Bridge and trail the result of a very successful cooperative venture between landowner Scott Holman and the Peter Wolfe Chapter.



Segment 57

**East line R34W/West line 33W to Spur Trail
 to Michigan Tech owned logging roads**

Length: 0.25 miles, on NCT map [here](#), no driving access to seg 57, and [Avenza](#) map # 29

Ownership: Michigan Technological University

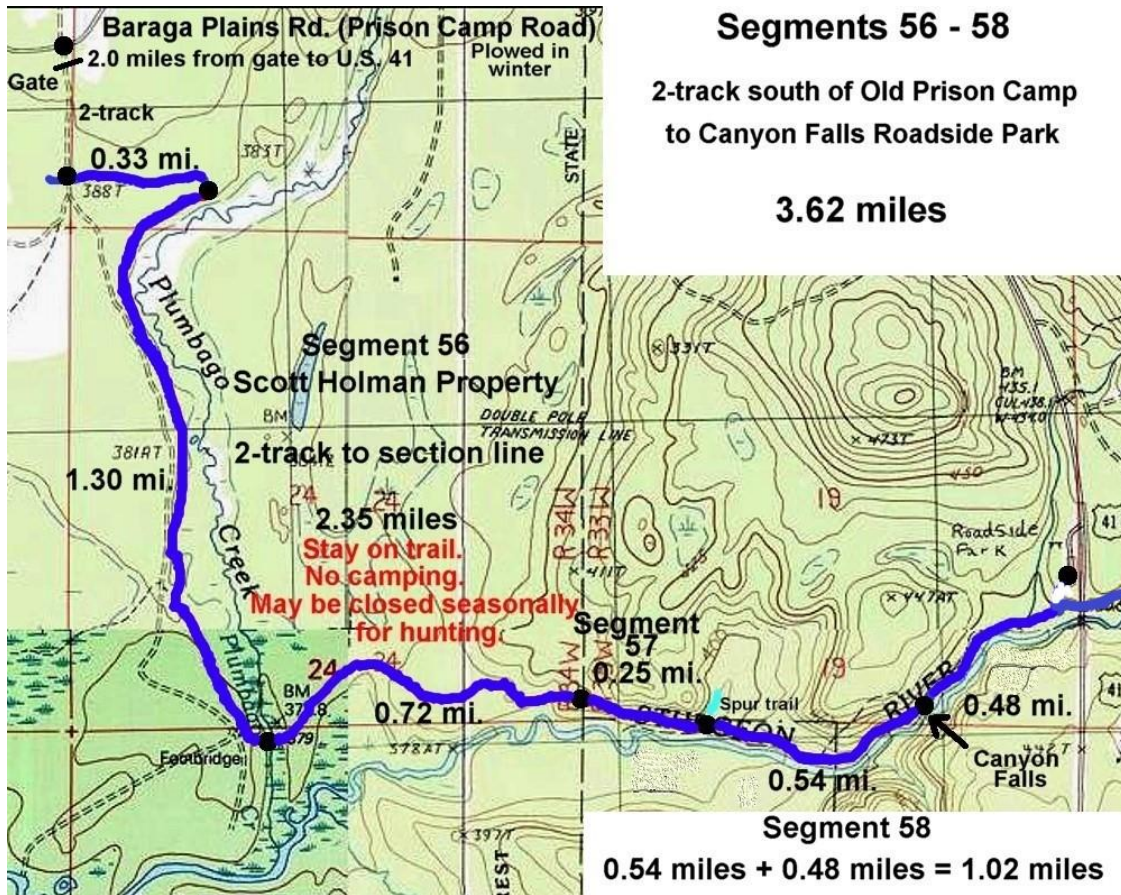
Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter

Developments along trail: Sign at west end of segment. Trail crosses wide powerline at west end of this segment. Possible future bridge over intermittent stream just west of spur trail.

General description of segment: Pleasant section, with some views of the river. Trail descends hillside to east through beautiful mixed hardwood/conifer forest.

Trail conditions: Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: There is no road access to this segment. The west end of the segment is accessed only from hiking Segment 56. The east end of the segment is accessed from hiking Segment 58.



Segment 58

Spur Trail to Michigan Tech logging roads to Canyon Falls Roadside Park

Length: 1 mile, on NCT map [here](#), Driving map [here](#), and [Avenza](#) map # 29

Ownership: Michigan Technological University

Responsible for maintenance: Peter Wolfe Chapter Volunteers

Developments along trail: The west end of the segment may be accessed from Segments 56- 57. Stone wall with wooden barriers along the view of the falls. Do not step beyond that barrier. New 48 inch wide boardwalk sections between the parking lot and the water falls were installed in 2021. Near the east end of the segment is a narrow foot bridge over Bocco Creek and a rough and rocky 500 foot spur trail that leads to the MDOT trailhead parking off US41. Roadside MDOT park at east end of spur has waterless seasonal toilets. It also has a water spicket on east side of a small block building. **MDOT does not allow overnight parking in this lot.**

General description of segment: This segment follows the river and is spectacular, with views of waterfalls and a slate rock gorge. Some call this area the Grand Canyon of the U.P.! Certainly a must see for the U.P.!

Trail conditions: The NCT below the falls follows the top of a deep rock gorge, with frequent views into that gorge. Below the lower most falls, the "swimming hole falls*," there *was* a large rock cairn, but this tall rock cairn was destroyed by someone the spring of 2015. This is a sad loss, as it was thought by some to have been an ancient Native built cairn. Below that point, the gorge ends, and the trail is level and not far above river level to the west end of the segment.

*The Peter Wolfe Chapter recommends that you do not jump into the river!! With fluctuating water depths depending on rain, Serious head injuries can happen from underwater rocks that are not apparent from a jumper's vantage point, and there are very difficult vertical rock cliffs to climb to get out of the water.

On the east end of this segment, at the directional NCT sign, there is a 500 foot rough rocky spur trail from the NCT up a hill to Canyon Falls MDOT Roadside Park. This spur trail crosses snowmobile trail #8 so use extreme caution before crossing that in winter.

Note: A nice almost 4 mile one way summer or winter hike starts on the Baraga Plains Road and joins up with the NCT at the west end of Segment 56, then goes to the river and ends at US 41. View of the river and its falls are most impressive when looking upstream on this hike. Drive [on this map](#) from Canyon Falls trailhead and park near the locked gate. The locked gate has blue stripe painted on it. Do not block this private owned gated road. Walk on the 2 track private road a quarter mile to where it intersects the NCT then continue eastbound to Canyon Falls and on to the US41 trailhead.

Maintained and blazed annually by PWC volunteers; please [let us know](#) if you encounter any problems in this area.

Parking: West end: There is no parking on the west end of this segment; you have to walk in from the west on segments 56-57.

East end: there is good summer time DAY LIGHT parking at the MDOT Canyon Falls parking. No overnight parking is allowed in this seasonal MDOT parking lot. You could contact the Alberta Ford Center, a Michigan Tech remote campus just one mile north of the MDOT parking at Canyon Falls [on this map](#) to ask about possible overnight parking on their campus. 906-487-3673 fordcenter@mtu.edu If you then do park overnight there, leave a note in your car with your contact info and when you expect to return to your car.

Info about the Alberta Ford Center that has dorms, cabins, cafeteria, showers etc:

<http://www.mtu.edu/forest/fordcenter/>

Here is Alberta lodging info:

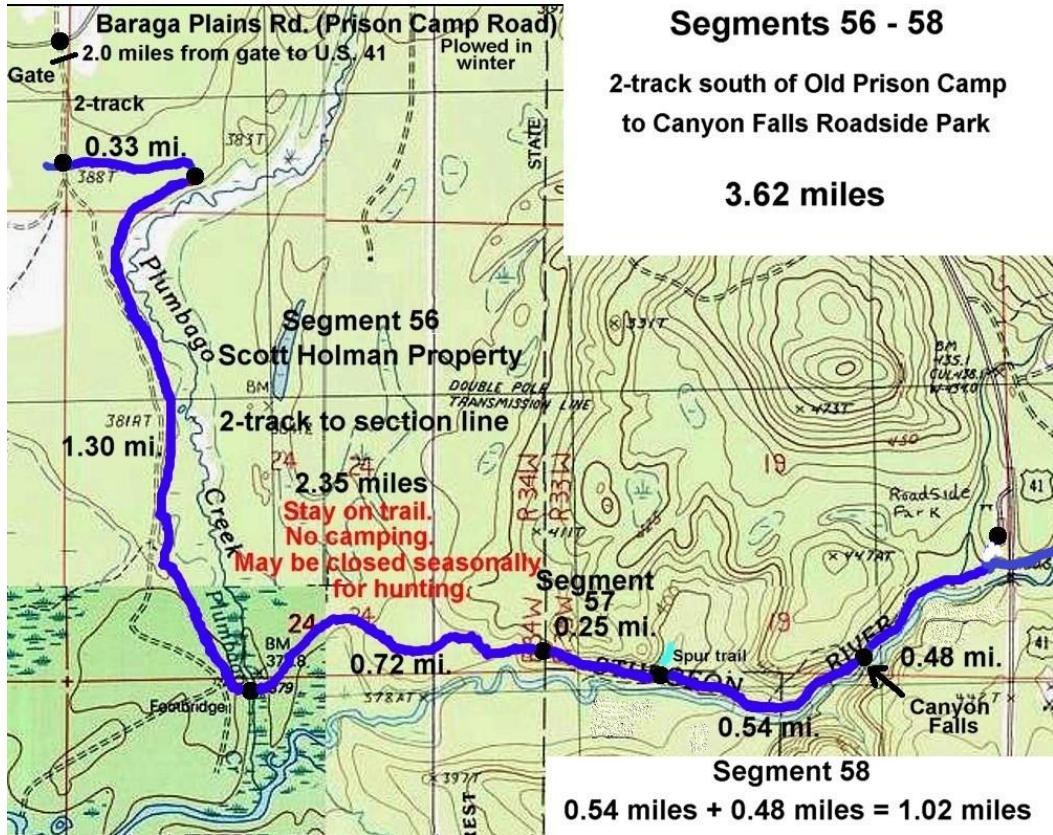
<http://www.mtu.edu/forest/fordcenter/conference/lodging/>

Alberta Dining: <http://www.mtu.edu/forest/fordcenter/conference/dining/>

Winter: The MDOT parking lot for Canyon Falls is locked at the gate near US41 between end of October to end of April each year. The highway snowplows make a small parking area directly in front of the gate that will fit about 5 cars if the cars all park perpendicular to US41. If those spaces are full, and you park on the highway shoulder, you might get a ticket for winter parking on the shoulder of US41.

Note! Many folks hike the trail to Canyon Falls in the winter on snowshoes or even with just winter boots once the route becomes hard snow-packed by many users a day. It is a great winter trip. The stone wall fence, which is the viewing area for the falls, is a good place to turn around

in winter and return to your car at US41. Beyond that point, winter users must exercise great caution getting up the steep narrow path of the rock wall. Also, keep in mind the need to be aware of dangers associated with being on over hanging snow at the top of vertical rock bluffs up to 50 feet high on the NCT downstream from the falls. So PLEASE, stay on the trail; do not walk on top of the snow drifted river or close to the edges that might be overhanging snow!!



NOTE: If you need to resupply from US-41 here, it is 9 miles north on the US41 highway to L'Anse and 91 miles on the NCT to the nearest small store in Marquette.

End of Trail Guide for PWC Segments 47-58

Go to bottom of [PWC webpage](#) for Trail Guide for Segments 59-67