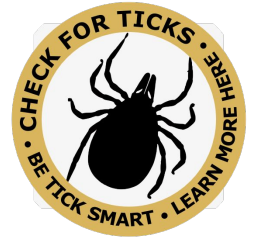


# 58th Street

## Sections



The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) is a long-distance hiking trail that stretches across eight states from Vermont to central North Dakota. Part of the National Trails System, the NCT links scenic, natural, historic, and cultural areas and allows visitors to experience a variety of landscapes.

When completed, the Trail will be the longest continuous hiking trail in the United States. The total projected length of the North Country Trail is 4,800 miles, of which more than 3,100 have already been completed. In Michigan, the NCT also serves as the hiking route of the DNR's Iron Belle Trail. Newaygo County is home to about 70 miles of the NCT.

### To the North

Geologically speaking, enjoy an imaginary walk through glacial history! This road walk will take you along a narrow sand ridge. On either side, you will notice several deeply-rounded depressions. Some are dry, but most contain small lakes, pocket marshes, or bog lands. The two larger [kettle lakes](#) along this section are cold and fairly deep. These are what remain of massive chunks of ice that fractured from the retreated glaciers some 10-14,000 years ago. The sand below your feet was deposited from ice chunks as meltwater made its way to the Muskegon River watershed.

There are two scenic points of interest in the last mile of this section. The first is an overlook of Twinwood Lake. A short spur trail leads to the rustic [USFS Twinwood Lake Campground](#) at the lake's edge, with campsites, picnic tables, pit toilets, and boat launch. The second is the [Newaygo County Sports Park and Welcome Center](#). A  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile spur trail leads to Little Lake Placid by the winter sliding hill and the Welcome Center at the top by M-37.



### To the South

This unique section will take you through regrown Oak and hardwood forests, old Red Pine plantations, a grove of massive old-growth [White Pines](#) along Bigelow Creek and a few "globally-imperiled" [ecosystems](#). Hikers can make an interesting side-trip into the 400-acre [Coolbough Natural Area](#), a little-known Michigan gem. White blazes lead to a looped trail system to view remnant prairie, Oak savannas, streams, wetlands, and ponds. There is also a turtle study area, large anthills and habitat for the rare [Karner Blue Butterfly](#).

Historically, most of the land in this section consisted of fire-dependent [dry sand prairie](#). Ruined by logging and unsuccessful attempts to plow and farm in the 1930-40's, the majority of this area had reverted to desertification. Today, we hike gently through areas of Forest Service restored [prairie](#) land which feature desert-like plants, such as the yellow-blossomed [Prickly Pear Cactus](#). Some of the restored remnant prairie land toward the southern end of this section is used for ongoing research.

**Please scroll down for more detailed information.**

## **58th Street Sections**

**Directions to the Trailhead:** From Newaygo, take Croton Drive east for 3 miles, turn left (north) on Barberry Road, and in 1 mile turn left (west) on 58<sup>th</sup> Street. Go about 1½ miles to a parking area on the right, just before crossing over the railroad tracks.

**Northbound Trail Description:** The NCT travels 2.6 miles north from 58th Street to the 40th Street Trailhead. 70% of the route is a 1.8-mile road walk along dirt-tracked Basswood Drive. The surface is forgiving, the traffic is light, but be alert for ORVs moving too fast on blind corners. Single track trail briefly resumes to 40th Street. The northbound route parallels a set of railroad tracks and crosses the tracks three times. The section has no on-trail water sources. At the west end of the parking area, begin the road walk on 58<sup>th</sup> Street where hikers will encounter the following northbound waypoints:

- **In 0.1 miles:** From 58<sup>th</sup> Street, cross the railroad tracks and hike to a junction with Basswood Drive
- **In 1.7 miles:** Hike north on Basswood Drive, cross the railroad tracks for a second time, where the roadwalk ends by re-entering the woods to the right on single-track trail, with a view of Twinwood Lake at a spur trail leading down to the USFS Twinwood Campground
- **In 0.3 miles:** Continue briefly in the woods, re-cross Basswood Drive, cross the railroad tracks for the final time, pass the spur trail to the Newaygo County Welcome Center, and cross paved M-37
- **In 0.5 miles:** Carefully cross M-37, climb up-hill and soon arrive at a spur trail to the left (west) that leads to the 40<sup>th</sup> Street Trailhead and parking area

**Southbound Trail Description:** From 58th Street, the NCT makes a wide 5.5-mile arc to the northeast before dipping back southeast to 56th Street. The NCT is single track tread throughout this section and is open to hiking only. Mountain bikes and horses are prohibited. On-trail water is available near the beginning of this section at vibrantly-flowing Bigelow Creek. Hikers will encounter these waypoints:

- **In 0.8 miles:** Leave the east side of the parking area, pass a trail box register in 100 yards, and hike downward to cross Bigelow Creek, the section's only reliable water source (notice the large old-growth White Pines on either side of the creek)
- **In 0.3 miles:** Pass through a small sandy parking area in several hundred yards, enter an old pine plantation, and cross the unsigned dirt/sand Spruce Road that leads right (south) to the northwest access point to the Coolbough Natural Area and trail system
- **In 0.3 miles:** On the NCT, continue to a junction with a spur trail that goes right (south) around a gate (with a posted trail map) into the north access point to the Coolbough Natural Area
- **In 1.5 miles:** On the NCT, hike through varying forest and meadow patches and cross dirt Poplar Road (NOTE: Temperatures can be 10-15 degrees warmer in the pockets of restored sandy-blow areas.)
- **In 1.6 miles:** Hike through mixed hardwood and pine forests, meadow lands, and patches of restored prairie as you dip down into usually-dry Cold Creek, and cross dirt-tracked Laurel Road and then 48<sup>th</sup> Street before crossing paved Oak Avenue
- **In 1.0 miles:** Hike through an old pine plantation, then traverse south and east across an expansive meadow/prairie area, and re-enter the pine forest to arrive at 56th Street