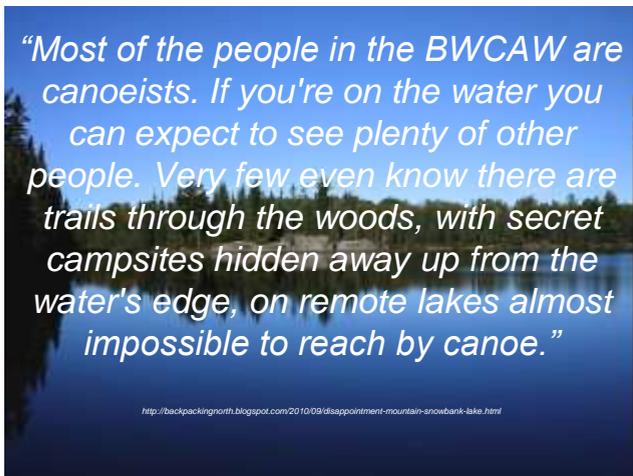




Matthew Davis
 Regional Trail Coordinator, North Country Trail Association
 Detroit Lakes, MN
 (701) 388-1883 / davis@northcountrytrail.org

The slides from this presentation will be available in handout format at...

<http://northcountrytrail.org/insight>



<http://backpackingnorth.blogspot.com/2010/09/disappointment-mountain-snowbank-lake.html>



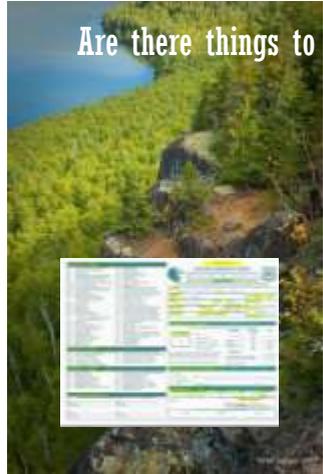
Why Hike/Backpack in the BWCAW?

- It's a magical place that you love visiting!
- It's more challenging – both physically and mentally - than other trails like the SHT!
- To reach places inaccessible by canoe
- Solitude and a true wilderness experience!



Are there things to know before you go?

- These trails are **NOT** for beginners!
- Wilderness character
 - Lower trail standards
 - Steeper grades
 - Fewer structures – e.g. bridges, boardwalks
 - Little or no signage / blazing
 - Frequent water crossings
 - Lower levels of trail maintenance
 - More frequent blowdowns
 - More wet spots
 - More brush obscuring the tread
- Wilderness skills are typically required
 - Map & compass
 - Route finding / land navigation
 - Self reliance in emergencies



Are there things to know before you go?

- The BWCAW may be closed during the hiking season due to wildfires
- Permits are required year round for hiking
 - A quota permit is required May–September
 - Non-Quota self-issuing permits October–April
 - Self-issuing permits for day use year round
 - There are user fees and fees for reservations and overnight permits. For more info, contact the Forest Service or visit www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5122904.pdf

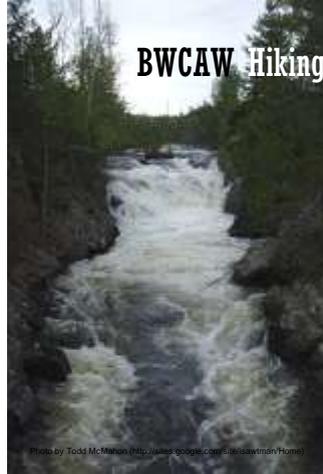


Most common challenges

- Getting lost
 - Post someone where you last knew you were on the trail
 - The rest of the group members should circle out in all directions looking for signs of the trail
 - Don't forget that the last place you think you were on the trail might already be off the trail
 - Signs to look for include: flush cut down logs, lopped brush, cairns, and a worn trail tread
- Crossing beaver dams
 - Use a hiking pole to improve balance
 - The trail doesn't always continue where the dams end (beavers keep changing the dams).
 - Usually there will be a discernable re-route leading you to the trail. Keep your eyes open and you should be able to find it.



Note: these tips were adapted from the Sioux-Hustler Trail brochure



BWCAW Hiking/Backpacking trails

- Pow Wow Trail
- Sioux-Hustler Trail
- Snowbank Lake loops
- Kekekabic Trail
- Border Route & associated side trails
- Brule Lake & Eagle Mountain Trails
- Anglemorm Trail



The Pow Wow Trail

The Pow Wow Trail was seriously impacted by the Pagami Creek Fire of Fall '11 and is currently CLOSED until the Forest Service can better evaluate conditions. Be sure to contact the Superior National Forest for the latest on trail conditions.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/superior>

http://photos.bwca.com/9/SOLEAD-290508-103044.JPG http://photos.bwca.com/9/SOLEAD-290508-100833.JPG



Before

After



The Pow Wow Trail

Trailhead on Tomahawk Rd. / FR377

Isabella, MN

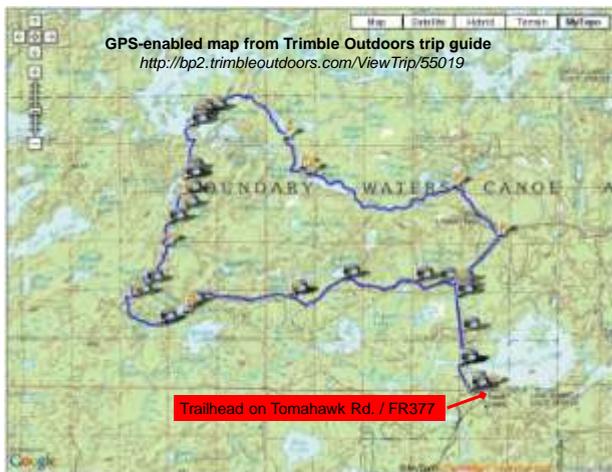
- **Location:** about 17 miles north of Isabella, MN or 77 miles northeast of Two Harbors, MN

About the Pow Wow Trail

- **Distance & Type:** 30.1 mile lollipop loop
- **Difficulty:** Mixed. The trail is partially on an old logging railroad bed (easy) and partially a wilderness trail with multiple beaver dam and stream crossings (difficult).
- **Hike description:** Take two or three days to explore the trail
- **Why go there?** Pine and cedar trees surround majestic lakes filled with fish and numerous backcountry campsites dot the trail.

About the Pow Wow Trail, cont.

- **Cautions:** Be prepared to get your feet wet traversing boggy terrain and fording small streams—there's only one maintained bridge along the route. **The Pagami Creek fire seriously impacted the landscape through which the Pow Wow Trail traverses!** The trail will most likely be difficult to follow when re-opened in 2012 and for years beyond.
- **Notes:** Make your reservations for entry point #86 – Pow Wow Trail.



For more info:

- **Online Trip Reports:**
 - <http://bp2.trimbleoutdoors.com/ViewTrip/55019>
 - http://www.bwca.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=trip.report_view&sel_trp_id=1058
- **Online photo album:**
<http://travel.webshots.com/album/141998612oQXbdU>
- **Maps:**
 - Trails Illustrated BWCAW maps (East and West)
 - McKenzie Maps Pow Wow Trail set (#s 18, 19 and 304)
- **Contacts:**
 - Superior National Forest's Tofte Ranger Station @ 218-663-8060



What can you do?

- Volunteer on a future trail clearing trip with the Kekekabic Trail Club and/or Boundary Waters Advisory Committee



This picture, from the Kekekabic Trail, most likely represents the future of the Pow Wow Trail



The Sioux Hustler Trail



About the Sioux-Hustler Trail

- **Distance & type:** 32 mile lollipop loop
- **Difficulty:** Difficult
- **Hike description:** Take three to four days to explore this wilderness trail
- **Why go there?** To visit Devil's Cascade, to find solitude
- **Cautions:** The trail is minimally maintained so there is a need for preparedness and route-finding under adverse conditions. It is marked by rock cairns, tree blazes and less subtle markers – saw cut log ends and tree roots that have been worn bare by foot traffic.
- **Notes:** Make your reservations for entry point #15.



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cageyl/4674087595/in/set-72157624071809775/>

For more info:

- **Online Trip Reports:**
 - <http://reidster.net/trips/2005-sioux-hustler/>
 - <http://reidster.net/trips/2007-sioux-hustler/>
 - <http://backpackingnorth.blogspot.com/2010/05/sioux-hustler-trail-bwca-minnesota.html>
- **Online photo gallery:**
 - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cageyl/sets/72157624071809775/>
 - http://bwca-smwgmap.com/Outdoors/Sioux-Hustler-Trail-Oct-201119600407_SMO3xw1345046779_1346192
- **Maps:**
 - Trails Illustrated BWCAW West map
 - McKenzie Maps Sioux-Hustler Trail set (#s 12, 13, and 14)
 - Parks & Trails Council of MN / Friends of the Sioux-Hustler Trail brochure available online at <http://tinyurl.com/3mbgmjS>
- **Contacts:**
 - Superior National Forest's LaCroix Ranger Station in Cook @ 218-666-0020



Snowbank Lake loop(s)



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Snowbank_Trail_ar12.JPG



<http://visitcranlake.com/blog/?p=1939>



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Snowbank_Trail_ar14.JPG



<http://visitcranlake.com/blog/?p=1939>

The Snowbank Lake loop(s)



About the Snowbank Lake loop(s)

- **Distance & type:** 21-40 mile series of connected loop options
 - Snowbank & Kekekabic Trails - 21.8 mi.
 - Snowbank, Old Pines, & Kekekabic Trails – loop around Snowbank & Disappointment Lakes – 26.1 mi.
 - Snowbank, Old Pines, & Kekekabic Trails – loop around Snowbank, Disappointment, and Moyaka / Medas Lakes – 33.8 mi.
 - Becoosin-Benezie loop add-on – 1.5 mi.
- **Difficulty:** Difficult, rocky terrain with many ups and downs and need for route finding
- **Hike description:** Take three days (or more) to explore the various loop combinations

About the Snowbank Lake loop(s), cont.

- **Why go there?** Circumnavigation around Snowbank and Disappointment Lakes, views of remote lakes, old-growth pines, solitude
- **Cautions:** These trails are generally well maintained so there is less of a need for route-finding than some of the other trails. There is still a need for preparedness. It is marked by rock cairns.
- **Notes:** Make your reservations for entry point #74.



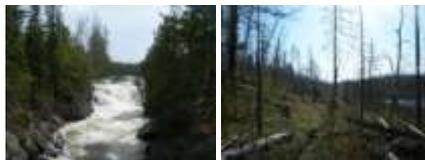
For more info:

- **Online Trip Reports:**
 - <http://visitorsanelake.com/blog/?p=1939>
 - http://www.bwca.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=trip_report_view&sel_trip_id=724
 - <http://backpackingnorth.blogspot.com/2010/09/disappointment-mountain-snowbank-lake.html>
 - http://www.everytrail.com/view_trip.php?trip_id=799992
- **Guidebook & Maps:**
 - Wiki Guide for the Snowbank Trail
 - http://www.bwcawiki.org/wiki/Snowbank_Trail
 - The **NEW** Kekekabic Trail Guide
 - Trails Illustrated BWCAW West & East maps
 - McKenzie Maps #9 – Snowbank, Basswood
- **Contacts:**
 - Superior National Forest's Kawishiwi Ranger Station in Ely @ 218-365-7600





Kekekabic Trail



All photos by Matt Davis, NCTA

Kekekabic Trail



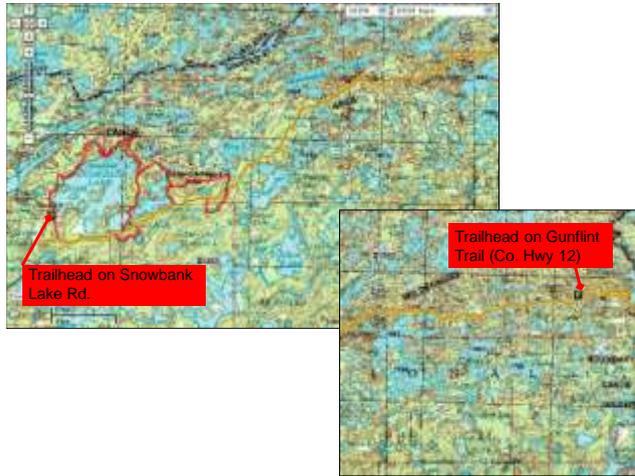
- **West Trailhead Location:** about 21 miles east of Ely, MN
- **East Trailhead Location:** about 47 miles northwest of Grand Marais, MN
- **Car shuttle:** 180 mi. or 4.5 hours

About the Kekekabic Trail

- **Distance & type:** 42-mile point A to point B trail with some loop opportunities on the far western end near Snowbank and Disappointment Lakes
- **Difficulty:** Difficult, rocky terrain with many ups and downs and need for route finding
- **Hike description:** Take three to five days to thru-hike "the Kek," whose origin was a forest firefighter's trail from Snowbank Lake to the Kekekabic Lake fire tower site
- **Why go there?** Remoteness, to enjoy the quietest campsites in America (according to Backpacker magazine), old-growth pines, to check out the recovery from the '99 blowdown & resulting forest fires

About the Kekekabic Trail, cont.

- **Cautions:** This trail is generally well maintained but there is still a need for route-finding and for preparedness. It is marked by rock cairns.
- **Notes:** Make your reservations for entry point #74 – Kekekabic Trail West for an eastbound hike or #56 – Kekekabic Trail East for a westbound hike.



For more info:

- **Kekekabic Trail Club:**
 - www.kek.org, info@kek.org
- **Online Trip Reports:**
 - <http://visitcranelake.com/blog/?p=1939>
 - http://www.bwca.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=trip.report_view&sel_trp_id=724
 - <http://backpackingnorth.blogspot.com/2010/09/disappointm-ent-mountain-snowbank-lake.html>
 - http://www.everytrail.com/view_trip.php?trip_id=799992
- **Maps:**
 - The **newly revised** Kekekabic Trail Guidebook
 - Trails Illustrated BWCAW West & East maps
 - McKenzie Maps Kekekabic Trail set (#'s 7-9)
- **Contacts:**
 - Superior National Forest's Kawishiwi Ranger Station in Ely @ 218-365-7600



Photos from Kekekabic Trail Club



Border Route Trail (& Side Trails)



All photos by Matt Davis, NCTA

Border Route Trail (& Side Trails)



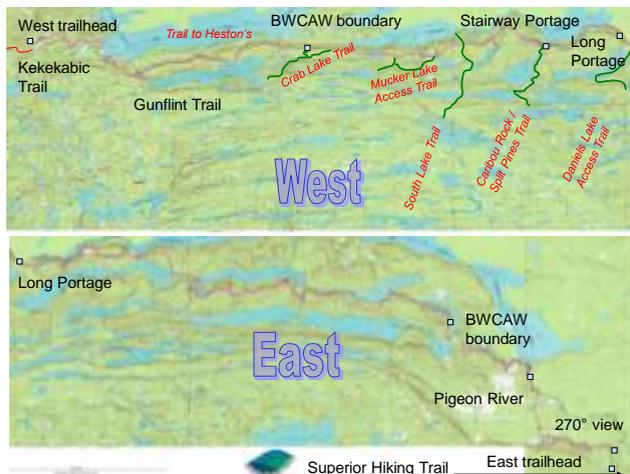
- **West Trailhead**
Location: about 47 miles NW of Grand Marais
- **East Trailhead**
Location: about 16 miles west of Grand Portage, MN
- **Car shuttle:** 57 mi. or 2 hours

About the Border Route Trail

- **Distance & type:** 65-mile point A to point B trail (35 mi. in the middle lie inside the BWCAW). There are some loop hike opportunities on the western half
- **Difficulty:** Difficult, hilly terrain with many steep ups and downs, some need for route finding
- **Hike description:** Take three to five days to thru-hike the BRT or figure out a loop hike
- **Why go there?** Remoteness, amazing views of border lakes chain, old-growth forests, to check out the recovery from the '99 blowdown & resulting forest fires

About the Border Route Trail, cont.

- **Cautions:** The trail is pretty remote but well maintained, map and compass skills are still needed, The trail does pass by numerous high cliffs.
- **Notes:** Make your reservations for entry point #81 – BRT Trail West for an eastbound hike OR #83 – BRT East for a westbound hike. There's also #82 – BRT Center for the Daniel's Lake Trail, #59 – Partridge Lake Trail (S. Lake Trail)



About the Crab Lake Trail

- **Distance & type:** 8-mile access trail from Loon Lake Lodge side road to the Border Route Trail and beyond to South Lake. Lies partially in the BWCAW
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Hike description:** Trail follows along shore of Crab Lake and past Whisker Lake before reaching the BRT and descending to South Lake
- **Why go there?** It allows a sampler hike of the BRT in the BWCAW

About the Topper Lake/Mucker Lake Trail

- **Distance & type:** There are actually three trails:
 - a 0.5-mile portage trail to Topper Lake,
 - a 1.5-mile access trail to the BRT east of Topper Lake from end of FR317, and
 - A 6-mile trail to the BRT near Mucker Lake.
 - All lie mostly inside the BWCAW
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Hike description:** Trail follows some streams, no significant elevation changes
- **Why go there?** Allows easy access to BRT sampler loop

About the South Lake Trail

- **Distance & type:** 7-mile access trail from Gunflint Trail (near Poplar Lake) to the Border Route Trail and beyond to South Lake. Lies partially in the BWCAW
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Hike description:** Trail passes by Birch, East Otter, and Partridge Lakes before ascending to the BRT and descending to South Lake
- **Why go there?** South Lake campsite is fantastic.

About the Caribou Rock/Split Pines Trail

- **Distance & type:** 7-mile access trail from Hungry Jack Lake Road (Co. 65) to the Border Route Trail at Stairway Portage. Lies mostly in the BWCAW.
- **Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult
- **Hike description:** Trail follows above Duncan Lake before reaching the BRT
- **Why go there?** Great access to Stairway Portage area including scenic Rose Lake cliffs

About the Daniels Lake Trail

- **Distance & type:** 3-mile access trail from (Co. 66) to the Border Route Trail near the Long Portage section. Lies mostly in the BWCAW.
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Hike description:** Trail follows old Railroad grade along shore of Daniels Lake before reaching the BRT / Long Portage Trail
- **Why go there?** Access to Long Portage section, splits BRT's BWCAW section roughly in half

For more info:

- **Border Route Trail Association:**
 - www.borderroutetrail.org, info@borderroutetrail.org.
- **Online Trip Reports:**
 - <http://northcountrytrail.org/2010/09/28/ncta-group-hike-tackles-the-border-route-trail-in-ne-minnesota/>
 - <http://picasaweb.google.com/TFMoberg/BorderRouteTrailHikeSeptember21262010#>
 - <http://sites.google.com/site/sawtman/Home/border-route-trail-east>
 - http://www.spotadventures.com/trip/view?trip_id=224930
- **Maps:**
 - The Border Route Trail guidebook
 - Trails Illustrated BWCANW East map
 - McKenzie Maps Border Route Trail map set (#'s 98, 1, 2 and 4)
- **Contacts:**
 - Superior National Forest's Gunflint Ranger Station in Grand Marais @ 218-387-1750

The Brule Lake / Eagle Mountain Trails



www.bwca.co/activities/hiking/eaglemountain.html



www.trmbleoutdoors.com/ViewTrip/19053



www.bwca.co/wildflowers/flowerimages/fornamepictures/eaglemountain/Eagle_Mt_view_contd.jpg



www.bwca.co/wildflowers/flowerimages/fornamepictures/eaglemountain/Eagle_Mt_Jackpine_trail_contd.jpg



- **Location:** about 16 miles northwest of Grand Marais, MN



<http://blog.woodlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/4W4490001.jpg>

About the Brule Lake / Eagle Mtn Trails

- **Distance & type:** 11.2 mile Point A to Point B overnight hike with spur to summit of Eagle Mountain; 14.4 mile out and back hike from Brule Lake Trail trailhead; OR 7-mile out and back hike using the Eagle Mountain Trail trailhead
- **Difficulty:** Moderately difficult, 500' elevation gain
- **Hike description:** Take a long day hike or do an overnight staying at Fishhook Lake or Whale Lake Campsites
- **Why go there?** You can summit Minnesota's highest mountain
- **Cautions:** none, generally a well-maintained trail
- **Notes:** Make your reservations for entry point #78 – Brule Lake Trail or #79 – Eagle Mountain Trail



For more info:

- **Online Trip Reports:**
 - <http://www.americasroof.com/mn.shtml>
 - <http://www.trimbleoutdoors.com/ViewTrip/9053>
 - <http://bwac.smugmug.com/Sports/Brule-Lake-Winter-Trail/>
 - <http://blog.woodalls.com/2010/04/the-three-puppies-hike-in-the-boundary-waters-canoe-area-mn/>
- **Guides & Maps:**
 - Trails Illustrated BWCAW East map
 - The **NEW** Mackenzie map for the Eagle Mountain-Brule Lake Trails
 - Superior National Forest brochure
- **Contacts:**
 - Superior National Forest's Gunflint Ranger Station in Grand Marais @ 218-387-1750



Anglemorm Trail



<http://reidster.net/trips/2006-bwcaw/anglemorm.html>



<http://reidster.net/trips/2006-bwcaw/anglemorm.html>

<http://www.bwacast.com/gallery/anglemorm-hiking-trail>



About the Angleworm Trail

- **Distance & type:** This 13.5-mile lollipop loop trail goes off the Echo Trail north of Ely
- **Difficulty:** Easy to moderate
- **Hike description:** This trail can be walked in a long dayhike or enjoyed over a weekend
- **Why go there?** The loop hike features several overlooks in the Angleworm Lake area and numerous (9) campsites
- **Cautions:** none, the trail is generally well maintained and easy to follow, albeit hilly
- **Notes:** Make your reservations for entry point #21 – Angleworm Trail



<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/3960740>

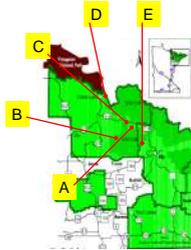


For more info:

- **Online Trip Reports:**
 - <http://reidster.net/trips/2006-bwcaw/angleworm.html>
 - <http://www.bwcacast.com/angleworm-hiking-trail-the-show/>
 - <http://www.bwcacast.com/gallery/angleworm-hiking-trail/>
- **Maps:**
 - Trails Illustrated BWCAW West map
 - Mackenzie map # 11 - Jackfish Bay, Crooked Lake and Beartrap River
- **Contacts:**
 - Superior National Forest's Kawishiwi Station in Ely @ 218-365-1500

Other BWCAW Hiking Trails

- **A. Big Moose Trail**
 - 2.1mi. from the Moose Loop Rd. off the Echo Trail to a campsite on Big Moose Lake. Entry point #76.
- **B. Norway Trail**
 - 6 mi. (1.9mi. segment that enters BWCAW) from FR472 near the Norway Lookout Tower site to the North Arm of Trout Lake. Entry point #10.
- **C. Blandin Trail**
 - 3.5 mi. from FR201 near Meander Lake Picnic Area to Nina Moose-Lamb Lakes portage trail. Entry point # 11.
- **D. Harriman Lake (winter) Trail System**
 - 3-14 mi. multiple loops from Trailhead on Co. Rd. 424 off Co. 24 to campsites on Knute and Little Vermilion Lakes. Entry point #13.
- **E. North Arm (winter) Trail System**
 - 32 mi. of multiple loops from Trailhead on Co. 644 off of the Echo Trail



Useful Resources

- **Boundary Waters Advisory Committee**
 - This non-profit group aims to save the historic hiking trails in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. They lead trail clearing trips on numerous hiking trails within the BWCAW including the Brule Lake, Eagle Mountain, and Kek.
 - Website: <http://bwac-homestead.com/>
 - Meetup group website: www.meetup.com/Friends-of-BWCA-Trails/
 - Online photo gallery: <http://www.bwac.smugmug.com/>
 - Email: wtrails2@yahoo.com
 - Call President Martin Kubik @ 651-214-5849
- **Superior National Forest's Hiking Brochure**
 - Available online at www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5281816.pdf
- **Wilderness.net page on the BWCAW**
 - www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&app=widView&WID=70
- **Canoe Country.com's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Hiking Guide**
 - www.canocountry.com/hike/
- **Up Northica.com's Go Hike! Boundary Waters Western Region**
 - <http://upnorthica.com/2011/03/22/boundary-waters-hiking-tips-western-region/>
- **Up Northica.com's Go Hike! Boundary Waters Eastern Region**
 - <http://upnorthica.com/2011/03/25/hike-some-more-boundary-waters-eastern-region/>



Get involved!

- **Take part in an organized trail clearing trip:**
 - Boundary Waters Advisory Committee
 - Kekekabic Trail Club
 - Border Route Trail Association
- **Go for a trip on your own!**
 - Report issues to the Superior N.F.
- **Take part in an organized group hike:**
 - Minnesota Rovers Outing Club
 - Border Route Trail Association
 - Boundary Waters Advisory Committee
 - Twin Cities Hiking Meetup group

