

Beltrami Island State Forest

A guide to recreational opportunities in Minnesota state forests



Spruce Grouse photo: Brad Bolduan

includes

Red Lake Wildlife Management Area

For More Information

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
Information Center
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4040

651-296-6157
1-888-MINNDNR
TDD (Telecommunications Device for Deaf)

651-296-5484
1-800-657-3929

Warroad Area Forest Supervisor
804 Cherne Drive Northwest
Warroad, MN 56763
218-386-1304

Wannaska Field Station
HCR 3 Box 34A
Wannaska, MN 56761
218-425-7793

Williams Field Station
115 Wilderness Avenue
Williams, MN 56686
218-783-6935

Baudette Area Forest Supervisor
206 Main Street East
Baudette, MN 56623
218-634-2172

CAMPGROUND INFORMATION:
Bemis Hill Campground
Hayes Lake State Park
218-783-7504

Blueberry Hill, Faunce Campgrounds
Zippel Bay State Park
218-634-6252

Norris Campground and Norris Camp
Red Lake WMA Headquarters
Norris Camp - Box 100
Roseau, MN 56751
218-783-6861

EMERGENCY SERVICE - DIAL 911
Law Enforcement:
Roseau County Sheriff
108 3rd. Avenue Southwest
Roseau, MN 56751
218-463-1421

Lake of the Woods County Sheriff
County Courthouse
Baudette, MN 56623
218-634-1143

NEAREST HOSPITALS
Roseau Area Hospital
715 3rd. Avenue Southeast
Roseau, MN 56751
218-463-2500

Lakewood Health Center
600 South Main Avenue
Baudette, MN 56623
218-634-2120

NW Medical Center
120 LaBree Avenue South
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
218-681-4240

About the Forest

Size: 669,000 acres Year Created: 1931

Forest Landscape: Much of this forest area was once an island in glacial Lake Agassiz. The shorelines of this ancient glacial lake created several low sandy ridges that extend in a general northwest-southeast direction in the forest. The ridges today are covered with pine and are surrounded by large areas of low flatlands and peat bogs.

Management Activities: Timber harvesting, reforestation, wildlife-habitat improvement, and recreational management occur in the forest. The DNR also protects the forest and surrounding areas from wildfires.

History: American Indians have lived in the Beltrami Island area for more than 10,000 years. Artifacts—including finely crafted spear points, arrowheads, and fragments of pottery—have been found along the region's rivers and lakeshores.

French explorers arrived in the 1730s, searching for a route to the Pacific. The French started on to engage the indigenous peoples in the fur trade, adopting much of the Indian lifeway. The French influence waned after 1760, whereupon the Hudson's Bay Company exerted British influence through the area. American control of the entire Beltrami Island area did not occur until 1818.

Much of northwestern Minnesota was reserved for the Ojibwe under the "Old Crossing" Treaty of 1863. The area north of Upper Red Lake was ceded to the U.S. government in 1889, but the Red Lake Band retains many parcels within the forest.

A land boom in the early 1900s attracted farmers to the area. Extensive ditching drained peatlands for agriculture, but the sandy soils and extensive swamps proved to be unsuitable for farming. By 1940 most of the settlers had left, many with the assistance of the federal government. Abandoned homestead sites and cemeteries can still be encountered in the forest.

In the 1930s public works programs such as the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) were initiated by the federal government. Norris Camp, established as a CCC camp in 1936, retains many of the original buildings and now serves as the headquarters of the Red Lake Wildlife Management Area. Many of the statly pine plantations seen throughout the forest were planted by the CCCs.

Beltrami Island State Forest takes its name from Count Giacomo Beltrami, an Italian explorer, who in 1823 searched for the source of the Mississippi under the shade of a red umbrella. Although Beltrami did not find the river's source, he ventured into northwestern Minnesota, circumnavigating the Red Lakes. The "island" in the forest's name refers to an area of higher terrain that may have existed as an island within the waters of Lake Agassiz.

Predominant Tree Species: Much of the forest is comprised of lowland conifers such as spruce, tamarack, and cedar. The better drained soils support red pine, aspen, and jack pine. Smaller acreages of birch, white pine and some hardwoods such as ash, elm, and oak are interspersed. The Rosevelt area is one of the few places where red maple can be found in extreme northwestern Minnesota.

Beltrami Island State Forest contains 573 acres of black ash, 569 acres of red pine, 485 acres of lowland hardwoods, 252 acres of white pine, 110 acres of white cedar, 25 acres of white spruce, and 13 acres of oak that are designated old growth and protected from harvesting.



Camping: **Bemis Hill Campground** has six drive-in campsites, four sites for horse camping, a picnic area, and a sliding hill. **Faunce Campground** has six campsites and a picnic area. **Blueberry Hill Campground** has eight campsites and a picnic area. **Norris Campground** has six campsites and a picnic area.

Wildlife: Many of the wildlife species occurring in northern Minnesota can be found in the Beltrami Island State Forest vicinity including:

Mammals: Gray wolves, white-tailed deer, black bear, coyote, red fox, marten, fisher, otter, bobcat, beaver, and other mammals can be found in the forest. Moose are also present, although their numbers have declined drastically over the past 25 years.

Birds: At least 289 bird species have been observed in this area, including 23 species of breeding warblers. Birders travel long distances to search here for several less common species including: spruce grouse, great gray owl, northern hawk owl, snowy owl, short-eared owl, gray jay, northern goshawk, black-backed woodpecker, Connecticut warbler, white-winged and red crossbills, and boreal chickadee.



White-winged Crossbill photo: Carl Greiner



Other Recreational Opportunities in the Beltrami Island area:

Zippel Bay State Park: Located on the shore of Lake of the Woods, the park features a long sandy beach. It also has facilities for fishing including a boat ramp, boat harbor, docks, picnic areas, and fish cleaning facilities. There are 57 campsites and trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.

Hayes Lake State Park: Directly adjacent to Beltrami Island State Forest, this park features an impounded lake on the Roseau River. Facilities include a swimming beach, boat ramp, two picnic areas, a screened picnic shelter, and a fishing pier. There are nature trails and other trails designated for hiking, biking, skiing, and snowmobiling. There are 35 sites in the campground and two camper cabins.

Fourtown/Grygla/Consolidated Conservation

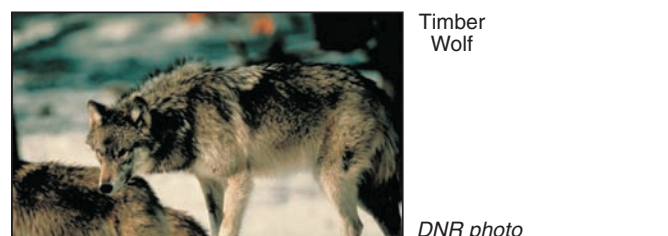
ATV Trails: These segmented all-terrain-vehicle (ATV) trails are located on several state wildlife management areas in several counties in northwestern Minnesota. They mostly run along county roads, township roads, ditch banks, or existing trails. A system of grant-in-aid trails (Fourtown/Grygla OHV) connect these segments of trails on the con-con lands to create a trail system in excess of 130 miles. Counties have passed an ordinance allowing ATVs to operate on the far right side of the travel lane. This means the route is shared with highway licensed vehicles (HLV), so extreme caution must be used, even though HLV traffic may be very low. Because of the heavy soils in this area and the flat ground, these trails are subject to temporary closures. Check the Web or call ahead to confirm current trail conditions.

These trails are short segments scattered within Marshall and Beltrami counties and are not a contiguous system. Additional segments are under construction and will be reflected in future maps when available for public use. Please visit: www.mndnr.gov/ohv/con_con/index.html for the most up-to-date information.

Big Bog State Recreation Area: Located just north of Upper Red Lake, the Northern Unit of the Big Bog State Recreation Area (SRA) features the mile-long Big Bog Boardwalk. The Southern Unit of the Big Bog SRA is located on the eastern shore of Upper Red Lake and has boat ramps, picnic areas, and a swimming beach. There are 31 campsites and five camper cabins.

Lake of the Woods State Forest: Classified as "managed," there are no campgrounds in the Forest.

Lost River State Forest: Classified as "managed," there are no campgrounds in the Forest.



Timber Wolf DNR photo

Dispersed Camping

Camping is allowed on state forest lands outside of designated campgrounds under the following conditions:

- Disposal of human wastes or animal parts and entrails in areas used for dispersed camping where no latrine or holding tank is available shall be accomplished by burying wastes in the immediate vicinity, at least 150 feet from a water body, in a manner that does not endanger a water supply, pollute a surface water, create a nuisance, or otherwise constitute a hazard to public health and safety.
- People who disperse camp may not construct permanent camping structures or cut living trees or place masts, screws, or other fasteners in a living tree at a campsite.
- Dispersed camps set up on forest lands must be occupied by a member of the camping party during the time the equipment is left on state land.
- Dispersed camping at one location is limited to 14 days.
- Dead firewood may only be used on site and may not be collected for removal from state land.
- Campfires may not exceed 3 feet in diameter, must be attended at all times, and must be completely extinguished before leaving the site.
- Litter or garbage must be properly disposed of in an authorized garbage disposal container and may not be burned in a campfire.

Camping is allowed within the Red Lake WMA with a free permit which can be obtained by calling or writing to the WMA Headquarters (address under the "For More Information" section) or to the Baudette Area Wildlife Office at 218-634-1705.

FIREWOOD ALERT!

It is illegal to bring firewood into a state park or state forest unless it is:

- purchased from the DNR
- purchased from an approved vendor
- kiln-dried, unstained, unpainted dimensional lumber free of metal or other foreign objects.

This restriction is in place to protect our forests from harmful pests that are carried in firewood. For more information visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/firewood.



OHV Riding

Welcome. You are part of a growing number of people who enjoy using off-highway vehicles (OHVs) for trail riding, off-road transportation, competition, and other activities. Your attitude toward your surroundings and your behavior as a rider affect the attitudes of other outdoor users, landowners, and lawmakers.

Tread lightly on the environment, be courteous to others, respect private property, and obey the law. By doing these things you contribute to the positive image of off-highway vehicle activities.

What Are You Riding?

Not all off-Highway motor vehicles can be ridden on all trails. The following descriptions can help you be certain that what you're riding is permitted on the trail you choose.

ATVs - All-Terrain Vehicles are motorized, flotation-tired vehicles with at least three, but no more than six low pressure tires, with an engine displacement of less than 800 cubic centimeters.

Class 1 ATVs have a total dry weight of less than 900 pounds.

Class 2 ATVs have a total dry weight of between 900 and 1,500 pounds.

OHMs - Off-Highway Motorcycles are vehicles traveling on two wheels that have a seat or saddle designed to be straddled by the operator and have handlebars for steering control. Motorcycles may be legal for highway use and still considered to be OHMs if used for off-highway operation on trails or natural terrain.

ORVs - Off-Road Vehicles are motorized, recreational vehicles capable of cross-country travel on natural terrain, such as four-wheel-drive trucks or ATVs over 1,500 pounds.

HLVs - Highway-Licensed Vehicles are allowed on all state forest roads; however, on "minimum maintenance" state forest roads, travel is at your own risk.

For more information on off-highway riding and opportunities, visit:

FindTheTrails.com

SMOKEY SAYS~



Blue Sky Illustration & Design

Be Safe With Campfires!

- Let your fire burn out completely to ashes or very small coals.
- Drench the fire with water, stir the ashes and coals, and wet again.
- Make sure any food, plastics, or foil is packed out as garbage.
- When your fire is extinguished completely, it should be cold to the touch.

MOTOR VEHICLE USE on State Forest Lands

State forest lands are classified by the commissioner for purposes of motor vehicle use.

The DNR is conducting a review of state forests that currently permit off-highway vehicle use. Following the review, these forests may be reclassified as either "managed," "limited," or "closed" to OHV use. On this map, none of the state forests is classified as "closed."

Please check for trail closures before you leave at: www.dnr.state.mn.us/trailconditions/index.html

For up-to-date information, check www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/mgmtplans/ohv/designation/index.html

Beltrami Island, Lake of the Woods, Red Lake, and Lost River State Forests Are Classified as Managed

• Highway licensed vehicles MAY OPERATE on signed forest roads.

• Off-highway vehicles, defined as all-terrain vehicles/off-highway motorcycles (ATVs/ORVs/OHMs), MAY OPERATE on signed roads and on trails that are designated and signed for their specific use.

In State Forests Classified as Managed or Limited ALL Motor Vehicles Must:

• Travel at a reasonable and prudent speed and obey posted speed limits and parking and traffic regulation signs.

• Observe road, route, and trail closures indicated by signs, barricades, or gates.

• Stay on the right when meeting or being passed. Pass on the left only when it is clearly visible and free of oncoming traffic.

• Yield the right-of-way to any user already on the road, route, or trail to be entered or crossed. When two users are about to enter an otherwise unmarked intersection at approximately the same time, the user on the right shall have the right-of-way.

• Yield to nonmotorized users and shall shut off their vehicles when meeting a horse until the horse has passed or until waved on by the rider or driver of the horse.

Motor Vehicles May NOT Operate:

• In a manner that causes damage to the road, land, or other natural resources causing erosion, rutting, or that damages or destroys trees or growing crops.

• On designated nonmotorized trails, unless posted open for motorized use.

• Within the boundaries of an area posted and designated closed to such use.

• Without a lighted headlamp and tail lamp at night or during reduced visibility.

• Or construct unauthorized permanent trails.

ATVs May NOT Operate:

• Off of designated signed trails or roads or off unsigned routes except with valid big game license, furbearer trapping license, or minnow license as per hunting and trapping regulations.

Snowmobile Trails

Many miles of grants-in-aid snowmobile trails including the Beltrami Island State Forest Trails - sections 1,2 & 3, Lake of the Woods Trails, Fourtown Trails, and Pelan Trails cross the area.

Alcohol, nighttime driving, and high speeds are the main causes of snowmobile fatalities. Conservation officers remind snowmobilers:

- Operating a snowmobile while intoxicated is unlawful.
- 50 miles per hour is the maximum legal speed for snowmobiling on frozen public waters and DNR-controlled lands (conditions permitting, when no other restrictions apply).

For complete legal information see "Minnesota Snowmobile Safety Laws, Rules, and Regulations," available from the DNR Information Center and the DNR Licensing Bureau.



2007-2008 Season Minnesota Snowmobile Trails

Locations of Minnesota's snowmobile trails have been mapped for NW, NE, SW, and SE Minnesota and copies are available from the DNR Information Center and other locations. The same information is available on the DNR Web site, www.dnr.state.mn.us.

Stay on the trails with the help of orange reassuring blazers, which are posted along the route.



Is It Trespassing?

On private land, the simple and best answer is, **Ask First!** Signs are posted by the landowners, and they will state, "No Trespassing," or similar words in two-inch letters and the signature or name and telephone number of the landowner, lessee, or manager. There can be civil and criminal penalties for violation of the trespass laws.

Civil penalties start at \$50 for first offense and range up to \$500 and loss of license or registration for a third offense within three years. All conservation and peace officers enforce trespass laws.



Scientific and Natural Areas

Minnesota's living museum of Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) has a thousand stories to tell - of Minnesota's lands and waters, plants, and animals, past and future. The SNA program preserves natural features and rare resources of exceptional scientific and educational value.

Please note: SNAs are open to the public for nature observation and education, but are not meant for intensive recreational activities. As a general rule there are no trails, restrooms, or other facilities. Pets are not permitted.

Other information about visiting a SNA can be found on the Web at: www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/rules.html

Peatlands, bogs, and fens

Minnesota's peatlands formed in areas of poor drainage and cool climates, with little evaporation during summer months. The water table lies at or near the surface in these areas, limiting the oxygen needed for decomposition of plant debris. Year after year, these organic materials accumulate, forming the partially decomposed mass of organic material, dark brown or black in color, that is known as peat.

Gustafson's Camp SNA was named for an old logging camp and has old-growth red and white pine stands.

Luxemburg Peatland SNA is a small, patterned peatland dominated by a water track containing ribbed fen patterns.

Mulligan Lake Peatland SNA is a patterned peatland with no bog development. Its water tracks exhibit all patterned fen features.

Norris Camp Peatland SNA is one of the most disturbed of the patterned peatland SNAs. It offers an opportunity for research on the effects of ditching.

Red Lake Peatland SNA is over 50 miles long and 12 miles wide. The big bog, as it is called, features the largest, best-developed water track in the United States. A portion has been designated a National Natural Landmark.

Winter Road Lake Peatland SNA has one small raised bog, an uncommon feature this far northwest in the state. A rarity here are the net-like flark patterns in the water track.



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Red Lake Wildlife Management Area

